

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1909

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. PLYMOUTH

STRENUOUS FORWARD GAME AT KINGSHOLM

DEVONIANS BEATEN

The City team received Plymouth to-day at Kingsholm for the return match.

Gloucester unfortunately were considerably weakened owing to the absence of J. Stephens, H. Berry, H. Smith, and L. Vears.

The three first-named are in ill-health, and it is feared Vears will not be able to assist again this season.

Baldwin filled the vacancy at three-quarter. Dix partnered Gent at half, and Nelmes substituted Berry in the front rank.

The weather turned out fine, and there was a capital attendance, the attraction of George Auger, the Palace giant, who was announced to kick off, no doubt making a difference.

The ground had recovered splendidly, and was in fine condition. There were three changes forward in the visitors' ranks.

A few minutes after time the Plymouth team took the field, followed by Auger and his Lilliputian band, their appearance causing great amusement.

Gloucester. – C. Cook, back; F. Smith, W. Hall, T. Elliott, J. M. Baldwin three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent, W. Dix, half-backs; G. Vears (capt.), W. Johns, W. Nelmes, B. Parham, D. Hollands, G. Griffiths, S. Hayward, G. Holford, forwards.

Plymouth. – Hosking, back; Conybeare, Dean, Moore, Butcher, three-quarter backs; Peters, Richards, half-backs; Robinson, Knight, Edwards, Heywood, Jones, Wise, Masters, Willcocks, forwards.

Referee : Mr. J. Milburn (Bristol).

THE GAME.

The giant started for Plymouth with a powerful kick, which went to Holford, who got in a good reply. The return went to Baldwin, who tried to elude an opponent, but was collared. His kick was charged down, but in some loose play F. Smith dribbled down inside the Plymouth half, where touch was given.

The Devonians soon worked out, and some indiscriminate loose kicking ended in the ball going to Elliott. The City centre gathered, but was hauled down. Plymouth heeling from a scrum, tried some passing, but Dean failed to gather, and Cook with a nice kick found touch in his opponents' half. Plymouth were twice penalised for off-side, but the City did not gain much ground with the resultant kicks.

A strong forward rush by Plymouth was well stopped by Baldwin, who repeated the performance a minute or so later. Ensuing play was scrambling, the attempts at opening out the play not being attended with success.

Butcher was prominent with a good relief kick for Plymouth, and the visitors made further headway with a loose rush. Gloucester sent back by the aid of Dix, but Plymouth changed the venue, Edwards dribbling well and cross-kicking to Moore, who fielded and raced away with Baldwin in attendance. The Devon player put in a cross-punt on the 25 line, but Gloucester got the ball and saved.

The City were sorely pressed for a couple of minutes, but failure on the part of Richards and Peters enabled the home team to relieve. Centre play followed, but there was little finish displayed on either side. Cook was called upon to field a long kick, but the City custodian beat Butcher and two or three others players cleverly and got in a fine return.

Gloucester, with a break-away from a line-out, put in a good rush, Johns taking the ball down cleverly. The International kicked past Hosking, but the latter got back, and, although hotly pressed, managed to get the ball to touch.

Gloucester went very close after this, but a timely punt by Peters brought relief to the visitors. The City, however, got back, and in some loose play a forward picked up and threw to Dix, who, taking careful aim, dropped a lovely goal.

Plymouth resumed, and here there was a bit of slim work introduced. The ball was placed to kick to the left, but the kicker shot the ball the other way, but some infringement occurred, and another start was ordered.

The Gloucester forwards and Dix gained considerable ground for Gloucester, who followed this up with some dashing footwork. The defence appeared well beaten, but Dean got back and saved in the nick of time.

Ensuing play was fast, but principally forward. Elliott checked a dangerous movement by Plymouth, and then Gloucester, headed by Johns, rushed away finely, Hosking saving a few yards out. Plymouth worked out of danger, but a flying kick by Dix landed the ball under the posts, where a visitor fumbled. There was a scramble, ending in a minor being recorded.

Some hot forward play followed the restart, the Gloucester men doing well in close footwork. Johns, with a follow up, tackled Dean and robbed him of the ball. Gloucester looked likely to clear, but they were pulled up in time.

Baldwin, with a dashing bit of play on the left wing, gave Gloucester a good slice of ground, but Plymouth regained with a passing bout. Conybeare was the last to receive but he was collared by F. Smith, and pushed into touch by Elliott. In falling the Devonian was winded, but soon recovered. Soon after Baldwin was temporarily laid out, but he, too, was soon able to continue.

Plymouth played up strongly after this, and a forward getting possession from a line-out ran and punted. Cook and his opponent met the ball at the same time, and both lost it. Another Devonian secured, and there were several sharp transfers, ending in an open goal. The final pass, however, was forward, and Gloucester luckily escaped.

Putting on full pressure, Plymouth just failed to cross again, and Peters only missed a dropped goal by a few feet. Just before the interval Conybeare from a long pass had a chance, but he was finely collared by F. Smith, and Gloucester escaped again.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucester 1 goal (d)
Plymouth Nil

Vears restarted, and the opening was sensational. Holford took the ball beautifully in the air, and feinting to pass, made a nice opening. His transfer, however, went to an opponent, who ran back to the centre and kicked. Conybeare raced for possession and gathered, but just stepped into touch.

