

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1907

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. PONTYPOOL

FOOTBALL IN THE FOG : WEAK CITY TEAM VICTORIOUS

With the visit of Pontypool to Kingsholm today, Gloucester commenced a series of home matches which extend to the end of the year. This was the Monmouthshire club's first engagement with the City, but unfortunately for the financial success of the match a thick fog prevailed, and greatly affected the attendance.

Owing to various causes Gloucester turned out a very weak team, the absentees including G. Vears (captain), C. Smith, D. R. Gent, A. Hudson, and H. Collins. Hudson is suffering from a strain, and it is stated the doctor has ordered him not to play for several weeks – a very serious loss to the city and county if such turns out to be the case.

Pontypool, who were very keen on making a good impression, brought up a very powerful side, the fifteen including four Internationals – “Ponty” Jones, Evans, Pritchard, and Dowell.

The teams were : –

Gloucester. – A. E. Wood, back; H. Smith, G. Cooke, E. Hall, F. Bloxsome, three-quarter backs; W. Dix, J. Stephens, half-backs; G. Matthews, W. Johns, B. Parham, D. Hollands, J. Wyburn, H. Quixley, R. Craddock, F. Pegler, forwards.

Pontypool. – M. H. Williams, back; D. P. Jones, C. C. Pritchard, J. P. Jones, E. T. Morris, three-quarter backs; W. Thomas, J. H. Evans, half-backs; W. H. Dowell, T. Barnfield, G. Carr, R. Thomas, A. Ranford, E. Stephens, W. Watkins, T. Carter, forwards.

Referee : Mr. Palmer (Bristol).

THE GAME

Pontypool won the toss and elected to defend the Worcester-street goal. Some of the Gloucester forwards got in front of the ball on the kick-off, and a scrum was ordered at the centre. The visitors heeled from the first scrum, but Evans sent out a bad pass, and Morris could only kick straight to touch.

Pontypool made headway with a loose rush, but the Gloucester backs, with neat passing, got well inside their opponents' half. Here Dix got possession and opened out nicely. Cook cut through cleverly and passed, but the ball went astray. Bloxsome, however, with a flying kick, sent to touch close to the visitors' line. The Welshmen relieved with a useful rush, but the ball got amongst the home backs, who, however, failed to take advantage.

A free to the visitors enabled them to find touch at the centre, where Evans started a bout of passing. Pritchard made ground, but in trying to do too much he was collared. Stephens and Dix, with neat work, gained Gloucester some yards, and Wood, with some grand touch kicks, further improved matters.

In a loose rush Dix fielded cleverly, and transferred the ball to a colleague, who fell over the line. A forward pass, however, was ruled.

From the subsequent scrum Dix handed out, but H. Smith was collared in trying to break through. With some fast footwork Pontypool got out to more favourable quarters, but Gloucester confined play to the visitors' half.

A wild pass by Thomas lost ground for the Monmouth men, a knock-on by Cook losing a possible opening for Gloucester. The City forwards were doing well in the loose, and Cook [word unreadable] up, dropped for goal, the ball going wide of the posts.

Following the drop out play was hotly contested at the centre. Then the players disappeared in the fog on the sixpenny side, and it was impossible to discern what was happening.

It was apparent, however, that Pontypool had made headway, the game being taken to the Gloucester 25. At length the ball got out to the home backs, and Cook found touch well on the grand-stand side, the arrival of the play at this portion of the field being greeted with cheers.

Gloucester heeling, Dix got the ball away to Stephens, who in turn fed the three-quarters. The ball, however, was lost with a possible opening. Gloucester went very close after this, Bloxsome doing good work on the right wing. For off-side by Pontypool the visitors were penalised, and Wood, with a grand kick, only just missed the goal, the ball dropping just short of the cross-bar.

The visitors punted out, and with a strong burst reached the home quarters. Pontypool had a shot for goal from a penalty, but failed. Play was contested in the home 25, where the visitors opened out. Hall, however, intercepted and running to the full-back punted over his head. There was a race for possession, ending in a visitor securing and punting to Wood. The latter returned under pressure, but "Ponty" Jones put in a fine reply to touch.

Dix was prominent with a smart breakaway from a scrum, but his pass went astray. Pontypool gained a footing in the City 25, where the backs resorted to passing. Cook however, intercepted, but kicked straight to the full-back, who returned with interest. From this point Pontypool attacked, and only the smartness of Dix stopped a score. Immediately after the visitors forced a minor with a kick over the line.

On the resumption the game went in favour of the Welshmen, and Gloucester had to concede another minor. Soon after the interval was announced.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester Nil
Pontypool Nil

Pontypool re-started with no waste of time, and a home player marked following an exchange kick. Play was near the centre, but operations were contested on the cheap side, and nothing could be seen of what was going on from the Press seats. After several minutes' interval a bout of passing by the visiting backs brought play to the grand-stand side, but almost immediately the players went out of view again.

“Ponty” Jones, from a pass by Pritchard, had a dash for the corner, but he was stopped in time. Gloucester cleared from a dangerous position, but for off-side the home team were penalised. A visitor took a shot at goal, but the ball went to Wood in front of the posts, and he punted out grandly to beyond the 25 flag. Good work by the City forwards improved matters, and a flying kick took Gloucester to their opponents' 25. Then in a further rush the ball was taken over the line, Pontypool touching down.

