

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1920

FOOTBALL

LEICESTER'S "DOUBLE" OVER GLOUCESTER

CITY'S FIRST DEFEAT AT HOME BY ENGLISH CLUB

LUCKY TRY DECIDED THE ISSUE

One of the strongest club teams in the country, and enjoying the reputation of always playing open and attractive football, the annual visit of Leicester to Kingsholm was anticipated with keen interest.

Gloucester still had one record to maintain this season – their invincibility against English teams at home – but the City fully recognised that in meeting the "Tigers" they were up against one of the stiffest propositions of the season.

Kingsholm, however, has rarely prove a lucky ground for Leicester, and in the long list of matches in which they have figured against Gloucester two solitary victories have been credited to the Midlanders. At Leicester the City have been far more successful, and in the aggregate of games played the Westerners can claim a big margin of wins over their rivals.

In the first match between the teams in January, Leicester were successful by 14 points to 9, but there was little in it, and on the general play Gloucester might worthily have reversed the result. On that occasion both sides suffered from absentees owing to the clashing of the International trial, Holford, Voyce, Smart, and Dix being away from the City ranks, whilst Leicester were minus Haselmere and F. Taylor, besides Watt.

To-day, again, neither club was at full strength. Smart and Voyce rested in view of the England-Scotland match next week, and Norman Hayes (suffering with a poisoned finger) and J. Brown (unwell) were also out of the Gloucester team; whilst Greenwood and F. Taylor (Internationals) stood down from the Leicester ranks.

For the second week in succession the weather turned out badly, heavy rain, which commenced to fall about 1 o'clock, continuing with more or less severity onward.

With so little covered accommodation the 'gate' suffered considerably, and the conditions were such as to render correct football very difficult.

The teams : –

GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. Welshman.

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

HALF-BACKS : W. Dix and T. Millington.

FORWARDS : G. Holford (capt.), A. Redding, F. W. Ayliffe, J. H. Webb, A. Hall, F. Mansell, F. Ward, and C. Mumford.

LEICESTER

BACK : J. Wilkinson.

THREE-QUARTERS : E. Haselmere, N. Coates, F. M. Taylor, W. Watt, and A. E. Barrett.

HALF-BACKS : G. W. Wood and A. Bates.

FORWARDS : W. J. Allen, G. Ward, Gordon Vears, G. Francis, W. C. Hicks, C. Cross, and D. J. Norman.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol).

THE GAME

Leicester played the eight-back formation, whilst Hall acted as rover for Gloucester. The reason for Hamblin's inclusion at the last moment was due to the fact that Jack Brown had been taken ill during the morning and was unable to play. Redding, being up from Cinderford to see the match, consented to fill Voyce's place.

Leicester kicked off, and after an exchange of kicks Wilkinson missed, but recovered and managed to get the ball straight to touch. Play opened very fast. Leicester opened out smartly, but the tackling was safe. Bates early shone in a smart run and pass, but Haselmere was well tackled by Webb. Then a penalty to Gloucester enabled the City to travel beyond the centre. Dix further improved the situation with a tricky bit of play, but off-side by Holford gave the visitors a free, and Wilkinson found touch nicely. The City captain was prominent a minute later with a clever punt, but another penalty to the visitors neutralised the ground gained.

A run across the field and kick by Haselmere carried the Tigers to the home half, but Gloucester getting the ball out, Dix started a round of passing. Hudson failed to take his transfer, however, and the movement stopped. Charging down a kick, Hall picked up and broke away finely, but Holford could not take his pass with several colleagues well placed.

Ensuing play was fast and open, the Leicester backs indulging in a series of exchanges which broke down at Watt. By the aid of good kicking Leicester gained a footing in the Gloucester quarter; but Redding came away grandly to the centre, where Wood saved nicely. A couple of minutes later, by loose kicking, Leicester sent over the Gloucester line, and forced a minor.

