

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 1921

## FOOTBALL

NEWPORT MEET THEIR WATERLOO

BRILLIANT RECORD BURIED AT KINGSHOLM

HUGE CROWD DEMONSTRATE DELIGHT AT CITY'S TRIUMPH

### A TERRIFIC GAME

Not since the famous "All Blacks" came to Gloucester in 1905 has a match aroused such tremendous interest as the visit of the Invincible Newport Fifteen to Kingsholm this afternoon. By their wonderful playing success this season – 23 matches out of 25 had been won outright and the other two drawn – the Usksiders have achieved a position unchallenged by any other Rugby Union club in the four countries; added to this, the personality of the splendid combination captured by Reg. Plummer, and the power of attraction was easily discernible.

Meeting as Newport do all the class teams in England and Wales, to maintain an unbeaten record must create more than the ordinary anxiety; still obstacles to surmount must occasionally be faced. The Usksiders successfully cleared one last week at St. Helen's, where Swansea, according to reports, were unlucky to lose by a solitary point – the difference between a dropped goal and one from a penalty.

Gloucester were bold enough to imagine Newport had quite as difficult a proposition to tackle at Kingsholm this afternoon. With a record of 13 home victories without a defeat, the City certainly were encouraged, and with a full side out the team were confident of making a close fight at least, if not actually win.

Of all Welsh clubs Newport have given more trouble to the City at Kingsholm than either Cardiff, Swansea, or Llanelli, and of the last fourteen contests they proved successful on eight occasions, Gloucester winning two, and four being drawn. But in several of the successes Newport were somewhat lucky. In 1906-7 the visitors won by 3 goals (2d). 1 try (17 points) to 3 tries (9 points); in 1910-11 by a goal (5 points) to nil; in 1912-13 by 2 goals (d). 1 try, (11 points) to 1 try (3 points). Last season Gloucester went down rather badly in points – 18 to 3 – but the Kingsholm men were very disorganised owing to the absence of Hudson, F. Webb, Holford, and Lawson, the backs especially failing to give the forwards – who played admirably – adequate support.

To-day Gloucester had out a back division that has shown capital football since Christmas, and with the forwards – the real mainstay of the side – at the top of their form, there was a feeling that the powerful opposition would be severely tested.

The constitution of the Newport team was not settled till this morning. T. H. Vile, the selected Welsh captain against Scotland and old Newport player, took Jack Wetter's place at scrum half, and Uzzell, Reg. Edwards and Dr. Roche dropped out of the forwards.

As early as one o'clock visitors began to assemble at the entrances, and half an hour later, when the gates were opened, there was a big rush to obtain the best places. From this time onwards there was a general flow of admissions, and right up to the time of the kick-off the crowd continued to pour into the ground.

Every available space seemed to be occupied, and the attendance easily beat all previous records for a Saturday fixture, if it did not equal the figures at the New Zealand match fifteen years ago.

A drizzling rain commenced to fall and made matters unpleasant for the spectators, but the ground was not seriously affected.

The teams met with a great ovation when they took the field as follows : –

#### GLOUCESTER

BACK : C. Cook.

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown, T. Millington, Stanley Cook, F. Webb (capt.).

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

FORWARDS : F. W. Ayliffe, \*G. Holford, \*T. Voyce, \*S. Smart, J. Harris, J. F. Lawson, A. Hall, and W. F. Warde.

#### NEWPORT

BACK : \*F. W. Birt.

THREE-QUARTERS : \*R. C. S. Plummer (captain), \*J. Shea, \*E. Hammett, and A. E. G. Holland.

HALF-BACKS : \*T. H. Vile and Harold Davies.

FORWARDS : \*N. Macpherson, \*J. Whitefield, Percy Jones, A. Bell, \*L. Attewell, Tom Jones, \*R. Dibble, and W. Williams.

\* Internationals.

Referee : Mr. Holt (Leicester).

### THE GAME

Gloucester were successful in the toss, and Macpherson kicked off from the Worcester-street goal. An exchange of kicks left the ball near the centre. From the line-out Newport got the ball away, but Shea passed badly to Plummer and the ball went to touch.

Newport got the ball from the scrum, and Vile passed out wide to Shea, but the centre was collared and lost the ball. They, however, secured it again, and by clever footwork took the ball over the line, where Holford conceded a minor, though he was temporarily laid out in falling on the ball.

On the drop-out, the reply to which was charged down, Gloucester reached their opponents' end, Brown putting in a nice kick to touch a minute later. The visitors came away nicely from a throw-out, and there was some clever combination and inter-passing, ending in Shea breaking clear on the left, with Hammett and Holland in attendance. It looked all over for a score, but Shea went on himself instead of passing and was pulled down from behind a yard or so outside. This was a splendid effort and was loudly applauded.

