

## THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1908

### TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

#### GLOUCESTER v. COVENTRY

After several years' absence Coventry appeared at Kingsholm to engage the City team. The Midlanders have done exceptionally well this season, having won 21 out of 25 matches, with only two defeats.

Gloucester were short of Hudson (who by arrangement was assisting Bristol), but Gent reappeared after a long interval, and Frank Smith, who has been playing for Cinderford, also came back into the City ranks.

Coventry brought a strong side, J. Davey, the Cornwall half-back, being included in their ranks for the first time. The weather was bright and fine, and the ground in good condition.

The teams took the field at 3 o'clock as follows : —

Gloucester. — F. Welshman, back; H. Smith, C. Smith, G. Cook, and F. Smith, three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent, J. Stephens, half-backs; G. Vears, W. Johns, B. Parham, H. Collins, H. Quixley, D. Hollands, R. Craddock, F. Pegler, forwards.

Coventry. — J. C. M. Dyke, back; H. L. Gilbert, R. W. Dakin, E. Goodman, F. Hughes, three-quarter backs; H. Laxon, E. Davey, half-backs; W. L. Oldham, W. Hall, W. Wetton, H. Allum, A. F. Mosby, C. L. Piggott, L. F. S. Beaver, W. M. Lewis, forwards.

Referee : Mr. G. Thomas (Bristol)

## THE GAME

Coventry kicked off against the sun, and an exchange of kicks saw Dyke find touch just inside the home half. From the throw-out Johns broke away in grand style, covering some 30 yards before being pulled up. The Midlanders relieved with a good touch finder, and play was fought out in the Coventry 25.

Gent passed from a scrum, but “Whacker” failed to make headway. Coventry, too, tried to open out, but Dakin was floored by Cook in attempting to break through. A punt by Dyke saw the visiting custodian collared in possession, but in some loose play Davey secured and kicked high. Hubert Smith failed to gather, but Cook was handy and kicked to touch.

Heeling by the visitors enabled their backs to start a passing bout, but Dakin knocked on when there was a good opening. A penalty for off-side was given against Coventry, but Welshman’s kick went to Dakin, who returned well. From a long line out Hall gathered and started the visiting backs, but the defence was too strong.

Coventry pressed for a couple of minutes, but Gloucester eventually cleared through a grand punt to touch by Welshman from a mark by Parham. A smart run by Collins gave Gloucester an opening, but a wild pass back lost the opportunity. Cook recovered the mistake and put in a neat punt which Dyke only moderately returned. Another mark by Parham saw a high punt well followed up by the Gloucester forwards, and a Coventry man was tackled on the line. A loose scramble ensued, and Parham picking up dived for the line, but was held up.

Coventry were severely pressed now, but the visitors’ defence was strong. The City had one fine chance on the left, but the ball was muddled. From a line out Parham threw back to Cook, who dodged past a couple of men and sent out a wide pass to H. Smith. The wing, however, failed to take the ball with a splendid opening.

Subsequent play was in favour of Gloucester, but wretched handling spoiled one or two smart bits initiated by Gent and Stephens. There was a slight delay owing to an injury sustained by Whacker” Smith, but the veteran was able to resume. The play so far had been far from brilliant, both teams appearing over anxious. A further stoppage was caused by an accident to Cook, who had to retire, Pegler being brought out of the scrum to wing three-quarter, and H. Smith going in the centre.

Resuming, Coventry got off with a dangerous forward rush which Welshman saved. Taking advantage of a loose pass H. Smith had a chance of going through, but Gilbert effected a wonderful save. A subsequent rush by the Gloucester front looked promising, but the ball was over-run. The City next tried to open out, but weak centre play was witnessed and nothing resulted.

Cook now returned, but almost immediately Welshman went off, and the City were again a man short. Cook went full back now, and Pegler again came into the third line. There was no improvement in subsequent play, which was of a scrambling nature and very poor in quality.

For off-side Gloucester were penalised, and with the resultant kick Dyke found touch a couple of yards from the line. There was an anxious moment for the City, but Johns gained slight relief with a sharp dash. From about fifteen yards out Coventry heeled and Laxon fed Davey, who fumbled, but again getting possession screwed round and dropped a goal.

Restarting Gloucester at once got off, but shockingly weak tackling allowed Dakin to make a good slice of ground. From passing F. Smith broke through nicely, but his pass went astray. A big kick by Dyke sent to Cook, who marked, and with his reply he sent to touch at the centre.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Coventry ..... 1 goal (d)  
Gloucester ..... Nil

Gloucester were still short of Welshman when the game was re-started. It was ascertained the City custodian had strained his thigh. Vears kicked off, and Quixley following up prevented the return, the ball rebounding towards the Coventry line. There was a race for possession of the ball, but Dakin got there first and cleverly kicked to touch.

The Midlanders made headway from a line-out, but F. Smith ran back down touch in fine style and was only stopped in the nick of time by Dyke. Gloucester went very close after this, but the City could get no luck. Some wild fly-kicking by the home backs let Coventry get clear, and the City end was visited. A punt into the open to Dyke saw the ex-Welsh International find touch close to the home line with a lovely kick. Johns broke away with the ball at his feet and reached Dyke, but the latter recovered in wonderful style and kicked to touch.

