

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1927

GLOUCESTER 20 Pts.; CHELTENHAM 0

KEEN GAME BUT STANDARD OF FOOTBALL MODERATE

CHELTENHAM PLAYER BREAKS HIS COLLAR BONE

The first of the City's holiday matches was played at Kingsholm, Cheltenham providing the opposition. This was the return game between the teams, Gloucester winning at Cheltenham by a narrow margin.

There were changes in both sides. Nicholas was still unfit, and J. Stephens was pressed into service, and of the ten forwards Seabrook and McIlwaine dropped out. Cheltenham were short of Jukes (captain), Riley and Worgan. The ground looked in splendid condition, though after the rapid thaw and heavy rain was soft on top.

There was only a moderate attendance when at 2.35 the teams took the field as follows :—

GLOUCESTER

BACK : H. Boughton.

THREE-QUARTERS : Roy James, J. Stephens, L. Abbey, and A. Hough.

HALF-BACKS : R. Milliner and S. Short.

FORWARDS : L. E. Saxby (capt.), E. Comley, T. Wadley, J. Davies, G. Foulkes, N. East, J. Hemming, and T. Field.

CHELTENHAM

BACK : T. Harry.

THREE-QUARTERS : W. Fellows, C. Fry, W. Hart, and H. Goring.

HALF-BACKS : J. Howell and C. James.

FORWARDS : A. G. Maby, P. A. Woods, W. Febrey, T. Kenny, W. Castle, B. J. Stephens, R. M. Wilkinson, and A. J. Owner.

Referee : Mr. G. Hale (Bristol).

THE GAME

Cheltenham started, and from the return a visitor made his mark. Stephens was early prominent with a strong run and punt to Harry. The latter replied to Foulkes, who found touch well, and Cheltenham were placed on the defensive. East, with a dashing burst, went very close, but Cheltenham relieved through Goring. From a big kick by Boughton, Harry fumbled, and the ball was taken over the line, where, after a scramble, WADLEY forced himself over with a try. Boughton missed the goal-kick.

Resuming, Cheltenham, with good kicking, reached the home 25, where Hart had a shot for goal, but sent very wide. James, however, misfielded, though he managed to get in a flying kick to touch. Later the Town punted over the line, where Boughton touched down. The football, on the drop-out, was scrambling, though Hart, who was playing centre to Goring, brought off a capital run, in the course of which he handed off a couple of home players who attempted to tackle him.

Short loose rushes enabled the City to pass the centre line, but a penalty against Milliner for off-side gave Cheltenham a nice slice of ground. Fumbling by both sets of backs spoiled attempts at passing, but Hart, with useful work, made headway for the visitors. Saxby headed a fine burst for Gloucester for some 30 yards, but Cheltenham saved when matters looked dangerous.

In some loose play Hemming picked up and threw out a wide pass to the left. Here Stephens gathered and dropped a lovely goal, but the whistle went for a forward transfer – hard lines for Stephens.

Subsequent play was scrappy and mistakes numerous. Cheltenham were doing better in the scrums and heeling well, but the backs did not handle accurately. At length from a cross-kick Goring fielded and raced away, with Hart in attendance. Hough, however, effected a smothering tackle, and Boughton snapped up the ball and sent to touch.

The Cheltenham forwards worried the City pack a good deal, though when the home forwards broke away in the loose they were very dangerous. A clever opening by Milliner saw Abbey serve Stephens, but the latter just failed to take. James, however, picked up and cut through, only to find an infringement had taken place. Gloucester set up a strong attack, and a wild pass from Howell going astray, COMLEY picked up and raced over with a try, which Boughton converted with a lovely kick.

Cheltenham resumed, and play was keenly contested at mid-field. Harry was slow on two occasions in getting to the ball and was upset, but Gloucester failed to take full advantage. At length Gloucester heeled, and Stephens, receiving from Short, punted ahead. Abbey and Hough followed up well but Cheltenham just managed to save in time.

