

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1912

FOOTBALL

RUGBY

GLOUCESTER v NEWPORT

MATCH OF THE SEASON

WELSH CHAMPIONS HELD

VISITORS' FOUL TACTICS

FORWARD ORDERED OFF AND VILE WARNED

Newport's visit to Kingsholm to-day was regarded as the match of the season, and with the weather conditions extremely favourable a big crowd assembled to welcome the famous Uskside combination.

Newport have had a splendid season, their record showing 24 wins with only two defeats and four drawn games. Their team was a powerful one on paper, no fewer than ten players having gained International honours, England, Scotland, and Wales all being represented. Gloucester, too, were strongly represented, the return of Stanley Cook and W. Hall greatly strengthening the back division.

When the teams met at Newport in December the City (who fielded short of Cook, Hall, Dix, and Johns) were beaten by 19 points to 5, but the score flattered the Usksiders. At home Gloucester always show up well against Welsh teams, and this season the City held an unbeaten record against clubs from the Principality.

Cardiff were defeated 11-0, Swansea 8-3, Llanelly 8-3, and Abertillery 23-3, whilst a draw of 5 points each was recorded in the match with Pontypool.

On this record the home team's supporters were not without hope of Newport being added to the list of beaten sides. H. Uzzell was absent from the visitors' ranks, his place being filled by the veteran Boots. Otherwise Newport were at full strength.

The "gate" promised to be the best of the season, though but for the curtailed railway service the number would have been considerably augmented.

The teams were as follow : –

Gloucester. – C. Cook, back; A. Hudson (capt.),* S. Cook, L. Hamblin, W. Washbourne, three-quarter backs; W. Dix, W. Hall, half-backs; G. Vears, W. Johns, G. Holford, H. Berry, J. Meadows, S. Smart, F. Pegler, N. Hayes, forwards.

Newport. – H. Wreford, back; G. L. Hirst,* R. McGregor,* F. W. Birt,* R. Plummer,* three-quarter backs; T. H. Vile (capt.),* W. J. Martin,* half-backs; G. Boots,* A. P. Coldrick,* R. Dibble,* L. Trump,* P. Jones, F. Willis, A. Bell, A. R. Williams, forwards.

* Internationals.

Referee : Mr. A. O. Jones.

THE GAME

Gloucester lost the toss, and the City had to face the strong sun and breeze. Plummer received Vears' kick-off and replied to Dix, who found touch just beyond the centre. At the first scrum Gloucester were penalised, and a high punt was carried by the wind to Cook, who just got the ball to touch with a flying kick.

Newport were next penalised, and C. Cook found touch at the 25 flag. Here the City forwards burst away, but lost the ball, and a visitor turned it out of play.

The wind was a great factor in Newport's favour, and another kick by Birt went close to the Gloucester line. The City relieved through L. Hamblin, but from another penalty Birt dropped for goal, sending wide of the posts with a good kick.

Hirst marked from the drop-out, and keen play followed in the home half. Vile opened out, but a forward pass pulled Plummer up. Off-side by the Newport front gave Gloucester a penalty, but C. Cook failed to find touch, and Wreford replied with a huge punt to the line. Hall, however, fielded cleverly and drove the ball to touch.

The game was spoiled by the wind, and Gloucester could not make much headway. The forwards got in one fine burst, but Birt quickly regained the ground. Inside their own 25 the City were penalised, and Birt taking the kick landed a good goal.

Gloucester resumed, and some even play followed at mid-field. The City forwards heeled, and Hall, receiving from Dix, punted smartly, but a visitor with a lucky flying kick saved. Johns and Berry led the home forward in a good rush, which took the City beyond the centre. Here Newport suffered a penalty, but C. Cook kicked straight up in the air and no ground was gained.

Dix and Hall next passed nicely, but S. Cook was tackled directly he received. He, however, passed back to Hall who, though partly collared, got in a short kick to Wreford, who sent to touch.

In the open Vile shot out a long pass to Birt, who with a left-foot kick sent down the field, the wind taking the ball over the line for a minor.

Ensuing play was scrambling, but Hall was prominent with a very smart bit of work under pressure, which was loudly cheered. Newport, however, kept the game in the home end until Washbourne, taking advantage of a mistake by Martin, dribbled through and kicked past Wreford.

Racing hard for the ball, he was obstructed by an opponent, and Newport were penalised. The kick was some distance out, but in front of the posts, and Hamblin, with a fine kick, covered the cross-bar amidst loud cheering. Just before the kick was taken the referee whistled for "no charge," but the goal was allowed and Gloucester were on equal terms.

Newport restarted, and the City, encouraged by their success, played up finely. Hall distinguished himself with some splendid kicks, and followed this up by serving Stanley Cook, who burst through but was collared from behind.

