

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1920

## FOOTBALL

SWANSEA TEN POINTS DOWN

STRENUOUS GAME AT KINGSHOLM

GLOUCESTER'S ALL-ROUND FORM TOO GOOD FOR WELSHMEN

CLEVER DROPPED GOAL BY DIX

For the first time since October 16th, when Gloucester defeated Guy's Hospital, the premier City team proper were at home to-day, and with the famous Swansea Fifteen as visitors the match was regarded as one of the most attractive fixtures in the programme.

Though regularly failing against Swansea at St. Helen's, Gloucester can point to a very creditable list of successes against the Welshmen at Kingsholm; in fact, only once since 1905-6, and that in 1912-13, have the All Whites recorded a victory at the City's headquarters. It was hoped to retain this splendid record this afternoon, and make amends for the rather indifferent displays away against Northampton, Cardiff, and Pontypool.

With the exception of W. F. Warde, who was suffering with a slight chill, Gloucester placed their strongest available side in the field. T. Voyce had been selected to play for England in the trial, but business engagements prevented his making the long journey to Bradford, and the Rugby Union Committee excused him, leaving the International free to assist his club. There was a change made at left centre three-quarter, where A. Robbins, who did so well at outside half the previous week against Moseley, was tried in place of Washbourn. Robbins was not new to the position, for he had played there and on the wing for Pontypool, and a good deal was expected from the Bream man.

The Swansea team did not reach Gloucester till the 2.17 train, and had to make straight from the Station to Kingsholm. The Welshmen lacked the services of Joe Rees (back), W. Bowen (half), and T. Parker, Huxtable, and Bert Palmer (forwards). There was a splendid attendance, and the ground was in fine condition.

Teams : –

#### GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. Smith.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown, A. Robbins, T. Millington, and N. Daniell.

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

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

#### SWANSEA

BACK : D. Bevan.

THREE-QUARTER BACKS : Chris Evans, F. C. Palmer, Islwyn Evans, and R. Harding.

HALF-BACKS : Tudor Williams and W. Griffiths.

FORWARDS : Ll. Jones, J. John, A. Evans, G. Evans, W. Tanner, Sid Parker, Phil Evans, and G. Sambrook.

Referee : Mr. J. Southby (Bristol).

#### THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss, and the visitors kicked off against the wind and sun. Smith replied well to touch near the centre, where the City forwards broke away nicely, but were checked. From the first scrum Swansea heeled, and Williams ran round and passed to Griffiths, but the latter was collared, and losing the ball the home men carried on, but did not gain many yards. Dix gathered in the loose, and fed Millington, who sent on to Daniell; but the wing man failed to gather the ball and it rolled to touch.

Some fast loose play followed in the Swansea half, but the latter, by the aid of a couple of penalties, kept Gloucester from getting dangerous. Swansea were getting the ball in the scrums, and the halves initiated a couple of bouts of passing. The second movement, however, broke down badly, and Robbins and another dribbled away. Bevan fumbled badly at the critical moment, allowing the ball to go between his legs and over the line. Smart, well up, raced ahead, and beating the opposition scored behind the posts amidst great cheering. Smith took the easy place, but failed to raise the ball – a miserable attempt.

Swansea resumed, and there was a spell of play just inside the Gloucester half. Some good kicking by Smith and Harding was duly recognised, and then the Gloucester forwards got away with a brilliant loose burst which was only stopped in the nick of time. Later, from a pass by Dix, Hall broke through finely, but in attempting a wide pass the ball was knocked out of its course by an opponent, and the Welshmen were able to save. Bevan cleared cleverly from another dangerous rush, but Gloucester worked back. For off-side by Williams, Voyce had a shot for goal, but a good attempt failed.

Following the drop-out Smith failed badly with a couple of kicks, and gave Swansea a good slice of ground. Again the home custodian was at fault, being collared in possession in front of his goal. A useful bit of play by the forwards changed the venue, and centre play followed. The erratic wind, however, was playing tricks with the ball, and passing movements attempted broke down.

Fine work by the Swansea front enabled the visitors to control the game for a period, but there was little in it. At length Ayliffe and Holford shone in a grand bit of footwork which L. Evans checked in daring fashion on the 25 line. Gloucester heeling, Dix served Hall, and the ball going across to Daniell, the right-winger made a splendid dash down touch, but just failed to escape the attentions of Harding. The effort, however, led to a sharp attack on the Swansea line. The defence, however, was very fine, the tackling being immense.