The Town were heavily pressed during the next few minutes, but the defence held out. Cheltenham dribbled clear but Milliner picked up and gave a short pass to Abbey, who yielded to HOUGH. The wing man made off with splendid dash, and going strongly for the corner, got the ball over the line for a fine try. Boughton failed at conversion.

Restarting, Cheltenham played up with great determination and gained a footing in the home half. Here Gloucester were penalised and Hart made a fine attempt to drop a goal. The ball hit the cross-bar and rebounded into the field of play. A visitor following up gathered and made a good attempt to get through but was held up.

Cheltenham struggled hard to open their account, but a pass from Milliner to Boughton saw the full back punt out to touch. Gloucester made further headway, Saxby being especially prominent in the open. A dangerous loose movement was checked, but later Saxby smartly intercepted a pass from Howell and had a clear field with the exception of Harry. The latter, however, stopped his man, but the ball rolling loose DAVIES snapped it up and went over with the fourth try. Boughton made another grand attempt to convert but just missed, the ball hitting one of the uprights.

Fourteen points up Gloucester did not relax their efforts, but the football displayed lacked finish behind the scrum. Cheltenham played hard and keen and tackled deadly, upsetting some well-intentioned efforts on the part of the home backs. Near the centre Howell fed Fellows on the right wing, and the latter sped clear away, finally punting to near the line. Stephens got back and cleared one or two opponents, but was eventually brought down in front of the posts.

Cheltenham had a fine chance of opening their account, but met with no success. Gloucester cleared with good footwork, and a splendid kick by Saxby found touch well inside the Town half, where play was being contested when the whistle sounded for half time.

HALF-TIME :
GLOUCESTER 1 goal 3 tries
CHELTENHAM Nil

Gloucester were value for their lead in points, but Cheltenham ought certainly to have had a try or two. Saxby resumed with a big kick which went over the line, but Harry pluckily kicked out to touch. A rush by the visiting forwards was stopped, and then Stephens made off in clever style, but his transfer to James was forward. The Town benefited by the aid of a penalty, and the City infringing again a minute later Hart had a long shot for goal, but failed to reach his object, and Boughton found touch with a long kick.

Gloucester made further progress, and Saxby dribbling away from a scrum, the captain picked up smartly and passed to Hough. The wing man had a big dash, but was upset by Hart and another a few yards outside. Gloucester confined play to within a dozen yards of their opponents' line, where strenuous efforts were made to pierce the defence, but without success. Scrums and lines-out followed in monotonous succession till Milliner went through a bunch of players, and letting the ball go it went over the line, where COMLEY pounced on it for a try. Boughton missed the goal kick, though the attempt was a good one.

Cheltenham restarted with a kick on the open side, where James fielded and passed inside to Stephens. The latter attempted a reverse transfer, but it was fumbled, and a Cheltenham forward kicked to Boughton who was tackled in possession. The Gloucester line was in danger, but the forwards got round and saved. There was a brief delay for attention to a visitor, but he quickly resumed.

Gloucester were inside their 25, where Short effected a bad pass, and the ball being rushed to Boughton, the full back was tackled on the line. Close forward work ended in Gloucester changing the position, but after getting out of danger Foulkes was penalised for off-side, and Hart sent back. Play was wild and scrambling, but at length the Gloucester forwards broke away and had practically a clear field, but Fry managed to save the situation. Gloucester had a possible opening a little later, but it was not utilised. After conceding a minor, Cheltenham played up strongly, and there was one attempt to open out, but no ground was gained.

Subsequent play showed no improvement in the general standard, and for the most part the forwards were engaged. Here the Town put up a stern struggle in the close exchanges, though beaten in open work. A breakaway by the City saw Short go through and after Milliner had handled SAXBY received and scored wide out. No goal resulted.

Though well behind in points Cheltenham restarted vigorously and reached the home half. Fry, intercepting from Short, had an open field with the exception of Boughton, but in starting to turn he slipped and fell to the ground losing a fine chance. Cheltenham went close after this disappointment, but could not get any luck.

