

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1914

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. PONTYPOOL

WELSH CHAMPIONS BEATEN

A REGRETTABLE INCIDENT

LAWSON KNOCKED OUT BY AN OPPONENT

VISITOR SENT OFF THE FIELD

The leaders in the Welsh Club Championship were visitors at Kingsholm to-day for the return match with the City, but unfortunately the weather was none too favourable. Pontypool have had a remarkably successful season, only three defeats having been sustained as against 18 wins and four drawn games. Early in the season Gloucester were beaten at Pontypool by five tries to one, and last Monday the Welshmen defeated Leicester by eight tries to one.

The City had to field this afternoon short of Washbourn, Smart, and Millard, the absence of the two forwards seriously weakening the pack. Lionel Hamblin, however, returned to the team after an absence of several weeks. Pontypool had Percy Jones and Lloyd away assisting Wales against Scotland, and neither Greenwood (the English International) and Ryan (Old Merchant Taylors), who are staying at Pontypool, were available. A high wind blew across the ground, and was likely to make things difficult for the players.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER	POSITIONS	PONTYPOOL
C. Cook	Backs.	W. Vallis
A. Lewis	Three-Quarter	T. Robbins
S. Sysum	Backs	J. P. Jones
L. Hamblin	"	R. Harry
F. Webb	"	W. Probert
A. Hall	Half-Backs	A. Robbins
J. Baker	"	W. Stacey
G. Halford (capt.)	Forwards	R. Hayward
N. Hayes	"	J. Hayward
A. Saunders	"	T. Davis
C. Mumford	"	W. F. Wooton
W. Parham	"	A. Hockey
A. Cook	"	G. Vater
J. F. Lawson	"	S. Smith
F. Ayliffe	"	G. Oliver

Referee : Mr. J. T. Curtis (Stroud).

THE GAME

When the teams took the field (Gloucester in white jerseys) it was seen that Alec Lewis played on the wing to Hamblin. Gloucester lost the toss, and from Halford's kick-off, the return found touch at the centre line. The City heeled from the first two scrums, but nothing was done, but a useful rush by the home forwards took the ball to Vallis, who cleverly evaded being collared and got in a kick to touch.

Play hovered just inside the Pontypool half where Hayes secured from a line-out. He was pulled down, and the ball rolling away the City front dribbled away, but they were checked. Stacey spoiled a throw out by Baker, and Hall being tackled Pontypool recovered to mid-field. Here the Gloucester forwards picked up in the loose and Saunders receiving beat Jack Jones with the "dummy" and made a nice opening. The final pass, however, was knocked on, and a good chance was lost.

Still Gloucester attacked strongly, but a little wildness spoiled it. Pontypool worked out to more favourable quarters, but the Gloucester backs were set going beautifully by Baker. Hamblin cut through, but his pass was delayed, and the ball being captured by Jones, he punted to touch.

Ensuing play was keen and even. Pontypool wheeling brought the ball with them, and later A. Robbins secured possession and fed Probert, who was upset by Hall. He let the ball go inside the field of play and A. Robbins kicked down to Cook, who cleared. The visitors, however, gathered and had an opening on the right, but the tackling put an end to the movement.

Playing a powerful game forward, the Welshmen gave some trouble with their loose rushes, and play was confined to the Gloucester half. Webb was heartily applauded for some fine work on the right for Gloucester, fielding a high punt and getting in his kick under severe pressure. The same player was again prominent a minute later from a line-out, being pulled down from behind when nearly clear.

Both sides were giving the ball plenty of air, but the marking was close and sure, and not much ground was made. From a penalty Gloucester made some thirty yards, a visitor fumbling Cook's kick and being upset by the Gloucester forwards. From this point the home front heeled, and Hall receiving punted hard down the field. Following up keenly, Webb tackled Vallis, and a couple of Gloucester forwards being up they got the ball, let it go to Webb, who dodged a would-be tackler, and touched down for a good try. Sysum failed at goal.

Halford replied well to the drop-out, and then came a dashing burst by Lawson, who made considerable headway before being collared. The Gloucester forwards continued the good work until checked by Vallis, but for lying on the ball the visiting custodian was penalised. There was a shot for goal, but it went very wide, and Harry kicked out to beyond the 25. Ensuing play was fast and exciting, the Gloucester forwards doing splendidly against their heavier opponents.

