

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1907

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. LEICESTER

SCRAMBLING GAME AT KINGSHOLM

GLOUCESTER'S LUCKY WIN

There was a very fair attendance at Kingsholm for this match. Thanks to a strong drying wind the ground recovered remarkably after the recent heavy and continuous rains, and was in good condition.

Gloucester fielded short of Hudson, Wood, and Gent, whilst the Midlanders had one or two good men away.

Interest locally was centred in the first appearance for the city of ex-Private W. Berry, formerly of the Gloucesters, who did excellent service at centre three-quarter for his Regiment in India last season. To-day he was tried on the wing in place of Hudson.

The teams appeared five minutes late, and soon got into position as follows : –

Gloucester. – F. Welshman, back; C. Smith, E. Hall, G. Cook, W. Berry, three-quarter backs; W. Dix, J. Stephens, half-backs; G. Vears (capt.), W. Johns, B. Parham, F. Pegler, H. Quixley, D. Hollands, G. Matthews, R. Craddock, forwards.

Leicester. – E. J. Jackett, back; P. W. Lawrie, K. B. Wood, J. W. D. Smith, T. Mann, threequarter-backs; G. W. Wood, J. R. Watson, half-backs; S. Matthews, S. Penny, T. Smith, F. Jackson, D. B. Atkins, A. J. Hobbs, –. Frear, A. N. Other.

THE GAME

Leicester won the toss, and Vears started for the home team from the Worcester-street goal. For getting in front of the ball the home side were penalised, and a scrum was ordered at the centre. Leicester gained a few yards, but the City replied with a good wheel. Off-side, however, was given, and with the kick Jackett found touch a few yards from the home line.

Play hovered in the vicinity of the City 25, where some scrambling play was witnessed. A useful kick by Wilson sent to Welchman, who luckily kicked to touch. A visiting forward was knocked out in attempting a tackle and retired.

With only seven forwards Leicester monopolised the ball in the scrum, but the passing behind was wild and little ground was made. Eventually from a kick over the line Gloucester conceded a minor. Dixie Smith marked on the drop out, and Jackett placed his side on the attack with a lovely touch-finder.

From the ensuing scrum the Leicester backs were given possession, and K. Wood cross-kicked right in front of the home posts. The ball was eventually rushed over the line, but Gloucester just managed to save.

Mann fumbled the drop out, but K. Wood recovered and tried to run round. He was, however tackled, and the ball getting loose the Gloucester forwards rushed away. Jackett, however, picked up and found touch in the home half, though the crowd on the sixpenny side was against the ruling of the flag-holder.

Gloucester, with a burst, got past the centre, but Berry failing to gather in the loose Leicester worked back. Welchman was here prominent with a remarkable clearance under difficulties, but Leicester continued to have all the game. The City forwards were badly beaten for possession, and had the handling of the visitors been at all accurate, the City lines could hardly have escaped.

Following a spell of scrambling play, Gloucester gained a better position. Dix, with a neat effort, made a nice opening, but his pass went astray. Leicester started a nice movement after this, but Cook intercepted, and raced away. He transferred to Berry, but the soldier was quickly upset.

From this point the Leicester backs came away with grand passing and inter-passing. A try appeared almost certain, but the final transfer was not accepted. Stephens was instrumental in bringing relief to the home side, but more smart combination by the visitors resulted in a warm attack on the City line.

Gloucester worked out through Dix, who slipped down touch and passed to Vears. The Captain, however, was immediately tackled. Infringements by the Gloucester scrum half caused the home team to be penalised twice, and with his second kick Jackett put in a fine touch kick.

Ensuing play was contested in the home half, where the Midland forwards heeled continually. The movements from the scrum, however, did not develop. Following a rough and tumble near midfield the Gloucester forwards made headway, but they were checked by Lawrie.

Subsequent operations were very scrambling, and mistakes of frequent occurrence. At length Leicester opened out, the ball going through a number of hands. Dixie Smith dodged several opponents and passed, but a knock on occurred. Rushing a scrum Leicester went very close, and from a line out a forward went over. Some infringement, however, happened, and a scrum followed five yards outside.

The visitors heeling, Watson gathered, and after feinting to pass he dived through a bunch of City players and scored. Jackson made a poor attempt at goal. Half-time was called a minute afterwards.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Leicester 1 try
Gloucester Nil

Matthews re-started, and opening play was fought out in the Gloucester half. Heeling by the visitors saw a bout of passing initiated by Watson. Lawrie, the final recipient, however, slipped when there was a possible chance. A pass by Dixie Smith enabled the latter to kick to Welchman, who punted out to the centre.

Hall and Dix brought play out to more favourable quarters. Near the centre Johns secured in a line out and kicked, and following up prevented a return. With a determined rush the City forwards took the ball to Jackett, who took a flying kick near his line. The ball went over the heads of the Gloucester men, and was gathered by Jackson, who was yards off-side. Leicester were penalised, and a scrum followed five yards from the Midlanders' line.

