

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1913

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. OXFORD UNIVERSITY

HAMBLIN AN ABSENTEE

ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY TRIUMPH FOR THE CITY

Gloucester had two defeats to avenge at Oxford to-day, but with Lionel Hamblin crocked, and a consequent non-starter, the City's chances of accomplishing their ambition were somewhat affected. In the county match last week Hamblin received a kick on the knee, and after examination by a doctor he was advised to rest for a fortnight, so that looks as if he will not be able to appear for Gloucestershire next Saturday – a serious loss with the Gloucester man playing such a fine game just now. Hamblin's inability to appear at Oxford was also a misfortune personally, for I had it on pretty good authority that some of the English selectors were keen on seeing him perform.

The vacancy at three-quarter was filled by S. Sysum, of the Reserves – a useful recruit, but lacking in experience. It was a pity no member of the Selection Committee other than Hudson and Bloxsome (who were playing in the match) were not present at Stroud last week, as I understand there was no question on the day's play that Wilkes was far superior all round to Sysum. However, the latter got the preference to-day, and I only hoped he would fulfil expectations. With A. Hall fit and well again Gloucester again enjoyed the valuable assistance of the Forester, and nine forwards were taken to Oxford, the final selection being made on arrival.

Two years ago the City lost to the University at Oxford by 4 goals (1p) to nil, but the visitors suffered a severe loss in having W. Hall badly injured at half-time, and 13 of the points were put on after his retirement. Last season at Kingsholm the Dark Blues again triumphed by 3 goals (1d 1p) to 1 try. Oxford's form this season has not been convincing, and in the last five games four defeats were sustained – Blackheath, Leicester, Newport, and Monkstown. The latter fixture, however, was not treated seriously, and of the recognised best fifteen only two took part, the others being rested to meet Gloucester. This was a distinct compliment to the City, whose victories over the Harlequins, Swansea, and Cardiff had deeply impressed the 'Varsity selectors.

A good deal depended on the Gloucester front this afternoon, but if Halford's brigade touched their best form – and all the players were very keen on repeating the Harlequins' victory – the University would find they were up against a formidable opposition. Behind, Oxford possess some speedy men, and close and sure tackling was necessary to keep their attacks under.

Football form is very uncertain, but Gloucester, despite Hamblin's absence, hoped to run their powerful opponents very closely if not actually win. A fair number of Gloucester supporters took advantage of the cheap excursion run to Oxford by the G.W.R.

Teams :

Gloucester. – C. Cook; W. Washbourn, S. Sysum, A. Lewis, and F. Webb; J. Baker and A. Hall; G. Halford (capt.), N. Hayes, S. Millard, S. Smart, J. F. Lawson, A. Saunders, A. Cook, and W. Parham.

Oxford University. – Reid; Loudoun Shand, O. Jenkins, F. J. Christison, and A. B. Crole; A. C. Williamson and F. H. Knott; D. M. Bain, G. Donald, I. Clarke, J. V. Rees, E. S. Fiddes, J. Moresby-White, F. W. Thomson, and H. B. Moore.

Referee : Mr. Potter Irwin.

THE GAME

Glorious weather prevailed, and the ground was in capital condition. Oxford kicked off, and early on the University backs got in a smart bout of passing, but Crole was well tackled, and a subsequent infringement gave Gloucester a penalty. The 'Varsity soon returned to the attack with more clever handling, but Jenkins fumbled with a nice opening.

The Gloucester defence was again tested, but it held out, and then a forward advance by the visiting forwards carried play to the centre. Halford further improved, but Hall twice passed wildly, and only the cleverness of Lewis enabled Gloucester to hold their ground.

Oxford worked back with nice kicking, but a smart breakaway by Cook from the line-out made some thirty yards for the visitors. Then from passing Webb cross-kicked in front of goal.

Oxford saved in a dangerous position, and a penalty a minute later enabled the 'Varsity to ease the pressure. Baker eventually opened out, and Lewis cut through smartly, but his transfer was not a good one. Good kicking by Knott changed the venue, but Gloucester working well together got back to half-way. Here the City backs handled nicely, but Lewis's pass to Webb was a shade forward, and a possible opening went astray.

The game was very keen and close, the forwards being well matched. Lawson, with a capital bit of footwork, gained Gloucester a good position, and the City were nearly through on the left. Still working finely Gloucester got close, and Webb, taking advantage of a mistake by an opponent, cleverly beat Reid and scored near the posts. Halford failed at the easy place.

Following the drop-out Gloucester at once attacked, and after nice passing Lewis burst away, and sent Webb over again. Lawson this time missed the goal-kick.

On resumption Gloucester continued their fine work. With capital footwork Gloucester gave Oxford a lot of trouble, and the defence was sorely tried. Baker with useful play set up an attack on the left, but nothing resulted. Immediately after, however, Shand was lucky in turning the ball to touch-in-goal.

