

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 1928

GLOUCESTER 6 Pts., LEICESTER 3 Pts

A HARD GAME BUT DISAPPOINTING FOOTBALL

CITY FORWARDS' GREAT FORM IN THE LOOSE

For their important home match against Leicester this afternoon, Gloucester were still minus the services of H. Boughton at full back, Roy James again deputising. In the continued absence of R. N. Loveridge (the vice-captain) Abbey retained the position. Leicester brought a powerful side, including three Internationals (Day, Buckingham and Greenlees), and the Oxford Blues (Franklin and Edmiston). A drizzling rain commenced to fall an hour before the match was timed to start, and this had an effect on the attendance, which was about 4,000 when the teams lined out as follows :—

## GLOUCESTER

BACK : R. James.

THREE-QUARTERS : A. Hough, W. Nicholas, J. Stephens, and L. Abbey.

HALF-BACKS : R. Milliner and E. Stephens.

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

## LEICESTER

BACK : H. W. F. Franklin.

THREE-QUARTERS : W. E. Farndon, R. A. Buckingham, H. L. V. Day, and F. W. Wood.

HALF-BACKS : J. C. Russell and H. D. Greenlees.

FORWARDS : F. D. Prentice, D. J. Norman, E. G. Coleman, M. G. Christie, J. H. F. Edmiston, E. Lawrence, A. Hall, and T. H. Briers.

Referee : Mr. A. E. Freethy (Welsh Rugby Union).

## THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss and Prentice kicked off for the visitors five minutes late. There was no City player positioned to take the ball which bounced to touch at the home 25. For not in straight at the first scrum Leicester were penalised, and James gained some 20 yards with the resultant kick. The visitors' opening out on the left, Farndon punted across, but the home team saved, and the ball getting loose the Gloucester forwards kicked down the field. Franklin failed to gather, and the ball was carried further until Greenlees got back and kicked to touch.

Heeling well, the Leicester backs handled cleverly, the men getting rid of the ball smartly although tackled. Not much ground was gained, but from a penalty for off-side Leicester found touch close to the City line. From a throw out from touch the home forwards came clear away but they were stopped at the centre. A loose kick was gathered by J. Stephens, who ran round and attempted to punt, but only sent the ball a few yards. Fortunately Gloucester recovered and E. Stephens giving Nicholas a short pass the latter found touch nicely.

The Gloucester forwards were doing well in the loose, but all the heeling so far had been done by Leicester. The visitors' passing, however, was erratic, and J. Stephens taking advantage dribbled through and tackled Franklin in possession. Gloucester attacked strongly, and E. Stephens shone with a dashing burst which was well supported, the Leicester line being placed in danger. Getting the ball away from a scrum, the Leicester backs handled, and Farndon was sent away on the right. He made good progress, but was well tackled by Abbey. The visitor was injured and had to go to the touch-line for attention, Christie coming out to three-quarter.

Leicester still commanded the ball in the scrums, but the movements behind were not effective. Hough came into prominence with some fine defensive work, tackling two men, and then getting the ball and bringing off a strong dash.

Hemming, with good footwork, tested the visitors, but Greenlees effected a remarkable pick up and save. Subsequent play was keenly contested in the Leicester half, Gloucester making a fine attempt to score. Saxby went close and threw out a wide pass to wing, but the ball did not reach Hough and rolled to touch. Gloucester kept on the aggressive, E. Stephens shining with a clever run through, but big kicking by the visitors brought the necessary relief. Farndon at this point came back on the field, but only remained a couple of minutes before retiring again.

Play was scrambling, both sides lacking judgment in handling. The City forwards brought off a good dash, and later James made headway with a fine touch-finder from a penalty. Greenlees replied for Leicester, only to see the home forwards break away from a line-out and recover the ground. Russell opened out for the Midlanders, but the passing went wrong, and Gloucester maintained territorial advantage.

From a scrum ten yards from the touch-line Milliner and Hough worked out a pretty bit of combination by interpassing. Milliner got to within five yards of the goal-line when he passed to SAXBY, who forced himself over the mark with a good try. The Captain took the shot at goal, but sent wide.

Restarting, play settled at mid-field, but the football displayed lacked finish. Leicester gained advantage with some good kicks, and later Hall led a forward rush which took play to the home 25. A pick-up and pass by Milliner to James saw the latter punt well, the ball rolling to touch at the centre. A useful kick by Saxby was next followed with a combined rush of the Gloucester forwards, who came down in a body on Franklin. At the critical moment, however, the ball went out of play five yards from the line.

Leicester kicked out to James, who side-stepped Christie cleverly and sent back to touch. James again distinguished himself with another fine return which confined operations to the Leicester half.

Milliner and E. Stephens got the ball away nicely, but J. Stephens' transfer to Abbey went wide. Gloucester continued to have the better of the exchanges, but nothing further of note occurred before the interval.

HALF-TIME :  
GLOUCESTER ..... 1 try  
LEICESTER ..... Nil

Gloucester, on the run of the play, deserved their three points lead, for the City had done more attacking, thanks to the superiority of the forwards in the loose. When the game re-started it was seen that Edmiston figured at wing three-quarter, vice Farndon (retired); Christie going into the forwards.

The City started well, and a pretty bit of work saw Saxby break through and pass to E. Stephens, but the outside half failed to take the ball with a good opening. Leicester cleared a little, but Hemming, snapping up the ball near the touch line, punted ahead, Franklin being bundled over immediately he gathered. Leicester for a time were in serious danger, the home forwards playing with great dash. They, however, failed to get the ball from the scrum to give their backs a chance.