Gloucester were in a dangerous position at this point, but Dix gathered from under Vile's nose and slipping clear, fed Lawson, who made headway. Newport, however, checked, and the Gloucester 25 was again visited. A useful kick by Stanley Cook brought Gloucester relief, but Vile and Plummer, with smart work on the short side of the scrum, secured a lovely opening until Millington effected a grand tackle.

Gloucester, working well together, cleared effectively, and then Dix, intercepting an opponent's pass, ran clean down to Birt, who tackled his man. Dix, however, got the ball clear to a confrere, and the City had a good chance, but off-side was given right on the line. Newport gained relief by the resultant kick, but Gloucester quickly got back again. Play was very fast and keen, and the forwards on either side worked with tremendous power and energy.

A smart effort by Holland down touch on the left promised well for Newport, but he stepped over the line and was called back. Then Robbins, gathering a loose kick, punted high down the field. Sid Brown ran hard and took the ball on the bounce. He beat Birt, and was running over the line between the posts, when he was called back for a knock-on – hard lines.

Newport were now being kept well in hand, and play was confined to their half. Dix, getting the ball from a scrum, passed out to Robbins, who missed, but the latter recovered his mistake and got in a clever left-foot punt to touch.

Just afterwards Harris, following up, fielded a kick and raced ahead. He punted over Birt's head and the ball went over the line. Harris went after it, but was obstructed as he was about to touch down, and the referee awarded a penalty try, amidst great cheering, though there was a protest by the Newport captain. Voyce missed the goal points.

Newport resumed and play continued very exciting. Cook elicited cheers with a fine touch-finder, and later Robbins was similarly applauded for an equally good effort. Gloucester, encouraged by their success were doing good all-round work, the forwards being fast on the ball and tackling well, especially Hall.

Near the Newport 25 Gloucester heeled, and Dix served Robbins, and the outside half, from a most difficult angle, dropped a lovely goal with his left foot, the shout which greeted this magnificent effort being tumultuous. A lead of seven points was good for Gloucester, and the crowd were in a frenzy of delight.

Newport restarted, and the visitors tried hard to change the run of play; but Gloucester stuck to their opponents splendidly and gave no quarter in tackling. The Usksiders eventually got set going nicely from the scrum, and Plummer receiving, the captain ran well and punted over the line, but Gloucester got back and kicked dead.

A big combined effort by the Gloucester forwards was noticeable on the drop-out, and Birt had some difficulty in saving. Newport were giving the ball air when possible, but the City marking was generally of the low and deadly order, and little ground was gained. Dix again beat Vile at the scrum, and nice passing between Millington, S. Cook and Brown saw the latter dash ahead. Cutting inside Plummer, he gained further ground, and then passed, but Newport checked further progress.

Just now the tackling was of a terrific order, and neither side could get an opening. Play fluctuated a good deal – first one end and then the other being visited. A long kick by Davies put the visitors well down, Brown only just getting the ball to touch before Shea was up.

From this point Newport attacked strongly, and following clever work by Vile and Davies, the former slipped over the line with a good try. Birt just missed the goal points.

HALF-TIME SCORE :  
GLOUCESTER ..... 1 goal (d), 1 try  
NEWPORT ..... 1 try

The first half had been full of incident, and rarely has a game provided so much excitement on the ground. Gloucester's four points' lead was deserved, for they had played dashing football against a fine opposition.

Ayliffe restarted, and Newport early started a passing bout; but Shea fumbled, and he was at once pounced upon. Gloucester carried the ball in dashing style, but Vile effected a wonderful save.

The City made further ground, but a mistake by Stanley Cook, who fumbled badly in trying to field the ball on the ground, let Newport out to near mid-field. A well-judged punt by Robbins, however, put the City back again.

A penalty against Dix for not putting the ball in straight was well taken, and the game was again at the centre. Davies was now off the field injured, Plummer playing outside half and Tom Jones going on the wing.

From a long pass out by Plummer, Shea brought off a strong, dodgy run and kick to touch, which placed Newport on the offensive. Inside the 25 Vile and Plummer worked out a nice opening, and the latter serving Holland, the wing man scored wide out. Birt failed at goal.

Only a point separated the teams now, and the players resumed the contest with great zest. Dix feeding Robbins, the latter cut through smartly and served S. Cook, who punted on. Shea, however, fielded and kicked back to touch.

