

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 1909

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL

BRISTOL BEATEN AT KINGSHOLM

INJURY TO ELLIOTT

Though the interest in the County League Competition has not been exceptional this year, a meeting of Gloucester and Bristol at Kingsholm always attracts attention.

With fine weather prevailing there was a good attendance of spectators at Kingsholm to witness the return fixture between these rivals.

Bristol had no direct interest in the leadership of the Competition table, but to Gloucester the match was important, as another victory would considerably strengthen the City's position.

Gloucester held an unbeaten record in the League, and naturally the Kingsholm team was anxious to maintain their clean certificate.

The City fielded their best side, and Bristol, too, had a strong fifteen out, the only absentee of note being F. Holbrook, the County centre, who was injured last week in the match with Clifton.

The ground was in splendid condition, and everything favoured a fast and open game.

The teams lined out at 3.30 as follows : –

Gloucester. – C. Cook, back; F. Smith, W. Hall, H. Smith, T. Elliott, three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent, J. Stephens, half-backs; G. Vears (capt.), W. Johns, H. Berry, B. Parham, G. Griffiths, G. Holford, B. Hollands, J. Wyburn, forwards.

Bristol. – W. R. Johnstone, back; C. Kingston, D. Llewellyn, W. Boddie, J. Spoons, three-quarter backs; G. Spoons, H. Shewring, half-backs; P. Down, N. Moore, G. Carey, W. Frost, G. Newton, W. Fry, E. Kibbey, A. Stradling, forwards.

Referee : Mr. G. C. Rodway (Birmingham)

THE GAME

Bristol won the toss, and Vears kicked off from the Worcester-street goal. The ball went to a Bristol forward, who broke through and passed to G. Spoons, but the latter missed the ball. From the first scrum Bristol were penalised, but Cook's kick failed to find touch, and Johnstone replied finely to the centre.

Subsequently there was another exchange of kicks, which ended favourably to Bristol. Gent opened out from the next scrum, and Hall, receiving from H. Smith, cut inside nicely, but was collared from behind.

Gloucester again heeled, but Stephens missed Gent's pass, and Shewring coming along fielded and gained a good opening. He passed wildly, however, but Kingston recovered, only to see him pushed into touch.

Gent was prominent for a smothering tackle of G. Spoons after Bristol had heeled, but an infringement caused Gloucester to be penalised. Johnstone dropped for goal, but failed, and Stephens punted out. J. Spoons fielded cleverly inside touch and ran down and passed, but the transfer was forward.

Some scrambling play ensued ending in Elliott gathering and putting in a strong burst, but J. Spoons upset his man finely. In some loose forward work Johns was conspicuous, and this was followed by Griffiths fielding and securing a grand opening. His pass to Berry, with the defence clean beaten, was forward, and a certain try therefore lost. The effort led to Gloucester gaining a good position, and Shewring getting off-side Bristol were penalised. Cook took a place, and with a lovely shot landed a goal.

Bristol resumed, and the drop-out took them inside the home half. A nice kick by Shewring further improved matters, and play was fought out in the Gloucester 25. Here a Bristol forward threw out from a line to J. Spoons, who handed to Shewring. The Bristol threes were well placed, but Shewring essayed a drop for goal, which was a long way out, and a minor was recorded.

Johnstone and J. Spoons fumbled the drop-out, and a scrum ensued just inside the Bristol half. Shewring quickly changed the venue with a well-judged kick, and the same player a couple of minutes later failed with a drop at goal from a penalty.

There was a lack of finish in subsequent movements, but play was fairly even. Near the centre mistakes by Gloucester gave Llewellyn an open field with the exception of Cook, but Elliott got back and effected a deadly tackle, which smothered man and ball. The ball getting loose, Johns dribbled back, and Gloucester got well out of danger. The ball was very lively on the dry ground and bounced awkwardly, making it difficult to judge at times. Bristol were penalised for off-side, and Cook gained a good slice of ground with the resultant kick. Then Griffiths, securing in a line-out, sent out a nice pass, but it was not taken.

The City forwards heeling, Gent and Stephens opened out, but Elliott missed H. Smith's pass, and Kingston gathered and came away with only Cook to face. The Gloucester custodian, however, brought off a superb low tackle and saved the situation.

Bristol, aided by the wind, had the better of the exchanges in the next five minutes, the backs kicking with good judgment. The Gloucester forwards came away with a strong rush to the centre, where the backs passed well. The return from F. Smith to Hall, however, was not taken, and the movement was stopped.

Next F. Smith put in a useful run, but in attempting to pass a Bristol man knocked on. Smart work down the touch-line by Gent and H. Smith made headway for the home team, and later W. Hall made a good but unsuccessful drop for goal. The ball went over the line, but Johnstone ran out pluckily and found touch at mid-field.

Cook was doing well at full back for Gloucester, and his fine kicking kept the City in the Bristol end. Still, play was not of a particularly high standard, though exceptionally keen. At this point Elliott sustained an injury (a kick in the kidneys) and had to be carried off the field. Berry came out to three-quarter, and Gloucester played seven forwards.

Resuming, Hollands with a fine kick sent to Johnstone, and there was some exchange kicking, ending in J. Spoons finding touch near the Gloucester 25. The City worked out, but a flying kick went to Llewellyn, who did not make the most of his opportunity. J. Spoons, getting possession, ran down and punted over Cook's head, and raced for the leather. Hall also went for the ball, which ended in the Gloucester man and Spoons falling over one another. Cook then picked up and got in a wonderful kick to the centre. Gloucester, working well, tried hard to get going, Gent, Stephens and F. Smith being conspicuous.

