

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1921

FOOTBALL

HONOURS EVEN AT PORTSMOUTH

CITY'S ILL-LUCK AGAINST THE UNITED SERVICES

SCRAMBLING GAME IN "VERITABLE MUD POOL"

It was unfortunate after the fine showing the City team made during the holiday games that the side should have to be so changed for the important match with the United Services at Portsmouth. But there was no help for it.

Dix and Voyce, of course, were engaged in the Twickenham trial, but it was injuries that kept Sid Brown and Norman Daniell (the respective wing three-quarters) out of the field. Both were damaged on Tuesday, and D. J. Brown (the reserve) was also crocked. In addition, Ayliffe and Smart were also disabled on Monday, and though both made the journey, they experienced great difficulty in shaking off the effects of the knocks received.

The back division, under the prevailing circumstances, had to be reorganised, Collins and Hall appearing at half-back, and F. Webb and Millington being joined at three-quarter by T. Burns and A. Robbins. The latter is not new to the wing position, and against Bridgwater, whilst deputising for Sid Brown, he showed splendid form.

Forward, Gloucester had a useful pack, and if the men could only touch their best form the Services were not likely to gain much advantage.

The Services were short of the International halves (Davies and Kershaw) and Gardner (forward), but there is a wealth of talent to pick from at Portsmouth, and the substitutes were all tried players.

This was Gloucester's first appearance at Pompey, and the team had looked forward to the visit. The party travelled overnight, arriving at their destination about 12 o'clock.

The weather, unfortunately, turned out very bad, rain falling persistently all the morning. A naval officer visited the hotel, and escorted the party over the Dockyard and the battleship Barham, which proved very interesting.

There were changes in the Services team, Sir John Wood giving place to Lieut. Dearden at half, and Lieuts. Pearce and Grahame substituting Stoneman and Loriston Clarke forward. On the Gloucester side J. Harris, indisposed, stood down for Mansell.

Teams : –

#### GLOUCESTER

BACK : C. Cook.

THREE-QUARTERS : F. Webb (capt.), T. Burns, T. Millington, and A. Robbins.

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

FORWARDS : F. W. Ayliffe, G. Holford, S. Smart, F. Mansell, J. F. Lawson, J. H. Webb, W. F. Warde, and C. Mumford.

#### UNITED SERVICES

BACK : Lieut. Evan Thomas.

THREE-QUARTERS : Lieut. Head, Lieut. Thomson, Lieut. Carnduff, and Lieut. Gray.

HALF-BACKS : Lieut. Dearden and Lieut. Chevalier.

FORWARDS : Lieutenants Agnew, Pearce, Grahame, O'Connor, Hyslop, Chapman, Calloran, and Lieut.-Comdr. Hynes.

Referee : Mr. Wilkins.

## THE GAME

The ground was in a shocking condition, and the conditions generally were as bad as they possibly could be. There were only two or three hundred spectators present.

The Services started, but the ball failed to go ten yards and a scrum followed at the centre. Gloucester heeled, but Collins failed to gather the greasy ball, and the Services dribbled away, but Millington saved. A strong run by Thomson put the Services on the attack, but the City tackled well.

Loose rushing kept Gloucester on the defence, and a nice touch-kick by Thomas put the ball near the corner. The ball was rushed over in the subsequent scrum, but a Gloucester man managed to kick dead.

On the drop-out Gloucester, by the aid of a useful kick, got beyond the centre. On the treacherous ground, however, accurate football was well-nigh impossible, and mistakes in handling and fielding were of common occurrence.

The play was confined to the Services' half, but it was all forward work, and the rival players were soon plastered with mud. An interception by Millington saw the centre burst through and pass wide to Robbins, but the latter knocked on – quite an excusable mistake under the conditions.

Gloucester, playing strongly, set up a warm attack with loose rushing, and there was a possible opening, but the players could not hold the ball.

A penalty against Gloucester for off-side gave the Services relief, but the City soon worked back. Play, however, was of a scrambling nature, and anything in the way of spectacular work was out of the question.

Robbins made a good attempt to drop a goal from a penalty, and after this the Services made an incursion into the City half. The forwards dribbling well, Gloucester quickly worked out with fine dashing footwork, and a player picking up passed inside to Burns, who had a walk in, but the whistle went for a forward pass. Immediately after, Millington dodged through splendidly, but his pass, with a good chance, was again given forward.

