

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1913

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. CHELTENHAM

ROUSING GAME AT KINGSHOLM

KEEN AND VIGOROUS FOOTBALL

CITY'S NARROW WIN

With the weather bright and fine, the second meeting of the season between Gloucester and Cheltenham, at Kingsholm, attracted a large crowd. Three weeks ago the teams played a pointless draw at Cheltenham, but Gloucester were short of Halford, Smart, Millard, and Hamblin on that occasion, and A. Hall was knocked out in the first three minutes, and was off the field until half-time.

Yesterday both clubs were on the winning side, the town beating Penarth by 5 points to nil; whilst Gloucester accounted for the Old Merchant Taylors by 12 points to 6.

With the exception that Sysum took the place of Lewis (injured the previous day) in the home three-quarter line, the teams fielded exactly as in their respective matches on Boxing Day.

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

Cheltenham. – B. Davy; Green, H. Rudge, Roy MacGregor, and T. H. Gange; H. A. V. Maynard and B. S. Bloodworth; H. Wixey, F. T. Wixey, F. J. Hopkins, C. Bennett, W. Burford, J. H. Barnwell, Watson, and Townsend.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol).

THE GAME.

The players fielded over a quarter of an hour late, by which time there was a splendid ring of spectators, and both stands were well patronised. Halford kicked off for the City against the wind, but several home players were in front of the ball, and a scrum was ordered at the centre. Cheltenham made a few yards with a kick through, but the ground was regained by C. Cook with a penalty for legs up. Immediately after, following several fruitless attempts to get the ball in the scrummage, Gloucester were similarly penalised, but Davy failed to find touch and Cook returned well to touch.

From the line-out Hayes secured and got in a capital dash. When tackled he let the ball go, and Lawson kicking on found touch in the Cheltenham half. Some loose play ensued, ending in a flying kick going down to the Gloucester end, where Hamblin gathered and punted. Baker was to the fore with a neat bit of work, but from his punt Davy marked cleverly. His kick was fielded by C. Cook, who dodged a couple of opponents and got in a punt to touch.

An attempt on the part of Cheltenham to open out was smothered by Baker, and the ball getting loose the Town forwards with useful footwork and keen tackling reached the home end. Here a Gloucester player was penalised for lying on the ball, but Davy's drop at goal was wide. Following up the drop out Saunders charged down Davy's kick, and the City forwards gathering passed to Millard who, however, dropped the ball. Gloucester, however, got going again, and a couple of passes nearly put Parham over.

For an infringement Cheltenham were penalised in a good position, but Hamblin's kick for goal just failed. From Davy's drop out the ball bounced in the field of play and rolled to touch near the Gloucester 25. Hayes and Halford took the City away, and Baker following up a kick threw Green to touch beyond the centre mark. Gloucester twice opened out smartly, but Sysum passed badly to Webb, and next Hamblin knocked on.

The game was very keen and exciting, and the hopes of Gloucester were raised when Baker set the home backs going with a perfect movement. Washbourn came round and took a pass from Sysum, but he could not gain the desired opening. The Cheltenham forwards, with a dashing burst, gained some 30 yards before being pulled up by C. Cook, and then Millard made a mark under difficulties.

Cook punted well to touch with his kick, and from the next scrum Hall, receiving from Baker, punted high and put his forwards on side. A knock-on, however, stopped the game. Gloucester twice lost ground by attempts at passing, Baker throwing the ball wildly beyond Hall and the three-quarters. Cook, however, was safe and got the ball to touch. From a kick by Bloodworth, Hamblin made his mark, and Gloucester made headway with the resultant kick.

Then came a strong burst straight up the field by Hall. Being held by the arm, the City half-back passed to Sysum, but the centre fumbled, and though Washbourn recovered there was nothing doing. Near mid-field Lawson secured and dashed away in fine style, but facing Davy he slipped in trying to swerve, and a good opening was lost.