Gloucester, however, were going great guns, and clever work by Dix and a forward took the ball over the line, but a scrum was ordered. Here Dix displayed his extreme cleverness, for getting the ball from his forwards he slipped the defence beautifully and scored in a good position, the little man being warmly congratulated by his colleagues, whilst the crowd cheered uproariously. This was renewed when Robbins kicked a fine goal, giving Gloucester a six points' lead. What a game, and what excitement !

When the game was restarted it was seen that Davies had returned to the field of play. Newport brought off a strong forward rush early and looked dangerous, but the situation was recovered by Stanley Cook. There was a stoppage owing to an injury to Voyce, but the International soon resumed. A penalty was given against Gloucester, but S. Cook ran round and punted to well outside the 25 flag.

Further ground was made by a loose dribble down the touch-line, and then a splendid move on the right looked promising for Gloucester. It was stopped, but a moment later Dix snapped up the ball and passed to F. Webb, who ran round behind the posts, only to be called back for a forward pass.

Newport cleared with kicking and the home end was the scene of operations. Robbins was heavily tackled by Vile after the Gloucester man had got rid of the ball, and he had to leave the field. Hall took the vacancy at outside half.

Immediately the Gloucester backs were sent away, and Sid Brown brought off a splendid run for 40 yards, but could not beat Birt. Hereabouts Macpherson with a strong run distinguished himself, and brought relief to the Usksiders, and the position was further improved with the aid of a penalty kick. Gloucester, however, stuck splendidly to their task, though the players were subjected to some terrific tackling. A great rush by the Newport front took the visitors to C. Cook, but the home custodian made a good save.

Gloucester kept play for a time in safe quarters, but at length Newport set up an attack. Millington fielded a high punt from Holland grandly and kicked out, but Newport came back. Here Voyce picked up in the loose and passed wildly right in front of the home posts. The ball was missed, and Plummer, slipping in, scored a soft try near the posts. Birt unaccountably missed the easy place, and Gloucester were left with a three points' advantage.

The last few minutes were fraught with anxiety for the home team. Newport struggled hard for the equalising score, but the defence was superb. Then Voyce broke away with a strong run and kick, and the game was taken to the Newport 25. A long kick immediately took play to the opposite end, where [the] ball went to touch. Immediately the whistle went for no-side, and Gloucester had achieved further fame by being the first team to beat Newport this season.

When the end arrived the spectators swarmed on the field of play and cheered the home players vociferously, and the demonstration was continued for some minutes. Several players were borne in triumph to the gymnasium, and altogether the scene was a memorable one in the history of the City Club.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER ..... 2 goals (1d), 1 try (12 pts.)  
NEWPORT ..... 3 tries (9 points)

REMARKS

*GLOster spells GLOUCESTER;  
We're proud of all the boys that represent us;  
We've beat the Best that Newport sent  
against us.*

*GLOster F.C.,  
That's the name of the team that has won  
the game so well for us –*

*GLOster F.C.*



The above is the war song of the "Boys" at away matches when victory has smiled on them. How well it goes to-day, with the demonstrations of delight still ringing in one's ears at the great triumph over Newport! Yes; it is a notable day for Gloucester football. Newport came full of confidence in the ability to maintain that much-cherished record; but once more Kingsholm proved the burial ground of the highest hopes and ambitions.

What a game, and what a win! In a hurried review of the contest one can scarcely do justice to the merits of the Gloucester team; but let me here congratulate the whole side on rising to a great occasion and achieving a triumph which proves that in the West we have a Fifteen capable of beating the best club combination in the country.

Lieut.-Commander Davies, the Services captain, last week wished Gloucester every success in this afternoon's engagement, but expressed doubt as to Newport being beaten, as he regarded the Usksiders as being a stronger lot than the Welsh national side defeated at Twickenham by England. Well, Commander Davies underestimated the City's abilities; and who will say Gloucester did not deserve their notable win?

Of the game itself, I question if a more exciting match has ever been witnessed in Gloucester; certainly those last ten minutes were the most tense I remember. It was one of the greatest struggles for supremacy one could possibly imagine, and proud I am of the magnificent and successful manner in which the City players met those desperate attacks of the Usksiders.

There was no quarter given, or asked for, in tackling, and only the fittest could possibly have survived such a test. There were one or two casualties – one could hardly expect such a game to be free from injuries – but the rival teams took all knocks for the most part in a sporting spirit. Now and again there was an ebullition of temper, and once or twice the crowd showed their condemnation of the tactics of Newport players; but nothing really serious occurred.

It was a game full of incident, and contested at a great pace. Early on Newport looked likely to force a lead, but once the City got a grip of the game they never relaxed. The Welshmen tried a variety of attacks – loose footwork, and plenty of open play – but the visitors were not so successful or finished in their movements as usual. For this non-success the close marking of the home players no doubt told appreciably.