Pontypool, aided by a useful touch-finder by A. Robbins, gained a footing in the Gloucester half, but Baker beating Stacey and Robbins, sent back with a nice kick. The Gloucester forwards were to the fore with some dashing footwork, Lawson being prominent, and then Sysum gained a nice slice of ground with a clever bit of work. Pontypool tried hard to gain the upper hand, but they were well held, A. Cook twice stopping dangerous rushes by falling on the ball.

Near the centre a visitor had his kick charged down, and Gloucester rushed away to their opponents' goal. Vallis cleverly extricated himself from a difficult position, and his kick reached the centre, where owing to some misunderstanding as to who should take the ball Jack Jones prevented a return. For a scrum infringement Gloucester were penalised on the 25 line, and A. Robbins made a splendid attempt at conversion, the ball going a yard or so under the bar and over the line for a minor.

Following the drop-out the Gloucester forwards brought off a magnificent burst nearly half the length of the field before being pulled up by the cleverness of Jones. Pontypool recovered by the aid of a good kick by A. Robbins, and when the interval arrived the game was in the Gloucester half.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester	1 try
Pontypool	Nil

Pontypool restarted, and the ball going to Hall, the latter dodged a couple of opponents and came down the field passing to Lawson, who unfortunately threw forward. Pontypool quickly changed the venue, but their forwards were playing a fearfully off-side game. A penalty was given against them for this infringement, but Cook did not get the ball to touch, and Vallis returned to the centre. Some close forward rushes by Pontypool took the visitors to the home 25, where they were again penalised. Cook's kick was fielded by Jones, who took a drop for goal, but it was a feeble attempt, and the ball went to Lewis on the left wing. He was collared by T. Robbins, but managed to pass to Hamblin, who ran and punted to touch.

Splendid work by A. Cook gave Gloucester the advantage, and then another penalty saw C. Cook find touch beautifully in the visitors' 25. Saunders here distinguished himself with a dash, and then came some neat exchanges by the home backs. Webb was collared but threw the ball inside, where it was captured by a visitor, who kicked to C. Cook. The latter side-stepped his opponents cleverly and cross-kicked, but nothing resulted.

Working splendidly together Gloucester [c.five words unreadable] but Saunders was held up and pushed back. Pontypool eased the pressure with a penalty, but immediately after Hall receiving from Baker, brought off a superb run straight down the field. He got past all but Vallis, when he lost the ball and Pontypool saved. For another illegality, Pontypool again came under the ban of the referee, but Hamblin could not place a goal.

On the restart Pontypool worked to midfield, where play was strenuously contested. Gloucester twice opened out, but knocks on took place and no ground was gained. A penalty to Pontypool was well taken, and the visitors gained a footing in the home quarter. Gloucester got another penalty immediately after, Cook's kick going to Jack Jones, who dodged finely and looked a likely scorer. He was, however, surrounded, and his pass was stopped.

Gloucester cleared with a useful rush, and then came one of the most despicable incidents ever seen on the field. Lawson partially tackled Vater when the visitor turned round and delivered a stinging blow with his fist to his opponent, laying him out. The blow was struck in full view of the stand and referee, and Vater was immediately ordered off to the accompaniment of derisive groans. Lawson in the meantime was attended by the ambulance men, and had to be carried off the field.

Play was resumed, and for a time Pontypool held the advantage. Gloucester, however, stuck to their opponents grandly, the defence being very fine. At length Gloucester moved away, but more fouling by the visitor caused them to be penalised.

The City made headway, and the Pontypool backs being at fault Hamblin took advantage and dribbled through. The forwards coming up took the ball along and over the line, where Webb raced up and touched down for a try. Sysum added the extra points, and Gloucester secured a good lead.

Gloucester were off again on the resumption, and from a kick over the line Vallis conceded a minor. The drop-out brought no relief to the Welshmen, and for a time Gloucester had all the play. Then the visiting forwards gained relief, and the game was hotly fought out at midfield. Baker was beating Stacey at the scrum, and once he broke away neatly only to see his pass dropped. Play to the end was even, and there was no more scoring.

RESULT :

Gloucester ... 1 goal 1 try (8 points)
Pontypool Nil

REMARKS

Gloucester won deservedly on the run of the game, and to the grand play of the City forwards high praise must be awarded. The light Gloucester pack were up against something formidable this afternoon, and in point of actual weight must have been giving away nearly a stone a man. Yet there was no flinching on the part of Halford's men; they stuck to their work splendidly all through, doing fine work in the scrums and displaying characteristic dash in the loose.