Cheltenham changed the venue with big kicking, and in the home 25 Maynard handed out the ball to Bloodworth, who fed Rudge, but Gange could not accept. Cheltenham confined operations to the Gloucester 25 for a few minutes until Baker started Hall going with a reverse pass. Sysum received and handed to Hamblin, who cut through and raced up to Davy. A timely pass gave possession to Washbourn, who had an open field. Gange, however, shot up, and overhauling the City left wing, brought off a great tackle.

Gloucester looked dangerous for a time, but the defence was one, and Washbourn again fell a victim to a tackle by Gange. Lucky fly kicking gave Cheltenham relief, and Green following up well sent past Cook and over the line, but the home custodian easily touched down.

Davy replied splendidly to the drop out, and ensuing play was hotly contested in the Gloucester end. MacGregor once served Gange from some loose play, but the Cheltenham wing made a feeble effort to get going and was bowled over into touch. A big punt by Hall took the City to midfield where, but for some over-running of the ball by the City, a good opening might have been secured. The interval was soon afterwards sounded.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester Nil
Cheltenham Nil

H. Wixey restarted for Cheltenham, the ball being taken by Hayes, who came through the opposing forwards in great style and passed to Smart, but the pass was not accepted. The ball rolled away, and Gloucester made ground, Washbourn being pushed to touch by Davy just in time.

From the subsequent scrum the ball came out to the left wing, where Baker fed Washbourn, but the defence prevailed. Davy enabled Cheltenham to ease the pressure with some useful kicks, and later Bloodworth further improved with a touch-finder. Back Gloucester came, and Halford kicking into the open MacGregor fielded and punted straight across the ground to Washbourn, who, however, failed to hold the ball with a splendid chance of scoring.

Bloodworth was instrumental in getting the Town out of a dangerous position, and the visiting forwards working splendidly rushed down to Cook, who made a plucky save. Bad fumbling by the Cheltenham backs lost them their position, and Davy knocking on Gloucester gained a footing at the centre. Hall here opened out, but there was a knock on with the backs well placed.

Rudge, intercepting, dodged well, but kicked instead of passing. More fumbling by the Gloucester backs allowed Cheltenham to get very close, and some exciting scrums followed in close proximity to the City goal. Bloodworth was nearly through once, and then Green missed a pass from MacGregor with practically an open line.

A big effort by the Gloucester forwards brought play out to more favourable quarters, and some long kicking saw Lawson pick up and dash down to Davy, where he was tackled. Gloucester played up desperately now, but the Cheltenham tackling was very deadly. Bursting away from a line-out the City forwards rushed right to the line, where Smart was just foiled in an attempt to score.

Gloucester maintained the pressure for a time, but the Town forwards with a loose rush broke away and got to the half-way mark. Gloucester worked back in double quick time, and Washbourne made a good effort to cross in the corner, but Gange pushed him over the touch-line.

Cheltenham were kept busily defending now, but the City attacks did not develop. Baker opened out nicely once from the loose, and Webb receiving, cross-kicked over the line, but only a dead ball resulted. Cheltenham dropped out, and the Town from the first scrum tried passing. It, however, broke down, and Washbourn coming along, gathered and ran to Davy, when he yielded to Hamblin, who raced over between the posts with the first try. The same player converted.

Thanks to a very fine touch kick by Lawson on the restart, Gloucester soon got on the attack again, and the Town defence had a warm time. Hall tried a burst through on the short side of the scrum, which was frustrated, and then Hamblin, after a pretty dodgy run, was collared by one arm when he looked a possible scorer. From the next scrum Cheltenham were penalised for palpable off-side play, and with a good kick Hamblin landed a goal, giving Gloucester an eight point's lead.

Wixey resumed, and Cook being at fault in trying to run round instead of kicking, he was tackled on his 25. This gave Cheltenham a good position, and the visitors struggled hard to gain a score. Sysum came to the rescue with a clever relief kick, and some Cheltenham passing going astray Washbourn tried to pick up, but knocked on. Davy was conspicuous with some fine work with Smart and another well up. Passing by the Gloucester backs promised well until Webb missed his transfer.

