

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1913

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. PONTYPOOL

MONMOUTH CHAMPIONS MET AT HOME

IRRESISTIBLE WELSH FORWARDS

Gloucester's ill-success on Welsh soil is proverbial, and with recollections of six successive defeats at Pontypool, the City team did not start favourites for to-day's contest.

There was encouragement in the brilliant victories of the past two weeks, and another good omen for a possible success was the knowledge that Pontypool, equally unsuccessful at Gloucester until last year, won their first match at Kingsholm. It was therefore up to the City to follow suit and break their record in the Monmouth town.

Pontypool, like all Welsh Union teams, are a particularly strong side at home, and I have no recollection of an English club being successful on the ground.

This season "Ponty," despite the loss of several good men, have performed great things, beating Leicester in the Midlands; only losing to Cardiff (after having a forward sent off early in the game) by a try to nil, at Cardiff; and drawing at home (a try to a penalty goal) with Newport. These three achievements fully indicate the strength of the side with which J. P. Jones, the old Welsh International, has been so prominently connected, and Gloucester fully recognised the severity of the task set them.

The City Club have often had to go into Wales with disorganised teams, but there could be no complaint on this account to-day, for the Fifteen was identical with that which beat Swansea and the Harlequins.

In several matches when Gloucester have visited Pontypool the weather has been atrocious, and the ground ankle deep in mud and slush, but there was promise of better conditions this afternoon.

Gus Carr, the old Cheltenham forward, has been honoured with the captaincy of Pontypool this season, and another Gloucestershire player was included in the ranks in the person of A. Robbins, formerly of Cinderford and Bream.

There was one change in the Pontypool side, W. Butcher taking the place of Vater forward.

Teams : —

GLOUCESTER	POSITIONS	PONTYPOOL
C. Cook	Backs.	W. Vallis
F. Webb	Three-Quarter	A. Robbins
A. Lewis	Backs	J. P. Jones
L. Hamblin	"	T. Robbins
W. Washbourn	"	W. J. Owen
J. Baker	Half-Backs	R. Lloyd
A. Hall	"	W. Stacey
G. Halford (capt.)	Forwards	Gus Carr (capt.)
S. Smart	"	T. Davies
N. Hayes	"	Rees Thomas
J. F. Lawson	"	G. Oliver
S. Millard	"	A. Hockey
W. Parham	"	S. Smith
A. Cook	"	W. Butcher
J. Meadows	"	E. Stephens

THE GAME.

Referee, Mr. J. G. Davies, Ebbw Vale. Mr. E. Roberts, Llanelly, was originally selected to referee, but an intimation received from the Welsh Union on Saturday morning stated Mr. Roberts had been suspended until December 31st.

There was a good attendance when the game started after four o'clock. Carr kicked off, and play for the first few minutes was contested about ten yards inside the Gloucester half. Lloyd with a clever punt to touch placed Pontypool close, and from a passing bout Owen tried to get through, but fell a victim to a tackle by Washbourn. A pass back inside saw Jones attempt to beat the defence, but it failed.

Faulty handling by Pontypool gave Gloucester breathing space, but only for a minute, for the home forwards heeling, another round of passing looked dangerous. Owen, however, failed to gather, and the City cleared to the centre. Here Lewis intercepted a pass and kicked through, but Vallis made a good recovery.

Dashing footwork by Pontypool sent Gloucester back, and Vallis further improved with a lovely kick. Hall relieved with a punt to touch, but the City were forced to defend again from a forward dash near the line. Lloyd fed Jones, who put in a determined effort, but was tackled on the line and lost the ball. Webb apparently touched down, but Robbins was given a try – a very doubtful point. The goal-kick failed.

Gloucester played up splendidly on the drop-out, Lewis getting in a fine touch-finder well inside the Pontypool half. From the subsequent scrum the City heeled and Baker sent Hall away. A timely pass to Hamblin saw the centre cut through and, giving to Washbourn, the latter raced over with an equalising try. Cook missed the goal points.

