

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1907

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. SWANSEA

WELSHMEN BEATEN

The weather to-day was far more suitable for football, and a good crowd of spectators attended at Kingsholm to welcome the famous Swansea team. The visitors were weakened by the absence of Trew (captain), Bancroft, Owen, and I. Morgan. Three of the players were on the injured list, whilst Owen was suffering from a cold. Gloucester played the same fifteen as beat Cinderford.

The team took the field at 3.35 as follows : —

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

Swansea. — F. Rees, back; W. Symonds, H. Thomas, D. H. Edwards, P. Hopkins, three-quarter backs; H. Crocker, H. Toft, half-backs; A. Smith, E. Morgan, H. Hunt, D. J. Thomas, H. Hyams, G. Hayward, Ben Davies, "Port Tennant" Davies.

Referee : Mr. G. C. Rodway (Midland Counties)

THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss, and deputed the visitors to kick off from the Worcester-street goal. H. Smith returned to touch inside the home half, but a minute later Gent punted to mid-field, and Gloucester made further progress with a loose rush.

Swansea heeled from the first scrum, but the ball only went straight across the ground. Later Toft cross-kicked cleverly, and C. Smith only returned poorly, the visitors only just failing to cross in the corner. The City were closely pressed on the line, but they gained relief by touching down.

The drop-out was replied to with a smart kick, and Swansea got well inside the home 25. Off-side caused the Welshmen to be penalised, and from Wood's kick Edwards forced a minor with a poor attempt to drop a goal. Ensuing play was scrappy, and in the Gloucester half of the ground.

A penalty was given against the City for an off-side tackle, and Rees had a shot for goal, but did not send the ball far enough. Wood punted out, and gained ground with a return to Edwards. The Swansea forwards were heeling well, but their backs could not get set going. Toft lost the ball once, and the home players made headway with a loose rush.

Gloucester next got the ball away, but C. Smith failed in his attempt to burst through. The ball got loose and to the wing, where H. Smith failed to take. Hopkins came along and picked up finely, punting to Wood, who marked.

Play was fought out at the centre, where Swansea opened out. Hudson, however, intercepted, but afterwards knocked on. Neat work by Gent started the Gloucester backs on the move, and Hall kicked finely to touch in the Swansea half. This advantage was soon lost by a fumble on the part of H. Smith, who failed to gather a kick by Toft.

More mistakes by the home side lost ground, but eventually a kick by C. Smith sent to mid-field, Hollands following up well. Fast and even play ensued at the centre, and then the home backs indulged in some clever exchanges. Hall punted, and the home men following up prevented a return. Rees was rushed off the ball, but it went to touch on the 25 line.

Gloucester worked hard now, and Hudson starting a bout of passing. Hall ran and passed to C. Smith. The latter was partly tackled, but shook himself free, and went on finally yielding to Matthews, who dashed over. A forward pass, however, was given. From a punt out by a Swansea man, Wood made his mark, and had a place for goal, but the ball just went wide of the posts, a minor resulting.

Gloucester returned well to the drop out and clever play by Gent and Stephens put Swansea on the defence. A penalty against the City enabled the Welshmen to change the venue, and a strong forward burst gained further ground. Wood, however, gathered and passed back to Hall, who found touch at mid-field. Here there was a slight stoppage owing to Crocker sustaining a damaged knee.

Resuming, Gloucester got the ball back, and Stephens passing to H. Smith, the wing man gained a dozen yards or so with a punt to touch. With a clever wheel the Swansea forwards got away, but they were pulled up; and then Wood, with a beautifully judged kick, found touch on the Swansea 25 line. The Gloucester forwards heeled nicely from subsequent scrums, but Gent was well marked, and had some difficulty in getting the ball away.

Eventually the City men got well away, and with Hall and Hudson well placed a score seemed imminent. The centre man's pass, however, went astray. Still, Gloucester pegged away, and at length their efforts were rewarded with a brilliant score. From a loose kick by a visitor Hall gathered nicely, and feinting to pass went through in fine style. Being pressed he sent out a wide pass to H. Smith, who took the ball cleverly and went over the line amidst great cheering. Wood failed at goal, though the attempt was a good one.

Swansea re-started, and their forwards showed up with a rush which carried them beyond mid-field. Parham stopped them nicely, and got in a good kick. Play to the interval was even.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucester 1 try
Swansea Nil

Vears re-started, and following an exchange of kicks the Gloucester forwards were penalised for getting within ten yards of an opponent[sic]. The Swansea forwards rushed a scrum in dashing style, only to be stopped by Stephens, who sent to touch. The Welshmen subsequently came under the ban of the referee, and the resultant kick left matters pretty equal.

A neat bit of work was accomplished by Stephens, who raced away down touch and cross-kicked, only to see Edwards mark finely. A long kick down went behind Wood, but Hall got back and kicked to touch at the centre. Here Craddock started an onward movement, which took Gloucester to their opponents' quarters.

Clever heeling by the Gloucester forwards continually put the home backs in possession. Some smart exchanges were witnessed, but Swansea twice saved by intercepting. Hopkins once dashed away on the right, but he was brought down, and Wood ran back to mid-field. Play was exceptionally fast, but the tackling was so keen as to spoil combined movements. Gent and Stephens indulged in some smart work, and Wood was also seen to advantage.