After the drop-out Oxford showed improvement, Knott kicking with nice judgment. The Gloucester forwards, however, came away with a rare burst, and Hall, fielding in the loose, made a beautiful opening. Lewis received but, with Webb waiting for a walk in, the centre cut inside, and a certain try was lost.

In the next minute Gloucester nearly crossed from a loose dribble, Reid touching down just in time. After this Oxford showed up with some bright back play, but the tackling was sound. The 'Varsity, however, kept up the pressure and, after some hot work, Jenkins scored, followed by another from Christison after a great run. Both goal-kicks failed. Soon afterwards the interval arrived.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester	2 tries
University	2 tries

Gloucester had done splendidly up till ten minutes before the interval, when Oxford put in some brilliant work and deserved both their tries. Halford re-started, and the Gloucester forwards preventing a return, the City at once gained a good position. Long kicking relieved for Oxford, and a grand bout of passing saw Crole tackled by C. Cook on the line in the nick of time. Then Jenkins essayed a drop at goal, but missed, and Gloucester touched down.

Oxford had the better of the exchanges on the drop-out, and only desperately keen tackling kept the lines intact. The Gloucester front, with dashing footwork, gained more favourable quarters, but they were beaten back with some capital dribbling. The forwards just now were mostly in the picture, till a fine touch-finder by Hall put Gloucester right on the line.

The ball coming out Sysum cross-kicked badly, and Shand securing he raced to the centre before being pulled up. Hall sent back again, and play was hotly contested in the Oxford half. Baker opened out cleverly, but Lewis was tackled, and his pass went forward. For legs up Oxford were penalised in front of goal, but some distance out, and Lawson made a poor attempt at goal. The 'Varsity came away from their own quarter with some lovely passing, but Shand could not get away from Washbourn. Oxford, however, set up a warm attack, Christison and Crole doing well on the left wing. Gloucester's defence, however, was sound, C. Cook tackling well.

Gloucester got out of danger with a combined effort, only to see Shand race back. Sysum effected a tackle, but was penalised for holding on to his opponent's leg. The kick at goal, however, fell short, and Sysum punted out to touch. With good forward play Gloucester worked past the centre, and Baker further improved, with a useful kick to touch. For an infringement Oxford were penalised, and from a good position C. Cook landed a goal, giving the City a lead. This success was hailed with enthusiasm by the Gloucester spectators, and it served to make the players' efforts more desperate. Oxford re-started with great dash, but they were held in check. Sysum distinguished himself with a very clever dribble clean through the opposing ranks, but Reid fielded and returned.

The battle forward was hot and strong, each side in turn gaining the advantage. Oxford with one big effort went very close, but only a touch-in-goal resulted. The 'Varsity came back stronger than ever on the drop-out, and again Gloucester had a narrow escape, Washbourn being knocked out in stemming the rush. A touch-down enabled the City to gain breathing space, and the visitors struggled desperately to hold their lead. Oxford were pressed in their own quarter, and A. Cook just missed scoring after dribbling. Then Hall nearly burst through, being held up on the line. Right to the finish Gloucester kept up the pressure, and Baker nearly scored at the end.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal (p), 2 tries (9 pts.)
Oxford 2 tries (6 points)

REMARKS

Another noteworthy triumph. It is true victory was only obtained by a penalty goal, but on the play Gloucester deserved their three points' margin. The City ought to have made the game absolutely safe in the first half, for they were much superior in this period. The second half was more even, but at the end Gloucester had their opponents well beaten.

The City pack again played marvellously, and their magnificent work in the loose was a feature in a game which was splendidly contested, and provided heaps of excitement. Behind Oxford had the advantage in speed, and their men took some looking after, but generally speaking Gloucester's defence was very sure. Baker and Hall both did well, and Lewis, except for that one mistake, was excellent at centre. Sysum rendered good service, and Webb was very effective. Christison, Knott, and Crole were the pick of the Oxford backs.

Harlequins, Swansea, Cardiff, and now Oxford beaten! Well played, City!

GLOUCESTER A v. GORDON LEAGUE

CITY SECOND STRING SUCCESSFUL

These teams met at Kingsholm on Saturday in beautiful weather and before a small gate. There were expectations of a keen game, as the League had up to the present not been defeated.

The teams lined out as follows : –

Gloucester A. – Marshall; T. Powell, A. Hudson, W. Wilkes, and F. Bloxsome (capt.); W. Wootton and T. Burns; Bruckel, W. Dovey, L. Smith, C. Mumford, E. Richardson, Ayliffe, Osborne, and Comley.

