

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1919

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER'S WONDERFUL FINISH

PONTYPOOL WELL BEATEN IN LAST TEN MINUTES

CLEVER TRIES BY WEBB AND DIX

Gloucester were at home to-day, to Pontypool, and with favourable weather a goodly company attended at Kingsholm in the expectation of witnessing a good game. Pontypool, though not perhaps as strong as before the war, are still a formidable combination, and had the distinction of being the only team this season to share honours with the all-conquering Newport Fifteen.

Gloucester were without Ward and Harris forward – both on the indisposed list – but Alec Lewis turned out at three-quarter in place of Millington, and Hayward was given a further trial at full back. Jack Jones, the old Newport and Welsh International centre, figured in the visitors' ranks, and the pack were regarded as a strong lot.

The following were the teams : –

GLOUCESTER

BACK: F. W. Hayward.

THREE-QUARTERS: F. Webb, A. Hudson, A. Lewis, and W. Washbourn.

HALF-BACKS: W. Dix and L. Hamblin.

FORWARDS: G. Holford (captain), A. Hall, S. Smart, J. H. Webb, F. W. Ayliffe, T. Voyce, J. F. Lawson, and C. Mumford.

PONTYPOOL

BACK : W. Price.

THREE-QUARTERS : W. Reed, J. P. Jones, G. Lewis, and T. Probert.

HALF-BACKS : G. Stacey and S. Coleman.

FORWARDS : T. Davies, G. Oliver, J. Hayward, T. Rees, J. Williams, Rees Thomas, W. Thorne, and J. Prosser.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol)

THE GAME

The visitors were accompanied by a large number of supporters, who made matters very lively with bugle calls and other demonstrations. The ground was in splendid condition, and everything favoured a fast, open game. The City team appeared in new-coloured jerseys, dark blue and white.

From Holford's kick-off a visitor marked, but from the resultant kick Webb found touch at the centre. Pontypool were early penalised, and Hamblin made ground with a nice punt to touch. Carrying the next scrum the Gloucester forwards rushed splendidly, but were pulled up for an infringement.

Dix gathering from the scrum passed out neatly to Webb, who side-stepped Reed and cross-kicked, but Alec Lewis failed to take the ball. Then the Pontypool half-backs initiated a bout of passing but a forward transfer was given.

Play was stoutly contested in the visitors' half until off-side by the City cost them a good slice of ground. Heeling by the Pontypool forwards saw Stacey punt up the field, and Hudson failing to gather the ball the Welshmen got dangerous. Good tackling, however, kept the line intact. Hamblin and then Hayward were instrumental in getting in relief kicks, but Pontypool were very keen. Coleman, after fumbling, opened out nicely to Jack Jones, who ran strongly, but Washbourn came across and effected a smothering tackle, which saved an ugly situation.

Keeping up the attack, Pontypool had another chance, but Jones attempted a drop at goal – a very feeble effort, the old International failing to raise the ball. A forward rush enabled Gloucester to clear, but Hayward, being tackled in possession, let his side down badly.

Scrum followed scrum close to the home line, and Coleman was only held up once on the line. Dix, with a clever effort, eventually eased the situation, and Smart further improved matters, which brought play to the 25-line. Mistakes by the visitors spoiled a possible opening, and then from a kick over the line Gloucester touched down.

Following the drop-out play favoured the Welshmen, until Holford and Lawson led a splendid dribble to half-way. A kick went to Hayward, who punted to Probert, for the latter to send back well to Lewis, who took the ball beautifully and found touch with a nice kick. The game, however, was kept in the Gloucester 25, the visitors working desperately hard, and opening out nicely at times. Gloucester eventually heeled, and Hamblin found touch splendidly near mid-field. Gloucester made further headway, Hudson punting high to Price, but the latter returned well.

The Pontypool forwards came away with a loose rush, which Webb only checked with a clever overhead kick. The effort led to a sharp attack on the home line, and the defence was severely tested. Ten yards out Gloucester were penalised for off-side, and Price with a nice kick landed a goal, the success being greeted with demonstrations of delight by the Pontypool supporters.

There was almost immediately a response by Gloucester. The drop-out was well followed up, and Jack Jones was collared in possession. For not playing the ball the City were awarded a free, and with a grand kick Hamblin equalised the points, the cheering being deafening. With the scores level the players resumed the struggle with increased vigour, and great excitement prevailed. In the home half the Pontypool backs were given possession, and Jones cut out a grand opening for Reed. The wing man got well away, but Hamblin dived with outstretched hand for one of his legs, and just did the trick.

From this point the Gloucester backs came away with a grand bit of handling, Webb being the last to receive. The Gloucester wing ran well, but being pressed by Jones he was forced to kick, the ball going to touch a few yards away.

