

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1909

## FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. PENRATH

OPENING MATCH AT KINGSHOLM

GLOUCESTER PLAYER INJURED

WELSHMEN BEATEN BY FIVE POINTS

The season was opened in earnest at Kingsholm on Saturday, when Gloucester met old opponents in Penarth. A few years ago the City had regular fixtures with the Welshmen, but for some reason matches were dropped, and to-day's engagement is the only occasion the teams will meet this season.

Gloucester had a useful practice game at Bream last week, and though the form was somewhat scrappy the City players won comfortably enough. The popular captain of the City (A. Hudson) was unable to lead the team, but his appearance is only delayed for a week or two.

Besides Hudson, there were two other prominent players missing from the ranks to-day – W. Johns and D. R. Gent. Johns, we understand, has expressed doubt as to whether he will assist this season owing to business calls, but the City club cannot afford to lose the services of such a sterling forward, and we hope to see the International back in the ranks before many games have been played.

Gent (who is vice-captain) was away on holiday, and Hubert Smith (first reserve) being also unavailable, the Reserves captain, W. Egerton, was tried in partnership with the veteran Stephens at half-back.

Other new players were Alec Lewis (who assisted in a few games at the end of last season), W. J. Pearce, and W. J. Vance – all from the Old Boys' Club. Penarth brought a strong side, W. H. Gunstone, the ex-Cardiffian, playing centre.

After a dismal morning the weather turned out fine, and there was a very fair attendance for the opening fixture.

The following were the teams : –

Gloucester. – C. Cook; W. J. Vance, A. Lewis, W. Hall, and F. Smith; J. Stephens and W. Egerton; G. Vears, H. Berry, G. Holford, G. Griffiths, J. Wyburn, D. Holland, S. Hayward, and W. Pearce.

Penarth. – P. Howells; W. J. Norton, F. Davis, W. H. Gunstone, and G. Heslop; D. Bryant and J. Thomas; L. S. Thomas, R. Jellings, P. C. Howell, J. McIvor, R. Sims, P. Bryant, H. Thomas, and J. Hill.

Referee : Mr. A. Lawes (Bristol).

## THE GAME

Vears, who captained the home team, kicked off, and opening play was contested at the centre. Gloucester eventually heeled, and Stephens, who was working the scrum, passed out to Egerton, but the latter could only punt to touch a dozen yards ahead.

A free to Penarth enabled Howells to send well inside the Gloucester half, but Howells replied cleverly. The City forwards burst away smartly, but lost the ball, and the Welshmen got possession and rushed back. A penalty against Penarth gave Gloucester a good slice of ground, but the City were beaten back, Cook saving effectively.

Penarth heeling, the visiting backs handled smartly, but little ground was made. Penarth repeated a smart series of exchanges but Heslop failed to take from Gunstone. A minute later Penarth forced a touchdown with a flying kick over the line.

Following the drop-out Pearce led the City forwards in a fine dribble, and though Howells cleverly gathered he was rushed over and lost the ball. There was a good opening for the City, but a visitor got back and sent the ball to touch-in-goal.

Penarth dropped out, and there was an exchange of kicks, which left play in the home half. The Gloucester forwards cleared with a splendid dash, and were not checked until the Penarth 25 was reached. Here the Welshmen came away, and Gunstone kicking through sent the ball past Cook. The City custodian, however, got back, and doubling Gunstone and another player, cleverly found touch nicely.

The Gloucester forwards were using their feet well in the loose, but so far the backs had not shone. In some open play a visitor secured and cross-kicked, but Cook got to the ball first, and slipping a would-be tackler got the ball to touch. From a line-out Gloucester broke away, and Vears picking up essayed a long pass, but the ball went astray.

For an infringement at the scrum Penarth were penalised, and Cook had a long shot for goal, but a good attempt failed. On the drop-out the City forwards, with a fine rush, looked dangerous, but Howells checked them in daring fashion.

Centre play followed until Wyburn opened out from a line. Egerton, however, held on too long, and though Hall made a creditable attempt to break through he was unsuccessful.

Penarth worked out of danger, and mid-field was the centre of operations for a few minutes. At length Stephens started Egerton, who passed to Lewis, but the latter was collared in trying to slip through.

Just now both full-backs greatly distinguished themselves with smart play, Cook doing an exceedingly clever piece of doubling and getting in his kick. The City forwards were performing capitally in the open, their footwork being very fine at times. Berry and Wyburn shone in this respect, and on one occasion the Penarth lines narrowly escaped.

Gloucester were having the better of the exchanges, and confined play to the Welshmen's half. Wyburn was conspicuous for another smart dash which took Gloucester close, but Penarth saved. Some loose kicking brought play to near the centre, where Hall made a mark. Cook had another shot for goal, and with a lovely kick credited Gloucester with three points.

Following the re-start Penarth attacked strongly, Gloucester only saving their lines by some determined tackling. The home forwards relieved with a grand burst, but Howells prove a stumbling block, gathering the ball from his opponents' feet and sending the ball to touch. Soon afterwards half-time was called.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester ..... 1 goal (m)  
Penarth ..... Nil

When the game was resumed Gloucester were short of Cook and Lewis, but the former soon appeared. Lewis, however, was suffering from a strained wrist, and Hollands took his place at centre.

Penarth forced a minor with the kick-off, Hayward allowing the ball to go over the line. The Welshmen early brought off a fine round of passing, and a try appeared imminent, but Cook effected a very fine tackle. Gloucester cleared from a dangerous position, and eventually forced Penarth to defend.