Penalties followed to either side for infringe-ments, but ensuing play was keenly contested at the centre.

A big kick by Birt eventually gave Newport an advantage, and Hirst, fielding a kick by C. Cook, dashed down touch and cross-punted, but Holford marked nicely. Gloucester were getting the ball in the scrums, and Dix and Hall opened out. The tackling, however, was very keen.

Birt checked a dangerous rush of the home forwards by kicking straight to touch, and then came a smart movement in which Dix, Hall, and S. Cook shared. The centre tried hard to break through, but was tackled from behind and lost possession. Newport, however, failed to gain any advantage.

More fine forward work and a sharp dash by Hudson enabled the City to reach mid-field, where Johns was badly fouled by Vile. Gloucester made headway with the kick, but Newport luckily cleared through Hirst, Hudson slipping and falling to the ground in running back to field. He was hard pressed and threw back to Cook, who was immediately tackled.

Matters looked dangerous for the City, but they managed to clear, though at the expense of a penalty. Birt took a shot for goal, but it was charged down, and Gloucester got to more favourable quarters.

On the 25 line Dix fed Hall, who got in a short punt which Hirst failed to gather. Washbourne dashed along and fielded, and cutting inside fed Hamblin. The latter raced away and, returning the ball to Washbourne, the wing man finished a great run by scoring amidst a scene of great enthusiasm. L. Hamblin failed at goal.

Newport restarted, and play became exceptionally keen. In front of the stand a visiting forward acted very roughly, and the referee had the game stopped to give warning. Gloucester put in some fine work, but the Newport backs showed up cleverly, and only a forward transfer stopped Plummer from scoring.

Newport attacked again, and Vile, breaking away on the short side of the scrum, passed to Plummer, who though tackled by Cook managed to get the ball down in the far corner. Birt failed at goal, and the scores were level again. Gloucester dropped out, and soon afterwards the interval was sounded.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester	1 goal (p), 1 try
Newport	1 goal (p), 1 try

Birt resumed for Newport, Cook finding touch with his return near the centre flag. Vile and Birt gained ground for the visitors, but Hall quickly replied. Then a wild pass by Birt gave Washbourne a chance, but the wing man unfortunately knocked on in trying to pick up.

Newport, with a big forward rush reached the home 25, but the City forwards came away, and Wreford being at fault, Hudson had a good opening. His pass was taken by Johns, who let the ball go, but an infringement occurred, and a possible opening was lost. Gloucester, however, secured a territorial advantage, which was quickly lost, Newport taking play to midfield.

Johns broke away finely from a line-out and gained a good slice of ground, and Hudson further improved. Then for off-side Newport were penalised, but Hamblin's shot for goal was a long way out.

A terrific dash by the City forwards severely tested the Newport defence, but they managed to keep their lines intact. Dix was temporarily laid out, but was soon able to resume, and Gloucester maintained their position in their opponents' 25.

From a scrum Dix tried to break away, but he was swung off the ball, and Vile securing he punted out to the centre, where Washbourne received and found touch. Wreford fielded from a big kick by Cook near touch and punted out, and Plummer gained further ground for the visitors. By the aid of two penalties Newport got closer, but only a minor resulted.

Gloucester forced a similar result on the drop-out from a kick by Hudson, whilst Hamblin forced another from a fruitless shot at goal from a penalty. Play was quiet for the next few minutes, and spectacular back play was conspicuous by its absence. Stanley Cook, fielding an opponents' kick, ran down and fed Hudson, who punted, but only a minor accrued.

Dix initiated a round of passing on the restart, but Hirst intercepted and was making off when he was finely tackled by Hall. Newport, through Birt, gained a footing in the home 25, where Vile fed Plummer on the short side of the scrum, but the latter was pushed to touch.

Newport lost ground when the ball came out, and Gloucester cleared easily to mid-field. Some exciting though scrambling play followed, ending in Newport gaining a minor.

Gloucester dropped out, and the forwards showed up with a magnificent burst which was checked by Martin.

There was a bunch of players on the ground, and Willis came up and commenced booting a City man. Fortunately the referee spotted his brutality and he was ordered off amidst the cheers of the crowd. McGregor also went off with an injured leg, and Newport continued with thirteen men. A clever kick by Hall put Gloucester in the Newport half, where McGregor came back limping.

Gloucester played up strongly now for winning points, and pressed Newport in their 25. In a desperate scramble Pegler was knocked out, and then Vile, right in front of the stand, was guilty of a shocking bad foul of Johns. He ought certainly to have been ordered off, but the referee was content with a warning.