On the resumption Jones was early prominent with a great run half the length of the field, but his pass went astray. The effort, however, led to a sharp attack, and the home forwards rushing over, Oliver scored near the posts. Lloyd, however, failed at goal.

Pontypool were playing a terrific game forward, and kept Gloucester on the defence near the line. Baker was sadly at fault when Gloucester heeled, and Lloyd scored a very soft try. No goal resulted.

The City backs showed up with pretty passing on the re-start, but so far they had not seen much of the ball. A grand rush by the visiting forwards looked promising, but the situation was saved. Then Lewis forced a minor with a drop at goal. Ensuing play was even for a time, but gradually Pontypool worked into the Gloucester half, but nothing further was done to the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Pontypool 3 tries
Gloucester 1 try

Halford restarted, and good kicking by Jones and Lloyd at once put Pontypool on the aggressive. The City relieved by the aid of a penalty, but a mistake by Baker in fielding let the home team in again. In subsequent play there was a lot of indiscriminate kicking, which ended in honours being easy.

The Gloucester forwards were struggling valiantly against a hefty pack, but they could do little in the way of heeling. When the ball did come out Baker was too slow for Lloyd, who was playing a very smart game. In some loose kicking Halford was temporarily laid out, but the City captain was able to resume. Play still favoured Pontypool, and Washbourn having his kick charged down, the ball rebounded over the line, Owen scoring in the corner. It was another soft try, but it counted, and though unconverted Gloucester were nine points in arrears.

The City restarted resolutely, and Webb gave his side a good position with a useful kick. The forwards heeling, Baker and Hall got away cleverly, but Lewis missed the transfer. Another round of passing broke down, but later Lewis brought off a fine dodgy run, but was fouled. The penalty was well followed up, and the ball taken over the line, but Owen just beat Halford for the touch.

After this Gloucester showed up well with a glorious movement, Hamblin shining, but the defence held up. The City, playing desperately, went hard for a try, but again luck was against them. Pontypool saving right on the line. Gloucester were now playing a fine game, the forwards especially doing well, but they were met with an exceptionally keen defence. The City, however, kept up the pressure, and Hamblin had hard lines in missing a dropped goal.

After this Pontypool recovered and attacked with great energy. Robbins had one fine opening, but Jones passed forward and a certain try was lost. Play continued in the Gloucester 25, Hall relieving with a powerful run. His transfer, however, went astray. Pontypool kicked back. Then from a scrum Lloyd worked the reverse pass to Stacey, who broke through and scored, no goal resulting.

The last few minutes favoured Gloucester, but the City could not gain a scoring position, and the game ended.

RESULT :

Pontypool	5 tries (15 points)
Gloucester	1 try (3 points)

REMARKS

It was the Pontypool forwards that laid the foundation for their victory. Gloucester by no means failed, and in the second half performed prodigies, but they were out-weighted, and try as they would could not check the impetuous rushes of the home pack.

Two of the Pontypool tries were fairly given them, but the Welshmen were deservedly winners on the day's play.

Baker was slow at the scrum, but the other backs did well with the few chances they got, Lewis, Hamblin, and Hall being best.

GLOUCESTER A v. ST. MARK'S

DRAWN GAME AT KINGSHOLM

These two teams met at Kingsholm on Saturday in beautiful weather and before a small crowd. The sides lined out as follows : –

Gloucester A. – F. W. Hayward; T. Powell, S. Sysum, W. Wilkes, and F. Bloxsome (capt.); W. Wotton and T. Burns; J. Harris, A. Russell, H. Mackenzie, Williams, J. H. Webb, E. Osborne, Comley, and Cromwell.

St. Mark's. – Marshall; J. Phelps, F. Stephens, H. Cook, and G. Hayward; E. Cummings (capt.) and J. Humphries; F. Westbury, E. Merchant, J. Griffiths, N. Wheeler, C. Bray, G. Griffiths, Jack Westbury, and A. Brown.

Referee : Mr. E. Chaney (Cheltenham).

Gloucester started, and the opening exchanges were fought out at midfield. St. Mark's then by means of a couple of punts and a forward rush reached the home 25, where play remained until Hayward relieved with a nice touch-finder. The Seconds forwards were prominent with a dribble to the centre, and working hard they gradually made headway, Wilkes sending to touch near the visitors' 25.

