

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1909

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v NEWPORT

A DISORGANISED CITY TEAM EFFECT A BIG SURPRISE

DRAW OF THREE POINTS EACH

FINE PLAY BY VANCE

PLUCKY GLOUCESTER FORWARDS

Gloucester made the journey to Newport to-day to meet the unbeaten Uskside team with a sadly disorganised team. In addition to Hudson, Johns, and Berry, engaged in the International trial at Twickenham, substitutes had to be found for Stephens and Hollands, both on the injured list, W. Hall and J. Wyburn (unable to make the journey).

The absentees created vacancies in every department in the City team, and some difficulty was experienced in arranging a side. Newport were short of F. Birt and P. Waller. The G.W.R. ran a cheap excursion to Newport in connection with the match.

Gloucester. – W. Egerton, back; W. J. Vance, J. Hamblin, W. J. Pearce, F. Smith, three-quarter backs; D. R. Gent, H. Barnes, half-backs; G. Vears, W. Nelves, G. Griffiths, G. Holford, W. Blackford, F. Pegler, F. Welshman, H. Daniells, forwards.

Newport. – S. H. Williams, back; A. M. Baker, J. P. Jones, P. Coldrick, R. C. S. Plummer, three-quarter backs; W. J. Martin, T. H. Vile, half-backs; C. M. Pritchard, E. Thomas, W. Jenkins, C. Evatt, H. Jarman, J. E. Partridge, R. Edwards, Dr. Smythe, forwards.

Referee : Mr. J. D. Evans (Welsh Union).

THE GAME

The weather was fine overhead, but the ground was very soft in places. Newport kicked off, and from the first scrum they heeled, and the backs brought off a good bout of passing. Gloucester, however, checked, and Pegler picking up tried to open out, but passed badly. Newport soon afterwards got in another sharp attack, but from Plummer's cross-kick Pegler made a clever mark, and the City cleared nicely. The home forwards, however, heeling from every scrum, put the backs in motion continually, and Gloucester were hard pressed.

An intercepted pass brought relief, and the City broke away to midfield. A brilliant combined effort between Vile and Plummer only just failed to score. Gent and Vance eased the pressure with useful kicks, but Newport confined play to their opponents' 25. The Gloucester forwards could not get a sight of the ball, and the City were wholly on the defensive. Newport lost one or two good openings, but eventually Baker, though well tackled by Vance, crossed in the corner, the goal-kick failing.

On the restart the Gloucester forwards showed up with a strong burst and visited the Newport half for the first time. Off-side gave Newport a free, but the kick was charged down, and Pegler gathering he passed to Griffiths, who dropped for goal. The ball hit the upright and rebounded into play, but Williams luckily cleared.

Newport, thanks to a fine run by Plummer, reached the other end, where a forward pass lost a certain try. Gloucester came away pluckily, and Hamblin made further headway, but Newport quickly changed the venue with good passing. Scrambling forward play ensued, ending in the City making half the length of the field. Williams was beaten, and there was a splendid opening, but Vance failed to gather the greasy ball.

The Gloucester forwards again shone in loose dribbling, but the Newport backs were too good. The passing, however, broke down at the critical moment.

A fine dribble started by Vance and continued by Blackford, Nelmes, and Vears, took Gloucester well inside their opponents' half but they were beaten off.

Strong forward play by Newport and a good run by Plummer placed the City lines in danger, but the tackling was good. A clever move by Vile looked almost certain for a try, but Plummer missed his pass. Neat play by Gent removed the situation, and Vile getting a kick charged down Gloucester gained more favourable quarters. Newport had the better of the game to the interval, but could not score.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Newport 1 try
Gloucester Nil

Vears restarted, and the first item of interest was a beautiful dribble by Plummer, but Gent checked nicely. Vance intercepting a pass kicked down the field, but Williams secured and punted back. Gent dribbled from a scrum, but Jones gathered and sent to Plummer, who was pushed into touch a yard outside. Hamblin with clever footwork took play to the centre, where Vance, taking advantage of loose passing by Newport, secured and with a dashing sprint, scored a fine try. Egerton failed at goal.

On the resumption the game was desperately fought out forward. Gloucester, though outweighed in the scrums, performed brilliantly in the loose, and gave Newport a lot of trouble. A well-sustained movement enabled the City to gain a good position, but the Newport forwards, with a great effort, brought operations to midfield.

The home team tried hard to gain the lead again, and lovely passing gave Baker a chance on the left wing, but he was grandly tackled outside. For an infringement Gloucester were penalised, but the kick went straight across the ground to the open, and Gloucester profited. There was a temporary stoppage for an injury to Griffiths, but he was able to resume. Then a Newport man was laid out, and there was further delay.

Resuming, Newport, who were short of Edwards, at once forced a minor. They repeated this performance a minute later as the result of a kick over the line.

