

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1908

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. ABERTILLERY

A SURPRISE FOR THE CITY

DRAW OF EIGHT POINTS EACH

Abertillery, who provided Gloucester with their first home match, had only once previously appeared at Kingsholm. This was on Good Friday, 1907, when the Monmouth League champions were beaten by 19 points to 5.

G. Vears and Elliott were absent from the home team, but M. Neale, the ex-Bristolian, made his debut for the City. The visitors brought a good side, the only absentee being D. J. Boots, the old Newport full-back.

Showery weather prevailed, and there was only a moderate attendance of spectators when the teams lined out at 3.35 as follows : –

Gloucester : – F. Welshman; F. Smith, J. Stephens, A. Hudson (capt.), and M. Neale; D. Gent and H. Smith; W. Johns, B. Parham, D. Hollands, D. Wyburn, H. Berry, G. Holford, G. Griffiths, and B. Craddock.

Abertillery. – C. Hodges; W. Bowen, J. James, J. Richardson, and L. W. Thomas; W. Hodges and D. Francis; J. Winmill (captain), Jim Webb, T. Dykes, Jack Webb, L. Lewis, W. Powell, J. Howells, and J. Blackmore.

Referee : Mr. J. Milburn (Bristol).

THE GAME

Abertillery won the toss, and Johns kicked off against the wind. The ball swerved into the hands of a Gloucester forward, but he knocked on and a scrum took place just inside the visitors' half. "Tillery early rushed away, and from a kick over the line Welshman touched down.

The City custodian made a poor drop out, and play settled in the Gloucester 25. A free to Gloucester for picking out by Hodges enabled the City to make headway, and the centre was reached. The "Tillery forwards heeling, Hodges passed out, but the ball went wide of Francis and Gent dribbled through cleverly. He cross-kicked nicely, but Bowen just beat Hubert Smith for possession and kicked dead.

From the drop-out the visitors punted out to Neale, who got in a clever kick to touch though partially tackled. A mark by F. Smith was taken by Welshman, and a series of exchange kicks left the game at mid-field. Good kicking by Gloucester took the City well in the visitors' half, where "Tillery were penalised for off-side. Welshman's shot for goal, however, went wide, and C. Hodges replied with interest.

Some splendid forward play by the Monmouthshire men led to an attack on the City line, and Jim Webb fielding, he was only pounced upon in time. Gloucester worked out of danger, but the "Tillery forwards, with some grand loose play, gained the advantage.

Near the centre the visiting backs handled, and Thomas made a dashing run down the right wing. He was successfully tackled by Welshman and another, but managed to pass to a colleague, who was also upset. In a scramble the ball again got amongst the visitors, and following a series of neat exchanges Bowen sprinted across the line with a good try, which was converted.

Gloucester re-started, but "Tillery playing with great resolution, at once worked into the home half. The home pack were being beaten for possession, and the defence was severely taxed.

At length Gloucester cleared, and Holford securing possession, the City forwards handled smartly. The final transfer, however, was intercepted, and a possible chance lost. Gloucester heeled smartly, and Gent and H. Smith got well away. The latter fed Neale, who burst down touch brilliantly, but was just stopped and his pass went forward. Immediately after Hudson made a strong effort to break through from a short pass, but he was pulled up.

Ensuing play was fast and exciting, but a poor kick by F. Smith gave "Tillery an advantage, which they were not slow to utilise. Welshman, however, proved equal to the occasion, and got in some fine kicks.

A dashing burst by Berry from a throw-out put Gloucester in a good position, and Neale, with another good effort, kept the City on the attack. C. Hodges changed the venue, but Hudson came back with a splendid run down the centre, but a good opening was lost.

A kick and follow up by Bowen carried operations to the home end, but an off-side tackle lost the ground. Ensuing play was desperately contested, and in favour of the visitors, who with a great rush got to within a dozen yards of the City line. Francis and Hodges handing out, Richardson was nearly through, and for a time Gloucester were seriously pressed.

Gloucester worked out gradually to the 25, where Hudson intercepted an opponent's pass and cut clean through to the full-back. Here he handed to Neale, who cut inside Bowen and Hodges, and raced for the line. Thomas came across hotly but Neale shook his opponent off finely and finished a brilliant effort by scoring under the posts. Welshman failed at the easy place, and thus when the interval arrived Gloucester were two points in arrears.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Abertillery 1 goal
Gloucester 1 try

Abertillery resumed, and the first item of interest was a great effort by Berry from a line-out. The City forward ran down to Hodges, when he was tackled from behind, but managed to let the ball go to Hollands.

A score seemed certain, but the latter's pass was missed, and by the time recovery was made by Hudson he was upset. "Tillery relieved from a dangerous situation with a forward rush, and a good kick took them beyond the centre. Gloucester quickly returned, but mistakes lost them ground.