By the aid of big kicks the Midlanders transferred the game to the other end. Some passing broke down, but Christie securing made a big attempt to get through, being pulled down by J. Stephens and another ten yards outside. In a desperate scramble in front of goal Hemming injured his leg and had to go off.

Resuming, Leicester tried passing, but J. Stephens completely bottled up Buckingham, and the ball becoming loose it was rushed to beyond the centre. Gloucester made further progress, but an attempt to handle broke down and the visitors benefited. A weak return by James lost further ground, but Saxby recovered with a splendid bit of play, kicking well down the field. Hough raced up and the ball bounced back from Franklin, but the Gloucester winger could not hold it with a fine chance.

The play was keen and determined, but behind the scrum neither side gave any indication of being able to combine with any accuracy. The City forwards took matters into their own hands and a brilliant dribble in which Abbey joined, took them close. Working desperately Gloucester went almost up to the mark, where SAXBY intercepting scored his second try. J. Stephens failed at goal.

From the kick-off James fumbled and a scrum followed ten yards from the home line. For off-side Milliner was penalised, and DAY taking the place kicked a fine goal, giving the visitors their first points. Previous to this Hemming had returned to the City forwards.

There was no improvement in the standard of play on the re-start. There was plenty of keen tackling, but the backs on both sides were very faulty in handling, and one longed for a combined effort carried through successfully.

Gloucester worked their way down the field with good work, and once J. Stephens got away, but his pass to Abbey went forward. In subsequent play there was some tall kicking by the Leicester backs, but the game was chiefly with the forwards, and here the City men did splendidly all round.

In the last five minutes Leicester gave the ball air, and Greenlees, after several failures, got the ball out to Wood. The left-winger raced away, but Jack Stephens got across, and with arm outstretched collared his opponents by the neck of the jersey and swung him in touch in fine style.

Gloucester went strongly after this, and Saxby, with a fine punt, tested Franklin. A penalty to the visitors brought a clearance, and to the end play was evenly contested.

RESULT :

GLOUCESTER ..... 2 tries (6 points)  
LEICESTER ..... 1 goal (p) (3 points)

## REMARKS

Gloucester's victory – and there was no question that on the day's play the City fully earned winning points – came as a pleasant surprise to the majority of followers of the home club, but at the same time I must confess the display of football, from a spectacular point of view, was most disappointing.

On paper the Leicester backs were a formidable combination, with nearly all the players either "capped" or honoured in International trials, yet the showing they gave to-day was weak in the extreme. I give the City men full credit for keen and close marking – Milliner and Jack Stephens were especially distinguished in this department – but Day and his colleagues had abundant opportunities of accomplishing something noteworthy. The occasions, however, when a concerted movement carried through were rare indeed. Indecision, faulty handling, and erratic passing were common, and the visitors' third line, as an attacking force, was negligible.

Undoubtedly the feature of the game was the grand work of the Gloucester forwards in the loose and lines-out. In the scrums the City men were out-manœuvred, and they did not get the ball back cleanly a dozen times throughout the afternoon.

With the Leicester backs finding the conditions so difficult for accurate handling, perhaps it was just as well for the City the visitors were allowed a monopoly of the heeling. Gloucester certainly did far better with footwork; they were always together, displayed cohesion and judgment, and tackled relentlessly.

Saxby, playing rover, was a big success, and the most prominent forward on the field. He scored both tries for the City, and was a tremendous worker in every phase of play. On to-day's form Saxby was good enough for any International side. The City captain would, I am sure, be the first to fully recognise the consistent support from all his colleagues.

There was no shirker; every man pulled his weight, and if Comley, Hemming, and Davies were in the limelight oftener it was because the ball came their way. The Gloucester forwards had a great share in to-day's victory, and to the whole pack hearty congratulations and further successes.

Gloucester's work behind the scrum was mainly tackling and saving, few opportunities being afforded the men of doing anything in concerted attack. Milliner has no superior at the smothering game, and he subjected Russell to a trying time this afternoon. With the ball coming out to him so regularly, the Royal Air Force scrum worker was bound to get it away sometimes, but there were many occasions when Milliner upset his opponent's best intentions. Milliner initiated Gloucester's first try, and he had a hand in the few attacking moves attempted.

Dick Stephens did good all-round work at stand off half, and one or two sharp runs in the first half were highly meritorious. In the third line Jack Stephens stood out for his splendid tackling, and the manner in which he got after Wood and stopped a possible try was one of his best efforts.

Nicholas did nothing striking, and of the two wings Hough was the more effective. He marked his opponent with great keenness, and on the rare occasions he received the ball he showed splendid determination. Abbey shared with his colleagues in the general defence they were called upon to do. Like the Midlanders, the City backs could not get going in a concerted movement, and with the continual mistakes by players on both sides the ball must have been difficult to control.

James, at full-back, was not called upon to do any tackling, but for the most part he gathered the ball well. His kicking lacked Boughton's length, and in some exchanges with Day and Franklin he suffered in comparison. The latter, after a shaky opening, improved, and there were two or three occasions in the second half when the slightest mistake would have meant disaster to his side.

Leicester had the misfortune to be short of Farndon for a good portion of the game. The seven forwards held the advantage in the scrums, but they were beaten in other departments. Lawrence, Norman, Christie, and Prentice were about the pick. Russell and Greenlees gave the men in the rear plenty of chances, but, as already indicated, they were made poor use of. The Scottish outside half, though very useful in making some effective clearances, was not outstanding in attack, and did little in the way of attempting the cut through. The Leicester three-quarters, as a line, were completely off colour, and except for the big kicking by Day were not seen to advantage.

Next week : Gloucester v. Northampton, away. Gloucester A v. Evesham, at Kingsholm.

JC