There were times when it looked as if the home men would be bound to give way, but heroic efforts were put forth at critical moments, and it was on very few occasions that Pontypool could be termed dangerous. In no match this season have the City forwards performed better; the odds were heavy against them, but they rose superior to all handicaps, and the victory was a fitting reward for the great showing they put up. All the men were in top-top form, Halford, Lawson, Saunders, and A. Cook being particularly noticeable.

The City backs supported the front admirably. There was little, perhaps, that was spectacular, but occasionally the Gloucester men exhibited real smartness.

Baker was a hard worker at the scrum, and though hampered a good deal by Stacey he got through a lot of useful work. More than once he beat his opponent after Pontypool had heeled, and the way he got the ball away under difficulties was most praiseworthy.

Hall was his dashing self to-day, and that one glorious run of his deserved a better fate. Pontypool had a couple of wingers who paid the Forester close attention, but Hall nevertheless was able to render his side valuable assistance.

In the City third line, Webb stood out as the star by reason of his two tries. Both points were opportunist efforts, and was a testimony to the right winger's alertness in keeping pace with the play and his anticipation of events. Apart from his two tries, however, Webb played stylish football, always doing the correct thing, and never being flurried.

Sysum was more prominent than Hamblin in the centre, but neither got many chances, and Lewis was not overburdened in his new position on the wing. C. Cook was in splendid form at back, and though he did not always find touch with his kicks, he gained a lot of ground at times.

Pontypool possess a splendid record, and when they like the team can play football. But today's exhibition was one of the worst I have ever witnessed, and if Gloucester refuse any more fixtures with the Club there will be no regrets. The incident which led to Vater being sent off was despicable to say the least, Lawson receiving a sledge hammer blow on the jaw which knocked him out completely. The referee had no alternative but to give the Pontypool man "marching orders," and on proceeding from the field Vater put his fingers to his nose in response to the groans of the crowd. Lawson was carried off insensible, and when I left the ground he was still in a semi-conscious state and in great pain.

Pontypool were best served by Vallis (full back) and Jack Jones. The old International was prominent with a couple of strong bursts, but Gloucester's marking was too close to allow of the visitors developing any attacking movements. On the whole Pontypool's display was disappointing.

Scorers for Gloucester : Webb 2 tries; Sysum converted one.

Next week : Llanhilleth, at Kingsholm.

Mr. George Bland writes : – The exhibition given us to-day at Kingsholm of Pontypool's 'skill' on the football field was disgusting, to say the least, and I trust the Gloucester Club will seriously consider the advisability of renewing fixtures with this club next season. As an old player and spectator, never before have I seen a player who has been ordered off the field for any reason whatever behave as the Pontypool player did this afternoon, and I hope I never may again. Personally, I do not consider the referee was capable of handling two such teams as opposed one another to-day, particularly when it is remembered that Gloucester's ground record was at stake, and that Pontypool would have added to their prestige considerably had they run out winners.

THE INJURY TO LAWSON

REMOVED TO GLOUCESTER INFIRMARY

That Lawson had received a serious injury was apparent from the force of the blow, and his condition after his removal to the gymnasium gave cause for anxiety to his colleagues and friends. Dr. St. Johnston could not say what damage had been done, and after a time the injured player was removed to the Gloucester Royal Infirmary in a taxi-cab. After treatment in the surgery he recovered consciousness, and it was found his chin was badly cut. The wound was dressed, and it was hoped Lawson would be able to leave the Institution.

GLOUCESTER A v GORDON LEAGUE

This game was decided at Hempsted, the Seconds fielding a very weak side. They were six short on Friday night, and only strenuous efforts on Saturday morning to obtain players prevented the scratching of the fixture. As it was they played with only 14 men.

Contests between these teams are always productive of keen, strenuous contests, and the present was no exception to the general rule. There was little or no open play, the ball being chiefly confined to the forwards, with the League generally the superior in this department of the game. Several men on both sides were temporarily laid out, but this was due to over-keenness, there being no really rough play.

Gordon League obtained a goal and a try in each half, all the scores being the result of good forward work. The scorers were Ashmeade, Cromwell, A. Comley, and Jones tries, while Staunton and A. Comley converted one each.

Gloucester's solitary try was obtained by Westbury soon after the interval. This was also obtained by the work of the forwards.

The League thoroughly deserved their substantial victory, although of course the weak [2 or 3 words unreadable] of the Seconds considerably helped them.

RESULT :

Gordon League	2 goals 2 tries (16 points)
Gloucester A	1 try (3 points)