Gloucester tried hard to open out, and later a feeble kick by a Swansea man gave Brown a good chance, but the 'Cestrian knocked on in trying to gather. The City, however, kept up the pressure, and the ball coming out to Dix, the home scrum-worker manœuvred for position and dropped a lovely goal, tremendous cheering greeting the performance.

Lawson replied finely to the restart with a left-foot punt to touch some 40 yards down the field. Swansea worked back, but the City forwards retaliated with a good loose rush, which gave the City an advantage. Immediately the Welshmen dribbled away, Webb saving in fearless style.

The contest forward was terrific, both packs doing grand work. But Gloucester were let down through Smith, who, slow in getting to the ball from a kick, failed to pick up, and Swansea sent right to the line, where Brown ran to touch. A penalty enabled the home team to gain some 20 yards, and then followed some keen out-of-touch play.

Working together with a will, Holford led the City forwards in a splendid 30 yards' dribble, the ball eventually going to touch. From the throw-out Lawson received and punted over the line for a minor. On the drop-out Brown was seen to advantage with a smart dash which troubled the defenders. The ball getting loose, the City took it over the line, but the final kick was too hard and the ball went dead.

Gloucester confined operations to their opponents' half, where they struggled hard for a score. The attack was beaten off, but from a penalty Voyce made a grand attempt to kick a goal, the ball hitting the upright and rebounding into the field of play. The Gloucester forwards, following up, secured the ball, but the defence prevailed. In the next minute, however, the Swansea defence was beaten, but the whistle had gone for a knock-on. Bevan stopped the Gloucester forwards in brilliant fashion shortly afterwards, and then more fumbling by Smith allowed Swansea to reach the other end, where play operated at the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

GLOUCESTER ..... 1 goal (d), 1 try  
SWANSEA ..... Nil

Ayliffe restarted, the ball going to A. Evans, who ran instead of kicking, and put his forwards in possession. A smart bit of combination followed, ending in a long kick going to touch near the Gloucester line. The City quickly eased the pressure, and a flying kick by Millington sent the ball to Bevan, who returned well. More flying kicks ended favourably for Gloucester, the City being also aided by mistakes by the visitors. This was followed by a lot of scrambling and wild play, but eventually the Gloucester forwards got away, and they went pell-mell for the line. The ball was eventually gathered, but the pass was not accepted, a glorious opportunity being missed.

Almost immediately there was another chance, but it went astray. There were too many errors in fielding and passing to make the game really attractive, but one effort by Robbins, Hall and Daniell was very praiseworthy. Voyce had another shot from a penalty, but did not find the cross-bar, and Swansea cleared with a nice kick.

A spell of even, though very strenuous, work ensued, from which neither side gained much. At length the City front shone in a combined burst which Palmer effectively stopped on the 25-line. For not putting the ball in straight Swansea were penalised, but Voyce had no better success than before with his kick for goal.

The drop-out saw more keen work forward, Swansea giving nothing away. But Gloucester were on top, and the City pack got in another capital rush. A visitor kicked across, but Millington came up and with a Soccer-like thrust with his foot sent the ball ahead. Following up, he kicked over the line, and Daniell, putting on his best pace, beat Bevan for the touch and scored a good try. Voyce's kick for goal struck the upright.

Resuming, Swansea by good all-round work attacked strongly, and for a couple of minutes the home line was hotly assailed. The ball being carried over the line by Voyce, a scrum was ordered five yards outside, from which the City effectively cleared with a good kick.

Headway was continued with a neat passing bout and a fine dash by Daniell, who tried his utmost to clear Harding near the touch-line. In some hot work Mumford was laid out, but the game continued until the ball became dead, and it finally went to touch at the Gloucester 25, chiefly through Smith's weakness.

For palpable unfair holding in the line-out Swansea were penalised, and with the resultant kick Gloucester reached the centre. Swansea gained a few yards by some back play, and then a penalty was given against Gloucester. I. Evans' kick, however, was easily stopped, the ball failing to rise any height.

The game continued fast and keen, with Swansea holding the advantage for a time. The All Whites, by a strong forward rush, went very close once, but the coveted try did not eventuate.

The home forwards were instrumental in easing the pressure, a sharp rush taking play to the quarter-line. The end was getting near now, but the Welshmen made desperate efforts to open their account. F. Palmer put in a clever run, and looked likely to get through, but he was cut off.

