

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1920

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER'S LUCK NOT IN AT LEICESTER

A REMARKABLE TEN MINUTES

Gloucester, with a side weakened by the absence of Holford, Smart, Voyce, Dix, Lewis, Hayes, and J. H. Webb, suffered defeat at Leicester on Saturday by 1 goal, 3 tries (14 points) to 3 tries (9 points). F. Webb (2) and Washbourn scored for the City, and Hamblin failed with the place kicks. Leicester were not at full strength, Haslemere, Taylor, Watts, and Gordon Vears being absent.

It was a remarkable game, and the result was in doubt right up to the final whistle. As in the Llanelly match, Gloucester had their chances of taking the lead in the second half, but the attacking movements were not successfully finished off. The City suffered through mistakes made by the referee, which had an important bearing on the game. The second try awarded the "Tigers" ought never to have been allowed, and Hudson was robbed of a gift try in being called back for a forward transfer when it was palpable to everyone in a direct line that there was no infringement. All the same Gloucester ought to have at least saved the game in face of these unfortunate decisions.

Ten minutes to the finish Leicester were leading by 9 points to 6, with Gloucester going very strongly. Near the centre Hamblin cut through beautifully – his one real effort in the game – and with Hudson and Washbourn in attendance a glorious opening presented itself. But with the line in sight the acting captain cut inside, instead of passing, and being tackled threw forward right on the mark. Ayliffe did actually cross later, but was whistled back, and Washbourn was held up outside after a sharp dash.

The Leicester line escaped miraculously at this point, but relief came luckily, and in less time than it takes to record the fact the play was transferred to the other end. Gloucester checked two desperate attempts to score, but from another scrum close in Wood secured and went over. The goal points followed and Leicester were now leading 14 points to 6.

But the game was not over yet. Gloucester set up a hot attack immediately on the drop out, the forwards sweeping down the field in irresistible style. Millington, gathering nicely, swung out a wide pass to Webb, who took the ball nicely, and with one of his well known dashes beat the defence and scored. No goal, but Gloucester had reduced the lead to five points.

The City had a couple of minutes to save the game, but though another supreme effort was made, it was unsuccessful and Gloucester had to acknowledge defeat by 14 points to 9.

Leicester possessed the smarter back division, the combination and handling being superior to that of the City men, who too often passed without making the slightest headway. Bates was the pivot of the Leicester attack, and this young outside half should go far. Humphries, who deputised for Dix at scrum half for Gloucester, performed very creditably against Wood (the old International), and gave little away. His service of the ball was on the slow side, and of course he was handicapped in not having had previous experience of Hamblin.

The vice-captain was not up to form and the centres consequently handicapped. The wings, however, were good, and Webb's two tries were dashing efforts. Welshman gave a first class display, and on the day was decidedly superior to Wilkinson, the Leicester custodian.

The Gloucester forwards were excellent, and they controlled the ball with far more skill than their opponents. After the first few minutes the City played Hall outside the scrum to cope with the Leicester tactics of playing a five-eighth.

The visitors' tackling was keen and close, and the only department in which they were beaten was in the lines-out, where Holford, Voyce, and Hayes were greatly missed.

JC