

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 1920

## FOOTBALL

### NEWPORT 'S RECORD INTACT

#### GLOUCESTER BEATEN BY A SUPERIOR COMBINATION

#### CITY FORWARDS' GALLANT STRUGGLE

The Team of the season – unbeaten, with the wonderful record of 22 victories as against one drawn game (the memorable match with Pontypool), and a total of 387 points scored for the Club as against 26 by opponents.

Such was the summary of the remarkable achievements of the Newport Fifteen, Gloucester's opponents to-day at Kingsholm, and it was all sufficient to account for the tremendous interest centred in the fixture, not only in the City but in the surrounding districts. To find a parallel one has to go back to the visits of the famous All Blacks and the South African touring teams, but those were special attractions which appealed to others outside the ordinary football enthusiast.

#### OLD AND KEEN RIVALS

Gloucester and Newport are very old opponents. In the Spa days some mighty tussles took place – not always of the pleasantest description – and the records will tell of games in which disputed tries played a prominent part. In the long list of engagements between the rivals Newport hold a big advantage in point of victories, but the large proportion have been recorded at the Uskside enclosure, when the City, like all other English teams have seldom given of their best.

At Kingsholm, Gloucester, though often on the losing side, have rarely gone down without a keen struggle, and the first match between the teams in 1891-2 when the playing pitch was the opposite to what it is to-day, will ever be remembered amongst the most exciting. Newport won on that occasion by a try to nil, but Gloucester's supporters always maintained that the City scored a legitimate try by Walter Taylor, which the referee disallowed.

Gloucester had a few moderate seasons in the earlier years at Kingsholm but they managed to beat Newport in 1898-9, the match in which the late Arthur Gould reappeared, but failed badly. With this triumph Gloucester made history, the four principal Welsh clubs – Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, and Llanelli – having been defeated in one season.

In the nine seasons prior to the war Gloucester put up some sterling contests against the Usksiders at home, winning two matches in 1905-6 by 5 points to nil, and in 1907-8 by 9 points to 3, and sharing honours twice in 1909-10 with 3 points each, and in 1911-12 with 6 points each. At Newport in 1909-10, Gloucester also accomplished a fine performance, making a draw with seven reserves in the side. Newport's five victories at Gloucester during this period were by no means overwhelming. In 1906-7 the Welshmen won by 3 goals (1d) 1 try to 3 tries; in 1908-9 by 1 goal 1 try to 1 try; in 1910-11 by 1 goal (from a very soft try) to nil; in 1912-13 by 2 goals (1d) 1 try, to 1 try, and in 1913-14 by 2 goals to nil.

#### PROMINENT PLAYERS ABSENT

It was unfortunate that for the great test both teams suffered in representation. Each side had one player in the England side at Twickenham – Holford (Gloucester) and Hammett (Newport) – but the City's most serious defections were A. Hudson and F. Webb at three-quarter. Hudson sustained an injury to his ribs in the Moseley match, and another wrench last week placed him out of action for such a serious game.

It was a keen disappointment to the old International to have to stand down, but he fully realised it would be unwise to run the risk of playing under the circumstances. The vacancy [at] centre was given to Millington, who had dropped out of the original selection to allow of the inclusion of Hamblin, replaced at outside half by A. Hall. J. F. Lawson (who broke a blood vessel in the thigh at Lydney the previous week) was also on the absent list, so that altogether Gloucester were short of four of the regular strength. Dix, who damaged his shoulder against Somerset, was a doubtful starter up to Friday night, but the strain yielded to massage treatment, and though not absolutely fit the clever scrum half was able to do duty, to the delight of his numerous admirers.

Newport fielded short of Uzzell and McPherson, besides Hammett. Shea, who overnight had been engaged in a boxing contest at Hull, which it was understood he had won on points after going the full distance, was able to make the journey to Gloucester and take his place in the team – a fact which put confidence in the Newport team and their supporters.

## TEAMS

### GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. Welshman.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown, T. Millington, L. Hamblin, and W. Washbourn.

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

FORWARDS : S. Smart, F. Ayliffe, A. Ward, T. Voyce, N. Hayes, J. H. Webb, J. Harris, and C. Mumford.

### NEWPORT

BACK : F. W. Birt.

THREE-QUARTERS : W. J. A. Owen, R. C. S. Plummer, J. Shea, and A. E. Morgan.

HALF-BACKS : J. Wetter and W. J. Martin.

