

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1907

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. CLIFTON

CITY'S OPENING MATCH

The season was inaugurated in earnest at Kingsholm to-day, when Clifton, as usual, provided the opening fixture. Clifton are amongst the oldest opponents of Gloucester, and back in the eighties some hard fought and close games were witnessed between the teams.

For some time now Gloucester have held a decided superiority, and the Cliftonians have had to submit to a number of overwhelming defeats. Heavy reverses, however, do not discourage Clifton, and the club now is as strong in members and players as ever, and when the season is in full swing three teams are regularly turned out.

With the exception of the forward ranks, where Holder, Hawker, and Collins of last year's pack were missing, Gloucester were able to start the campaign with practically their full strength. Holder, as is well known, has joined the Northern Union, and the other two players have retired. H. Quixley, who left the City Club to assist Cheltenham last season, returned to Gloucester and filled one of the vacancies, and D. Hollands also found a place in the front. The back division was identical with the combination which did duty in 1906-7, and with such an experienced set of players the City are expected to do well.

Clifton fielded a strong side, and though not expecting to repeat their surprise triumph of a few years ago, had great hopes of keeping the score against them to a reasonable margin. T. Watkins Baker re-appeared for Clifton after a long absence, taking Matthews' place at wing three-quarter.

The weather was beautifully fine, and the ground was in capital condition. There was a fair crowd of spectators when the teams took the field at 3.30, and later the attendance increased. The teams were as follows : –

Gloucester. – A. E. Wood, back; C. Smith, H. Smith, A. Hudson, F. Smith, three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent, J. Stephens, half-backs; G. Vears (capt.), W. Johns, B. Parham, F. Pegler, G. Matthews, J. Merchant, B. Quixley, D. Hollands, forwards.

Clifton. – E. Biggs, back; E. F. Eberle, V. F. Eberle, F. W. Baker, T. W. Baker, three-quarter backs; A. Gardiner, S. B. Sleeman, half-backs; E. J. G. Higham, A. J. Gardiner, G. W. Coles, F. R. Rudman, F. T. Boucher, P. T. Rowe, J. A. Brown, F. S. Woodley.

Referee : Rev. D. T. Jones.

## THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss, and played with the sun at their backs. Clifton's kick-off was well returned by Wood, and the first line-out took place near the centre.

The Gloucester forwards carried the first scrum, but were soon stopped, and then Gent saved nicely at the feet of the opposition. The visitors broke away from a scrum but they over-ran the ball, and were pulled up.

Heeling by the visitors saw an attempt at passing, but Johns tackled well. E. Baker made a mark from a loose kick, but Wood returned well, and Gloucester reached to centre. Kicking exchanges followed, ending in Gloucester gaining an advantage.

C. Smith fielding in the open ran round and started a bout of passing. Gent handled and sent to Hudson, who cut inside beautifully and scored a nice try. Wood failed at goal.

The drop-out bounced to touch, but good play by H. Smith put Gloucester on the attack. Getting the ball in a line-out Johns ran strongly, but was collared from behind a couple of yards outside. Clifton worked out of danger, but from a feeble kick by V. Eberle, Matthews just failed to score.

A couple of scrums ensued close to the Clifton line, a minor eventually being allowed. The visitors worked strenuously on the drop-out, and kept play near midfield. An intercepted pass by Baker looked dangerous, but Hudson tackled well. Wood was prominent with a couple of big kicks, but some scrappy play on the part of the home team lost ground.

Clifton tried to open out, but the exchanges were too slow, and nothing resulted. Pretty combination between Gent, Stephens, and C. Smith nearly brought about a score, but Stephens missed a repass. Clifton gained a few yards with loose footwork, but Gent getting hold fed his three-quarters cleverly. There was some fumbling on the right wing, but H. Smith recovered, and kicking across enabled Vears to secure and cross the line. Wood kicked a grand goal.

Wood received the kick-off, and got in a grand return, but an off-side tackle caused play to be brought back inside the home 25. Gloucester quickly worked out, Parham getting in a good punt to the centre. V. Eberle intercepted and ran down to Wood, but the City custodian brought off a grand tackle.

Gloucester soon got on the attack again, but the passing went astray between Hudson and C. Smith. Some really clever passing and inter-passing by Stephens and Gent only just failed of a score, and a minute late "Whacker" Smith lost a try through trying to cut inside instead of going straight for the corner.

The City, however, did not have to wait long for a further addition to the score, H. Smith notching a smart try after good work by F. Smith. Wood's attempt at goal failed.

Clifton restarted, and even play followed at midfield. Gent eventually got off, but ran F. Smith too near touch before parting with the ball. Gloucester pressed their opponents to their 25 but some wild passing and fumbling gave Clifton an opening which they quickly seized upon, and V. Eberle scored a good try, which E. Baker converted, the success of the visitors being heartily applauded.

Restarting, Gloucester at once pressed. On the 25 V. Eberle intercepted another pass and had a clear opening with the exception of Wood. Reaching the latter he handed to Higham, who raced home and behind the posts. E. Baker landed a goal, and the visitors were within one point of the City's score.

Gloucester played up strongly on the resumption but Clifton, encouraged by their successes, held their own well. Their forwards were good in the loose and tackled well. Just before the interval Stephens intercepted an opponent's pass, and feeding Johns at the right moment the latter ran hard and crossed the line near the posts. Wood's kick for goal was charged down.

#### HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester .....	1 goal 3 tries
Clifton .....	2 goals

Vears restarted and the game settled at the centre. Johns was early prominent with a dashing effort, and this was followed by Gent cutting up the field and working out a fine opening. Both Hudson and C. Smith, however, failed to take advantage.

