

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1927

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. BATH

CITY'S ONE POINT VICTORY UNDER DISMAL CONDITIONS

SPIRITED DISPLAY IN RAIN AND MUD

Both Gloucester and Bath showed changes from the selected fifteens for their match at Kingsholm. On the City side Tom Voyce stood down owing to a sprained ankle, while F. J. Seabrook was ill. Bath lacked Nudds, Gibbs, Partridge, and Mackay from the side victorious over Leicester last Saturday. D. James, their regular full-back, was drafted into the three-quarter line.

Teams : —

GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. Thomas.

THREE-QUARTERS : A. Hough, L. Abbey, J. Stephens, and S. R. Crowther.

HALF-BACKS : R. Milliner and T. Millington (captain).

FORWARDS : J. Russell, M. Short, E. Comley, H. J. Ferris, H. Pitt, A. Rea, G. Foulkes, and J. Hemming.

BATH

BACK : T. Coles.

THREE-QUARTERS : L. Chard, D. James, W. Hancock, and L. M. Basden.

HALF-BACKS : A. Tomlin and I. J. Pitman.

FORWARDS : R. S. Chaddock (captain), H. B. L. Wake, E. Dunscombe, N. Matthews, R. J. Collett, A. Milsom, P. R. Skinner, and H. Burgess.

Referee : Mr. F. J. Stephens (Moseley).

THE GAME

Heavy showers of rain just before the match militated against a large attendance, there being over 2,000 at the kick off on a heavy ground. Bath kicked off but their inroad into the City half was short lived, Stephens finding touch.

Bath heeled out from the first scrum but off-side was given against Milliner. Bath, however, gained little advantage and from a forward rush Bath conceded a minor. It was evident early that the slippery ball was going to provide difficulties in passing movements.

At the half-way line Bath were penalised for a scrum infringement and Stephens got the ball in a rush which followed Millington's kick. Stephens was clever in passing until Pitman got possession, only to see his kick retrieved by Thomas, who found touch in the Bath half.

Play hung about mid-field for some minutes until Ferris started a rush by the home forwards. Millington was next conspicuous for cleverly cutting through from the half-way line, only to find himself unsupported. Bath had to contend against some good work in the loose by the Gloucester forwards, which gave the home team a footing on the Bath 25.

Feet-up in a scrum gave Gloucester a penalty which Thomas kicked easily to touch. Thereafter Milliner sold the dummy in good style and Gloucester attacked, Hemming being pushed into touch at the corner. There were several scrums almost on the Bath line and the visitors ultimately got away. Abbey, however, cleverly found touch with the remainder of the Gloucester defence beaten.

Bath were not done with and their forwards controlled the ball well in the loose till one of their men kicked it over the dead-ball line. From the drop-out Millington found touch beyond half-way. Basden resisted five attempts to pull him down and put Bath into a good position by finding touch.

By means of superior play in the loose Gloucester forced Bath to defend and after good work in which the home forwards and three's were prominent, CROWTHER got over near the corner following splendid play by Hemming. Millington's effort to convert from a difficult position was good, but unsuccessful.

A glorious rush by the home forwards followed the restart and the ball was taken nearly to the Bath line. There it became loose and Crowther got possession to cross and touch down only to be called back.

Play went over to the right wing where Hough made a gallant effort to get over until force of numbers beat him. More strenuous work by the Gloucester forwards led to another score. Coles stumbled and SHORT, following up touched down for the City's second try. Again Millington just failed to convert from a sharp angle.

Gloucester pressed for some time without looking like adding to their lead and ultimately they were sent back. Bath made desperate efforts when they got a lodgement inside the home 25.

HALF-TIME :

GLOUCESTER 2 tries
BATH Nil

Gloucester started in the second half as if they meant business, and Bath were quickly defending inside their 25. The ball, however, came out to Hancock at left centre, who fed Basden. Exhibiting great speed till he got over the half-way line, Basden kicked over the head of Thomas when the latter met him. PITMAN, who had been supporting Basden, ran on and got possession, ultimately running behind the posts for a clever try which was heartily applauded by the crowd. Burgess converted.

With only a point separating them, both sides put even greater vim into their play. First Gloucester were nearly over, and then, following a quick change of the scene of action Bath put the City's line in danger until Thomas found relief at touch.