Gradually the City got down to their opponents' end, where the forwards broke away with the ball at their feet. Johnstone picked up, but lost possession, and the ball being taken over the line F. Smith touched down for a try. Cook converted with a magnificent kick, giving Gloucester an eight points' lead.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester	2 goals (1p)
Bristol	Nil

Down resumed for Bristol, Elliott being still absent from the home ranks. Play opened in the home half, where Gent eventually opened out from a scrum. The ball came across the wing to Berry, who made a strong effort to hand off Kingston, but he was rushed to touch.

Mid-field play followed, ending in Gloucester getting an opening. Hall put in a long punt, causing Johnstone to run back. F. Smith followed up sharply and tackled the visiting custodian, who passed the ball, but it was forward. This gave Gloucester a footing in their opponents' 25, and the City played up strongly. The forwards heeled nicely, and Gent and Stephens were clever in getting the ball away. H. Smith, however, missed one possible opening by failing to accept a transfer.

In the next minute Stephens broke away cleverly and sent out a pass to H. Smith, who was collared. The ball rolled away, and Hall, picking up saw an opening which he seized upon, and making a bee-line for the goal posts went over with a fine try, not a single player touching him. Cook added the extra points.

Bristol restarted, and Gloucester were soon on the move again with clever passing. Hall punted down the field and F. Smith and an opponent went for the ball together. In a subsequent scramble Vears was knocked out and had to be carried to the touch-line, Gloucester resuming with 13 men. Bristol, with this advantage in numbers, attacked strongly, and Gloucester were severely pressed. For an infringement close to the line the City were penalised, and Moore landed an easy goal, making the score 13 to 3.

When operations were continued Vears resumed his place in the pack amidst cheers. A lot of scrambling play was witnessed in the next five minutes, and mistakes, especially in fielding, were numerous. Off-side by Johns gave Bristol another penalty, but this time Moore was unsuccessful with his shot for goal. Gloucester played well on the drop-out, and Cook, with a lovely kick from a penalty, sent to touch inside the Bristol half.

Here Gloucester tried to penetrate the defence with a passing movement, but F. Smith was stopped by Johnstone. Immediately after the City ought to have had a score, but the passing broke down.

The game continued in the Bristol half for some little time, but play was of a poor class. Bristol eventually raised the siege, and got well inside the Gloucester half. Here the visiting backs indulged in a round of passing, but the home team checked it before the movement got dangerous.

In his own 25 Stephens gathered in the loose and came away smartly. H. Smith, however, failed to take his transfer with Berry well placed. Gent, with a really fine touch-kick, gained Gloucester some 30 yards, but the visitors soon recovered. Bristol now began to get possession in the scrums, and the backs handled smartly. The tackling, however, was too good.

In subsequent play both sides spoiled good work by mistakes, due to the lively ball. Gloucester held an advantage for a few minutes, and then Bristol took up the running. A passing bout promised well, but fumbling took place in front of Cook, and the latter gathering the ball put in a grand touch-kick to the visitors' 25. Here operations were contested until a long kick down gave Bristol an advantage.

In the concluding stages, Bristol had a couple of possible chances, but they failed to accept them.

RESULT :

Gloucester 3 goals (1p) (13 points)

Bristol 1 goal (p) (3 points)

REMARKS

Considering Gloucester played a man short for fully sixty minutes, the City's victory was a capital one. Still the game must be voted a keen disappointment, the back play especially being of a poor standard.

Occasionally there was a decent bout of passing, but for the most part the movements broke down in aggravating fashion. The ball was very lively, and played all sorts of tricks, and to this fact must be attributed the numerous mistakes in handling.

Undoubtedly the feature of the game was the grand form of the full-backs – Cook and Johnstone – both of whom gave delightful displays. In fielding, kicking, and general ability there was little to choose between the men, and the only serious mistake noticed was when Johnstone fumbled near his line, which led to Gloucester's first try. The county certainly need not look further than these two players for a custodian next season, providing the men retain their form.

Forward, the battle was strenuous and keen, with the honours going to the Gloucester pack for all-round play. The Bristol eight had a big pull in weight, but cleverness was on the side of the City men, who did fine work at times. It was a punishing time for the Gloucester seven in the second half, but they responded gamely to the calls made upon them, and it was not until the concluding stages, when the players evidently began to feel the effect of their exertions, that Bristol could claim any real advantage.

The men most in evidence to-day were Johns, Wyburn, Griffiths, and Hollands, but the other players were at it all the way through. The tackling was very deadly at times, and in this department Wyburn showed his colleagues the way to "lay 'em low."

Holford was conspicuous, as usual, in line-out work and following up, but Gloucester did not always make the best use of the advantage gained in this respect.

Outside the scrum the work of the respective back divisions was lacking in finish. As a whole Bristol were the speedier lot, but the passing was often wild and combination was wanting. The Gloucester quartette did several good things, Hall and F. Smith being very effective when opportunity served.

Elliott's injury – a wrenched back – caused his retirement ten minutes before half-time, and his withdrawal was a severe handicap. Berry, however, deputised well, though his services would have been more appreciated in the forwards.

At half-back, Gent and Stephens worked prettily together, and the former did a lot of stopping and saving. G. Spoor, the Bristol scrum-worker, was very moderate, and neither Shewring nor J. Spoor made much of a show at stand-off half.

By their win Gloucester have established a stronger hold on the County League championship. At present the City are level pegging with Cinderford with 18 points, but Gloucester have two more matches in hand. The remaining fixtures are Cinderford and Stroud (home) and Lydney (away).

GLOUCESTER A v. BRISTOL NOMADS

THE DOUBLE EVENT

At the County Ground, Bristol. The City Seconds were without their captain, Hawker, but had a good side out.

RESULT :

Gloucester A	15 points
Nomads	Nil