Gloucester continued to have the better of the exchanges, and were doing very well forward. Lawson was prominent with a splendid dribble, but off-side was given with the goal-line in sight. Gloucester had hard lines a couple of minutes later, Robbins crossing from a pass smartly, but a forward transfer was ruled.

Gloucester attacked resolutely during the succeeding play, but could not get any luck. Clever work by the forwards again took the ball over the line, with Robbins well up, but the ball bounced away from him, and the Services man touched down.

The Services did better after this, but could not get beyond the centre. Cook was playing a good game and kicking a good length.

HALF-TIME SCORE :  
GLOUCESTER ..... Nil  
UNITED SERVICES ..... Nil

Gloucester had certainly had much the best of the first half, and deserved to have been at least six points up.

On the restart Webb led a splendid dribble to the Services' quarters, but Chevalier effected a daring save. Thomson kicked back, and following [c. 2/3 words unreadable] collared Cook in possession.

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Thomson looked dangerous with Carnduff well placed, but the latter dropped his pass.

With a big effort Gloucester cleared, and the ball being kicked into the open Millington carried on in fine style. The Service players tried to check, but failed, and Burns finally sending the ball over the line, Webb raced up and scored a good try. Burns converted with a nice kick, and the City held a five points' lead – well deserved on the play.

On the resumption there was some sterling forward work on both sides. The Services gained the advantage, and once Thomson kicked through, but Hall cleared with a flying kick.

Cook effected a fine save from the Service forwards when matters looked ugly, and then two flying kicks enabled Gloucester to reach the centre. A penalty to the Services put the home team in a good position, and play waged furiously in the Gloucester 25 for two or three minutes. Gloucester came under the ban of the referee for legs up, and Grahame only just missed the goal.

The forwards continued to bear the brunt of the work, and on the heavy ground it was very hard work indeed. The Services for a time maintained the pressure, but the Gloucester defence was keen and sure. The Gloucester forwards at length raised the siege, but they were penalised for off-side, a touch-down resulting from the kick.

A well-placed touch-finder by Thomas gave the Services territorial advantage, and play operated in the Gloucester half. For off-side the visitor again suffered the penalty, but an aimless punt over the line only resulted. Cook found touch beautifully at the centre, and from this point the City made a breakaway, but a splendid effort by Thomson put his side down again. A rush followed, ending in the Gloucester line being crossed, but the visitors won the touch and only a minor resulted.

The ground was now churned up into a veritable mud-pool, and the players were in a sorry state. Still, the men carried on, though football was naturally of a scrambling nature, with accuracy at a discount.

Gloucester being penalised for legs up, Thomas punted high, and the Services forwards following up collared Cook. The ball getting loose, it was carried over the line where Hynes was credited with a try.

Just as the goal kick was about to be taken, the referee blew his whistle for "No charge," but it was too late, and the goal kick missed. Another kick was allowed, and this time a goal resulted, making the game level. This was near the end, and Gloucester unluckily failed to win.

#### RESULT :

GLOUCESTER ..... 1 goal (5 points)  
UNITED SERVICES ..... 1 goal (5 points)

#### REMARKS

Comments on such a game, played under conditions which could hardly have been worse, are unnecessary. Still, as to the game Gloucester were very unlucky to draw after leading to within ten minutes of the end.

Gloucester were clearly on top in point of merit in the first half, and the winning advantage should have been established before the interval was taken; but the City were extremely [un]lucky in missing three tries by passes only a shade forward, to say the least.

Lawson, too, experienced hard lines in being penalised after a thirty yards' dribble for alleged off-side. The referee was very down on the City, and penalties were dealt out for very trivial infringements. However, some of the Gloucester forwards hung about a good deal on the wrong side of the scrum waiting for things to turn up, and they invited the attention of the referee.

In such a game there was no outstanding feature individually, but both teams worked hard in the mud and slush, and at the close it was almost impossible to tell one man from the other. On the whole a draw was a satisfactory performance from Gloucester's point of view.

## GLOUCESTER A AGAIN VICTORIOUS

### TREDWORTH OUTCLASSED IN HEAVY STRUGGLE

Gloucester A were at home to Tredworth at Kingsholm this afternoon. Unfortunately rain had been falling heavily all day, and when the teams turned out the ground was sodden and the spectators few. A considerable mist overhung the ground.

