

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1921

## FOOTBALL

### GLOUCESTER SUBSTANTIAL WINNERS OVER COVENTRY

#### DAY OF PENALTY KICKS

#### CITY CAPTAIN'S FINE TRY

After a long absence – some 13 years – Coventry renewed acquaintance with the City team at Kingsholm. This was the return fixture, the first game having been won by Coventry by two tries to one. The date of that match, however, clashed with a county engagement, and Gloucester had to play practically a reserve fifteen.

To-day Gloucester were again unable to field full strength, the absentees being Voyce, Smart, and Harris, who, not quite fit, rested in view of the county championship final on Thursday.

Coventry brought a strong side, including Pemberton and Elton (who had been on the reserve as half-backs for England) and R. A. Clarke, who assisted the City Club on several occasions prior to the war.

The Midlanders have accomplished some good performances this season, but in form could hardly hope to repeat the triumph of 1908, when they beat Gloucester by 2 goals (1d 1m) 1 try (10 points) to nil. At that time Coventry were exceptionally strong with J. C. M. Dyke (the Cardiff and Welsh International) at full back, Davey (Cornwall and England) and Laxon at half, and several good forwards in W. L. Oldham, W. Hall, C. L. Piggott, and A. P. Mosby.

There was a late change in the Coventry team, Pemberton was attacked with malaria on Friday night and could not make the journey, his place being taken by Ernest Hall, the old Gloucester centre three-quarter, who has been residing in Coventry for some time now.

The City Club was again fortunate in the weather, but the attendance fell short of the big crowds recently at Kingsholm. Prior to the match Mr. H. K. Fox took a group photograph of the Gloucester team officials, with the President (Sir James Bruton. M.P.). The proceedings delayed the start several minutes.

Teams :

#### GLOUCESTER

BACK : C. Cook.

THREE-QUARTERS : N. Daniell, F. Webb (captain), A. Robbins, and S. Brown.

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

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

#### COVENTRY

BACK : J. Morton.

THREE-QUARTERS : H. Holbrook, R. A. Clarke, G. L. Moss, and D. C. Hill.

HALF-BACKS : Alf. Elton and E. Hall.

FORWARDS : E. Blowers, A. Hill, S. Bones, H. Morris, H. L. Gilbert, T. Carter, L. Williams, and N. Ashdown.

Referee : Mr. E. Rice (Bristol).

#### THE GAME

Coventry started against the wind but Lawson trapped the ball nicely and kicked ahead, collaring Elton before he could get in his kick. At the first scrum the City were penalised for feet up, and a visitor punted well to touch in the home half.

The Gloucester forwards at once broke away, with Holford leading. The old International dribbled nicely and, picking up, there was a likely opening, but he passed forward. Heeling by Coventry saw Elton break away and get in a punt, but the visitors were stopped at half-way. Here Dix served his threes, and Brown was set going, but in trying to cut inside he was collared.

A penalty for off-side against Gloucester enabled Morton to exhibit his fine kicking abilities, and Cook knocking on Coventry found a footing in the home 25. Here Dix broke away on the short side, and Millington cutting through passed to Robbins. The latter, after making headway, returned inside, but Millington was not in a position to take the ball and the movement was checked.

A penalty against Coventry saw Robbins find touch nicely, and Gloucester were placed in a good attacking position. Following some loose play, Hall picked up and threw out wide to F. Webb, who at once served Daniell. The wing man put in a fine dash, but was hemmed in. He, however, let the ball go, and Ayliffe gathering, the vice-captain slipped over with a try, which Robbins failed to convert.

On the restart Dix was prominent with a clever bit of work, in the course of which he got a pass out to F. Webb. The latter yielded to Daniell, but the latter knocked on with a fine opening. After this the Coventry forwards rushed well for 30 yards, but the Gloucester pack replied to midfield. F. Webb racing up gathered the ball off the ground and cut out a nice opening, but Mumford missed the ball.

Some scrambling play followed, ending in Gloucester being awarded a free. Robbins' kick found touch ten yards from the line – a beautiful effort.

In the next two minutes Gloucester missed a couple of certain tries through forward passes with the defence beaten. However, the City continued to attack, and following a pretty movement by Millington, F. Webb scored easily behind the posts. Robbins converted, and Gloucester were eight points up.

Coventry restarted, and immediately the Gloucester forwards shone in a great loose rush half the length of the field. The visitors' line was in dire danger of being crossed, but off-side spoiled the chance at the critical moment. Daniell received the kick-out, and put in a fine return. Racing hard, he only just missed the touch for a try by a foot or so.

The referee ordered a scrum five yards out, and for the next few minutes Coventry were kept strictly on the defence. Several penalties were given in quick succession against the Midlanders, and from one of these Robbins landed a goal.

Coventry resumed, and Brown was prominent on the left with a smart run and pass, but Warde could not hold the ball. A penalty to the City put the home team well down again, and twice the Coventry line narrowly escaped from loose forward rushes.

For feet up Coventry were again penalised in front of goal, but Robbins, apparently on purpose, dropped wide of the posts.

Subsequent play was very scrappy, but all in favour of Gloucester. The handling attempted, however, was very ragged. Near the centre Coventry heeled, and Elton got the ball away neatly to Hall. The Old 'Cestrian gave the "dummy" in clever style, and after a series of neat exchanges amongst the "threes" Holbrook went over in the corner with a good try. The place-kick failed.

Brown was off for a few minutes on the restart whilst a damaged hand was being attended to, and during this period Hall forced a dead ball with a fruitless drop at goal. A neat effort by Dix on the restart sent Brown off in fine style along the touch-line, but Morton effected a splendid tackle.

