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ALL BLACKS IN GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTERSHIRE BEATEN BY SIX POINTS

STRENUOUS GAME IN THE MUD

The visit of the All Blacks to Gloucester on Thursday aroused tremendous interest, but again the tourists were unfortunate in the weather. Rain fell incessantly for over twelve hours, and though the Kingsholm ground, thanks to its sandy subsoil, was never soddened, the surface naturally cut up badly, and with the ball terribly greasy back play was largely at a discount.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BACK : T. Millington (Gloucester).

THREE-QUARTERS : S. A. Brown (Gloucester), L. J. Corbett (Bristol), capt., R. C. W. Pickles (Bristol), and T. Spoor (Bristol).

FIVE-EIGHTH : Dr. G. C. Taylor (Gloucester).

HALF-BACKS : C. B. Carter (Bristol) and G. Thomas (Gloucester).

FORWARDS : M. V. Shaw, A. S. Prowse, A. T. Hore (Bristol), S. Bayliss (Gloucester), W. Preece (Bream), S. Dubberley (Cinderford), and A. R. Richards (Cardiff).

NEW ZEALAND

BACK : G. Nepia.

THREE-QUARTERS : G. Hart, H. W. Brown, and F. W. Lucas.

FIVE-EIGHTHS : N. P. McGregor and M. Nicholls.

HALF-BACKS : W. Dalley and C. G. Porter.

FORWARDS : M. Brownlie, J. Richardson, R. Stewart, Q. Donald, L. Cupples, R. R. Irvine, and L. H. Harvey.

Referee : Mr. R. Fear (Somerset).

THE GAME

Nicholls kicked off for the All Blacks, and right from the start Porter broke away nicely and passed to Hart, who dodged cleverly and passed to Brownlie. A score seemed certain, but a visitor was rushed to touch close to the line. The Gloucestershire forwards brought relief with a rush, and Corbett following up a kick took play to near midfield. The All Blacks dribbled back, where Carter was penalised for off-side at the scrum, but Nicholls' shot for goal was very wide and short, and Pickles punted well out to touch.

Play was confined to the Gloucestershire quarter, where the visitors carried a scrum and swept down on Millington. The latter only partially saved, and the ball being taken over the line DONALD fell on it and scored the first try wide out. The goal kick failed.

Gloucestershire resumed, and found a footing in their opponents' half. Corbett securing broke through, but lost the ball, and Porter gathering sent to the centre. Play was very keen, and Donald was spoken to by the referee for a heavy tackle of Shaw.

With a terrific forward burst the All Blacks gained some 20 yards, but they over-ran the ball and the home forwards checked. Matters looked dangerous for Gloucestershire in the next minute, but Millington relieved with a nice punt, and later Thomas, kicking well down the field, Nepia had to run across the field to gather. He did this successfully, with Corbett hot in chase, and managed to send to touch.

From this point the visitors went away, and a long kick went to Millington. The latter fielded well and got in a good return, but it just kept out of touch, and Hart receiving dashed down the line and passed, but nothing resulted.

So far the Gloucestershire forwards had not been able to do much except in tackling, and the game was confined to the home quarters.

Dalley from a mark had a drop for goal, but failed. Later Nepia had a shot from a penalty, and covered the cross-bar, but for some infringement not apparent, unless the ball was touched in flight, the points were not allowed. The ground was cutting up somewhat, but the All Blacks handled beautifully when they got possession, and but for a forward transfer McGregor would have had a certain try.

Gloucestershire were being outclassed in the finer points of the game, and there was nothing in the way of combination behind. Occasionally good individual work was witnessed, but as a side the County were much the inferior side. The quick, short passing of the tourists was a source of worry to the home backs, and the forwards were very quick on the ball and tackled relentlessly. There was a slight stoppage for an injury to a Gloucester[sic] forward, and on resuming the All Blacks, through Dalley, set up a hot attack. This was warded off, and from a pass by Carter, Pickles kicked out of danger.

From a line-out the tourists' backs handled smartly, and Hart was given a perfect opening, but the wing man dropped the ball. A penalty against New Zealand was taken by Pickles, who put in a huge kick, but Nepia judged the ball beautifully and fielded in play, finishing up with a neat left foot kick to touch. Corbett staved off threatened danger with a clever pick up and screw punt, and then Preece and Dubberley got in a fine bit of loose work, and Shaw later distinguished himself with good work. Still all the clever back play came from the New Zealanders, and following an opening by Dalley, McGregor sent Hart away. The latter went strongly for the line, but fell to a grand tackle by Millington.

Just now the All Blacks made strenuous efforts to score, but the defence was great. Near the line the tourists were penalised, but Pickles did not gain many yards with his kick. Half-time was drawing near with the All Blacks only holding their three points lead.

Twice Gloucestershire got the ball out, but in the first instance Thomas punted to Nepia, who returned with interest, and the second time the passing broke down.

It was in the lines out where the New Zealand forwards held a big advantage, and they got the ball nearly every time in the throw-out. The visitors were still in the Gloucestershire half when half-time was called.