Then after the City had got well out of danger, the Welshmen brought off one of the prettiest bits of combination in the match, a score failing owing to a forward transfer.

Before the final whistle Gloucester made a big effort to add to their lead. A splendid break-through by Millington and a nice pass to Daniell sent the wing man going, but the opposition had cut across, and he was stopped. Gloucester went on and over the line, but were called back, and a long punt sent play beyond mid-field.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER .... 1 goal (d), 2 tries (10 pts.)  
SWANSEA .....Nil

## REMARKS

Gloucester won well, as they deserved to do; but considering the Welshmen's weakened ranks – I heard the All Whites had some difficulty in completing the Fifteen this morning – they put up a surprisingly good game. Forward especially the All Whites were strong and thrustful, both in the scrums and outside, and the City had several anxious moments, particularly in the second half. On the whole, perhaps, Gloucester held the advantage, but the City were robbed of the fruits of a lot of hard work by the feebleness of Smith, at full back; but more anon.

Spectacularly the game was by no means a great one, though the keenness exhibited in the front, with plenty of dashing footwork, created plenty of excitement. Only at rare intervals did Swansea approach the old standard of back play – their best effort was seen in the closing stages, when a wonderful bit of combination went unrewarded owing to a forward transfer at the critical moment.

The players were nippy enough and kicked well, but the artistry of such performers as Owen and Jones, Trew, George Davies, Gordon and others was missing. Still, the side showed football good enough to account for the best of English clubs, and on this account the City's handsome victory must be set down as a very meritorious achievement.

Gloucester held a distinct superiority in the first half; but one must be impartial, and not forget the All Whites had to take the field within half an hour of a long and tiring journey. Those Gloucester players who have made the trip to St. Helen's will readily agree this was no mean handicap.

The City front fully sustained their reputation for brilliance in the open and good scrummaging; but there was a lot of faulty tackling at times, which must be remedied. The collaring was much too high, and opponents were allowed to escape from grips in unaccountable fashion. The "Plant 'em low" maxim was not carried out by several players to-day.

Taking the play throughout, the Gloucester forwards had quite a fair share of the ball in the scrums, but the heeling might have been quicker. The work in the loose was the great feature, and several of the rushes half the length of the field were masterpieces of speed, judgment and combination. Individually, Ayliffe, Voyce, Holford, Smart and Webb were the more prominent, but the eight had the pace of the opposition as a whole.

Among the backs the play generally was lacking in sparkling movements, the handling being none too certain on either side. Dix had a smothering opponent in Tudor Williams; but the City scrum-worker accomplished a lot of clever play, and his dropped goal was one of the prettiest imaginable; no blind shot, but a cool and deliberate effort after gaining position. Hall was at his best in tackling and stopping rushes. He was not always happy in taking his passes, and once or twice tried to "barge through" opponents when perhaps it would have paid better to open out.

Robbins, at centre three-quarter, was watched with interest, and the Bream man did enough to warrant his retention in the side. He is a brainy player, and when he has had a few more games with the side his presence in the backs should tend to improve the combination, and scoring ability of the line. Millington, I thought, played one of his best games of the season. He broke through several times in fine style, and it was mainly through his opportunism that Gloucester scored their second try. On the wings, Daniell and Brown fitted in well, the former being the more noticeable by the fact that he was more often in possession. Both men were sound in defence, and gave very little rope to the Swansea wingers.

At full-back George Smith was clean off his game, and it was fortunate for the City they held an advantage in other departments. He could not seem to settle down, and his gathering of the ball, usually a strong point with him, was very faulty. Just before the end he made one fine save and clearance, but this was easily the best thing he did during the game. Gloucester must still look around for a reliable full-back.

Swansea were best served forward by the Evans's and Ll. Jones, but the eight were all workers and gave Gloucester an object lesson in close and sure tackling.

Williams and Griffiths were fair at half, and of the threes F. Palmer and Chris Evans distinguished themselves. Bevan proved a capable substitute for Joe Rees at full-back. After that one bad miss, which allowed Gloucester to open the scoring, he was seldom at fault, and he robbed the City forwards of the ball very cleverly on numerous occasions. On the day he was streets ahead of the home custodian.

Next week : Gloucester v. Stroud, at Kingsholm; Gloucestershire v. Cornwall, at Camborne.

JC