The drop-out was well returned, and ensuing play was fought out in the Pontypool 25. Gloucester struggled gamely for a score, and Williams being tackled near his line the visitors were hotly pressed. A combined effort brought relief, and the Welshmen subsequently transferred operations beyond midfield. Here a stoppage was necessary owing to a visitor being laid out.

Resuming, a visitor kicked over the Gloucester line. Wood punted out, and Williams fumbling he was forced to kick straight to touch in his own half. Off-side by Hollands and then Dix gave Pontypool a couple of penalties, but little ground was gained. Clever play by Gloucester in a line-out gave Bloxsome possession. The wing man beat Morris and ran to Williams, but Stephens missed his pass with a very good chance to score. Pontypool gained relief owing to Wood knocking on at mid-field, but the City forwards quickly gained a good position. Then with a superb rush the Gloucester front went for the line, and a loud shout from the cheap side suggested a score had been made. It was a false alarm, however.

Subsequent play was all in favour of Gloucester, and the Pontypool defence was several times severely tested. Passing by the home backs looked promising, but Hall stumbled and lost possession. The ball going loose a visitor kicked down, but Cook gathered neatly and took a drop for goal. Only a minor resulted.

On the re-start Gloucester were all over their opponents, and they attacked repeatedly. A beautifully judged kick by Wood placed Gloucester close to the line, and from a throw out Quixley secured and scored a try amidst great cheering. Wood kicked a good goal, at which success the applause was renewed.

Gloucester maintained their advantage on the re-start, but just before the finish a rush by Pontypool took the ball over the City line, but only a minor resulted.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal (5 points)
Pontypool Nil

REMARKS

What would undoubtedly have proved a very attractive game to watch was entirely spoiled by the fog. The spectators, however, took the situation good humouredly, and cheered lustily whenever the players came into view.

The game was confined to two thirties, and while it lasted the pace was very hot. On the run of the play Gloucester thoroughly deserved their victory, which was all the more creditable considering the greatly weakened side doing duty.

The visitors were a splendidly-built lot, especially forward, and they had speed behind the scrum. The combination, however, was very faulty, and the backs seldom brought off a concerted movement. The first half was pretty evenly contested, both teams missing chances of scoring. In the second portion Gloucester were clearly on top, and Pontypool were fortunate in getting off with only a five points' beating.

To the Gloucester forwards must be awarded great praise for a fine display. They were meeting a powerful eight, but the City scrummagers held up grandly all through, and fairly had the measure of their opponents in the concluding stages. Every man played his hardest to-day, and whether in the tight or loose the work was excellent.

Johns led the pack in the absence of Vears, and the acting captain was ever to the front several times dribbling with great effect. His chief supports were Parham, Hollands, and Matthews, but the other players were little inferior. For Pontypool Dowell, Barnfield, and Carr were conspicuous, but one or two of the men did not last.

The visiting halves (Thomas and Evans) had more of the ball than Dix and Stephens, but the latter were smarter and more accurate in their movements. Dix proved an admirable substitute for Gent, and he and Stephens got on well together.

The Gloucester three-quarters combined nicely at times, and the centres displayed smartness at intercepting. Cook and Hall, too, kicked with good judgment, and their marking and tackling was a distinct improvement on the Newport display.

Bloxsome and Herbert Smith performed creditably on the respective wings, and gave precious little away. Great things were expected from the Pontypool quartette, but none of the players sustained their reputation.

Pritchard made one decent run, but he did not strike one as being the dangerous player in attack as in his Newport days. "Ponty" Jones was well looked after, and his brother and Morris did not get many openings.

Wood gave another superb display, his kicking being beautifully judged and always of splendid length. Williams also did well as custodian for Pontypool.

Gloucester's victory gave great satisfaction to their supporters.

GLOUCESTER A v. ST. PAUL'S COLLEGE

CITY SECONDS EASY WINNERS

This match was played on the College ground in foggy weather. Gloucester soon began to press, and from loose play Baldwin early registered a try, the kick at goal failing.

College re-started, and from a good bout of passing the Citizens again scored by Cook, the kick, an easy one, again failing. Gloucester continued to have the best of the game, W. Hall scoring near the posts. The kick at goal failed.

The College now bucked up, but the Citizens soon came again, Cook scoring. The kick failed. Play ruled at mid-field for a short time, but W. Hall again scored. No points were added. Half-time arrived with the score Gloucester, 5 tries (15 points), College, nil.

On resuming, Gloucester soon began to attack, but lost the advantage through off-side, College finding touch at half way, where play settled for a short time, neither side claiming any advantage. The Citizens now had a turn on the attack. Welshman dropped a fine goal.

The drop-out brought little relief to the College, Holford scoring try number 6, but failed to have the points added. The Trainers charged down a kick and got dangerous, but Welshman, with a good kick, found touch at half way. Gloucester still continued to have much the best of the game, tries being scored by Cook and Baldwin. The game was very difficult to follow towards the finish.

RESULT :

Gloucester A ... 1 goal (d), 8 tries (28 points)
College Nil