On the drop-out play favoured the visitors, Cross breaking clean away to Welshman. His transfer, however, was not accepted, and a good chance was thrown away. By the aid of a mark Gloucester worked out to mid-field, where operations were keenly contested.

With a supreme effort the Gloucester forwards got away in grand style, but the ball was sent too hard to Wilkinson, who returned nicely to touch. Leicester again tried to open out, but Coates punted instead of passing, and Hudson was able to get in a useful kick to touch under pressure. So far play had been bright and open, despite the conditions, and was fairly even. A big rush by the home forwards promised well, but the movement was checked on the 25-line. Here Wood and Watt tried to work the blind side, but it did not come off.

A penalty against Leicester saw Welshman find touch with a beautiful kick, but the ground was quickly regained by the Leicester forwards. Off-side, however, again gave Gloucester the advantage, Welshman again getting in a nice touch-finder. Heeling by the Tigers saw Bates bring off a beautiful dodgy run and pass. A cross-kick followed, but Webb effected a fine save.

Hall was prominent with a good spoiling effort when the visiting backs were away, but Leicester continued to do well and Gloucester were closely pressed. Wood and Bates worked hard for the desired opening, and once it looked certain the home defence would be pierced, but the tackling was very deadly.

Subsequent play was confined to the home quarter, and clever combination by the visiting backs nearly brought about a score. Webb, however, upset Haselmere and Coates, in quick succession. By a splendid combined rush Gloucester eased the pressure, and Webb further improved with a lovely touchfinder. Hall and Hudson were to the fore later with strong bursts, but the Leicester forwards, with a grand bit of footwork, transferred operations to the other end, where play was hotly contested.

Gloucester changed the venue with a capital effort, and then fine combination from a throw-out saw Holford clear, but there had been a previous infringement. Heeling well the City backs brought off a nice bout of passing, Washbourn being the last to receive. The wing man tried hard to cut inside Barrett, but just failed, and his pass was knocked on by an opponent.

After this the City men attacked strongly, and forced Wilkinson to kick dead; whilst Dix forced another minor with an attempt to drop a goal. Soon after the interval was called.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

GLOUCESTER Nil

LEICESTER Nil

On the restart Leicester started with a round of passing, but a forward transfer was given with a possible opening. Welshman, with good kicks, sent to midfield, and then came a wonderful rush half the length of the field by the City forwards. The ball was sent over the line, where Millington made a big attempt to gain the touch, but just failed.

Webb replied finely to the drop-out, and next the Gloucester backs had a bout of passing. It broke down, but Washbourn kicked across and enabled Holford to gather. The captain, however, tried to drop a goal, but failed badly, and only a minor resulted.

Gloucester were going strongly now, and confined play to the Leicester half. Hamblin checked a dribble nicely, and later Hudson made nice headway. This was followed with a grand forward rush by the home pack, Redding being well in the van. Leicester partially checked, and a scrum ensued on the visitors' 25.

For an infringement Leicester were penalised, but though the position was a nice one, Welshman failed to land a goal. Haselmere pluckily ran the ball out and found touch near the half-way with a good kick. Well fed by Dix and Millington, Hudson dashed past Watt and reached Wilkinson, when he tried an inside pass, but it was rule forward.

Hall next spoiled a promising movement by failing to take a transfer, but Gloucester still kept up the attack. A knock-on called the City back with Hamblin well away and Webb on his right, to the disappointment of the home crowd.

Working well together, the Gloucester forwards rushed their opponents clean off their feet, but Wilkinson smartly checked. The Tigers gained a momentary footing in the home half by big kicking, but Ayliffe led the home forwards back in a superb rush, which was not stopped until the visitors' 25 was reached.

Hall hereabouts brought off a strong run through the opposing forwards, but his transfer was forward, and then the Midlanders, with a loose rush, reached the home 25 for the first time in this half. Gloucester heeled from the ensuing scrum, and Dix passed to Millington, who had his kick charged down. The Leicester forwards at once seized their opportunity – a lucky one – and the ball being taken past Welshman, Norman dropped on it and scored. Allen failed at goal.