What really happened when Gloucester scored their first try was hardly discernible from the Press seats, but despite the protest of Captain Plummer the referee was firm in awarding the penalty try, and he was in the best position to see what occurred. Of Robbins' dropped goal one can only describe it as a wonderful effort.

If the first half was fast and keen, what of the second half? Up and down the field the ball travelled with lightning rapidity. Gloucester did especially fine work during this period, and Dix's try was a beauty. Newport's two scores were also smartly obtained, though the second point was decidedly lucky.

Comparing the rival teams, Newport perhaps displayed the more initiative and resource, but some of the wide passing was not always well-judged. The Gloucester backs did not take the same risks, but most of the work accomplished was very praiseworthy.

In the centre Stanley Cook and Millington kept a sharp look-out on Hammett and Shea. The English International kicked nicely, but he did not shine to the extent expected in attacking movements. On the day Shea was the more prominent, but selfishness spoiled one or two fine efforts. The respective wings were well matched. Sid Brown signalled his return by playing a strong and sound game. He ran well on several occasions, and Plummer had no real advantage over the Gloucesterian. Fred Webb played his best game of the season, and seemed more like himself all through. Both Webb and Brown had hard lines in not scoring behind the posts through slight mistakes when the defence was beaten completely.

At half-back Dix was a perfect worrier to Vile, the Welsh captain, and had him beaten continually at the scrum. Robbins was one of the "stars" of the afternoon, and his kicking for safety in the second half was invaluable to Gloucester.

Both full backs were highly tried, but came out of the ordeal with great success. C. Cook was at his best. He scarcely made a mistake in fielding, and his kicking was always of good length and judgment. Birt also did admirably for his side.

Forward, it was a battle of giants, with very little in it. The Gloucester pack were quite the equal of their opponents in all phases of play, and there was not a man one could pick out above his fellows. Every player was all out and lasted splendidly to the finish. Newport are a grand pack, but they were up against a formidable opposition to-day – one of the strongest they have met. Macpherson, Whitfield, and Attewell were great workers, and the men as a whole were clever with hands and feet, but they could not get through the fine defence set up.

I shall have an opportunity to refer to the game again in next week's Football "Citizen," and will wind up with offering the heartiest congratulations to the winners on their noteworthy performance.

Next Week : Cheltenham, at Kingsholm (for the Royal Gloucestershire Infirmary).

## AN IMPRESSION

(By D. R. GENT)

It was a pleasure to be among so many old friends again, and to see the ground on which I had had all my most delightful football. I came knowing I should see a close game, but, to be candid, I did not expect to see my old club win. I thought the Newport backs would be a wee bit too good.

What it all came to, though, was that they played as well as we let them; there is the beginning and the end of it, and we won because, taking the game on the whole, we were slightly the better side, which they sportingly admitted after the match.

It was a real pleasure to see the glorious work of our forwards and halves. I wonder where Dix gets his recipe for keeping off the effects of Anno Domini! He is playing better than ever, and, with Kershaw's play in mind, as well as every other half, I have no hesitation in saying that "Shanter" is the finest feeder from the scrum playing to-day. Gloucester people ought to have seen him in the final trial at Twickenham. Some of his reverse passes were as good as Owens' at his best.

I take my hat off to the old club for its great display this afternoon and especially to Dix, which doesn't mean that I haven't the greatest admiration for all the other fourteen. It was well worth coming from Kent to see such a grand game, and I shall go back to Maidstone with delightful recollections of my visit to the old place.

## VIEWS OF THE GAME

### "JUST ABOUT DESERVED TO WIN"

Congratulated by a "Citizen" representative upon his team's victory, the Gloucester captain (Fred Webb) said it was a very hard and strenuous game, but he thought his team just about deserved to win. Every man in the side played a good game, and did their utmost to secure victory. The combination of the Newport backs was not quite so good as he anticipated it would be, but Newport were to be congratulated upon their great fight.

## VISITING SKIPPER'S CONGRATULATIONS

Reg Plummer, the Newport captain, said he had nothing to say about the match. It only remained for him to congratulate the Gloucester team upon their victory.

## THOSE LAST FIVE MINUTES

Mr. Arthur Hudson, the Gloucester Club's Secretary said that owing to the accommodation of the ground being taxed to the utmost he did not see so much of the game as he would have liked.

The game was in keeping with the best traditions of the old Club, but he had to admit that in all his experience of football the last five minutes was the most exciting and anxious he had ever experienced.

## RECORD GATE RECEIPTS

The attendance was just on 12,000, and the takings a little over £750.

JC