Teams : –

Gloucester A. – G. Griffiths; P. Gabb, F. Bloxsome (captain), H. Ashmeade, and J. Phelps; B. Langford and H. Adams; S. Bayliss, T. Taylor, A. Wright, E. Richardson, E. Curtis, T. Bridges, J. Merrett, and J. Hawker.

Tredworth. – T. Miller; G. Harris, H. Woodward, C. Staunton, and E. Allen; T. Staunton and A. Allen; M. Little (captain), M. Stone, A. Witts, B. Jones, G. Mallard, D. Kingscote, B. Partridge, and W. Roach.

Referee : Mr. F. Lawrence.

Gloucester kicked off, and a misfield gave them a chance of initiating a strong attack, led by Bloxsome, but the visitors managed to clear. Feet up by the home pack saw Tredworth gain further ground with the penalty kick, and a similar advantage came to them a few minutes later. A useful bit of handling by the Tredworth backs and a kick to touch sent play into the Gloucester quarter, where Langford did some smart work, but still the home team were kept on the defensive, Miller putting in some well-judged touch-finders.

Gloucester changed the venue with a loose rush, and a keen struggle took place on the visitors' line. The ball came to Adams in the line-out, and the home scrum half being unmarked, scored an easy try, which he was also successful in converting.

Miller was again conspicuous with some excellent saves and well-judged punts to touch. The visitors continued to play a strenuous loose game, and several times penetrated to the Reserves' 25, but were unable to round off their movements.

From a penalty Miller essayed a kick for goal, but a good effort fell short and Ashmeade headed a rush which transferred play to the centre. Again the visitors advanced, and after a struggle well up one of the visitors picked up and made a fruitless drop for goal.

The heavy, greasy ball made handling almost impossible, and in the loose Tredworth were having quite a fair share of the game. An injury occurred to one of the visitors when Gloucester were attacking, and upon continuing Tredworth were forced to concede a minor.

Gloucester were getting the better of the scrums, but the state of the ball made it impossible for Langford to open up the game. A strong dribble carried Tredworth well up, but the ground was lost through the off-side play of E. Allen, who was continually infringing the off-side rule.

HALF-TIME SCORE :  
Gloucester A ..... 1 goal  
Tredworth ..... Nil

On the restart Tredworth attacked, but they received a set-back, and then came the incident of the match. Langford received from the scrum and threw out a wide pass to Bloxsome, who sent to Gabb, the Cinderford man taking the ball smartly, and outpacing a couple of opponents beat Miller and raced round behind the posts, for Adams to convert. It was a fine spectacular try, carried out with speed and foresight.

Tredworth, undaunted by this fresh reverse, again advanced to the attack, but they lacked scoring ability, and when Gloucester had cleared they were again penalised through Allen, the kick leading to a smart bit of footwork by the home backs, Curtis touching down Gloucester's third try. The position was too difficult, and the kick failed.



Play was now fairly evenly contested at midfield, but although the Gloucester forwards heeled well the attempts at handling by the backs generally broke down. There were few incidents of interest, play being generally of a scrambling nature and confined to the forwards.

Gabb now put in a smart run, but the opposition was too thick and he threw a wide pass to the centre which went astray. The visitors were now on the defence, and a further try came to the Seconds, Ashmeade tumbling on the ball in the course of a melee. The place kick failed.

The City Seconds were pressing at the end, and indulged in a handling bout which broke down after a short run by Bloxsome.

#### RESULT :

Gloucester A .... 2 goals, 2 tries (16 pts.)  
Tredworth ..... Nil

#### REMARKS

The state of the ground was all against good football, and it was essentially a struggle between the forwards. In the scrums the Tredworth pack were quite outclassed, the ball coming out to Langford every time, a state of things A. Allen tried to remedy by off-side play; but in the open it must be admitted that the visitors played a keen game, and kept the home team working hard.

Langford was not altogether a success as scrum half, his passing being generally wild, but he did one or two good things.

Of the Gloucester three-quarter line Gabb, a White Rose player, was the outstanding performer. The nature of the ball gave him few chances, but he was quick to grasp those which came his way, his try being an effort which, if indicative of his general form, should gain for him a place in the Premier team. He possesses speed, has a useful side-step, and a good knowledge of the game.

The Tredworth threes were only a moderate lot, and their scrum half was a danger to them. At full back Miller played a first-class game for Tredworth, and quite outclassed Griffiths, an emergency player for the Seconds. Miller kicks a good length, fields well, and seldom fails to find touch.

The result was a fair indication of the game.

JC