Gloucester restarted with vigour, and were soon on the move, but Haselmere returned with a clever kick to touch. The City forwards got the ball and Dix served the backs well, but the movement broke down and nothing resulted. Leicester retaliated with a similar move, but made no headway, and centre play followed. Again Dix opened out, and Hudson and Washbourn tried hard to beat the defence, but touch was given. Then came a fine effort by Webb, who cut straight up the field and passed with only a few yards to go. A deadly tackle, however, saved the situation for Leicester.

The Tigers cleared with useful kicking, and in turn had two good chances of scoring, but Watt was finely brought down by Webb, and Mansell saved at the critical moment in the second instance. Gloucester quickly rushed out to more favourable quarters, Hall and Millington, and later Hudson, showing up with some splendid combination, but the scoring chance did not come.

In the concluding stages the City made a big effort to bring off the equalising try. Dix served Millington cleverly at the centre, and after Hall had handled the ball went to Hudson, but the latter failed to accept, and Watt kicked down the field. This was Gloucester's last chance, the game ending soon afterwards.

RESULT :

LEICESTER 1 try
GLOUCESTER Nil

REMARKS

Gloucester were unlucky to lose to-day, for in the second half, except for brief periods, during one of which Leicester obtained the winning points, the City were well on top in the play. The City had numerous opportunities of opening their account long before Norman scored that lucky try, but things went wrong at the critical moment. On several occasions, however, bad tactics were responsible for losing scoring opportunities, drops for goal being attempted when it was clearly the policy to pass.

Considering the conditions the game was fast and interesting, and provided many thrilling moments. On the treacherous surface there were bound to be mistakes in handling, but now and again there were some bright movements, and here the Leicester backs were seen to advantage in the earlier stages, Bates especially distinguishing himself with some smart kicks.

Forward, the struggle was keen and vigorous, with honours fairly even on the whole. Some of the footwork on both sides was brilliant in the extreme, and it was not an isolated case to see the ball travel half the length of the ground. The "Tigers," well led by Ward and Allen, were adepts at the cross dribble, and the men were fast on the ball. In the tight both packs heeled at every opportunity, and the ball for the most part came back clean and sharp.

The Gloucester forwards were in better all-round trim to-day than last week, and the work generally was of the best. The City were up against a hard, keen and clever set, but Leicester could claim no advantage in any department. Ayliffe, Webb, and Redding were always conspicuous for Gloucester, but the whole eight lasted splendidly and were all out to the finish.

Behind, Leicester were the smarter division, and some of their work in the first half was very praiseworthy. Dix and Wood had a rare duel at scrum half, and both got through a lot of clever work. Bates was not much in the picture in the second position, but there were occasions when he displayed skill and ability in making openings, and being quick off the mark was difficult to check.

Millington was more than useful, and Hall, in his position as rover, was prominent for some grand stopping and tackling, whilst one or two of his bursts ought to have been developed.

The City three-quarters were uncertain in their handling, and some promising movements failed badly when openings had been made. Of the line, Webb was the pick, the right-winger doing splendidly both in attack and defence. Hamblin, who pluckily turned out despite being unwell, accomplished some useful work, and Hudson was a tower of strength under pressure. Washbourn was a trier all through, and that one effort of his to break through deserved better result.

For Leicester, Coates and Watt played capitally at centre, though both were at fault in giving and taking passes. Haselmere, the fast left winger, was kept well in check by Webb, but it was easy to notice his scoring ability given a dry ground and a less watchful opponent.

At full back, Wilkinson was better than Welshman on the day's play, though the Gloucester custodian by no means played a bad game. The Leicester man, however, found touch better, and was very safe in fielding and in checking the Gloucester forwards.