

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1924

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER'S BEST PERFORMANCE

PLYMOUTH ALBION BEATEN BY EIGHT POINTS

BAD CONDITIONS, BUT SOME KEEN AND VIGOROUS FOOTBALL

The weather was most unfavourable for the visit of Plymouth Albion to-day. Heavy rain descended all the morning, and continued with more or less severity up to the time of starting, rendering the conditions generally very bad, whilst the attendance was considerably affected.

The Albion team differed in several instances from last season, mostly in the back division; whilst Gloucester also made changes. The two Oxford players – Bruce-Jones and Byers – were not available, but G. McKay, another student at the University from Epsom College, appeared, and was partnered at centre by W. Prior, of the City A team. In the forwards Seabrook and Roberts took the places of Collier and Dubberley.

The teams took the field at 3.5, Voyce meeting with a hearty reception on his first appearance of the season at home.

Teams :

GLOUCESTER

BACK: T. Millington.

THREE-QUARTERS: S. Brown, W. Prior, G. Mackay, and S. Crowther.

HALF-BACKS: Dr. Taylor and W. Collins.

FORWARDS: T. Voyce (capt.), F. Ayliffe, A. Hall, F. Ford, H. Roberts, M. Short, W. Hemmings, and J. Seabrook.

PLMOUTH ALBION

BACK : H. S. Dyer.

THREE-QUARTERS: L. J. Spry, F. A. Wood, V. Lewis, and W. R. Syms.

HALF-BACKS: F. J. Granger and R. H. Rowe.

FORWARDS: F. W. Sanders (capt.), J. Boddy, E. Stanbury, J. Clements, C. Gummer, R. Sparkes, L. R. Stephens, and S. Dow.

Referee : Mr. R. A. Roberts (Gloucester).

THE GAME

Gloucester started, and early on Seabrook led a fine rush to the visitors' 25. From a line-out the ball was got amongst the Gloucester backs, and a splendid movement left the ball with CROWTHER, who though partly tackled, managed to roll over the line with a fine try. Millington missed the goal kick from a difficult position, but Gloucester were three points up in as many minutes.

Restarting, the ball was taken by Voyce, who had his kick charged down. The Albion forwards dribbled through and sent over the line, Taylor touching down.

On the drop-out the City forwards showed up with some capital loose footwork which tested the defence, but the visitors managed to clear. An obvious forward pass by the Albion escaped the referee, and a long punt down saw Millington fail to gather, but he got back and recovered.

Some fast play followed, but the slippery state of the ball caused mistakes when handling was attempted. Seabrook, Voyce, and Ayliffe shone in a loose rush, which was finally checked on the Albion 25, and then good kicking changed the venue. Some keen play ensued at centre, followed by some exchange kicking between Dyer and Millington left honours easy.

Heeling by the Albion forwards saw Collins tackle Granger, who lost the ball. Voyce broke away and kicked hard and past Dyer. Following up, the City captain tackled his man on the line. Dyer lost the ball but held on to Voyce and prevented him from touching down. The referee awarded a penalty kick, but although the position was an easy one Millington missed the goal.

Following the drop out the Gloucester forwards dribbled finely, but off-side brought them back when looking dangerous. Operations were confined to the Albion half, but both teams were handicapped by the treacherous ground, and slips occurred before movements could be brought to fruition.

Millington was cheered for a fine gather and kick to touch, but the Albion returned later with interest, and the City end was visited. Here a pass from Voyce was missed, and the visitors became dangerous. Working hard Gloucester cleared, and a loose rush took the game well beyond the centre. Gloucester made further progress, but the visitors snapping up a loose pass broke clear, and with the three-quarters in position there was a fine opening, with only Millington to beat. The pass, however, was missed, and the opportunity of equalising thrown away.

Play during the next few minutes was very scrappy, and though not lacking in vigour, skill was not prominent. A flying kick by Taylor gained some 30 yards for the city, and the Albion were forced to their 25, but some good kicking took the game to midfield again. Here Ayliffe led the City forwards away with a splendid dribble, and Dyer was tackled almost on the line. A loose kick sent the ball into the open, but the whistle had gone for a previous infringement.

From the penalty kick awarded Gloucester rushed back in aggressive style, and the opposition being swept aside three Gloucester forwards fell in the ball, VOYCE being credited with a try, which Millington converted.

From the kick-off Ford replied nicely, and Gloucester again took up a position in their opponents' half. Bustling tactics by the Albion forwards forced the City back a dozen yards or so. Here some strenuous work was witnessed between the rival forwards, with very little in it.

Voyce with a useful effort sent through to Dyer, just missing tackling the visiting full back. Mackay checked a dangerous rush of the visitors with a clever pick-up and punt, but Gloucester lost the ground gained.

A long flying kick by Taylor sent the ball over the Albion line, but Dyer ran out and, passing to Syms, the latter found touch well. A little later Syms made a sharp dash down touch, but fell to a grand tackle by Millington. Soon after the interval was called.

HALF-TIME :
GLOUCESTER 1 goal, 1 try
PLYMOUTH ALBION Nil

Soon after the restart Taylor distinguished himself with a smart break through, followed by a solo dribble by Mackay, who kicked across. Voyce was up, but was fouled, and a penalty kick awarded. The captain had a shot for goal, but failed to raise the ball.

Gloucester were beaten back a few yards, but Voyce, opening out, Taylor fed Prior, who dashed ahead beautifully but his transfer to Crowther was too high and was dropped. The Albion cleared with good kicking, and a loose dribble took them past the centre, where the City had another penalty. Little ground, however, was made, and play settled at midfield. Voyce, picking up, handed off an opponent, and turned round to kick, but sent the ball towards his own goal, where Millington fielded and kicked to touch.