#### HALF-TIME SCORE :

GLOUCESTER .....	2 goals (1p) 1 try
COVENTRY .....	1 try

Ayliffe resumed for Gloucester, and early on a visiting forward was prominent with a run and punt which sent the ball past Cook. Daniell, however, got back and relieved. Coventry, however, secured a good position, and from a penalty Morris made a good shot for goal. Robbins ran the ball out, but only found touch at the 25 flag.

The Midlanders maintained their territorial advantage until, from a penalty, Millington found touch beyond mid-field. Here Holford distinguished himself from the throw-out, and Ayliffe carrying on, the Coventry line was nearly reached when Moss swept up the ball from the visiting forwards' feet and effected a great save.

Soon afterwards the visitors touched down from a shot at goal from a penalty. Coventry worked out of danger after this; but Hall, gathering, beat the defenders with a strong run and pass to Holford. Mansell next received and made ground, when he handed to Ayliffe, who completed a splendid movement with a good try. Robbins just missed the goal points.

Millington returned nicely to the restart, and a pretty passing movement saw F. Webb break through cleverly, but his pass went forward. A forward rush was stopped just in time by the visitors, and then came a perfect round of handling by the home backs until the ball reached Brown, who failed to accept. Still Gloucester kept on the aggressive, and Dix working out an opening sent Brown over in the left corner with the City's fourth try. Robbins failed to convert.

Coventry were a well-beaten side now, and were kept strictly on the defensive. Near midfield Millington gathered neatly and passed to Dix, who sent on to his captain. Webb had his opponents guessing as to his intentions, and cutting clean through finished up a magnificent effort by scoring between the posts. Robbins added the goal points, making the score 22 points to 3.

On the resumption Hall came into the limelight with a dashing burst, finishing up with a pass, but Coventry checked. Immediately after F. Webb was off again, doubling his opponents nicely and sending a nice pass to Robbins. The latter shot ahead and finally yielded to Brown, but the wing man missed the pass with a certain try in view.

Gloucester maintained their advantage, and from a penalty a long way out Robbins added three points to Gloucester's score with a lovely dropped goal.

Coventry played up better after this reverse, and for a time had the better of the exchanges. Inside their quarter Dix got the ball away to Webb. In trying to get a pass to Daniell the captain mis-handled, and Clarke, snapping the ball up, scored an opportunist try in a favourable position. Morton, however, missed the goal.

In subsequent play Daniell was to the fore with a splendid run, in the course of which he shook off the attentions of Hall, but was eventually pushed out of play. A big punt to touch by Morton put Coventry inside the home 25, but the City quickly worked out and in turn visited their opponents' half. The referee continued to deal out frequent penalties, which spoiled the game to a large extent.

A passing movement by the home backs was stopped by Hill intercepting with a clear field except Cook. A high kick sent the ball well down the field, and there was a race for possession between Brown and his Coventry opponent. The Gloucester man won, and eluding a tackle punted to touch near the centre – a very fine relief. This was the last item of note.

#### RESULT :

GLOUCESTER .... 4 goals (2p), 3 tries (25 pts.)  
COVENTRY ..... 2 tries (6 points)

#### REMARKS

Though Gloucester won handsomely, the game contained a lot of play that was scrappy and uninteresting. The referee was continually awarding free kicks – mostly against Coventry for scrum infringements – and the frequent stoppages no doubt contributed largely to the unsatisfactory nature of the game. The visiting forwards included some weighty players, but of packing they exhibited an elementary knowledge, and it was rarely a proper formation was obtained.

In all the finer points of the a game the City were easily superior, and had more judgment and accuracy been observed in handling the ball several more tries should have accrued. Brown was particularly unhappy in taking passes when scoring chances presented themselves, though at other times he did good work, and that one save of his was particularly brilliant.

Other players were guilty of similar mistakes, and all round there was a good deal in the display of the home men that could have been improved upon.

At centre three-quarter Fred Webb again greatly distinguished himself, and his doubling and dodging, especially when he scored, was among his finest efforts. Robbins combined well with his captain, and Daniell was full of dash, experiencing hard lines on several occasions in not scoring.

Behind the scrum Dix and Millington had some capital practice. The Gloucester scrum worker had a couple of winging forwards in addition to Elton waiting for him, but Dix found ways and means to circumvent the opposition. He opened out delightfully – sometimes going clean away on his own, and at others utilising the reverse pass, and serving Millington in the orthodox style. It was clever football, and always advantageous to his side.

I heard on the ground that Lieut. Kershaw had accepted his place for England against Scotland and France, so it is up to Dix to accept or refuse the invitation to go with the English team as reserve only.

The Gloucester forwards were hustled at times by the strenuous tactics of their opponents, and the work as a whole was not so clean and finished as usual.

Hall was always prominent, whether in the scrum, line-outs, or when helping outside, and Holford, Ayliffe, Lawson and Mansell were generally to the fore in the loose movements.

The Coventry side included some useful players, but the forwards lacked cleverness and skill. Elton and Hall were outclassed by the Gloucester pair, though the latter showed on one occasion he had not forgotten the art of giving the "dummy."

The three-quarter line was not given many opportunities, but the try in the first half was well engineered and perfectly carried out.

Morton, at full back, kicked a grand length, and on the whole played a good game. Cook made some capital saves, but was not tested to the same extent as the visiting custodian.

Thursday : Gloucestershire v. Leicestershire (County Championship final, at Kingsholm).

Next Saturday : Gloucester v. Bristol, at Bristol.

#### GLOUCESTER A v. OLD BOYS

This match, which should have been played at Hempsted, was scratched by the Old Boys owing to several of their players crying off as a result of injuries, illness and business engagements.