From the line-out Plymouth burst away and nearly scored in the left corner. The visitors were penalised for off-side, but Plymouth replied well, and quickly secured a good position. Richards opening out, the backs handled smartly, and Butcher, sprinting hard for the line, crossed with a good try. Peters failed at goal.

Gloucester restarted, and there was some fast play at the centre. Gent had hard lines in failing to field after beating Richards, and then Plymouth rushed away in dashing style. They were checked, and Gloucester next gained a footing inside the Devonians' half.

Here Johns came out prominently with a lovely dribble, clean beating the defence and taking the ball to the line, where Holford picked up and scored amidst enthusiasm. Cook missed the goal kick.

Griffiths replied nicely to the drop-out, and play continued to be contested in the Plymouth half. Dix tried to work out an opening for Smith, but found the defence too strong. The visitors worked out gradually, but well outside the 25 flag Elliott got possession, and with a strong run, in which he handed off several opponents in grand style, finished up a fine effort by scoring. Cook landed a lovely goal, and gave Gloucester a lead of nine points.

Plymouth restarted, but Gloucester were soon on the attack again. Fumbling by the Plymouth backs nearly ended fatally, and a minute later F. Smith just missed. Hall next crossed with a sharp dash, but was held to have stepped into touch.

Plymouth, by good line-out work, removed the pressure, but Cook sent them back twice with beautiful touch-finders. Hall further improved Gloucester's position with a neat touch kick, and then followed a lot of strenuous forward work in which some deadly tackling was witnessed.

Plymouth eventually got down to the Gloucester 25 through Butcher, and later Peters marked from a short kick right in front of goal, but the same player unaccountably missed from the easy place.

Soon after the restart Baldwin, fielding from a return by Hosking, ran some distance and put in a big punt, following up and preventing a reply. The Devonians luckily changed the venue, only to see Johns come back with a nice dribble, Hosking being collared in possession. Plymouth were allowed to get away after several infringements, but Cook effected a good save under pressure.

Plymouth kept up the attack, and after Dean had just failed to cross, Conybeare, from a pass by Peters, slipped over in the corner. No goal resulted.

Plymouth continued to have the better of the exchanges for the next few minutes, but the City defence was very sound. Just before the end Gloucester brought off a big rush, and with Hosking beaten there looked every chance for a score. Holford, however, made the mistake of trying to pick up, and knocking on, the home men were pulled up. The end soon afterwards came.

RESULT ;

Gloucester 2 goals (1d) 1 try (12 pts.)
Plymouth 2 tries (6 points)

REMARKS

By no stretch of imagination could the game be termed an attractive display, yet the conditions were all in favour of fast, open football. For the most part, however, the forwards monopolised attention, and with two well-matched packs there was plenty of vigorous and strenuous play.

Plymouth had a big advantage in weight, but except in the scrums they could not command superiority. The first half was sadly lacking in the finer points of football, and there was a lot of indiscriminate kicking and rushing, which developed into a regular scramble at times.

Gloucester's disorganised side did well to come out with a victory, for Plymouth are a dangerous side at their best. To the forwards the City were mainly indebted for their victory, for the backs rarely brought off a concerted bout of passing. Dix and Gent by no means hit it off well at half, for when the ball did come out on the Gloucester side of the scrum there was no attempt to open out. Gent appeared to miss his regular partner, and his play suffered as a consequence. Dix, who deserves credit for his dropped goal, occasionally got in some useful punts, but otherwise he was not over-conspicuous.

The Plymouth pair, Richards and Peters, were far more effective in combination, but the Cornwall man was guilty of numerous infringements, especially in picking the ball out of the scrum. The referee, however, was very lenient in this and other illegalities.

The Gloucester three-quarters scarcely had a look in as regards attack, and nearly all the work accomplished was individual. The try of Elliott's stood out prominently, and the soldier did many other good things, especially in defence. Hall was scarcely noticeable. Frank Smith tried hard on the wing, but could not get a fair opening, and the same may be said of Baldwin. The latter showed up well in defence, and in the first half especially he effected some daring saves by falling on the ball.

Plymouth had a useful quartette, but the men did not make the best use of their chances. Dean was too well marked to often get dangerous, and Moore, his co-centre, held on too long. Butcher showed a nice pace on the right wing, and Conybeare was very nippy.

There was some desperate work forward, and the tackling at times was exceptionally keen. The Gloucester men were splendid at times in the loose, and here Johns – always a great worker – showed up finely. Holford, Parham, and Griffiths also did well and Hayward and Vears were triers all the way.

The Plymouth eight took a lot of stopping when on the move, and they were often dangerous in the lines out. Edwards and Willcocks were about the pick.

Cook gave a delightful display at full back for the City, showing cleverness in slipping opponents, and always fielding and kicking in capital style. Hosking also gave a sound display for Plymouth.