

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1928

CITY DISAPPOINT AGAINST THE TAYLORS AT HOME

The annual match with Old Merchant Taylors on Boxing Day proved as popular an attraction as ever, and the best "gate" of the season (£176) was taken. Gloucester lost by a try to nil, and the City served up such disappointing football that they deserved to be beaten.

Making allowance for the rearranged back division, necessitated owing to the absence of McCanlis and Roy James, Gloucester had so much of the play territorially that they should have won the game with a few points in hand.

But the City backs had a crude idea of combination, and when openings were made by individual effort scoring chances were literally thrown away through failure to pass at the right moment.

The football throughout was keen and hard, with plenty of resolute tackling, but there were no real thrills, and the exhibition, as a whole, was very disappointing to the large holiday crowd.

The Gloucester forwards, in all except heeling from the loose scrums, where the Taylors were clearly superior, did quite well, but they did not reach the standard displayed against the Harlequins. Saxby, playing at three-quarter, did some useful work at centre, but the captain would have been more effective in his old position.

The Taylors backs were allowed so much scope in getting on the move, and Turnbull and Spragg, powerful runners both took some pulling down. Melhuish, too, proved a difficult man to tackle, and his clearance work against the Gloucester forwards was one of the features of the match.

The old Cambridge full-back and Boughton were the most conspicuous performers, and their respective displays stood out prominently in a game not distinguished for much in the way of skilful football.

The Taylors were better in team work behind the scrum, but their passing frequently broke down through faulty handling. The visitors had the pace of the home line, and individually were superior footballers all round. At half-back Tomlinson was worried by the persistent off-side tactics of the opposing wing forwards which even penalties did not check. Boughton had several shots for goal from free kicks, but fortunately for the Londoners he was not "on the spot" on this occasion.

Jack Stephens was again inconsistent, and I hardly know what to make of him. He distinguished himself with two of the finest runs witnessed during the game – it should have been a try on each occasion had he parted with the ball after making the openings – and he had hard lines with a smart effort to drop a goal. But he had some bad lapses, especially in the second half, and only the alertness of Boughton saved the side from disaster.

The other Gloucester backs did not impress in attack, and it is behind the scrum the City are feeling a draught just now. The Selection Committee have chopped and changed the players about, and made experiments galore, but the desired combination has not so far been discovered. It is to be hoped the much-needed improvement will be forthcoming in the second half of the season. The Taylors were the fifth team to win at Kingsholm this year! There was a time when Gloucester were regarded as well-nigh invincible at home.