The contest continued to be waged furiously, and the pace was terrific. A capital punt by Hudson to Probert saw the latter pushed to touch, but later a touch-finder sent play to the home 25. The City front breaking away from a line-out, quickly changed the venue, and the centre was the scene of operations. Hall and Hamblin were here conspicuous with good efforts which gave Gloucester an advantage, but the tackling on both sides was too deadly to effect an opening.

At length Dix and Hamblin opened out, but Hudson's pass to Washbourn was not accepted, and ground was lost. The Pontypool forwards, with a fine rush, tested Hayward, but the City custodian gathered well and sent straight to touch. From the subsequent scrum Dix got the ball away, and after handling Washbourn punted down, the ball rolling out of play at the visitors' 25.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

GLOUCESTER	1 goal (p)
PONTYPOOL	1 goal (p)

Pontypool restarted, but early on a fine kick by a Gloucester man was sent to Price, who failed to find touch with his return. A cross-kick put the City men on side, but only a minor resulted.

Following the drop-out Lawson and Voyce and a couple of other Gloucester forwards dribbled clear away and to the line, where Price was tackled in possession. Gloucester had a fine attacking position, but Washbourn, who received a pass from Hamblin, was smothered, and losing the ball the Welshmen relieved.

Further mistakes ensued on the part of the Gloucester backs, with the result that the game was transferred to the other end.

Gloucester cleared by sharp footwork, and Hamblin with a clever touch-kick gained a further 20 yards. Here Coleman got the ball away nicely to Stacey, but the latter held on too long, and when tackled threw forward. The infringement, however, escaped the referee and Gloucester benefited.

The game was a terrific tussle forward, first one side and then the other gaining the advantage. With one big burst the 'Pool men took the ball past Hayward, but Williams in picking up was tackled and laid out. The Ambulance men attended the visitor, who appeared to have broken his collar bone.

Resuming, the visitors' backs were at once in possession, but Stacey fumbled his pass. Gloucester worked away after this, and J. Webb opening out from the loose, the ball got across to F. Webb. The latter raced past several opponents, and then transferred to the forwards. There was a great chance, but Pontypool saved right on the line. From a scrum ten yards out Dix fed Washbourn on the short side, but the wing man just failed in his attempt to score.

Gloucester were going great guns now, but a mistake behind allowed the Welshmen to gain breathing space. The City, however, came back again, and Hudson threw out a long pass to Webb on the right, but it was not accepted. The City lost their position through fumbling behind, Hudson and Hayward being at fault in turn. The result was that a visitor gathered, and with Jones and Reed well placed there was every chance of a score, but a great smothering tackle saved the City.

Pontypool came near crossing a couple of minutes later, but for an infringement Gloucester were awarded a penalty. Hamblin kicked out well, but Price stopped it from going to touch, and with his return sent the ball over the line for a minor.

On the drop-out Gloucester took up the running again and confined play to their opponents' half. But few scoring opportunities presented themselves, the tackling being too close. A long kick by Webb found touch at the visitors' quarter flag.

Gloucester struggled hard to gain the lead, but were met with a sterling defence. Eventually the long-looked-for chance came, and it was utilised to the full. Dix started a movement from the scrum, and the ball went all along the line to Webb. The wing man had three men to beat, but with a magnificent effort he cleared all opposition and crossed with a corner try. No charge was allowed, but though Hamblin kicked grandly no goal resulted.

Pontypool dropped out, and in less than a couple of minutes the Gloucester spectators were given another opportunity to shout. Lewis replied well to the kick-out, and Gloucester had a footing in their opponents' 25. The visitors heeled from a scrum, and Coleman passed out, but Dix intercepted cleverly, and dodging G. Lewis and side-stepping Price, scored a splendid try, which Hamblin just failed to convert.

Gloucester had the game in safe keeping now, but the City did not relax their efforts. Playing in irresistible style, they swept the opposition on one side, and the Pontypool line was again in serious jeopardy. For off-side the visitors were penalised on the quarter line. This time Hamblin elected to drop for goal, and with a beautifully judged kick safely covered the cross-bar, his achievement being the signal for a further outburst of enthusiasm. To the end Gloucester maintained their advantage.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 2 goals (p), 2 tries (12 pts.)

PONTYPOOL 1 goal (p) (3 pts.)

REMARKS

It was a glorious finish to a fast, strenuous and hotly-contested game, in which the Gloucester men came out in brilliant style. That last ten minutes was worth going a long way to see, and fairly sent the home supporters frantic with excitement. Nine points accrued to the City's score in the brief period mentioned; but so irresistible were Holford and his colleagues that every point was thoroughly deserved.