Clifton were sorely pressed for a period and the defence was severely tried. Parham was held up on the line, and a little later Clifton just managed to save by touching down.

Play hovered in the visitors' 25 where Gent, Stephens, and H. Smith inter-passing cleverly, but the final transfer was missed.

Hubert Smith later failed with a drop at goal, but a try ought to have resulted from a neat pick up and pass by Parham, H. Smith knocking the ball over the line. For palpable off-side play by Sleeman, Clifton were penalised and Wood added three points to Gloucester's score with a fine kick.

Clifton resumed, but play was quickly taken back to their quarters, where Gloucester set up a hot attack. After several fruitless attempts to score, the City forwards opened out and Hudson getting possession ran over in splendid style. The place kick by Wood failed.

Clifton were immediately put on the defensive on the drop-out and Gloucester missed a couple of scores by the nearest shave. By the aid of some loose kicking Clifton relieved, and with a dashing burst passed the centre. Here they were penalised, and Wood gained a lot of ground with a big punt.

Still Clifton got the better of a couple of scrums, and reached the home 25. The City forwards heeling, Gent fed Stephens who gave up to Hudson smartly. With a brilliant dash the International cleared the opposition and finished a splendid run by scoring. Wood's shot for goal struck the upright and rebounded over the cross-bar. Clifton paid a brief visit to the home end on the restart, but they were beaten back. A long kick down was fumbled by Briggs, and Johns being well up dribbled on and scored his second try. No goal resulted.

Wood replied to the drop-out with a good kick, and Gloucester were placed in an attacking position again. Johns was conspicuous with another good dribble, but E. Baker brought off a neat save. Then on the right wing Hudson brought off another big run, but he was pulled into touch by E. Baker, who had come across from the opposite wing.

Gloucester lost a fine opportunity a little later, H. Smith passing wildly when Frank Smith had a walk in. The little left winger had a dash for the corner immediately afterwards, but he was stopped in time. Then the ball got out amongst the Gloucester backs, and Hudson registered the eighth try, which Wood converted.

There was some fast play on the resumption, the Clifton forwards showing up well. Gloucester, however, were never in danger, and easily cleared to beyond the centre.

Hubert and Frank Smith took part in a combined movement which promised a score, but Clifton saved at the critical moment. Hudson stopped a dangerous rush of the visiting forwards, whilst Wood brought off a magnificent tackle of E. Eberle when the latter had a possible chance.

Near midfield Gent opened out nicely, and Stephens feeding C. Smith, the latter broke through and ran to Biggs. Yielding the ball to Hudson, the International completed a lovely movement by scoring his fifth try. Wood again converted.

To the end play was in favour of the home team, but there was no further scoring.

#### RESULT :

Gloucester ..... 5 goals (1p), 5 tries (38 points)

Clifton ..... 2 goals (10 points)

#### REMARKS

A fast and enjoyable game, in which Clifton did far better than the score would indicate. This was especially the case in the first half, and when the Cliftonians got within a point of the home score visions of a surprise defeat loomed ominously. Gloucester, however, were not to be caught napping, and once they started scoring in the second half the result was placed beyond doubt.

A victory by 28 points was eminently satisfactory to Gloucester, and the fact that Clifton twice crossed the City lines unquestionably gave great satisfaction to the visitors.

Clifton, on their play, deserved a score, and though there was an element of luck in the openings which culminated in both their tries, no one begrudged them the points obtained.

The match was keenly contested throughout, and if at times play became scrappy there were many smart movements which prevented the game ever becoming dull and uninteresting.

Clifton can always place a strong, resolute set of forwards in the field, and to-day they were represented by a pack which fully sustained the reputation of the club. In the scrums they were beaten for possession, but if anything they had the better of the Gloucester men in loose footwork. The City eight would do well to cultivate this style of play, and not resort to picking up so much.

Even when the game was going dead against them the Clifton forwards did not relax their efforts, and occasional bursts gave Gloucester a good deal of anxiety.

The City forwards packed well, heeled smartly, and were always keen on the ball. They are a well balanced eight, and should settle down into a serviceable pack.

Vears was always in the van, following up well and putting a tremendous amount of energy into his work. Johns was good in every department, and Parham, Hollands, and Merchant came under notice in the open.

For Clifton Higham, Gardner, and Woodley were conspicuous, but there was no slacking on the part of any individual.

#### GLOUCESTER A v. St. MARK'S

These old opponents met at Walham in their opening match of the season. Both sides were well represented. St. Mark's won the toss, and C. Hayward kicked off.

Gloucester soon got on the attack, and looked like scoring in the first two minutes, but were penalised for off-side play. C. Cook took the kick, which fell short.

St. Mark's forwards carried a couple of scrums nicely, but they were beaten back well, and play was in neutral territory for some time. Gloucester then got the ball back well, but the half-backs were very slow, and the passing in the rear division was wild and ill-judged, the ball being flung about in the air anyhow.

Play was vigorously contested in the neighbourhood of the centre for some time. Eventually, by dint of hard work, Gloucester obtained a footing in the St. Mark's 25, and a clever bit of work from a line-out nearly let Cook in. Towards half-time St. Mark's made desperate efforts to score, but although they got over the line the man lost the ball.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester A ..... Nil  
St. Mark's ..... Nil

The first two or three minutes of the second half saw the ball travel up and down the ground at a great pace. Then from a line-out Westbury obtained, and passing out to the three-quarters, let in Cook with a splendid try.

St. Mark's resumed pressure, but failed to score. Play hovered in the centre, where it remained till the call of time.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ..... 1 try (3 points)  
St. Mark's ..... Nil