

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1914

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. LLANELLY

WELSHMEN AT KINGSHOLM

LLANELLY OUTPLAYED AND WELL BEATEN

CITY FORWARDS' FINE DISPLAY

For the sixth successive Saturday Gloucester had a Welsh team for opponents, to-day's visitors at Kingsholm being Llanelly.

The famous Scarlets won the first game at Stradey, after a hard struggle, by a try to nil, and on this form Gloucester anticipated turning the tables this afternoon.

Halford, slightly injured at Cardiff, was an absentee from the City ranks. Washbourn, who was expected to make a reappearance, could not accept his place, and Alec Lewis, who had also decided to stand down, took the vacancy in the third line, and captained the side.

Llanelly brought a strong fifteen, including the Rev. Alban Davies, captain of the Welsh International team, and W. Watts, who played centre against England. Ike Davies, the Welsh right wing three-quarter, however, was unable to play.

The unpleasant weather militated against a large attendance, but fortunately the rain ceased at the time of starting.

Teams : –

Gloucester. – C. Cook; F. Webb, L. Hamblin, S. Sysum, and A. Lewis; A. Hall and J. Baker; S. Smart, J. F. Lawson, A. Saunders, W. Parham, F. Ayliffe, S. Millard, N. Hayes, and J. Meadows.

Llanelly. – G. Burchill; H. Thomas, W. Watts, ? O. Davies, and S. Jones; I. Fowler and J. J. Lewis; Rev. Alban Davies, Rev. W. T. Havard, Rev. J. Thomas, A. Howell, S. Phillips, W. J. Howells, D. Hillstone, and S. Webber.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol).

THE GAME

Gloucester lost the toss, and Smart kicked off, the return going to touch near the centre. Baker and Smart tried to break away from the line-out, but an infringement occurred, and a scrum followed. Baker was at once penalised for off-side, but in the exchange kicking little advantage accrued to either side. Gloucester were awarded a penalty a couple of scrums later, and Cook found touch well with his kick.

Breaking up from a scrum the City forwards made headway until checked by Watts, who later punted some 20 yards to touch. From the next scrum Gloucester heeled, and Baker sending out Sysum received, but he was upset directly he received and lost the ball. Webb, however, was handy, and got in a clever screw kick to touch. Ayliffe led the home front away nicely, and then the City backs again handled. The passing, however, broke down, and Watts kicked hard down the field and past Cook. Lewis, however, got back and effected a nice save.

For not playing the ball Llanelly were penalised, and Cook sent play to midfield with a lovely kick. Gloucester heeling, the home backs got away, Hambling cutting through smartly and throwing wide to Lewis on the wing. The latter took the slow pass at the second attempt and punted but Burchill was safe. A fine rush by the Gloucester front promised well, and Lewis joining in Burchill was lucky in checking.

The City made further ground and secured a good attacking position on the left. Here Baker worked the short side of the scrum cleverly, and after Hall had made a short dash he transferred to Lewis, who scored smartly in the corner. Hamblin failed at goal.

Resuming, there was some keen work by the forwards, and well-judged kicking by the Llanelly backs. Inside their own half Gloucester handled, but Hamblin stumbled when in front of Watts, and was tackled. Sysum, however, recovered, and with a sharp burst cleared several opponents in good style.

Gloucester had the better of subsequent exchanges, but in some loose play Fowler opened out for Llanelly, and Watts secured a grand opening. There were three visitors left with only Cook to beat, but the final pass was not accepted, and Gloucester's line luckily escaped. The City cleared from a dangerous position with some lucky kicking, but Llanelly got back and were awarded a free for a scrum infringement. Watts had a drop for goal, but his shot was a long way short, and Cook punted out well to touch.

Off-side by the visitors in a forward rush gave Gloucester a penalty, and the resultant kick sent play to near the centre line. Gloucester twice got the ball back to Baker, but the passing was not effective, Sysum holding on too long in one instance. Another bout was carried out with more finish, but from Lewis' cross punt Burchill effected a wonderful mark.

Gloucester did well in subsequent play, and from a kick down the field Webb just failed to take it on after Burchill had fumbled. Smart heeling by the City forwards saw the backs served well by Baker and Hall. Hamblin sent Lewis away on the left, but the acting captain fell a victim to a grand tackle by Burchill. Llanelly eased the pressure with a big punt out, to which Cook responded with a drop for goal. The ball, however, fell into the arms of a visitor, who started passing, only to see Hamblin come across and bring his man down in fine style.

From the ensuing scrum the Gloucester forwards dashed away, Lawson picking up and passing to Meadows. The defence appeared beaten, but Meadows threw back inside, and the pass was adjudged forward. The Welshmen had a couple of narrow escapes after this, and it was by some lucky fly-kicking they eventually gained relief.

Play was rather scrambling at times, and the Gloucester attack was not very effective when the ball got amongst the backs. Baker twice opened with reverse passes over the scrum, but the City did not benefit to the extent they should have done. Then the forwards took matters into their own hands, and with a desperate rush carried the ball over the line under the posts, but a visitor got the touch first.

Gloucester were doing well all round up to a point, but they did not finish their movements well. It was through fumbling behind that led to Llanelly finding a footing in the City end, where Burchill made his mark. Howard had a shot for goal from a long distance out, but his kick was charged down, and ground was lost. The game was at the centre when the whistle went for half-time.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 1 try
Llanelly Nil

Alban Davies re-started for Llanelly, and an exchange of kicks left the ball with Cook, who got in a grand touch-finder. From a line-out the Gloucester forwards broke away in irresistible style. Ayliffe, fielding the ball on the bounce, fed Hayes, who dashed away, but the whistle had gone for a forward pass.