A fumble by Harry allowed Gloucester to reach the centre where play operated for a few minutes. Then Short started a nice movement, and Abbey ran well up the field. He finally handed to Hough who raced over the line, but was called back for stepping into touch. Gloucester were dangerous in the next minute, but the defence proved effective.

Subsequent play was even for a time, but the football for the most part was disappointing from a spectacular point of view. Once James cut through beautifully from a sharp pass from the scrum and worked out a fine opening, but the pass to Stephens went astray.

In attempting to tackle Harry fell to the ground and fractured his collar-bone, and had to be assisted off. There was only a couple of minutes left for play, and nothing of note resulted.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER ... 1 goal 5 tries (20 points)
CHELTENHAM Nil

REMARKS

Cheltenham put up a much stronger opposition than the score would suggest, and experienced very hard lines on several occasions in not opening their account. The game was not one to enthuse over. There was plenty of keen, determined play and hard tackling, but rarely did the standard of football touch real class.

Gloucester's pronounced victory was due chiefly to the immense superiority of the City forwards in the loose, and the fine display of Boughton at full back. In the scrums Cheltenham actually had the better of the heeling, but the Town backs were not a success in combined movements, though Hart did well individually and made several strong runs.

Saxby was the live wire in the Gloucester front, and the captain was the leader in a number of dangerous raids. Quick away from the scrum, Saxby made full use of the mistakes of his opponents, dribbling effectively and initiating several attacks. His tackling, too, was very effective.

Saxby had splendid support from Comley, Hemming and Davies, but the others all shone at intervals. Owner, Febrey, and Woods were prominent for Cheltenham, whose best work was in the close exchanges.

Behind the scrum, Gloucester's work suffered through lack of finish and accurate handling. Milliner did all that was possible with the chances he had, but Short did not exercise the best judgement, and was too much inclined to loft his passes. The result was a general slowing down of passing movements.

At times the City displayed clever tactics, and the try by Hough was easily the best effort of the afternoon. The right-winger made one or two other good runs, and on the afternoon's play was more in the picture than James. Stephens was closely marked, but there were occasions when he beat the defence, though active support was not forthcoming to finish off his efforts. Abbey gave a creditable display at right centre, but the line as a whole did not make the best use of their scoring chances.

Boughton, at full back, gave an other fine display, and outshone Harry, who was very uncertain at times. The Town custodian was very unlucky in being damaged late in the game, and had to go to the Royal Infirmary to have his collar-bone set. Hart and Goring were the strongest wing in the Cheltenham third line, and Howell worked strenuously at scrum half.

I was sorry to hear at the match that R. N. Loveridge is seriously ill again, and it is feared he will be out of football for some little time. His many friends will hear the report with great regret, and hope for better news in the immediate future.

For the match with the Old Merchant Taylors, on Monday, J. K. Evans will take the place of Field, and it is hoped that G. McIlwaine will also be available.

Tuesday, v. Bath, at Kingsholm; next Saturday, Gloucester v. Moseley, at Moseley; Gloucester A v. Berry Hill, at Kingsholm.

Gloucester A play West End at Castle Meadow on Boxing Day morning.

GLOUCESTER A v. CHELTENHAM A

VISITORS GAIN DECISIVE VICTORY

Before a small crowd on the Athletic Ground, Cheltenham. The visiting three-quarters showed skill in handling, and almost scored in the first five minutes. Storrie beat off several opponents, and scored an unconverted try.

After good work by Goodwin and Storrie, D. Meadows crossed. Cheltenham attacked unsuccessfully and broke down on the line.

Half-time :

Gloucester A 2 tries
Cheltenham Nil

After even play, Gloucester got over by L. Meadows, which T. Stephens did not improve. Goodwin was the next scorer, Stephens converting. Further tries were added by Paget, Holford, and Goodwin, Stephens converting one.

Result :

Gloucester A 2 goals 5 tries (25 points)
Cheltenham A Nil