The ground was now in a heavy state, and it was difficult to distinguish one team from the other. Clever footwork by Collins was backed up by Voyce and Taylor. The ball was taken over the line, but only a minor resulted.

After the drop-out the Albion had rather the better of the exchanges, but accurate football was rendered very difficult, and most of the play was confined to the forwards. Gloucester at length set up an attack, chiefly through the aid of the front, and the Albion were placed on the defensive. From a line-out a City forward broke away, and passing to VOYCE, the International raced away and scored behind the posts. Millington failed to land a goal.

Though 11 points down, Plymouth restarted with plenty of dash, and a strong forward rush took them well inside the home 25. Here there was a stoppage for attention to a player. Resuming, Gloucester quickly cleared from a dangerous situation, Millington helping appreciably. Just inside the Gloucester half Seabrook led the home forwards in a great dribble to Dyer, who, however, gathered the ball beautifully from the feet of his opponents and effected a splendid clearance.

Gloucester returned with interest, but all attempts to open out proved futile. With the forwards it was desperately keen work, and rushes and counter rushes were the order, first one side and then the other gaining the advantage. The Albion once looked very dangerous, Millington being called upon only a few yards from his line. Being pressed he passed back to Hall, who forced his way through the opposition and saved the situation. Next Prior shone with a useful dribble, but the ball was lost and the Albion worked back. Off-side by Voyce gained the Devonians a penalty, but Dyer's kick was not successful, and Millington punted out to touch.

The Albion kept up the pressure, and from another penalty kick STEPHENS landed a goal, the ball hitting the cross-bar and bouncing over. Encouraged by this success the Albion worked with desperate energy to add to their score, and Gloucester were very hard pressed and Collins was instrumental in bringing relief with a pretty bit of footwork down the touch-line, but the Albion worked back again, Mackay effecting a wonderful save close in. To the end the Albion had the better of play, but there was no further scoring.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER 1 goal 2 tries (11 pts.)
PLYMOUTH ALBION 1 goal (p) (3 pts.)

REMARKS

Considering the wretched conditions the game was by no means a bad one. Gloucester thoroughly deserved their eight points win, and it was gratifying to note an all-round improvement. With the heavy and greasy ball and slippery surface correct back play was at a minimum, and for the most part the battle waged chiefly with the forwards. In this department the City eight held the advantage, especially in the first half, when the home men showed magnificent footwork, pace and dash. In the last quarter Plymouth improved considerably, and in the closing stages they gave the home men a gruelling time.

The City forwards, as a pack, did great work in all phases of play, and if mention must be made of any players in particular, Voyce, Seabrook, Ayliffe and Ford, perhaps, are entitled to the distinction. There was, however, no weak spot this afternoon, and Roberts and Short showed themselves possessed of the right mettle, and are men who should come to the fore in first-class football with more experience in better company.

Voyce had the distinction of scoring two tries, and might have had a third with the slightest bit of luck. The International set his side a splendid example, and the backing he received was all that could be desired. On to-day's showing Gloucester are almost well up to standard forward, and the majority of opponents should be given a thorough testing.

Behind the scrum there was a good deal of merit in the play of individuals, and if failure largely attended the combined efforts it was due mainly to the conditions prevailing. Both sides tried to open out as often as possible, but success was rarely achieved, and the best policy to-day was footwork. Gloucester were splendidly served at half-back by Collins and Taylor, both of whom displayed clever dribbling abilities, and they also shone in saving and tackling. As a pair the City were superior to Granger and Rowe.

At three-quarter the City's best movement was obtained early in the game, and led to Crowther's opening try. In the centre G. Mackay, the Oxford student, showed a good conception of the game, and under trying conditions came out of the contest very creditably. He did some capital relief work, and the few occasions he was served shaped extremely well on the attack. Prior, too, did several good things, and if not quite up to first-class standard yet, there is decided promise about him. Brown and Crowther, on the respective wings, made a respectable showing, though their opportunities in attack were limited.

The full-back play on both sides was excellent. Millington and Dyer had plenty to do – to accurately field the ball this afternoon was no easy job – but the mistakes they made were few and far between. At times their relief work was wonderful, and the hearty recognition paid by the crowd of the performances of the rival custodians was in every way deserved.

Plymouth have a good leaven of youngsters in their team – players who should quickly develop. Sanders, Boddy, and Stephens gave the forwards a good lead, and it said much for the stamina of the men that they were able to stand such a strenuous encounter and finish so strongly. Granger was a bit slow at scrum half, and Rowe was not over prominent. In the third line Syms displayed good pace, and he and Lewis worked well together on the left wing. Wood did some capital defensive work, and Spry gave promise of better things on a dry ground.

The victory to-day should do Gloucester a lot of good, and encourage the team to greater efforts in the important games immediately on hand.

Duberley, the Cinderford forward, had applied for a game, and was included in the Gloucester side, but at the request of his club he was not played until the latter's Committee had met and given formal sanction. The two Oxford students – Bruce-Jones and Byers – who were expected to play, were absent for very good reasons. One was down with laryngitis and the other was called upon to turn out for Oxford Greyhounds – practically a reserve University team.

Ian Smith, the Scottish International, obtained the services of G. Mackay, the old Epsom College boy, to fill one of the vacancies, and as previously remarked, he created a very good impression.

Next week : Thursday, Oxford University (don't miss this special attraction); Saturday, Devonport Services, both at Kingsholm.

JC