The City, working well together, were all over their opponents for the next few minutes, and at least three scoring chances presented themselves. A repass from Lewis to Hall was not taken, with the defence clean beaten, and then twice Llanelly saved, thanks to mistakes by home players. From one kick over the line Watts conceded a minor, but the drop-out brought no relief to the Welshmen.

Gloucester were almost immediately on the attack again, and from a throw out of the loose by Ayliffe, Sysum dropped for goal, only to see the ball hit the upright and rebound into the field of play. Try as they would Llanelly could not get out of their 25. The City forwards rushed their opponents off their feet at times, but though getting close they could not cover the coveted mark.

The Welshmen were a thoroughly beaten side just now, but urged on by Alban Davies they made a couple of spurts, which took them out of danger for a time. But some of the players were too impetuous, and got off-side, and from a difficult position Cook landed a lovely goal.

Hamblin replied nicely to the restart, and then came a perfect series of transfers by the home backs. All handled, and Webb, as he sailed away, looked to have a good chance, but he tried to cut inside Burchill and was brought down. Play was confined entirely in the Scarlets' half, where Hall distinguished himself with some fine work.

Cook put Gloucester well down with a lovely touch-finder, and from some open play a good opening appeared likely, but it was not accepted. Gloucester kept up a persistent attack, and there was some clever work witnessed on the part of Hayes, Smart, Ayliffe (forward), and Baker and Hall in the backs. Twice Llanelly intercepted with good chances in view, Llanelly's luck being in every time.

For once the visitors tried some open play, but it broke down at Watts, and Lewis gathering he punted some 20 yards down the field to touch. Hayes was continually prominent in line-out work, and his efforts gave Gloucester a good territorial advantage.

A clever bit of work by Baker started the Gloucester backs on the move. Sysum fumbling, Webb recovered, came back inside and kicked, Burchill just saving at the critical moment. Gloucester went strongly for a try from this point, and the forwards carrying the ball over in a body Lawson was credited with a try, which Cook converted with a grand kick.

This gave Gloucester an 11 points' lead, and they thoroughly deserved it. The City put in some splendid all-round work on the resumption, but in one breakaway the visitors got an opening. Thomas raced away and passed to Havard, who was tackled by the legs when within scoring distance. This was the best effort seen from the Welshmen, and was deservedly applauded.

Hall brought relief to Gloucester with a strong effort, and then followed a remarkable bit of play. Kicking into the open Hayes followed up at a good pace and gathered the ball on the run. He reached Burchill when he threw to Webb, who was pushed into touch half a yard from the line by an opponent who had come across. Llanelly changed the venue with a good rush, but Hall, picking up in the loose, brought off a superb dash right through the defence, but again Webb just failed with the try. Play to the end favoured the home team, but they could not score again.

RESULT :

Gloucester ... 2 goals (1p), 1 try (11 points)
Llanelly Nil

REMARKS

On their form to-day Gloucester were full value for a 20 points' win at least. In the second half there was only one team in it, for apart from that one breakaway, when the Rev. Havard nearly scored, Llanelly never had the ghost of a chance. On the other hand, Gloucester attacked repeatedly, and it was marvellous how they failed to score only one try from the many chances that came their way.

Webb twice had the misfortune to be robbed of tries less than a yard from the line, and then there were the two or three occasions when it was only a question of a player to take the ball cleanly for a certain try.

It was a keen disappointment to see opportunities going astray like this, but fortunately Gloucester were able to record a substantial victory despite the many failures.

The City forwards put up another great game again to-day. The men were a little slow in settling down, especially in scrummage work, but Smart, who was entrusted with the leadership in the absence of Halford, soon had this remedied. The International was always in the thick of it, and one or two clever bits of individual work on his part did not go unrecognised.

Smart was splendidly backed up by Hayes, Ayliffe, and Lawson, though the other men were by no means lacking in any particular. Hayes' chief forte was in the lines out, where he displayed wonderful skill in getting the ball and starting loose rushes. That dashing run of his towards the end deserved some tangible reward, but Webb could not quite do the trick. Llanelly played clean and hard football, but they were up against a superior lot in all phases, and the Welsh International captain would be the first to admit the City's superiority.

At half-back, too, Gloucester had a decided pull. Baker departed from the orthodox on several occasions, and worked Vile's dodge of the reverse pass over the scrum with perfect success several times. Hall was perhaps the most prominent player on the field, and his grand openings should have been better utilised by those in the rear. Pace is not one of the assets of Gloucester three-quarters; with the necessary speed today some half dozen tries might easily have been scored.

There were some neat combined movements by the Gloucester men at intervals, but that little bit of extra finish and dash at the end were missing.

The four players were fairly evenly distinguished, though perhaps the wing men, Webb and Lewis, were the more to be relied upon. Cook played a very sound game at full-back, and some of his kicking was the best he has done for some time.

Llanelly had plenty of pluck and a good defence; minus these qualities the score against them would have been a record one. The forwards worked their hardest, but they had not that fire and effectiveness in the loose when playing at home.

The half-backs were of no outstanding merit, and of the three-quarters, Watts and Thomas were the best, though all kicked and tackled well. Burchill was the Welshmen's saviour time and again at full-back.

Scorers for Gloucester : Lewis and Lawson, tries ; C. Cook kicked penalty goal.

Next week : Leicester, away.

JC