Johns fielded neatly from a line-out, but kicked instead of passing out. Gent, H. Smith, and Neale combined in a neat effort, but the wing man was pushed to touch on the 25 flag. The ball quickly came across to the other wing, where F. Smith tried to get an opening, but was not successful.

Gloucester were now playing in irresistible style, but over-eagerness lost one or two chances. The game continued to be desperately fought out, and no quarter was given in tackling. Gloucester went very close again, but the defence was good, and "Tillery got out of danger.

A long throw-out to Neale went wide of the ex-Bristolian, but with Bowen on his heels the City three-quarter cleverly beat him for possession and cross-kicked. Johns gathered, but there was some infringement. In a tackle a visiting forward sustained a cut face, and he retired to the touch-line to have the wound dressed.

Play was resumed and fought out at the centre. "Tillery made ground with a loose forward dribble, but Gent replied with a clever punt out. "Tillery returned, James, with a well-judged kick, finding touch a few yards from the City line.

The visitors had a scrum, and Hodges passed out to Richardson who was only held up outside. The ball getting loose, it was picked up, and Evans feeding Bowen, the latter had an unopposed run in. The place-kick failed.

Leading by five points the visitors played up strongly, and Gloucester had to touch down twice. The City eventually got out to the centre, where Gent and H. Smith fed Hudson. The International got off at a good pace down the field, but he was unable to get clear, and his pass was cleverly taken by Bowen, who raced back and punted to touch.

An injury to Bowen caused a slight stoppage, but when the game was resumed the hot pace set up showed no falling off. "Tillery heeling, the backs handled smartly, but the final transfer to Thomas was ruled forward.

Centre play followed, but close tackling prevented any openings. After Hubert Smith had failed once to start his backs, he did better a little later. The ball came from Neale to Hudson who put in a grand dash and pass to Berry. The latter returned to Neale, who had come across, and the latter scored amidst great cheering. Welshman took the place-kick and landed a goal, the ball striking the upright and going inside the post.

The put the teams level, and Gloucester's supporters breathed more freely. In the last few minutes "Tillery made a great effort to again secure the lead, but they were not rewarded.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal, 1 try (8 points)
Abertillery 1 goal, 1 try (8 points)

REMARKS

Surprises are ever being served up in football, and to-day's result at Kingsholm was a veritable eye opener.

After the victory at Plymouth last week Gloucester, whilst recognising the Monmouth League champions were a smart side, were confident of picking up a few points, but their anticipations were rudely shattered, and the City were a trifle lucky in escaping defeat in their first home match.

In a desperately fought game "Tillery certainly had the better of the exchanges, and all round the visitors proved themselves an exceedingly smart combination. The forward work, both in the scrums and loose, was full of fire and dash, and cleverness was by no means an isolated quantity.

The two tries scored by "Tillery could not be compared with the efforts which led up to the two points notched by Neale for Gloucester, but dealing with the play as a whole it must be said the visitors held the upper hand.

Forward, Abertillery were represented by a hefty pack, the members of which knew the game and how to play it. In the scrums the players worked with a will, and in gaining possession they had the advantage over the home scrummagers. In the open the visitors were fast, keen, and determined tacklers, and they also knew how to use their feet. Jim Webb and Winmill were great in all phases of play, but their colleagues were by no means out of the picture, and every man was a worker.

Gloucester came out strongly now and again, and at one period in the second half they put in tremendous efforts. Johns was a fine leader, but the man most prominent of the City forwards was Berry, whose work in the lines-out was brilliant. Holford and Wyburn were also good in this respect, and Craddock a rare trier all through. Hollands did a lot of useful work in the open. Still it must be admitted the City eight met more than their match in the "Tillery representatives, who must have been at the top of their form.

Outside the scrum "Tillery had a smart pair of halves in Francis and Hodges. Better served than the Gloucester couple, they displayed all that Welsh slimness in opening out the game, and were quick in seizing upon the slightest chance of making headway. Gent worked hard and successfully, but Hubert Smith has not yet dropped into the old International's style. Smith tried once or twice to vary his tactics, but his kicks generally went straight up in the air or behind him.

At three-quarter the visitors were well served as a line. Bowen was very nippy on the left wing, but his two tries were gifts. The centres, James and Richardson, were smart, and did some effective work in attack and defence, whilst Thomas was well up to the standard of his colleagues. The men handled the ball with smartness and efficiency, and were better on the whole than their opponents.

The Gloucester left wing, Stephens and Frank Smith, were not particularly prominent for the reason that they were not overburdened with chances. The inclusion of Neale proved a valuable acquisition, and the county three-quarter made a noteworthy first appearance in the cherry and white jersey. Neale's play was class with a capital 'C.' Hudson had a hand in both scores obtained by the City, and he did a lot of other good things.

Both teams were admirably served at full-back. Welshman twice made the mistake of trying to evade opponents instead of kicking, but these were the only drawbacks to a capital all-round display. His kicking was above reproach. C. Hodges, on the other side, also gave a first-class exhibition, fielding and catching with certainty and kicking a good length.