

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1931

OXFORD UNIVERSITY 17 Pts., GLOUCESTER 6 Pts.

GLOUCESTER BEATEN IN THRILLING GAME

TANNER'S GREAT TRY

OXFORD BACKS SUPERIOR IN SKILL AND FINISH

SPECIAL BY "W.B."

Additional interest was centred in the visit of Oxford University to Kingsholm this afternoon as it was the team's last serious test before the meeting with Cambridge at Twickenham, on December 8.

OXFORD'S FINAL TRIAL

The fixture was originally arranged to be played at Oxford, but at the special request of the University the venue was changed to Kingsholm.

With Hovde and Hart on the injured list, the Oxford side was still incomplete for the great University test, and players were on their final trial to-day, to fill vacancies in the three-quarter line, in the event of the Scottish International and the American not being available for Twickenham.

These included V. G. Jenkins (who gained his Blue last season), J. D. Bevington, and A. R. Brookes, who was included in the Gloucester team.

PROMINENT GLOUCESTER ABSENTEES

Gloucester were again weakened by prominent absentees – Boughton and James (injured), and McCanlis (not sufficiently recovered from an attack of "flu") all being unable to turn out.

At full back a trial was given to G. W. Parker, the Old Cryptian, who, though in his first season in top class club football, has already appeared in nearly every position behind the scrum. It was a big test for the young player, but he has plenty of confidence, is a good tackler, and kicks well – qualities which fitted him for the position.

At three-quarter, C. C. Tanner had notified his ability to play, and though it was his first match of the season, and his fitness for a strenuous game doubtful, his experience was likely to prove valuable. For the other position, R. L. Baker returned to the side after several weeks' absence.

Forward the City were at full strength with Steele-Perkins back, and here the University were expected to be fully tested.

There was a late change in the Oxford team, the captain (W. Roberts) injured in Thursday's match, having to stand down for H. Rees, who was full back against Cambridge last year.

The afternoon was dull, but the rain fortunately kept off. The early kick-off was against the attendance, but at the time of starting there were 5,000 present, and crowds were still pouring into the ground.

THE TEAMS

GLOUCESTER

BACK : G. W. Parker.

THREE-QUARTERS : C. C. Tanner, R. L. Baker, A. E. Brookes, and J. T. Andrews.

HALF-BACKS : J. C. Brooks and H. Aplin.

FORWARDS : L. E. Saxby (capt.), F. Wadley, A. Carpenter, E. Comley, J. Hemming, Dr. Steel-Perkins, A. Welshman, and L. Franklin.

OXFORD

BACK : (a) J. A. Adamson (Keble).

THREE-QUARTERS : (a) P. C. Minns (Balliol), (a) V. G. J. Jenkins (Jesus), S. G. Osler (New), and J. D. Bevington (Oriol).

HALF-BACKS : (a) H. Rees (capt.) and (a) N. K. Lamport (Balliol).

FORWARDS : (b) K. W. J. Jones (Jesus), (b) E. S. Nicholson (Wadham), (a) W. A. H. Druitt (Oriol), (a) R. R. MacGibbon (Corpus), (a) W. E. Henley (New), (a) D. H. Swayne (Worcester), (b) T. L. Tanner (Trinity), and H. M. Kelly (Exeter).

(a) Old Blues; (b) new Blues.

Referee : Mr. B. S. Cumberlege (London).

The game was started by Gloucester, and at the first scrum the home forwards heeled, but Aplin failed to field, and the Oxford forwards dribbled some ten yards before being checked.

Gloucester again got the ball out, but no ground was gained. In the next bout Brookes tried a short punt but the ball was captured by a visitor, who kicked to touch.

A good kick by Rees put Oxford well up the field, but a fine burst by the home forwards took play back to the centre, Hemming following up and tackling Adamson.

Gloucester opened up an attack by Brooks, and Tanner receiving, the International dashed away, handing off Minns, but stepping over the touch line. Play was just in the University half, Brookes having hard lines in failing to retain a pass after a sharp dash.

CITY ATTACK

The City went close after this, but they were beaten back, and Osler, receiving from Rees cut through beautifully. His pass, however, was stopped, and Parker turned the ball to touch.

Brilliant loose work by the home forwards covered 20 yards, the whole eight being well together. They finally over-ran the ball, and Oxford returned. Parker, however, was very cool and checked. A penalty to Oxford aided them a little, but the Dark Blues were forced back by the City front. A well judged kick by Parker put Gloucester well down, and exciting play followed. Brooks kicking across to the left, and to the line, raced for the touch but just failed in his effort.

GLOUCESTER OPEN THE SCORING

Gloucester, however, had obtained a good attacking position, and Aplin was nearly through after a sharp burst. Oxford were hotly pressed, and working tremendously hard, Gloucester carried a scrum and took the ball over the line for STEELE-PERKINS to score a try. Parker made a splendid attempt at conversion. First points for Gloucester, and the reward was well-deserved.