FORWARDS : P. Jones, T. Jones, L. Attewell, J. Whitfield, W. Radford, R. Edwards, A. Bell, and Mapson Williams.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol)

## THE GAME

After a wet and dull morning the afternoon turned brilliantly fine, and the attendance, as expected, beat all records for an ordinary Club fixture. Half an hour before the time for the kick-off the accommodation as far as actually being able to see the game appeared fully taxed, but spectators continued to flock to the ground, including a large number of Newport supporters. During the wait the Wagon Works Band discoursed a capital selection of music.

The teams met with a hearty reception on entering the field, Shea meeting with special recognition. Gloucester lost the toss, and Smart kicked off against the sun and breeze. There was no response by the Newport player who received, and the home forwards dashing up took the ball a few yards before being checked by Williams, who injured his wrist and had to have attention from the ambulance men.

Both sides were early penalised for scrum infringements, but little ground was gained, and the centre was the scene of operations for a few minutes. A loose rush by the Newport forwards was only partially checked, but off-side spoiled the movement. In the home half Hall picked up and punted high to Birt, whose kick was charged down. The Gloucester forwards, with Smart in the van, dashed away, and Newport were hard pressed. A penalty, however, to Newport saw Birt find touch in the home 25 with a fine kick.

Heeling by Gloucester enabled Dix to open out, but a bad pass went to the wing, and Morgan kicked through, but off-side by a visitor gave the City a penalty. This did not avail the home team much, but later the City forwards came away grandly, and only a splendid pick-up and kick to touch saved the situation.

Play was hotly contested, Gloucester playing finely against the wind. The home forwards heeling again, Millington brought off a good dash, but was eventually stopped. Shea responded with a sharp burst, but he was upset and Gloucester maintained their position.

Dashing play by the Gloucester front gradually made headway and the City went beyond the centre line, where there was a temporary stoppage owing to Attewell being winded. Resuming, Smart led the forwards away from a line out, but a smart bit of play by Shea checked nicely.

So far Gloucester had held their own splendidly in all departments, but especially in the lines-out. Newport, with a sharp forward rush, made a few yards, but the home men effected a good save. Then came a clever reverse pass by Wetter, which set the Newport backs on the move. Plummer served Shea nicely, and Morgan kicked across but nothing resulted. A penalty followed to Gloucester shortly afterwards, but Newport initiating another attack, Plummer tried hard to break through but was unsuccessful.

Play was desperately keen in the left corner, ending in Voyce breaking away and bringing Gloucester relief. The visitors, however, were on the run again, and from a kick across Morgan fielded grandly and made a brilliant pick up. He, however, was hampered and his cross-kick was taken by Welshman, who saved. Newport tried hard to break the defence, but the tackling was superb.

Newport, however, were having the better of the exchanges, and following some clever cross-kicking [7 or 8 words unreadable] and Martin being well placed scored near the posts. [2 or 3 words unreadable] kicked a neat goal. Thus the first points of the period came after 25 minutes' play.

Gloucester re-started, and the City at once rushed to their opponents' half. Wetter changed the venue with a screw punt to touch, but a minute later off-side by Newport lost them a good slice of ground. A lucky kick going to Welshman, the latter ran round and passed to Brown, but the wing man put in a poor kick to touch and the visitors had a fine opening. The City, however, saved on the line. Newport [4 or 5 words unreadable] obtained a splendid [4 or 5 words unreadable] some loose work [4 or 5 words unreadable] who with a strong burst beat the [word, words unreadable] and scored under the posts for Birt to convert.

The wind was a big factor in favour of the visitors, and they utilised it to the full. The result was that play was mostly in the Gloucester half. The City, however, put in a good fight, despite the handicap, the forwards especially doing well in the tight mauls and loose. Newport, however, maintained their advantage to the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :  
NEWPORT ..... 2 goals  
GLOUCESTER ..... Nil

Newport restarted, and at once made tracks for the home 25. They, however, were beaten off, and then there came a wonderful rush by the home forwards nearly three parts the length of the ground. The Newport defence was beaten and the ball kicked over the line, but in the desperate race for the touch the Newport man was given the verdict, though it was a desperately near thing.

Following the drop-out, Dix was prominent with a neat run, but Wetter ran across and effected a smothering tackle. Working well together, the home forwards rushed pell mell for the visitors' line, and Birt had some difficulty in turning the ball out of play. Not to be denied, the City carried another scrum, and two strong dashes carried players right to the mark. Ayliffe in the second case was only held up in the nick of time.