Ensuing play was vigorous, nothing being given away. Newport played very determinedly, but they met with a great defence, Egerton showing up well.

Several time Newport got the ball out, but Baker each time was grandly tackled by Vance, who was playing a grand game.

Gloucester stuck to their formidable opponents in grand style, their form surprising everybody. From his own 25 Vance got away with a lovely dribble, taking the ball past Williams. There was a splendid chance, but Jones got back and kicked dead from the field of play.

Newport kicked out, but Gent replied with another fine dribble, and the Usksiders had a narrow escape.

In the last five minutes there was a great contest for victory. Gloucester altogether had the better of the exchanges, and Newport had all their work cut out to keep their line intact.

The record was seriously in danger, and the Newport spectators became very anxious. Gloucester made no effort to heel, but concentrated their efforts on loose footwork. This policy paid well, for at this game the City were the better exponents.

Just before the end Newport kicked to the open, and there was a keen follow up. Egerton, however, fielded the ball in perfect style, and with a well-judged punt found touch in the Newport half. Here the game remained to the end, which came with honours even.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 try (3 points)
Newport 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS

Bravo Boys! With seven reserves in the team, and able to draw with the unbeaten Welshmen is truly a wonderful performance, and one which stands out as the finest achievement ever accomplished on Welsh soil. How was it done? Well, it was secured by downright honest work all round. Newport were undoubtedly the classier team, especially behind the scrummage, but if less showy the City were nothing inferior in point of strenuous play and dogged tenacity.

It was this that pulled the team through to-day, and we never remember a Gloucester side rising to the occasion in such style against tremendous odds.

The early stages of the game suggested a walk over for Newport, for the home backs were continually in possession, and play for a long time was rarely out of the Gloucester half. The City, however, never lost grip of the game, and plodding on gamely they kept the score down to a solitary try. This was the record at the interval, and the visitors were on good terms with themselves.

If Newport fancied Gloucester would be played out as a result of their exertions in the first half they were sadly mistaken, for as the play went on the visitors improved. Strongly overweighted in the scrums, the City could not gain possession, but they broke up quickly, and with united efforts frequently hampered the home backs.

In the loose the City were immense, and finer footwork could hardly be imagined. Forwards and backs shared in the honours in this department, the chief performers being Vance, Gent, and Hamblin behind, and Vears, Holford, Nelmes, and Blackford in the forwards.

All through the game was fiercely contested, but the last quarter of an hour was very hot indeed. The tackling on both sides was deadly in the extreme, and more than one player was laid out. Only one, however, had to leave the field – Edwards, of Newport.

Again and again the home backs tried to pierce the Gloucester defence, but the City offered a solid front, and all attempts were nipped in the bud. Vance's equalising try was a splendid solo effort, and with a little luck the Old Boy would have repeated the score. He took the ball past the Newport custodian, but was just beaten before regaining possession by Jones, who kicked dead.

After this Gloucester nearly brought about another score, only a daring save by a forward stopping the try. The precious record was in dire danger to the end, and the whistle came as a welcome relief to the home crowd.

The City forwards were finely led by Gordon Vears. They were all workers, and never slackened the pace to the close. It was a gruelling game against such a powerful eight, and to accomplish what they did was indeed remarkable. Hats off to the Gloucester forwards – a game and plucky set.

Behind the scrum Gent played with capital judgment, his kicks to touch being often very useful. His saving, too, was excellent. Barnes did his best in a new position, and the same be said of Pearce and Hamblin. The two latter marked their men well, and their close attentions no doubt caused the Newport passing to go astray at times. Frank Smith had a clever three-quarter to look after in Plummer, but he was always on the look-out, and gave nothing away.

Vance was opposed to Baker, and the Gloucesterian came out of a serious test with flying colours. The budding Welsh International was looked after like a brother; those who have questioned Vance's defence had better keep closed mouths in future. In a word, Vance was great to-day. He had to find all his own work, but he was keen, resourceful, and full of dash, and with Plummer ranked as the best three-quarter on the field. At full-back Egerton gave a fine display. He was frequently hardly pressed, but not once did he fail, and his relief kicking was first-class.

Newport were undoubtedly disappointing. They had the chances to-day to do something big in the way of scoring, but though Vile and Martin opened up the game very cleverly, the centre three-quarters failed badly at times. Jones was inconsistent, and Coldrick too slow and cumbersome. The wing men have already been referred to. Of the two, Plummer was certainly the more proficient, Baker exhibiting a decided tendency to curl up before Vance.

The forwards were a strong eight, and they were big enough to run over the City players. Apart from their work in the scrums, however, they were not the terrors one was led to expect. Pritchard, Thomas, and Smythe were about the pick, the former being as good as ever.