Following the restart the Gloucester backs shone in a round of passing, Brookes serving Tanner nicely. The wing man dashed off in fine style, and though challenged by Minns, he beat the New Zealander. He was too near touch however to go far and stepped over the line. From a penalty Oxford found touch well inside the home 25, and there the rival packs were hotly engaged in some heavy scrummaging. The University eventually got the ball out, and the ball was passed beautifully among the backs. Osler punted ahead, but knocked on in trying to re-gather.

OXFORD DRAW LEVEL

Gloucester were pressed for a couple of minutes, but Parker brought relief with a punt. Adamson failed to gather, and was tackled at once, the home team thus getting to the centre. Here the visitors started passing, Jenkins putting in a high punt. Tanner waited for the bounce and was tackled in possession. He passed out from the ground, and a penalty followed for not bringing the ball into play first with the feet. The position was easy, and HENLEY equalised the scores with a good goal.

NEARLY A SCORE

Play on the resumption was very fast, and there was some fine work on both sides. Tanner again came into prominence with a good run, but again the touch line beat him. Parker showed up well with some good work and then came a grand movement by the home team. Wadley, Franklin, and Baker took part in it, and a score seemed certain with only ten yards to go. But a grand tackle stopped Baker a yard outside. Oxford here turned attack into defence[*sic*], and from their line they reached the centre before being stopped.

OXFORD TAKE THE LEAD

Gloucester returned immediately, but a kick ahead by Brooks rolled badly for Tanner, and went out of play. Aplin, with a useful dribble enabled the City to gain the advantage, but Oxford, showing more skill behind the scrum, attacked strongly.

Rees, from a pass by Lamport, went through the centres nicely, and giving to JENKINS, the latter went over behind the posts – a clever try. Henley goaled, and Oxford led by five points.

Gloucester restarted strongly, but Oxford had the better of the play, and just before half-time JENKINS dropped a neat goal.

HALF-TIME :

OXFORD 3 goals (1d. 1p.)

GLOUCESTER 1 try

The score – 12 points to 3 in favour of the University, by no means represented the play, for Gloucester had enjoyed a good share of the play. But the University displayed the more skill and finish behind the scrum, and it was their smartness in this department that they were able to take the lead.

Gloucester had performed splendidly forward, and Tanner was a decided success. Parker had also performed well.

TANNER'S GREAT TRY

Resuming, the Gloucester backs were early in possession, the ball coming to the left. Brookes punted across to the open where TANNER fielded, but slipped in taking the ball.

Recovering splendidly, the old Cambridge Blue cut inside an opponent, and put on his best pace. He cleared Minns, and going all out beat the full-back and scored a wonderful try in the corner. Tanner was cheered to the echo for his really fine effort. Parker made a good effort to convert, but sent wide.

UNIVERSITY INCREASE THEIR LEAD

Following the restart Oxford travelled to the other end, where there were direct attacks on either side of the scrum. The handling was very good, and only sound tackling kept them out. The pressure was continued, and good combination between the half-backs made an opening for MINNS, who dashed over with a smart try. Just as Henley took the place kick the referee's whistle went for "no charge" but a goal resulted, and the points were allowed. The score was 17-6 in Oxford's favour.

GLOUCESTER BACKS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Gloucester resumed with vigour, the forwards putting in a lot of hard work, but the back play was not successful, the passing being too slow and uncertain. One fine rush by the City front promised well, but Adamson went down to the ball in daring style and checked.

EXCITING INCIDENTS

Exciting play followed, Tanner and Andrews being concerned in remarkable runs, but the defence could not be beaten. It was thrilling football, and Saxby served up another incident with a dashing effort. His pass, however, was captured by an opponent, who punted to safety.

After Parker had forced a minor from an ineffectual drop at goal, Oxford worked to the other end with a big kick. Tanner had to run back to gather, and was tackled just outside. The University tried hard to press home their advantage, but without success.

Gloucester were subjected to hot pressure for two or three minutes, but the defence held out, and Brooks eventually brought relief with a useful touch finder. Oxford came back, but Brookes, after fumbling, broke away with a clever run and pass to Saxby, who punted ahead, Adamson just managing to get the ball to touch.

FAST FOOTBALL

The pace continued a fast one, and brilliant combination by Oxford promised well, but there was a knock-on from an inside pass. Gloucester, however, were not done with, and play continued to be very exciting. Gloucester were getting their full share of the ball behind, and though there was good individual work, the finish was lacking.

Play to the end was well contested, Gloucester making a fine effort to score without success.

RESULT :

OXFORD 3 goals (1d. 1p.) (17 pts.)
GLOUCESTER 2 tries (6 pts.)

REMARKS

It was a glorious game, and provided Oxford with the test they wanted. The result mattered little, but the University deserved their victory for the superior skill and finish displayed behind the scrum, and the successful goal-kicking of Henley – a match-winner in this department alone.

Actually the rival teams were equal in try-getting – two each – which after all is the best test of merit. And Tanner's score for Gloucester was the biggest thrill of the game.

Any doubt as to the fitness of the old Cambridge Blue was quickly set at rest in this game, and in the International the City and County possess a wing three-quarter of real class. He ran with great dash and resolution, and clearly indicated his illness and long rest have not impaired his abilities in one single respect. With a centre of equal class he should prove a big success.

JC