

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1919

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. ABERTILLERY

CITY'S FINE WIN

WELSHMEN BEATEN POINTLESS

BROWN'S SUCCESSFUL DEBUT

Abertillery visited Kingsholm to-day with a record of having drawn with Plymouth and defeated Pill Harriers – two performances which stamped the team as one of first-class merit, and well able to contest with the best Rugby combinations in the country. There were two changes in the City ranks, Webb and Lewis (injured) both having to stand down. Their places were filled by Capt. Clarke and S. A. Brown.

Teams : –

GLOUCESTER.

BACK : L. Hamblin.

THREE-QUARTERS : Capt. F. E. M. Clarke, H. Stone, A. Hudson, and S. A. Brown.

HALF-BACKS : W. Dix and A. Hall.

FORWARDS : G. Halford (capt.), F. W. Ayliffe, J. F. Lawson, A. Ward, W. Davis, J. Harris, W. Dovey, and N. Hayes.

ABERTILLERY.

BACK : J. Jones.

THREE-QUARTERS : E. Hill, F. Giles, Dr. E. C. Fahmy, and I. Griffiths.

HALF-BACKS : W. Dando and T. Williams.

FORWARDS : J. Webb, W. Hale, H. Gregory, R. Saunders, J. Howell, B. Hadley, B. Jones, and W. Lewis.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol).

THE GAME

There was a capital crowd present when the players took the field, including a goodly contingent of the 'Tillery supporters. The ground was in fine condition, and favoured a fast, open game. Gloucester started with the sun in their faces, but the opening play was very quiet and contested at midfield.

A nicely-judged kick to touch by Williams gave the Welshmen a slight advantage, but Gloucester worked back by the aid of Lawson. The City forwards heeled nicely, and the Gloucester backs were set in motion by Dix, but Hudson knocked on from Stone.

Abertillery immediately replied, and Fahmy cutting through made a fine opening for Griffiths, but the wing man failed to take the pass with a clear run in – a lucky escape for the home side.

The Welshmen confined play to the Gloucester half, but the home defence was sound, and fine kicks by Hamblin eased the pressure. A long kick over the line, however, forced Gloucester to concede a minor.

Following the drop-out Hamblin fielded a return kick, and after a short run punted down the field. Stone raced up and charged down the reply, but several visitors came up and saved. Some smart work in the open by Gloucester left the ball with Dix, who dodged several opponents and was making for the left wing when he was pounced upon and prevented from passing.

Brown soon afterwards brought off a smart piece of work, but he was checked and then, thanks to some big kicking, Abertillery worked to the other end. The visiting forwards working well gained 20 yards with a good rush, but the Gloucester pack burst back in fine style. A neat movement by Dando and Williams saw the latter punt high to Hamblin, but the City custodian fielded nicely and replied well to touch.

Stone, with a clever kick under difficulties, was heartily cheered, and later Hall put Gloucester well down with a long punt which Hill missed and allowed the ball to go to touch. A mistake by a home back allowed Dando to break away, but he was stopped, and Hamblin picking up punted out to safe quarters.

The 'Tillery forwards were now getting the ball back well, but the backs were uncertain in their handling. The visitors, however, continued to have the better of the exchanges, and only keen tackling kept the Gloucester lines intact.

Passing and inter-passing cleverly, the Welshmen once seemed bound to score, but fine collaring saved the situation. Gloucester eventually got breathing space by the aid of a forward rush, Harris finally kicking past Jones. Griffiths, however, got back, and though tackled he managed to bring about the necessary relief.

The Gloucester backs now asserted themselves, and a clever round of passing saw Hudson serve Brown nicely, but the recruit missed the transfer. Stone, however, came behind and kicked down, but in trying to pick up he knocked on. Gloucester were doing much better now, and Hall gathering in the open shook off a couple of opponents and made a beautiful opening. A pass to Hudson was well taken, and the centre serving Brown, the latter ran over in good style and scored the first try. Hamblin kicked a goal and Gloucester led by five points.

The restart was finely replied to by Hudson, the ball going to touch just inside the visitor's half. From the ensuing scrum Dix got the ball away, and Hall punted high to Jones, who had his kick charged down by Stone. There was a good chance of a score with two or three Gloucester forwards up, but the visitors managed to save.

Gloucester were pressing when a visiting forward dribbled away and sent to touch. From this point the Welshmen made further headway, but Stone effected a nice clearance. Bursting away the Gloucester forwards looked dangerous but Griffiths gathered and saved, though temporarily being laid out in being tackled. Play to the interval was fairly even.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester 1 goal
Abertillery Nil

Rain fell heavily when the game was resumed, and the ball going over the Gloucester goal line Hamblin touched down. The first incident of note was a passing run by the visitors, Fahmy making a strong effort to beat the opposition, but just failing. An interception and kick by Hudson brought slight relief, but the Welshmen returned to the attack. Hall missing a low pass from Dix, the visitors got very dangerous, and a forward actually crossed in a scramble, but a scrum was ordered five yards outside. Gloucester were desperately hard pressed for a few minutes, but a brilliant forward burst brought play to more favourable quarters.

The rain had made the surface somewhat treacherous, and several mistakes were noticeable on both sides. Then from inside the home half Lawson broke away in brilliant fashion with the ball at his feet. He finally kicked across, and Brown continued the movement, but at the critical moment a visitor sent the ball over the line from the field of play.