Leicester cleared from a dangerous position, and with strong forward work reached the Gloucester quarters. Watson, with a tricky punt, sent to Welchman, who ran out in fine style, but eventually succumbed to numbers. Working well together Gloucester gained ground, and neat passing gave Berry a chance on the left wing. The soldier handed off well, but was not fast enough.

In some loose play Stephens gathered and punted to touch. The ball, however, swerved into the field, and Jackett being fairly caught napping, Hollands picked up and ran over with a good try. Welshman converted, and gave the City the lead.

Resuming, Hall returned beautifully to the kick-off, and play settled in the Leicester half. The Gloucester forwards heeling, Dix fed Stephens, who essayed a wide pass. The ball, however, was taken by Lawrie, who dribbled cleverly and to the line, where Welchman was collared. It was a dangerous position for the City, and from a scrum close in Watson went through and scored. Jackson failed with the place kick.

Following the drop-out, Mann brought off a good run from a pass by Jackett, but dropped the ball when getting clear. Williams and Quixley, with clever work, took Gloucester to their opponents' 25.

Here Berry missed a high pass from Stephens, and K. Wood snapping it up, he ran to Welchman and then transferred to Dixie Smith. The latter, however, failed to take with an open field. G. Wood dribbled on and to the Gloucester line, where the visitors made strenuous efforts to add to their lead. The defence, however, was too sound to be pierced. Determined work by the home pack brought the much-needed relief. A big punt by Hall brought play to the centre. A long kick went to Jackett, who ran across the field and found touch.

The City worked desperately hard to gain an opening, but the visitors were too strong, and a great forward burst took them to the centre. Here, in some desperate work, Stephens and Craddock were lamed, and there was a delay.

Re-starting, Gloucester at one showed up prominently, and from passing Parham only just failed to cross. After this Gloucester had one or two possible openings, but they were not accepted.

Leicester in turn took up the running, and Gloucester were again called upon to defend. Welchman was seen to advantage when pressed, and then a big punt by Hall transferred the game to the other end.

Near the Leicester 25 Watson was penalised for off-side, and Welchman, with a lovely kick, landed a goal amidst great enthusiasm. Time was nearly up, and immediately after the restart no-side was whistled, leaving Gloucester lucky winners.

RESULT :

Gloucester 2 goals (1 p) (8 points)
Leicester 2 tries (6 points)

REMARKS

By no stretch of imagination could it be said Gloucester deserved winning points to-day. For three-parts of the game the City were outplayed by a side considerably stronger forward and smarter behind in every department. Leicester had chances galore of making the game safe, but they missed them and paid the penalty.

In no match this season have the Gloucester forwards been beaten for possession more than they were this afternoon. The Leicester men appeared to control the ball at will, and rarely indeed could the City pack heel. The result was that the home backs were afforded few opportunities in attack. The Midlanders were a big, powerful eight, and they made their presence felt both in the scrums and the loose.

The home forwards presented a plucky front, but they were pushed and overpowered again and again. In the lines-out, too, the visitors held the advantage, and it was only in the open Gloucester could compare at all favourably with their opponents. In this department the work of the City players was very good, and some dashing play was witnessed.

Hollands, Quixley, Johns, Matthews and Parham were conspicuous at various points in the game for special efforts. For Leicester, Jackson, Penny, and Matthews were to the fore in some determined bursts, but the pack all round was a strong one.

Well beaten forward, Dix and Stephens had anything but a pleasant task at half-back. Still, the Gloucester pair worked hard and accomplished some sound work. Watson and G. Wood, after an erratic opening, displayed effective combination, and they fed their three-quarters well. Watson had the distinction of scoring both tries – each obtained from scrums close in.

In the three-quarter line, Leicester possessed speedy and resourceful players, but the handling was at fault repeatedly. Dixie Smith was very resourceful in attack, and K. Wood brought off several strong runs.

Of the wing men, Lawrie was the more dangerous. The City quartet had to make their own work, for the times they got the ball were few and far between. Hall was the most prominent player in the line, and he did a lot of useful kicking. Cook had an occasional dash, and made the best use of his limited opportunities. “Whacker” Smith did not get a single pass, but the veteran’s defence was sound.

Berry's debüt was watched with close interest, but first impressions of the soldier recruit were not favourable. He was certainly playing out of his proper position, but it struck one he had not the necessary pace for a three-quarter. Of course there is every chance for him to improve, but on to-day's form he is hardly up to the standard of Gloucester First.

At full back, Welshman compared very favourably with Jackett. The Gloucester Second teamer was continually called upon, but he never failed, and some of his clearances under severe pressure were wonderfully smart. To Welchman also credit is due for winning the game, his penalty goal being a very fine effort. Jackett was practically responsible for Holland's try, and the International's face after the Gloucester man had scored was a study.

JC