Williams, at full-back, could claim no advantage over the City custodian, except perhaps in length of kicking.

The result was hailed with enthusiasm by the small band of Gloucester supporters present. It was indeed a welcome surprise shared no doubt by those at home. Again – Bravo, boys!

GLOUCESTER A v NEWPORT A

HOME TEAM'S RECORD GONE

These old rivals met at Kingsholm in bright weather before a small attendance. There were many changes in the home team, and Newport arrived one short, finding a substitute in Craddock. The teams were : –

Gloucester A. – H. Hancock; W. Washbourn, L. Hamblin, P. Roach, and J. M. Baldwin; W. Dix and S. Stephens; J. Price, T. Catesby, F. Westbury, J. Westbury, W. D. Henderson, S. Millard, E. Merchant, and H. L. Merrick.

Newport A. – H. Wreford; Percy Jones (Risca), I. Evans, H. J. Richards, and C. Perry; J. Dunn and R. Beith; G. Boots, C. Hews, C. Murphy, A. Jenkins, W. Hulbert, L. Pritchard, A. Bell, and R. Craddock.

There was a poor return to Gloucester's kick-off, and play opened in the Newport quarter. F. Westbury was conspicuous with a characteristic break-away on his own, but he was not supported, and Newport cleared. The forwards carried a scrum nicely, and centre play followed for some time.

Newport, with the advantage forward, opened out the game, and the ball came nicely across, but Richards was smartly tackled by Washbourn, and a little later the Gloucester forwards and Dix gained a nice slice of ground with a loose rush. Gloucester were awarded a free for off-side, but not much ground was gained. The home men then tried passing, but the handling left a good deal to be desired.

Newport were again penalised, but no ground was made, the return to the kick being lengthy and well judged. Newport's forwards burst away prettily and Hancock mis-kicking the visitors appeared to have a chance, but the defence prevailed. Newport, by short rushes, gradually worked up into Gloucester's 25, where Richards had a shot for a dropped goal, but it was a poor attempt.

Newport, heeling nicely, gave an opening to their three-quarters, and a quick pass and re-pass between Percy Jones and Evans looked particularly promising, but the latter was finely floored by Hancock, and had to receive the assistance of the ambulance men. Newport were desperately close, but Gloucester managed to work out of immediate danger.

Newport, however, were quickly back again, and after a very near squeak in the far corner, Hews, receiving from a pass in a scramble, managed to struggle over although tackled. The kick struck the upright. Newport attacked very strongly again on the drop out, and Perry appeared to have crossed with a good try, but he was ruled to have gone to touch. Newport continued to keep the game in Gloucester territory till half time.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Newport 1 try
Gloucester Nil

Aided by a free early in the second half, Gloucester reached a favourable position, and a pretty bit of work by Stephens gained ground, but Roach kicked much too hard and a good opening was lost. Stephens gained ground by a neat kick, but with a wide throw-out the Newport threes got moving, but no ground was made. Then Newport again opened out, and Richards raced away, but he was prettily upset when going strong. Then Percy Jones got on the move, but Baldwin tackled him well.

Newport, however, had now established a footing in the home half, but a free brought relief, and centre play followed. Another free fell to Gloucester, but there was a good return. Dix punted up nicely, but the kick was returned again, and neutral territory was for some time the scene of operations. Newport gained materially by a free kick, but then a very pretty bit of work between Stephens, Westbury, Hamblin, and Baldwin took play right up to the Newport line, the wing man being only just upset in time – a near thing.

A neat kick by Hancock put Gloucester up again, and a forward taking nicely from the line-out sent across to Baldwin, but he was hemmed in and could not get going. Gloucester, however, were now pressing very strongly, but a wild pass let Newport out. Baldwin received again wide out, but he failed to shake off the opposition.

Gloucester were now playing up desperately, and kept the game well in the Newport half, but there was a very strong defence to cope with, and the home men were unable to make any impression. Newport transferred the game to the other end, and after a brilliant round of passing all along the line, Percy Jones ran over with a capital try in the corner. No goal resulted.

Just on the call of time Perry ran in on the opposite wing with another unconverted try.

RESULT :

Newport A 3 tries (9 points)
Gloucester A Nil

REMARKS

The game was a great disappointment to the home spectators, not only because the team's record was lost, but also because of the very ragged and un-combined play of the City Seconds. True they were sadly handicapped by so many changes in the team, but given all this in[sic], they ought to have made a better show of it.

The falling away in the last five minutes was lamentable, for up to then Gloucester had had quite their share of the laurels of the second half.

The Newport forwards were too heavy and too fast for the home scratch eight, and herein undoubtedly lay the foundation of the Usksiders' victory. Gloucester also made a great mistake in invariably kicking into the open instead of finding touch.

Individually there was no one who particularly shone, and we look for better organisation and combination in future engagements.

JC