From a throw-out Holford got away nicely, but lost the ball with every prospect of a score. Gloucester lost ground through Hall and Cook colliding in an attempt to field the ball from a high kick. The home line was in serious jeopardy, but the visitors missed the opportunity. The City relieved the situation for a time, but Penarth returned, and forced a minor. Gloucester played up strongly on the re-start, and following a neat bit of work by Stephens, Berry just missed a score. Stephens received from a drop-out, but instead of kicking he passed to F. Smith, who cross-kicked. There was a race for possession to near the line, where Howells was robbed by Holford, who scored. Cook landed a lovely goal.

Gloucester had all the better of the game on the resumption, and Frank Smith was racing home beautifully from a pass by Hall, when he was called back for an infringement. A bit of weak play by Vance lost Gloucester a good slice of ground, but it was recovered by fine play by the City front rank, Berry, Griffiths, and Wyburn shining.

Gloucester got the ball out twice in quick succession, but little was done, Vance making a somewhat feeble effort on the left wing. Stephens showed up with a clever piece of play and secured a nice opening, but his pass was taken by an opponent and a good opening was lost.

Penarth now began to take up the game, and Gloucester were severely pressed. twice the City saved, but the visitors were not to be denied, and from a sharp pass out Gunstone received and ran over with a good try. The place-kick failed.

From the first scrum formed after the drop-out the Penarth backs were again in possession, and after perfect handling amongst the whole of the backs, Norton crossed in the corner. No goal resulted, but only two points now separated the teams.

Gloucester dropped out, and the City at once took up a strong position. Stephens dribbled away nicely from a scrum, but Howells checked in the nick of time. A long kick down by Gunstone caused Cook to run back to field, and being collared a few yards from the line, Gloucester were awkwardly placed. Penarth made desperate efforts to effect winning points, but they were met with a sterling defence.

At length Gloucester changed the venue, and the City played up strongly. The home front put in some grand footwork, but were unlucky at the critical moment. Eventually Hollands got hold from some loose kicking and cross-punted. Hall took the ball on the run, and passing at the right moment to Frank Smith, the little right-winger raced over in the corner. Cook failed with the difficult place.

Just before the end the Penarth backs took part in a good passing bout, and looked likely to score, but the City's defence held out.

#### RESULT :

Gloucester .....2 goals (1m), 1 try (11 pts.)  
Penarth ..... 2 tries (6 pts.)

#### REMARKS

For an opening display the game was a really good one, and the fact that Gloucester registered a victory gave the season a capital send-off. Penarth are said to have this season one of the strongest teams in the club's history, and certainly the Welshmen's form to-day was such that few English sides would have equalled Gloucester's performance.

Penarth possess a hard-working pack of forwards, and a very serviceable set of backs – they were smarter all round than the division representing Gloucester, except at full-back – and the Club should enjoy a successful season.

Of Gloucester one is not inclined to be too critical at the start. There were players out on trial to-day, and some excuse therefore must be made if they failed to come up to expectations.

It was a great misfortune that Alec Lewis should have been disabled in the first match, for great things were looked from him at centre three-quarter. Lewis is reported to have broken a small bone in the wrist, and if this turns out to be the case it means an enforced rest for a month or six weeks. The accident occurred before half-time, and though Lewis, previous to the injury, had done nothing startling, there is no question in our mind as to his ability.

W. J. Vance, Lewis' colleague in the Old Boys' ranks, appeared on the left wing, but with only moderate success, and he gave one the impression that he is hardly "ripe" enough for the premiers. Vance has the pace and physique to make a successful three-quarter, and he ought to come on; what he lacks is confidence in himself.

W. Hall and Frank Smith formed the City's right wing, and this pair did the best work on the home side. When Hudson joins the team, and another good centre (pending Lewis' absence) is discovered, then Gloucester might look forward to a successful season with some degree of confidence. The most promising recruit on last year's form was H. Barnes, of the A team.

With Gent away the City were handicapped at half-back; Dix, the ex-International's understudy last season, has not turned up to train so far, and consequently he was not chosen to play. W. Egerton filled the vacancy, playing outside half to Stephens, but the new Second team captain did not do much in the way of opening out. He kicked with judgment, and this would appear to be his strongest point. Stephens worked hard, and the veteran was as active as the youngest member of the team.

Forward, Gloucester, with the majority of last season's players available, should be all right. Johns was a notable absentee, and speaking to the International before the match he declared he had finished, though adding : "I wouldn't mind playing if the Club was pushed for a man at any time." No doubt the usual pressure will be brought to bear upon Johns before the season is very old, and we trust with success, for he is a player who cannot be allowed to retire after gaining the highest honours last season.

Gordon Vears led the team to-day, and he was as keen as ever. He had capital support all round, Berry, Wyburn, Griffiths, and Holford being continually prominent. W. J. Pearce, of the Old Boys, fully justified his inclusion, and should keep his place, for he is a good scrummager and clever in the open. Hayward, too, is a sterling forward.

The Gloucester men displayed fine footwork occasionally, and in the lines out they were always superior to their Welsh opponents. The forwards, as a whole, have certainly started well; it is to be hoped they will keep up this form, for it looks as if Gloucester will have to rely largely on the front – at least for a time.

The full-back play of the respective custodians – Cook and Howells – was of the best; both did a lot of clever saving and relief work, and the kicking was excellent.

Next week Gloucester play Abertillery away.

JC