HALF-TIME :

NEW ZEALAND 1 try
GLOUCESTERSHIRE Nil

Considering the amount of attacking done by the New Zealanders, Gloucestershire were fortunate in being only three points down. But though the All Blacks indulged in some clever passing, and generally were the better combination, the movements were not finished off with that perfection which characterised the efforts of the 1905 combination. Not once in the first half had Gloucestershire been in the visitors' 25, and the state of the two divisions of the field clearly indicated where all the play had been.

Gloucestershire restarted, and the rain again came down heavily. Soon after the resumption Brown fielded from a cross-kick by Nepia, and dashed down touch, passed to Taylor, who returned to Corbett, but the latter was tackled. A loose dribble by the All Blacks was checked by Pickles, and later Corbett came into prominence with a solo effort, but he was upset and the ball went forward. The visitors rushed back, a forward transfer losing a good chance. Then Pickles (who had changed places with Thomas) receiving from Carter, burst through beautifully, and punted ahead, but with Corbett and Brown well up the ball rolled to touch.

Some hot forward work followed, and in a melee Prowse was again injured and left the field, but came back in a couple of minutes. The Gloucester front[sic], all of whom worked splendidly against a bigger pack, did well in subsequent play, but behind the home players had not the snap and dash of their opponents, and tried little in the way of opening out. Lines-out and scrums followed in the Gloucester half[sic], and then from a loose kick Dalley picked up and started a passing bout. The ball came prettily across to Lucas, who missed, and Corbett dribbled away and forced Nepia to turn the ball to touch.

It was hot work in the next few minutes, the Gloucestershire seven performing gloriously in the heavy exchanges. In the tight scrums they were beating their opponents, and the ball coming to Pickles, the latter ran and punted over the line, forcing Nepia to concede a minor. The Gloucester forwards[sic] shone in another forceful rush, and the New Zealanders were being fully extended in every phase of forward play. Useful touch-kicking gained ground for the All Blacks, but the forwards quickly recovered with dashing footwork, Bayliss, Shaw and Preece being to the fore.

A left-foot touch-kick again gave the visitors a line-out ten yards from the Gloucester line, but the home forwards broke away and Corbett further improved with a splendid effort. A kick back was fielded by Spoor, who put in a short run and punt. With backing further progress would have been possible, but Nepia was there and got out of the difficulty.

The game continued to provide plenty of excitement, Gloucestershire's surprising fight keeping up the excitement. It was a battle hot and strong with the forwards, with the home seven well holding their own. For the past ten minutes the All Blacks had had little of the ball behind the scrum, and when they did handle they could not do much. The Gloucestershire forwards heeling, Carter fed Corbett, who put in a big punt, but Nepia was very safe and gave nothing away in his return. The All Blacks put on pressure in the concluding stages, and McGregor breaking away on the blind side of the scrum fed Lucas, who missed his pass and a certain try. The Gloucestershire defence was hotly assailed, but by a big effort the situation was relieved, Corbett and Brown sharing in the effort. Back the tourists came, but Millington and then Brown effected marvellous saves just outside.

A couple of minutes to time the All Blacks found an opening in the defence, which DONALD was quick to seize, the forward scoring wide out. Nepia failed at goal.

RESULT :

NEW ZEALAND 2 tries (6 points)
GLOUCESTERSHIRE Nil

REMARKS

It was a great struggle in the mud, and Gloucestershire's splendid fight in the second half roused the spectators to a high pitch of excitement. That the All Blacks were the cleverer set in football finesse, speed and combination admits of no question; but the County deserve all praise for the grand defence they set up.

The honours of the game on the Gloucestershire side certainly went to the forwards. They were out-weighted, and in the first half they appeared slow in comparison with their more virile opponents, who were quick to break up, backed up attacking movements with surprising speed, and tackled with extreme deadliness.

But Gloucestershire came into their own in the second half, and for a good period more than held their own. But the tourists were always the more dangerous, and several of their sharp, short passing bouts were only circumvented at the critical moment. Shaw, the leader of the County pack, played a fine game throughout, and Bayliss, Dubberley and Preece frequently came under notice.

Behind the scrum the County's work was chiefly in defence and relief kicking. As an attacking line they never once looked like scoring. Corbett and Pickles were the leading lights – the latter especially after he had changed places with Thomas – and both did an immense amount of defensive work. The other players, if not outstanding, did their part creditably. Millington, at full back, effected one or two fine tackles, notably of Hart in the opening half, and the Gloucesterian altogether gave a satisfactory exhibition.

The All Blacks are undoubtedly a clever combination, and on a firm turf will no doubt prove worthy successors to Gallaher's famous side of 1905. But to-day the players were again terribly handicapped by the heavy and greasy ball, and more than one possible try was missed when safe handling alone would have pierced the defence.

The forwards were a formidable lot in all phases of play, Richardson, Brownlie and Donald being particularly in evidence. Porter and Dalley were exceedingly smart at the scrums, and the other backs were all artists, combining nicely and recovering mistakes in remarkable fashion. Nepia was not severely tested at full back, but in all that he did he showed the master-hand – safe fielding and quick clearance, combined with beautifully-judged kicking.

The game, under such wretched conditions, naturally suffered, but play was keen and well fought out, and Gloucestershire's close fight gave the spectators plenty to enthuse over.

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