

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1927

RUGBY REFLECTIONS

(FROM W.B.'s NOTEBOOK)

BRISTOL BEATEN AT KINGSHOLM

GLOUCESTER FORWARDS SETTLING DOWN

YOUNG FULL BACKS WITH A FUTURE

Bristol's visit on Thursday for an evening match marked a resumption of fixtures between the clubs after a season's lapse, and the reunion proved a pleasant and happy one for all concerned. The fixture was set apart for the benefit of local charities, but the weather was none too kind, and the attendance undoubtedly suffered as a result of the rain which fell persistently up to 3 o'clock.

Under the circumstances a "gate" of £74 was considered satisfactory. A collection on the ground (organised by Mr. H. J. Balchin) brought in a further sum of about £11. No expenses were deducted, and after the usual donations to local charitable institutions have been allotted, the balance will be handed over to the Royal Infirmary, with probably an addition from the Club funds.

Gloucester won the match by 8 points to 5, and on the play the City were value for a more decisive victory. The game did not furnish anything outstanding in the way of combined back play, and for the most part the contest was between the forwards.

Bristol missed the services of Locke, Burland and Carter from the back division which opposed Cardiff, but J. S. Tucker, the International, made his first appearance in the pack, and in this department the visitors were at full strength.

Gloucester, too, were strongly represented, Tom Voyce resuming, and with McIlwaine and Seabrook the trio made a formidable back row of the scrum.

Breaking up quickly, the Gloucester front gave the Bristol backs few opportunities of making real headway, and they asserted a distinct superiority in the open, where McIlwaine shone repeatedly with brilliant bursts.

Bristol generally commanded the ball in the scrums in the first half, but the home players did some effective heeling later in the game. Gloucester did by far the major portion of the attacking, and with better finish should have added a couple more tries at least.

All the Gloucester forwards did well in this game. In the loose rushes the ball was kept well under control, the tackling was close, and there was a better appreciation of team work. Bristol were splendidly served by Tucker, Shaw and Hore, and Ackroyd and Lambert, of the new men, fitted in well.

What advantage Bristol held in heeling was nullified by the weakness behind. Lucas was frequently "bottled up" by Milliner at the scrum, and only on very few occasions was a bout of passing carried far. Stinchcombe is a better wing than outside half, and Bristol must feel the loss of that promising youngster Babington, who is now in London. At three-quarter the visitors had no outstanding player, and the line was singularly ineffective in attack. Locke and Burland, at centre, would have made a vast difference all round.

Better work individually was seen on the Gloucester side, with Stephens distinguished with several fine runs. Handing-off and side-stepping are strong points in the play of the City centre, and two or three times he completely beat half the opposition. One particularly good effort took him up to the visiting full-back, but with the goal line in sight Stephens was just caught by the leg and checked.

David did good work in the second half, and Thompson and Abbey were keenly alert all through. The backs, however, as a whole are not together yet, and one would like to see the ball got out to the wings quicker and the inside pass worked effectively. James did some useful work, but he has not yet grasped the real idea of the duties of a fly half, and open movements are not developed quick enough. A few tips from Tom Millington would probably put him on the right track.

Undoubtedly the feature of the game was the display of the rival full-backs – Boughton (Gloucester) and Brown (Bristol). Both are practically new to first-class football, and after seeing them in opposition on Thursday there is little to choose between the pair. Brown was tested far more severely in defence than the Gloucester custodian, but never once failed, and his clearances under the greatest pressure was remarkable.

In fielding neither made a serious mistake, and if Boughton had the greater length in his kicking, Brown was equally good in finding touch.

Gloucestershire are fortunate in having two such promising full-backs available, and with R. D. Evans (last year's custodian) playing well for Clifton, the Match Committee will have a difficult task in making their final choice.

JC