A short dash by Bell and a penalty kick enabled Newport to gain relief, and play was fought out at the centre. Webb aided Gloucester with a couple of useful touch-finders, and the forwards made further headway.

Back Newport came to Welshman, but the City custodian fielded grandly from their feet and punted down the field to Owen, who was quickly pulled down in trying to run back. Rain now commenced to fall, but the play showed no falling off in vigour and determination. Newport twice tried to bring their back players into operation, but to no purpose, and ensuing exchanges were pretty even.

At length the Newport backs were set going by Martin, and Plummer, after cutting inside, cross-kicked to the right wing. Shea coming up took the ball over the line and gained the touch for the third try. Birt failed at the place kick.

Gloucester restarted vigorously, Voyce and Ayliffe being prominent. But the Newport backs were soon away again, and a brilliant combined effort, in which Shea was distinguished, ended in Owen dashing over and racing round behind the posts. Birt added the goal points, making 18-0 in favour of Newport – a sure and safe margin of points for victory.

A splendid effort by Voyce following the re-start put Gloucester well down, and with a supreme effort the City got very close. Newport struggled hard against a determined attack, but success came to the City ere long. Hall picking up burst through splendidly, and giving a timely pass to a forward the ball was shot sharply out to Brown, who dashed over with a corner try. Welshman failed with a fine effort to goal.

Encouraged by this score, Gloucester played up strongly, but good play by Birt sent the game to the home half. Here operations were waged for a few minutes until the Gloucester front came away with dashing work. Mumford and Dix combined in a neat move down touch, and the latter cross-kicked cleverly, but the backs were out of position and nothing resulted.

Gloucester, thanks to good efforts by Washbourn and Brown, held their own splendidly in subsequent play, but they got no luck. A neat movement by Dix on the short side of the scrum gave Harris a chance, but the latter passed badly.

The last five minutes showed no slackness on either side, and to the end both teams struggled hard and well, but there was no further scoring.

RESULT :

NEWPORT ..... 3 goals, 1 try (18 points)

GLOUCESTER ..... 1 try (3 points)

## REMARKS

The Newport record is intact, and on the day's play the Welshmen clearly deserved their victory. At the same time one cannot but fail to appreciate the Gloucester forwards for their fine display against the formidable opposition opposed to them. It was no fault of the front that Gloucester were on the losing side this afternoon. From the start the City pack put plenty of dash, keenness, and determination into their play, and with proper support in the rear the result would have been a very close one.

The whole eight can be congratulated on their showing to-day. Play was deadly keen, and hard knocks were given and taken, but the City ever offered a bold front and maintained their form to the end. Individually, Smart, Voyce, and Ayliffe were particularly distinguished, the International's work in the lines-out being as good as anything seen in the match. The others were little inferior.

Behind, the Gloucester half-backs did their part creditably. Dix stood up to Wetter splendidly, and several times got the better of his opponent. His passing out was efficient and well-judged, and Hall made the best use of his opportunities. But the third line lacked the pace and skill of their opponents, and this was where the City were handicapped.

Of the four three-quarters, Millington proved the most useful, but the work of the line was mostly individual. Welshman had a lot to do at full back, but came through very successfully on the whole.

Newport are undoubtedly a great side, but the team were worried on occasions to-day by the close marking and tackling of the home men. The forwards were fast and clever in the loose, but there was a lot of waiting about off-side, for which offence players were duly penalised. Bell, Attewell and Edwards were the pick of the eight. Wetter and Martin showed clever combination at half, but the former did not shine to the extent he did at Swansea in the International match.



The third line was composed of players who possess skill and resource, but the combined efforts seen during the match were very few. Shea did one or two smart runs, but Plummer was the most effective judged on the afternoon's play. Morgan is a speedy and clever wing, and Owen (of Pill Harriers), who was drafted into the team, proved a very useful substitute.

Birt, capable and reliable as ever, was a first class custodian, and did excellent service for his side all through the game.

Gloucester were beaten by a superior combination, but the City were by no means disgraced, especially considering the weakened ranks and the limitation of the reserve strength at the disposal of the Club. In this latter respect Newport have a big advantage.

## GLOUCESTER A v. NEWPORT A

### CITY SECONDS BEATEN BY ELEVEN POINTS

At Newport. In the first half Humphries scored for Gloucester, and Male (penalty) and Rees for Newport. Later Thompson and Trevor Evans added tries for the home team one of which Male converted.

#### RESULT :

Newport A ..... 2 goals (1p), 2 tries (14 pts.)  
Gloucester A ..... 1 try (3 pts.)