Gordon League. – E. Ruck; H. Ashmeade, H. Wheatley, T. Millington, and H. C. Barnes; A. Langford and W. Rigby; F. Mansell (capt.), R. Curtis, W. Comley, W. Cromwell, T. Taylor, G. Wells, F. Bayliss, and T. Hopton.

The visitors started, and the opening exchanges were fought out at the centre, the League being awarded a penalty. This, however, gained them little ground, as Burns replied neatly to touch. The visiting forwards then came away nicely, and working down with a series of bursts compelled the Seconds to touch down. From the drop-out Ruck sent to touch right in the corner, and maintaining their advantage the visitors were awarded a penalty in front of the posts. Ruck had no difficulty in gaining the three points for them.

Later the League forwards again got going, but Wilkes picked up and handed to Hudson, who, however, fumbled. Barnes secured and made a dash, but he was well tackled. Then twice in succession the League, who were having the best of matters, forced minors.

Eventually the Seconds got to their opponents' 25, but they could not maintain the pressure, play again settling in the home half. Later Burns relieved with a useful kick and Gloucester gained some ground, but Wheatley sent them back with a neat touch-finder under difficulties. The League pack were playing a hard game, and rushing to the home 25 they were nearly over, but Hudson gathered from their feet and sent to touch. The visitors were awarded a penalty near the centre, and Ruck with a lovely kick further increased their lead.

On the resumption Burns was prominent with a nice run, but he delayed his pass, and Millington intercepting, he shone with a beautiful run right to the line. He was tackled, and Gloucester again touched down. Some scrambling play was afterwards witnessed near the centre, neither side making much use of their three-quarters in attack. Barnes and Hudson were prominent with useful touch-kicks, and then the League backs indulged in a spasmodic passing bout, which gained them a good slice of ground.

They were, however, sent back, and the City in turn attacked. Bloxsome secured near his own 25 and ran strongly until he was pulled down near the visitors' line. The Seconds failed to press home their advantage, however, and a good opportunity was lost. After some scrappy play, in which neither side gained much advantage, Hudson picked up, and cutting through passed to Powell, who punted and followed up. Ruck, however, gathered nicely and checked a promising movement.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gordon League	2 goals (p)
Gloucester A	Nil

On the resumption the Seconds, six points in arrears, put more heart into their work, and quickly assumed the aggressive. They were awarded a penalty, and Burns just failed to land a goal from a difficult position. The same player had another attempt a minute later, but again failed by a narrow margin. Then Wilkes kicked over the line, and racing up he was only just beaten for the touch.

The League subsequently worked to mid-field. Then Gloucester received from a scrum and the ball travelled right across the line, Bloxsome, however, just failing to clear Ruck. The Seconds a minute later again had a good chance, but Wilkes threw the ball wide. The visitors subsequently completely changed the venue and were only pulled up just in time. Gloucester in turn again visited their opponents' end, but they seemed to completely lack finish to their movements.

Barnes was prominent with a neat dribble, but Marshall managed to gather and send to touch. Later the home forwards went away strongly, and attacked again and again, Bloxsome and Hudson each attempting to get over.

At last the much needed score came. The ball was sent out from the scrum, and all the threes' handling in turn. Bloxsome put the finishing touch to a pretty movement by swerving past Ruck and grounding in the corner. Burns just failed with the kick.

Continuing to press, the Seconds took the game for a time into their own hands, and Wilkes was almost over in a scramble. Then League had a brief visit to their opponents' end. Afterwards Gloucester attacked and from a punt the ball went over the line, and Wootton sprinting hard he just beat a couple of visitors and scored a good try. Barnes added the extra points.

On the resumption, the Seconds, who seemed to be somewhat recovering their form again, continued to attack, Bloxsome and Burns combining in a good movement. Then Wilkes scored easily the best try of the match. Taking the ball just inside his own half he ran round, and feinting to pass to his wing, beat man after man, and eventually grounded behind the posts. Burns converted.

Some exciting football was seen in the closing stages, both sides putting in all they knew.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 2 goals 1 try (13 points)

Gordon League 2 goals (p) (6 points)

REMARKS

The Seconds thoroughly deserved their victory, although it was only in the last quarter of an hour that they showed enough energy and dash to ensure their earning honours. For three-parts of the game there was very little in it, and the League, who held a lead of six points, due to the two penalties taken by Ruck, looked like maintaining their unbeaten record. Both packs were fairly evenly matched, but Gloucester when they got going were cleverer behind.

For the Seconds Burns played a splendid game, while Hudson, Bloxsome, and Wilkes were frequently prominent. The pick of the locals was Ruck, who gave a really good display at back. Millington and Barnes were the best of the three-quarters. In the front, Mumford, Dovey, and Smith for the homesters, and Cromwell, Comley, and Mansell for the League, did well.