Gloucester had now secured a good attacking position, but when the ball came out nothing was done, and 'Tillery cleared to near the centre. Ensuing play was keenly contested, with little in it. At length, however, came a great effort by the home backs. It started from Dix, and Hall, Stone, and Hudson in turn handled. Brown was given possession with a good 50 yards to travel; but racing at top speed the young three-quarter easily rounded Jones (the full back), and put the final touches to a brilliant movement by scoring his second try. Hamblin landed a neat goal amidst great cheering.

Resuming, Gloucester played up in irresistible fashion, the forwards carrying the scrums and using their feet in wonderful style. On the visitors' 25 Hall threw a wide pass to Hudson, who transferred to Brown. The wing man made a big effort to get over, but was tackled on the line. He, however, got the ball away cleverly to Hudson, who raced round behind the posts. Hamblin, from the easy place, failed with the goal kick.

For a few minutes on the restart Gloucester continued to have all the play, and Hall was nearly through on his own. By the aid of loose footwork, 'Tillery gained much-needed relief, and a spell of even play followed. The Welshmen attempted passing, but it broke down, and Stone securing, he punted well down the field, Jones having to run back and only getting a short kick straight to touch in the nick of time.

Play slowed down in the next few minutes, attempts by either side to open out play not meeting with any success. Stone was prominent with a clever bit of work, which did not pass unnoticed, and it enabled Gloucester to secure a good territorial position. The 'Tillery were being overpowered in the scrums, Halford and Lawson doing splendidly, whilst Dix accomplished some clever footwork.

The home backs shone in a pretty combined effort on the left wing, Brown again doing well, but he succumbed to numbers. He was knocked out in the tackle, but soon recovered. The City had one possible scoring chance after this, but Stone could not break through, and losing the ball the Welshmen dribbled to beyond half way. Dix, Hall, and Hudson came back with a series of exchanges, but Jones checked, and the game ended.

RESULT :

Gloucester 2 goals 1 try (13 points)
Abertillery Nil

REMARKS

Gloucester are to be complimented on a downright good performance to-day. It was victory gained by superior tactics and cleverness all round – a superiority which was very pronounced in the last quarter.

Abertillery fully sustained their reputation as a smart combination, and in the first half they had more of the play territorially than the City. Chances came their way on several occasions, but there was just that lack of the necessary finishing touch to complete scoring movements.

Gloucester, on the other hand, made splendid use of their opportunities, and the three tries scored were all the outcome of brilliant back play, cleverly conceived and carried out with characteristic finesse. With Alec Lewis and Webb standing down from the home three-quarter line, there was a certain amount of misgiving as to what would happen with two recruits drafted into the side. Brown, however, early set all doubts at rest as to his ability, and Gloucester has not for a long time had a second teamer distinguish himself so well in his first match.

I was taken up with Brown in the trial, and to-day he more than confirmed first impressions. With one exception he took his passes well, showed splendid pace and dash, and went for the line in true workman-like fashion. Brown was nicely nursed by Hudson, and the old International certainly contributed towards bringing out the best from the recruit. The time should not be far distant when Brown will get further opportunities of displaying his abilities in the First team. Captain Clarke was not in the picture like Brown, and now and again he was inclined to be erratic – once throwing the ball back when in front of his goal, a very dangerous practice. Still, I think he has football ability, and with more experience should develop into a useful wing.

The play of the Gloucester three-quarters this afternoon was greatly in advance of last week. They were splendidly fed by Dix and Hall, the latter taking his passes with precision, and now and again going through in taking style[sic]. Hall's tackling and saving, too, were great. Dix had a smart opponent in Dando, but the Gloucesterian was on top for the most part, rarely failing to get the ball away, and proving effective in many other ways. Hudson was more like his old self, moving well and always anticipating. Stone did not get many chances of showing his worth in attack, but the young Forester accomplished a lot of clever work, especially with relief kicks.

The Gloucester forwards played well to a man. They were meeting a well-trained pack, who cannot be taught much in the finer points of the game, but honours rested with the City taking the play all through. For ten minutes after the change of ends the City eight had a very bad time but they recovered splendidly, and thereafter took the game well in hand.

'Tillery tried hard to stem the onslaught of Halford's men, but Gloucester were not to be denied. I thought Lawson and Davis equal to any forwards on the field. The former's pace and dribbling powers and Davis' solid all-round work – how he did tackle ! – were great features. Halford, Dovey, and Harris, too, came prominently under notice.

Abertillery can play football and one can understand what a hard team they are to beat at home. Gloucester, by-the-bye, have never won there yet !

The forwards were best in loose rushes, but at one period of the game they had more of the ball in the scrums than the Gloucester eight. Dando and Williams showed pretty combination at times, and worked the short side of the scrum very trickily. All the backs could kick well, but of the threes Dr. Fahmy was the best; the Scot putting in some nice runs.

Of the full-backs, Hamblin was not pressed so severely as Jones. The Gloucesterian's fielding and gathering of the ball were perfect; he got good driving power behind the ball, but failed to find touch as often as could be desired. He, however, was a distinct improvement on Mormant, and with a few more games should settle down to the new position with every promise of success.