Neat passing by the Coventry backs gave Hughes a chance on the left wing, but the ex-Lydneyite just failed to beat the defence. Coventry now set up a hot attack, and twice the home lines narrowly escaped. Eventually a home player punted out from near the line, and Dyke easily marked in a good position.

#### RESULT :

Coventry .....2 goals (1m 1d) 1 try (10 pts)  
Gloucester ..... Nil

#### REMARKS

Gloucester were clean off their game to-day, and even allowing for the loss of Welshman's services for three-parts of the match – a serious handicap – they deserved to be beaten. Summed up it was the weakest display given by the City this season, and to account for the lapse is no easy matter.

At the outset Gloucester had the better of the exchanges, and they should have been several points up before the unfortunate accident to Welshman. The home backs, however, made poor use of the openings, the handling was wild and erratic, and judgment was too often lacking.

Coventry possess a keen and lively lot of players, but until well in the second half the visitors display was anything but up to the standard expected.

The fight forward was a vigorous one, with the Coventry eight holding the advantage. In the scrums matters were fairly even taking the play throughout, for with only seven men the Gloucester pack got the ball back a fair number of times. Gent and Stephens did their work all right, but the players in the third line shaped poorly, and few combined movements were brought off.

On the day the Coventry quartette were much the smarter, and late in the game they indulged in some really clever exchanges. Hughes was very nippy on the left wing, and Goodman and Dakin were very resourceful in the centre. Gilbert showed strong defensive powers, and the whole of the players kicked well.

The Gloucester line was upset by the withdrawal of Cook to full-back, as he was the only City player who showed anything like his proper form. "Whacker" Smith received a nasty injury to the leg early on, and this considerably affected the veteran, who only got about the field with difficulty. Frank Smith made one or two smart runs, but Gilbert and Dyke proved too much for them. As the emergency man Pegler performed creditably.

The rival half-backs were well matched. Gent, after his long absence, accomplished a lot of good work, but he was held in check by Laxon, the old Cambridge Blue. Stephens gave out a number of good passes, and it was no fault of his that the movements did not materialise.

Davey, the Cornish half-back, proved a valuable acquisition to the Midlanders. He is a strong runner and knows how to open the game. Altogether Davey (who bye-the-bye is reserve for England against Ireland) made a highly successful debut for his new club, for besides dropping the goal he was the only player to score a try. It is stated Davey has obtained employment at Coventry.

Forward, Gloucester were very nervy. They were well beaten in the lines out, and in the open rushes there was not that control of the ball usually witnessed. Another great fault was the high collaring, the men being slipped time after time. Johns worked desperately, and his best supporters were Vears, Collins, and Quixley. For Coventry, Hall, Oldham, and Piggott were a trio often noticeable, but the rest of the pack were all triers.

At full-back we had a magnificent exhibition from Dyke, the ex-Penarth custodian. His display was easily the feature of the game, and to him Coventry were largely indebted for their victory. Welshman was not on the field to be seriously tested, but the City custodian gave evidence of being at his best. His injury consists of a strained muscle in the knee, but it is hoped he will not be kept out of the field for any length of time.

At times a very nasty feeling was displayed by the players, and once it looked as if the referee had lost control of the game. Fortunately matters improved after cautions had been administered.

The defeat came as a disappointment to the City's supporters, especially after the good fight made at Swansea. It was the first time an English club had been successful at Kingsholm this season, and naturally Coventry (who had a few enthusiastic supporters present) were immensely pleased at their success.

## GLOUCESTER A v. OLD BOYS

### SECONDS WIN BY DROPPED GOAL

Those keen rivals, Gloucester A and the Gloucester Old Boys, met for the return match on the Old Boys' ground at Hempsted, before a fair crowd. A strenuous game was anticipated, and the spectators were in no wise disappointed in that respect. There was a strong cross-wind. About three minutes after the start, in a loose rush, the ball came out nicely to Cook, who dodged over with an unconverted try.

After this the Old Boys had a turn at pressing, but the Seconds' forwards relieved, and the home team's territory was the scene of operations for some time. Bloxsome and Dix were in turn nearly over, but a capital tackle by T. A. Truman on each occasion saved the situation.

From close in Alec Lewis broke away cleverly, but he was not able to clear Butler at full-back, and although the movement was carried on to half-way, it was checked. Good kicks by W. Thomas and Truman put the Old Boys in a favourable position, but the City defence prevailed, and the Seconds gained the other end, where Dix, receiving in the open field from a kick, dropped a goal.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester A ..... 1 goal (d) 1 try  
Old Boys ..... Nil

Even play characterised the opening stages of the second half, then Arthur broke through cleverly, but again Truman proved the stumbling block. The Old Boys then attacked hotly, and after Thomas and Alec Lewis had handled, the ball came out to Pearce, and he scored a well-earned try, which was not improved upon.

The Old Boys were very nearly over again the next minute, but from a scrum almost on the line Dix relieved with a clever kick. There was very little between the teams to the end, but jut before the close Baldwin was put over after a line-out, but the point was disallowed owing to the ball being thrown out from the wrong place.

All through the game there was very little in it between the teams, but Dix with his rather lucky goal, and his absolutely first-class play at the base of the scrum, was the thorn in the Old Boys' flesh, and to him the Seconds owe their victory.

RESULT :

Gloucester A .. 1 goal (d) 1 try (7 points)  
Old Boys ..... 1 try (3 points)