Pitman's great speed proved helpful to Bath, who found the same difficulty as the home side in controlling the slippery ball. Despite the efforts of several players to get hold of it, it was not until Stephens dashed in and put a long kick to touch that Gloucester were able to get into an attacking position. Many of the players were barely recognisable by this time owing to the mud in which they were plastered from top to toe. Another rush by Gloucester saw Crowther and Coles engaged in a great tussle over the line, where Coles was successful in getting the touch.

Again Crowther was prominent in getting the ball after Ferris and Pitt had taken it ahead in the loose but the winger's kick was too hard and Bath conceded a minor.

Bath tried hard to throw off Gloucester's attacks at this juncture, and they reached half-way only to be cleverly sent back owing to Thomas's sure touch-finding. Rain had fallen all through the match so far but in spite of the conditions no effort was spared by either side.

Gloucester were in the ascendancy now, with Bath defending pluckily. The visitors' tackling was not surpassed and this more than anything else kept their line from being crossed. They succeeded in getting into the Gloucester half again until a penalty was given against them for offside. From this Thomas found touch with a splendid kick.

The visitors had a narrow escape when the home forwards made a capital raid in the loose, the ball being taken almost to the line, where it got out of their control and a Bath player touched down to save the situation for his side.

Millington failed to loft the ball when he tried a drop at goal and immediately afterwards it looked odds on Gloucester scoring when Crowther and then Milliner launched themselves over the line. Hough also got over but in each case a Bath player succeeded in getting the touch.

Bath at last raised the siege and their forwards rushed away. A penalty was given against Gloucester and Burgess failed to land a goal from a favourable position. Again Bath were nearly in but Thomas fell on the ball in face of a determined rush by the visiting forwards. This was countered by a characteristic dash on the part of the home forwards, in which Russell was conspicuous.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 2 tries (6 pts.)

BATH 1 goal (5 pts.)

REMARKS

No one would quarrel with the manner in which Bath scored their try, for it was a brilliant effort of speed by Basden and Pitman on anything but a secure foothold. All the same, Gloucester were unfortunate not to have won by a larger margin, for they pressed during the greater portion of the match, and on occasions Bath were able to touch down behind their own line more by good luck than judgment.

With mud-larking as the order of the day, it was clearly a difficult matter for any sustained cleverness to be shown, the wet and slithery ball proving elusive for backs and forwards alike.

Probably the biggest factor in Gloucester's victory was the spirited play of their forwards, among whom good players like Short, Hemming, Rea, Pitt, and Foulkes were equalled by Comley, Ferris and Russell. The last named couple were real reserves and were not the least conspicuous in the strong City pack. Milliner and Millington were as good, if not better, than the combination which opposed them, although Pitman was always a dangerous force as Bath's stand-off half.

Under the conditions the Gloucester threes got little chance of combining. But they did their bit in marking and also supporting the forwards. Thomas did well at full back, though it was surprising to see him actually caught in possession on one occasion when, fortunately, he was near the touch-line about half-way.

Some idea of the state of the ground can be gathered from the fact that it was not an unusual sight in the second half to see a player slither on his back for yards, and before the end the forwards on both sides were much alike in their mud colours.

Coles, the Bath full-back, proved himself an efficient reserve for that position, and cleverly got out of some tight corners. The Bath threes were under the same handicap as their opponents. The visiting forwards did well in the scrums, but were not so successful as the Gloucester eight in the loose, though they always strove to reply.

Next Saturday : Gloucester v. U.C.S. Old Boys, at Kingsholm.

GLOUCESTER A v. BATH A

CITY SECONDS WIN WELL AWAY

This return game was played at Bath on the Recreation Ground to-day. Earlier in the season Bath A were defeated at Kingsholm by 14 clear points. Gloucester A arrived one short, but L. Hardy, a Bath player, stepped into the gap.

The game was played in heavy rain on a ground which had been previously churned up by a match between Bath and Bristol Schoolboys. Foothold was very insecure, and the slippery ball was difficult to control.

Gloucester A scored first, James sending in Thompson with a well-timed pass to touch down behind the posts, Boughton adding the extra points.

Bath replied, but Boughton proved a stumbling block. Then Bishop failed to stop a slippery one, and Holford scored a second try, which was not converted.

Shortly before half-time, Coombes went over for Bath A from the loose, and Weeks goaled.

Half-time :

Gloucester A 1 goal 1 try
Bath A 1 goal

Result :

Gloucester A 19 points
Bath A 5 points

JC