St. Mark's threes got away prettily, but they were well pulled up by Hayward and Bloxsome. Burns got away with the ball, and beating his man handed to Bloxsome, who had hard lines in slipping when he had the opposition practically beaten. A minute later Hayward marked and made a good attempt at goal.

Gloucester were awarded a couple of penalties but without result, and then the Saints following up well found Hayward misfielding, but F. Westbury inadvertently kicked to touch. Burns was next prominent with a good punt and tackle, and Gloucester rushed to the line, where a knock-on spoilt a certain try.

St. Mark's came again, however, but Hayward relieved splendidly under difficulties. The Seconds got down into the visitors' half again, and Sysum gathering he ran well before transferring to Bloxsome who, outpacing his opponents, scored near the corner. Hayward landed a lovely goal.

On the resumption the Saints immediately got to the Gloucester line, where Phelps, accepting a pass, went over with a nice try, which was converted.

With the score now level both sides played desperately, and the St. Mark's forwards charging down Hayward's kick one of them picked up and a score seemed imminent. Sysum, however, raced back and effected a grand tackle.

The visitors continued to press, and a minute later were nearly over in the corner. Gloucester worked out of danger, and Hayward, with a beautiful touch-kick when hard pressed, enabled his side to again take the offensive. Their stay, however, was of not long duration, the visiting forwards, who were playing a dashing game, rushing to the other end, where the ball went in touch in the corner. A line-out resulted, and from this Phelps dropped over with his second try. The kick failed.

Immediately after the drop-out F. Westbury obtained, and with a punt and follow-up he gave the Saints another three points. The kick again failed. St. Mark's were still pressing at the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

St. Mark's 1 goal 2 tries
Gloucester A 1 goal

On the restart there was some give and take play for the first two or three minutes, and then Webb, picking up out of a scramble, handed to Trevor Powell who, outpacing the opposing threes and beating the back went over with a nice try. Hayward failed to convert.

Afterwards St. Mark's quickly got on the attack, and maintained the pressure for some time without adding to their score. Gloucester then managed to gain the upper hand, and rushing down compelled the visitors' full back to kick to touch near his own line. The Seconds twice made futile attempts to cross, and then were awarded a penalty in a favourable position. Hayward, however, again failed to gain points.

The Saints next tried passing, and quickly reached Hayward who effected a good tackle. Continuing to play up desperately the Saints got very near the line, where F. Westbury threw out a long pass to the wing, which was not accepted, when there was a good opening.

Subsequently Gloucester, who were still three points in arrears, improved their position, Harris being prominent in a forward rush, whilst Wotton found touch neatly. Then Gloucester got the equaliser. Their forwards got away and Wilkes racing up took the ball at his feet past several men and kicking over the line dropped on it with a really nice try. Hayward failed to improve, and a minute later just missed with a capital attempt to land a penalty.

With the scores again level play was fought out at a rare pace, and with desperate keenness, being confined chiefly to the forwards. There was no further scoring before the end.

RESULT :

Gloucester A	1 goal 2 tries (11 points)
St. Mark's	1 goal 2 tries (11 points)

REMARKS.

A drawn game was a very fair result, neither side showing any marked superiority over the other. St. Mark's surprised everyone by their good showing, and during the greater part of the first half they fairly and squarely controlled the game. In the second moiety, however, Gloucester asserted enough superiority to pick up the lost ground and make honours even.

The play, taken as a whole, was not of a very high order, being confined chiefly to the forwards, who, however, displayed any amount of dash and resolution. The Gloucester eight were, however, a little slow at heeling, and with Wotton, the scrum half, failing repeatedly to get the ball, the three-quarters were very badly served. In fact there was not a decent passing movement throughout the whole game.

The exchanges were fought out with great keenness and the tackling on both sides was deadly. The locals were undoubtedly proud of their achievement, and they should do very well in their matches this season. There was no outstanding player on either side, and it is therefore unnecessary to individualise.

JC