Pontypool fought fairly and squarely, and put up a contest worthy the Club's reputation in pre-war days. [4, 5 words unreadable] struggle for supremacy, and not until towards the end were the City able to thoroughly master their opponents. In the scrums, taking play all through, honours were fairly even, and there was no great disparity in loose footwork, keen tackling and general all-round ability. Pontypool suffered in having a man off the field for the final twenty minutes; but the seven stuck manfully to their task.

Individually, Holford, Lawson, Smart and Hall were the most conspicuous of the home pack, but all played their stoutest and best – and it was wanted to-day against such a sterling pack as that fielded by the Welshmen. For Pontypool, Rees Thomas was frequently noticeable, and Oliver and Rees were strong workers in all phases of play.

Outside the scrum, the tackling and marking were too close to allow of much in the way of brilliant combination. Movements were often initiated by the respective half-backs, but it was rarely they developed. There was an exception in the concluding stages, and the try scored by Fred Webb was carried through with a perfection and accuracy, with just that devil at the finish necessary to complete as fine a bit of artistry as could be imagined. It was a great try in every sense of the word.

The contest at half-back was interesting. Dix and Coleman had a rare tussle at the rear of the respective scrums, and the Gloucestrian on the whole came out on top. Dix put the finishing touches to a clever display by scoring a very smart try, which fairly left Jack Jones and his co-centre dumbfounded.

A clever interception let Dix clean through the third line, and the rest was easy, for Price was beaten simply and cheaply, to the delight of the home crowd. Hamblin was clever and resourceful at fly-half, and his well-judged kicking was again a prominent feature. Coleman on the day was more effective than Stacey, the latter being inclined to hold on too long at times.

At three-quarter, Gloucester, despite some mistakes in handling and fielding the ball, were a stronger set than the visitors. Hudson and Lewis both did good work in the centre, and Webb, apart from his grand try, was splendid on the wing, displaying skill in attack and a sound defence. Washbourn did better all round to-day, and made one or two good attempts to score. Jack Jones was the most effective of the opposing threes, with Probert the better of the two wings.

Hayward was caught napping once or twice, but his general display showed a marked improvement. His catching was excellent, and he kicked a good length, but he is still on the slow side in getting rid of the ball. Price gave a sound display, and saved his side from disaster on more than one occasion.

The game was strenuous, and no quarter was asked or given on either side; but I saw nothing in the play of the visiting team at which to take exception. Of their supporters, however, a good deal could be said, especially those in the grand stand. The language was very objectionable, and insulting remarks were shouted to the referee which called forth a rebuke from Mr. Southby. Similar objectionable demonstrations have taken place at Kingsholm before on the part of supporters of visiting Welsh teams, and to protect their own members the Gloucester Committee will have to take action and put a stop to it.

GLOUCESTER A v. R.A.O.D.

SECONDS GO DOWN BEFORE THE LOCALS

Gloucester A visited Hempsted on Saturday to play the R.A.O.D. There was considerable interest in the game, as the home team had not been beaten on their own ground and were confident of upholding their record. Gloucester were weak in the forward line, and had a fresh man at back.

The R.A.O.D. quickly opened their score with five points, which came as a result of a lucky kick, the ball coming into the hands of Sysum, who had a clear field and raced over between the posts. Miller goaled.

After an anxious time the visitors began to warm to their work, and were getting the ball from the scrum beautifully, but while the threes were handling nicely, the boisterous play of the home team robbed them of the deserved result.

After severe pressure by the home team Gloucester worked up, and when at midfield their threes secured the ball, which eventually came to Daniells, who, showing a rare turn of speed, got clear away, and racing down the field, planted the ball between the posts, Millington converting.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

R.A.O.D. 1 goal
Gloucester A 1 goal

On the resumption Gloucester advanced to the attack, and in the course of some open play in the home 25 Millington secured and scored in a position from which he was able to add the necessary points.

Play was now practically confined to the home end, but the R.A.O.D. put up a strong defence, and Gloucester were unable to add to their score.

Breaking away the Depot made a dash up the field, and from a scrum Hodges got possession and dropped a fine goal.

This heartened the homesters, and the contest became keener, with continued pressure by the Depot.

From a scrum the home threes got the ball nicely, and as the result of their first display of passing Hill went over with a fine try. Miller added the extra points.

RESULT :

R.A.O.D. 3 goals (1d) (14 points)
Gloucester A 2 goals (10 points)

REMARKS

Although the R.A.O.D. were victors and deserved their victory by their strenuous play, it would not be correct to say that they were the better team, for the Gloucester men put in some very good work both in and behind the scrum. The home team, however, played a hustling game, and by sheer vigour beat their opponents.

The home forwards were generally beaten in the pack, and at handling their threes were not particularly good; but their back (Miller) did very good work. The Gloucester forwards, while better in the pack, were lacking in the open; but the threes, especially Millington and Daniels, did well. The Depot's win was popular with the numerous onlookers.

JC