

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 1921

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER'S GREAT "DOUBLE" OVER NEWPORT

BIG DEMAND FOR FOOTBALL "CITIZEN"

Great enthusiasm prevailed in Gloucester on Saturday evening over the City's notable victory over the hitherto Invincible Newport team. The result at Kingsholm, as is well known, was a win for Gloucester by 2 goals (1d), 1 try (12 points) to 3 tries (9 points). Harris and Dix scored the tries for Gloucester, and Robbins dropped the goal; and the try-getters for Newport were Vile, Holland and Plummer. The gate receipts were a record for the Club, amounting to £768 odd. It was estimated the attendance was well over 12,000.

There was a big demand for the Football "Citizen" on Saturday evening, and though the usual order was largely increased the demand was greater than the supply. We were able to get a reprint this morning, and a few dozen copies are still left, and may be obtained at the office, St. John's-lane.

NEWPORT CRITIC ON THE RESULT

"GAME SHOULD HAVE BEEN DRAWN"

"Dromio," the well-known critic of the Newport "Argus," commenting on the game, says : "Well, the Newport record has gone! We could have wished it had gone under other circumstances.

Possibly we might have thought the same under any circumstances, but it is certainly the fact that Newport owed their defeat to a try by Gloucester which was scored after an obvious knock-on.

Now in that statement there is no reflection upon the good faith of the referee. In reality, the opening incident of the game was an attack by Newport, from which it seemed certain that Jerry Shea would score, in which there were at least two knock-ons, and it was obvious that the referee would have allowed the try had Shea fairly and squarely crossed the line; so that it is plain that the referee was not favouring one side or the other, but that he simply failed to see informalities which were apparent to others. Apart from this one try, the scores would have been equal at 9 points each, and a draw would have fairly represented the merits of the game.

Gloucester played so finely to maintain their ground record that it would have been very hard luck for them, on the play as it ran, had they been defeated; but Newport played up so well to maintain their unbeaten record that it was distinctly hard luck that they should have lost it through a try which should not have been allowed.

The game was extremely fast throughout, and very vigorous. Both sides were intent upon putting out every effort, and Gloucester certainly played a good game in all positions. They got the ball about as often as Newport, and their backs played a clever game, especially in the matter of using the touch-line in order to prevent Newport from getting within attacking distance after the home side had attained the lead.

Neither side displayed combination of the highest character. But that was largely due to the fact that the tackling was so keen. Some movements were very exciting, and several times Gloucester got away unexpectedly with thrilling runs. But apart from the first try of the game, the watchfulness of Newport's defence proved equal to the demands made upon it; that is so far as the combination was concerned, for Dix scored his try very smartly from the base of the scrum, and beat the defence cleverly.

Dix was responsible for some fine work and for some excellent runs. McPherson also ran finely, and his last effort towards the end of the game, when Gloucester were pressing upon Newport's line, was quite remarkable.

The rest of the Newport forwards were untiring, hard-working and clever, while for Gloucester the whole pack threw themselves into the game with the greatest abandon, and in the end the honours were fairly even in front.

At half-back, Vile was extremely clever, and worked out quite a number of smart movements on the short side, from two of which tries resulted. It was rather hard luck that one or two of the other efforts did not lead to scores, but there it was – it was the luck of the game.

Dix and Robbins were especially smart at half-back for Gloucester, and there will be no denying that through their combination and individual play Newport were beaten.

Robbins dropped a goal, and Dix scored a try which Robbins converted. That accounted for nine of the 12 points Gloucester obtained. Certainly, the Gloucester halves must have been on pretty good terms with themselves.

Vile and Harold Davies worked together very well. It was unfortunate that the latter was injured in the game, and twice during the second half left the field, at the last permanently.

Plummer and Hammett were the outstanding figures of the Newport three-quarter line, though Shea, towards the end, did some excellent work in defence; and during the game made some smart runs.

Holland scored his one try smartly, but was a little uncertain in front of the Gloucester rushes. Birt did some very fine kicking to touch, and once tackled Brown when he had got clear away.

For Gloucester, C. Cook played a fine game at full-back, and Brown was most prominent of an excellent line of three-quarters. The result is a surprise to Newport's supporters, and in my view does not represent the merits of the sides.

The game, in fact, should have been drawn, not lost or won.

NEWPORT'S SET-BACK

Turn wherever you may in the Rugby world at the moment (writes "Old Stager" in the "South Wales Daily News"), the one thing that transcends all others in importance is that Newport has at long last lost its chance of invincibility. The record has gone; it has found a last resting place alongside many other Welsh records at Kingsholm.

All Wales will sympathise with Newport in the set-back received at Gloucester – a set-back not altogether unexpected, but none the less to be regretted on that account. Newport had an unblemished record at stake; the Citizens were out to preserve a cherished ground record; and after a contest which was witnessed by what was a record crowd for Gloucester, the Usksiders, though having a full share of the game, went under by 12 points to 9.

Luckily both sides fielded representative teams, so that there can be no excuses under that head, and while everyone will sympathise with the vanquished, none can withhold congratulations to the victors.

When teams are so evenly matched and so much is at stake, Rugby cannot be seen at its best. The game at Gloucester was no exception to the rule, the keenness of the defence preventing the development of the finer phases of the game. The tension on the players on such occasions is great, and it was just in the nature of things that the game should have really been decided by a penalty try awarded to Gloucester. Obstruction by Harold Davies, the Newport outside half, caused the referee to award a try, and assuming that the official's ruling was a correct one, and was justified by the circumstances, Newport had to pay an extremely heavy penalty for that one misdeed.

In view of Tommy Vile's selection for next Saturday, it is gratifying to find that he was in great form, and was mainly responsible for the engineering of a couple of tries.

By the way, it is also of interest to Welshmen to notice that Gloucester's dropped goal was obtained by Arthur Robbins, one of Pontypool's most versatile players in pre-war days.

JC