The last few minutes were very hotly contested, Gloucester attacking strongly. Hall once just missed dropping a goal, whilst the Newport lines had a narrow escape on another occasion.

Then the visitors put in an effort, and Birt changed the venue with some big kicking. Back Gloucester came and nearly scored, and the excitement was intense.

The City, however, were eventually beaten out, and Newport shone in some clever work at mid-field. Gloucester had just one more chance, but the passing broke down and the end came.

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal (p) 1 try (6 points)

Newport 1 goal (p) 1 try (6 points)

REMARKS

As a spectacle the game was a big disappointment, but the keenness displayed made things exciting. Gloucester did not win, but they did the next best thing in sharing the honours, and the City's home record against Welsh teams is still intact. In holding their own Gloucester accomplished a fine performance, for they were up against a severe handicap in the strong wind all through the first half. The breeze moderated a good bit after the change of ends, and thus Newport had all the luck that was going.

I regret having to say so, but it is a long time since I saw a Newport team guilty of such tactics they adopted this afternoon. At Devonport against the Albion recently, the Usksiders were severely criticised for their roughness, and to-day they brought into play fouling and wilful obstruction which cannot be too strongly condemned.

The case of Willis kicking an opponent on the ground was one of the worst I have witnessed, and Vile was guilty of an equally bad foul of Johns. For a man of his position in the football world it was surprising to find the Newport captain lose his head in such a manner, and he was fortunate indeed in not receiving "marching orders."

The contest forward was terribly keen, and the City pack are to be congratulated on coming out of such a severe ordeal with so much credit. There was a period in the second half when the Gloucester eight appeared to crack up owing to the great efforts they were called upon to make in the opening half, but they came again in the closing stages, and combined in several rushes which swept their opponents all before them. More than once the Newport line appeared certain to fall, but the City could not get the least bit of luck in a scoring position.

All the men did splendidly, but Johns was the hero. He revelled in the desperate work frequently witnessed, and his short, sharp dashes again and again came in useful. He was well backed up by Holford, Hayes and Smart, though the other players put in their stoutest and best, and never failed when called upon.

There was a fair division of the ball between the rival packs in the scrums, and in the loose there was little to choose between the men. In the lines-out, however, Newport were smarter, though Hayes and Holford were very good amongst the home eight.

Newport had a formidable front with their four Internationals, but they had to play their hardest this afternoon. Coldrick and Trump were about the pick of the bunch, the former being very prominent. When overwhelmed at times in the second half the visitors frequently lost their tempers, and there was a lot of unnecessary roughness introduced.

Behind the scrum the feature was the individual cleverness of one or two players. Combined passing movements were at a discount, the marking being so close, and causing the men tackled to throw the ball about wildly.

At half-back the Gloucester pair held a slight advantage taking the game throughout. Vile was well watched by Dix, and though occasionally doing smart things, was by no means over distinguished. Hall, for general soundness and usefulness, overshadowed Martin, who was faulty in taking his passes at times.

At three-quarter Gloucester showed one real bit of cleverness, and that led up to Washbourne scoring – a very fine try indeed. Hamblin shared in the movement, and the two players named worked it out very happily.

Stanley Cook did not get many chances, and the few times he got the ball he was generally too closely pressed to do anything. Hudson, however, ought to have done better with one or two passes he received, but the captain did not let himself go in the old style, and Newport were not slow to take advantage.

The Newport third line did little worthy [of] their reputation, the redeeming feature being Birt's wonderful kicking. Plummer was conspicuous for one or two smart runs, but neither McGregor or Hirst came much in the picture.

Both full backs gave excellent displays, though Cook did not reach his best. The sun and wind, however, bothered the players a good deal, and the few errors made were excusable.

Scorers for Gloucester : Hamblin, penalty goal; Washbourne, try.

I hear F.E. Chapman, who will be visiting Stroud at Easter, will be invited to assist Gloucester in one or more matches, but it is reported W. Hall and W. Washbourne will not be available, as they have both accepted an invitation to tour with a scratch team on the Continent, visiting Italy, Switzerland, and France. A pleasant trip no doubt for the players, but Gloucester can ill afford to lose their services. One would have thought that the organisers of the tour would have had the courtesy to consult the Gloucester Club, but I understand nothing of the sort has been done.

GLOUCESTER A v NEWPORT A

CITY SECONDS WELL BEATEN

At Newport, before a good attendance. The homesters early became aggressive and scored through Evans, Rowlands converting. Gloucester lost one of their players through injury, and Newport in the first half scored again through Jenkins, Hobbs converting.

Gloucester pressed continually for the first part of the second half, but could not pierce the defence. After fine combination Evans scored for Newport, Rowlands converting.

RESULT :

Newport A 3 goals (15 points)
Gloucester A Nil