Good kicking by the Swansea backs gave the visitors a nice position, and the forwards, with a brilliant dribble, took play close to the Gloucester line. The City worked out of danger, but a clever kick by Symonds found touch a yard or two outside. Swansea lost ground by wild passing, and Hudson and Wood relieved for Gloucester with short punts.

Swansea, however, kept up the pressure, and Toft forced a minor with a kick over the line. Thomas replied to the drop-out, and Swansea soon found a footing in the City half. Bad passing by the Welsh backs lost a possible opening, and then the Gloucester three-quarters indulged in a fine movement. Hudson, the last to receive, put in a lovely dash down touch and then punted, but he was charged over before he could get up.

Gloucester were off again a moment later, but they were checked in time. Both teams were working vigorously, but there was not much in it. Near mid-field Hudson got a short pass, and seizing upon an opening ran clear. He only had the half-back to beat, but in trying to cut inside he was tackled and brought down. Johns was up and took a pass, eventually crossing the line, but a forward pass was given. Rees was injured in tackling Hudson, and had to receive the attention of the ambulance men.

Resuming, Gloucester at once got the ball out, and Hudson receiving he dropped for goal, but the shot was a long way out. The ball went over the line, and H. Smith raced hard for possession, but he was just beaten. Swansea after this, reached the centre, where Gent fumbled a kick. Vears was handy and picked up, but sent the ball behind him, and Rees coming up from full-back gathered and scored one of the softest tries imaginable. The place-kick failed.

On resuming play was confined to the Gloucester 25, where some scrappy play was seen. H. Smith made a poor kick, which nearly brought about disaster. Johns was instrumental in relieving from a dangerous position, but Rees effected a capital pick up and return to Wood. The ball went over the line, but the City custodian refused to touch down and kicked out. Johns followed up and tackled Symonds, who lost possession of the ball. Hollands gathered, and passing inside to Hudson, the International ran half the length of the ground and planted the ball behind the posts amidst terrific enthusiasm, which was renewed when Wood added the extra points. Symonds was knocked out when tackled by Johns, but he came round and was able to resume.

Swansea re-started, and play was contested with great vigour. The All Whites opened out, and Symonds tried to break through, but he was stopped. He essayed a long pass to the wing, but nothing came of it. The last few minutes were hotly contested, Swansea making desperate efforts to draw level. Once they got right to the line, but the home team saved. An intercepted pass gave the City relief, and time was called with Gloucester winners.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal, 1 try (8 points)
Swansea1try (3 points)

REMARKS

It was a well-deserved victory, and right heartily do we congratulate the City team on at last breaking the run of ill-success against the premier Welsh clubs.

Swansea came with weakened forces, but there is always a wealth of reserve talent at the disposal of the All Whites, and the substitutes performing today are players who would be welcomed with open arms by the majority of first-class clubs in England.

Regarding the game, it was fiercely fought out, but one missed that perfect combination behind usually associated with Swansea. As a whole the passing of the visitors was wretchedly poor, and it was rare indeed that the ball got to the wing men.

For the continual breakdown in the machinery, Toft, the outside half, was mainly responsible. He was altogether too selfish and unreliable, and the players in the third line seldom got a fair chance of displaying their abilities.

Forward, the visitors had a fine pack out. Knowing their strength in this direction, the acting Swansea captain (Aubrey Smith) had scrums instead of lines-out, but the Gloucester forwards stuck to their opponents splendidly. The City eight were over-weighted, and having this fact in mind they did marvellously well in all departments.

In the tight the Gloucester men were pushed at times, but whenever possible they got possession and heeled in a manner that was very gratifying to see. Every man in the Gloucester pack played his hardest this afternoon, and it was a fine struggle against such opponents.

Johns, despite his injured hand, turned out and played another fine game, being always to the fore. Hollands, Matthews, Vears, and Parham were also prominent, the former doing splendidly in the open.

Swansea were best represented by Smith, Hunt, and “Port Tennant” Davies – a burly forward and one who took some holding. No blame whatever could be attached to the Swansea front for the defeat. They were as strong as ever, and right to the end they struggled desperately to save the side.

At half-back, Gent and Stephens were more effective than the opposing couple. The City pair combined well, and they both got through a lot of work.

At three-quarter Gloucester were better served than the All Whites. The first try was a beautifully carried out movement, in which Hall was the principal agent. Hudson was always in evidence – in attack and defence – and his try was a splendid effort. Just previously he had brought off a very fine run, and had he given up the ball to Johns earlier a certain score would have resulted.

“Whacker” Smith did some sterling work in the centre, but Hubert Smith was at fault more than once. Neither of the Swansea three-quarters was particularly prominent, and one missed the master-hand of Trew.

Both full backs rendered admirable service, Rees proving a most able substitute for Bancroft. The visiting custodian had the honour of scoring the try for Swansea, but it was a gift, and the outcome of a mis-kick by the home captain. It would have been exceptionally hard lines for Gloucester to have been robbed of a well-earned victory by this mistake.

GLOUCESTER A v. WHITECROFT

At Whitecroft, both clubs being well represented. Last week Whitecroft met Lydney First and were only beaten by 9 points to 3.

RESULT :

Whitecroft 1 try (3 points)
Gloucester 1 try (3 points)