Right at the end a Gloucester man got his kick charged down, the ball rebounding to Cook's arms. The City full-back made a mark on the spur of the moment, but of course it was not legitimate under the circumstances, and he was promptly bowled over. The ball was obtained by the Cheltenham forwards and rushed over the line, where Burford was credited with a try, which Davy goaled.

RESULT :

Gloucester 2 goals (1p) (8 points)

Cheltenham 1 goal (5 points)

REMARKS.

If to-day's game did not reach a particularly high standard as regards finished football, it was keen and vigorous enough to satisfy the most exacting supporter of the rival clubs who delights in matches of this description.

The result was a narrow win for Gloucester – a penalty goal is never a satisfactory winning margin – but I think on the run of the play the City just about deserved their victory. Both tries accrued from mistakes by the opposing side, and Cheltenham merited something tangible in recognition of the desperate fight they put up.

Forward was the Town's biggest asset, and concentrating their efforts on loose footwork the visitors were able to have a good deal of the play territorially. It says much in favour of Cheltenham that they were able to do so well against the City pack, and their rally at the finish showed the men were in splendid trim.

In the scrums Gloucester were the more clever set, and the line-out work of Hayes, Lawson, Halford, and Saunders was better than anything seen on the Cheltenham side, but here the superiority of one division over the other ended. Bennett, Wixey, and Burford were among the hardest workers for Cheltenham, but the whole pack exerted themselves to the utmost and had reason to be proud of their performance.

Behind the scrum we had one side attempting a lot of open play, with the opposition out almost solely for smothering tactics, and the result was little in the way of concerted movements. Baker, despite Maynard's close attention, got the ball away in smart fashion, and though Hall often continued the work he was not so effective as usual in his individual bursts. Occasionally Hall utilised the high punt, and I think he would have done better service to his side had he displayed more variety in his tactics. However, that is a matter of opinion.

In the three-quarter line the combination was not happy. Granted the Cheltenham tackling was extremely close and sure, there is little doubt that with ordinary skill in handling Gloucester ought to have done more effective work in attack considering the times they had the ball. Over-anxiety and the keenness of the occasion no doubt contributed to the many mistakes in passing, all the players being affected more or less.

To-day Washbourn could not complain of lack of opportunities, but the Gloucester left wing found Gange too strong for him in defence. It was a bit of opportunism on the part of Washbourn that led up to the Gloucester try, and just about that period the City experienced rough luck in not scoring two or three others.

Hamblin, like the others, made mistakes, but he did a lot of clever things, and one run of his, when he darted out from amongst a crowd of opponents and swerved his way past others, was a repetition of his dazzling effort against Cardiff, except that on this occasion he was stopped ten yards from the line.

I know I differ from several members of the Selection Committee as to the merits of Sysum and Wilkes, but I cannot say Sysum has impressed me in the three matches I have seen him for the First. He was very ordinary again this afternoon, and Webb must have keenly felt the absence of Alec Lewis. By-the-bye, the latter is progressing favourably from his injury, and will soon be in the field again.

Of the Cheltenham backs, they were a dodgy lot in the few combined movements attempted. Maynard bustled about a good deal, but he has something to learn yet in the finer points of the game. Bloodworth was much better than in the recent match at Cheltenham, and his defence and saving were most praiseworthy. All the three-quarters tackled keenly, but Rudge showed the most enterprise in attack. Gange, with his pace and strength, ought to make a fine wing man, but he is very slow in starting and possesses little in the way of cleverness. Still he is useful for stopping purposes, and he gets about the field for work.

Davy once more proved his worth to the Town, his fielding and kicking being of the best, whilst his tackling was sound. Cook too, performed well.

Scorers for Gloucester : Hamblin, try and penalty goal.

Next week : Leicester, at Kingsholm.

THE INTERNATIONAL TRIAL

A. Hall has received notification that he is also a reserve half-back for The Rest v. England at Twickenham next Saturday.

ACCIDENT AT THE MATCH

Before the match commenced a Cheltenham visitor named Limbrick fell in the stand on the sixpenny side and injured his foot and shoulder. He received attention from the ambulance brigade and was examined by Dr. Hugh Powell, subsequently being sent to Cheltenham Hospital.