

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHRONICLE

OCTOBER 26, 1901

FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL

A KEEN AND STUBBORN GAME

Many circumstances combined to invest Saturday's match at Bristol with special interest. For one thing, neither team had been beaten this season. Bristol had defeated Cardiff, and Gloucester had drawn with Newport; and it was now a determined fight for supremacy between the two English teams which take leading positions in the West.

The Gloucester men were accompanied to Bristol by a numerous body of supporters, and at the County Ground there was a record gate – fully 7,000 people being present. Gloucester were without Watkins, A. Smith taking his place; and Bristol had not the services of either E. W. Baker who was playing for Edinburgh University, or G. F. Eberle, who was doing duty for Oxford University, but they had the help of A. B. Timms, the Scottish International, who was in the team last season.

The opening exchanges went in favour of Bristol, but the teams were very evenly matched, and for long spells neither side could gain any material advantage, and there was intense excitement as move and counter-move were adroitly carried out.

At length Bristol were forced on their defence, and Oates was almost overborne in a rush, but recovering himself, he found touch, and again operations shifted to centre. Then, at the end of twenty minutes' fast play, Needs kicked down to Romans, and the Gloucester back sent the ball across the field and followed up, with the result that Timms, who fumbled somewhat, was collared before he could get in a return.

"Scrum" was formed in front of the Bristol goal, and on the ball getting loose, C. Smith threw it to Miller, who, with a couple of strides, dashed across the line. Romans failed to convert the try.

Up to half-time Bristol were unable to get upon even terms with their opponents, although they tried their utmost; but immediately after the interval they got away with a big rush which put them in a strong position. They lost a few yards in some three-quarter passing, which had no particular merit, and when the ball next came from "scrum" into Foster's hands, he stole off a long touch, Timms following up and preventing a return.

Gloucester's goal was at once imperilled, and there was exciting scrummaging a few yards from the line, resulting in Foster passing out to Bush, who secured a try in the corner. Adamson was unable to add the goaling points, so that the scores were now equal.

Both sides worked with redoubled energy after this, but it was only about ten minutes from the end when Needs was given a pass in front of the Gloucester posts, and, unable to break through, he just dropped a goal.

This settled the game, and when it finished in favour of Bristol, spectators raced into the enclosure, an enthusiastic, cheering crowd, and hoisting some of the players shoulder high, carried them off the ground in triumph. It was Bristol's first win over Gloucester for five years, and it afforded Bristol more delight than even beating Cardiff. The final score read : – Bristol, one dropped goal one try (7 points); Gloucester, one try (3 points).

There can be no gainsaying that the victory was well deserved, the dash of the Bristol forwards contrasting with that of their opponents. There was an absence of rough play, the contest being fought out in the best spirit. The referee when the packs were getting excited gave them a half-minute rest to cool down; an innovation which might be followed by others sometimes.

The Bristol pack (says the "Times and Mirror") deserve the highest praise, and the presence of Courtney and Thomas made so great a difference that it would be advisable to keep the same eight. The Gloucester forwards were well led by C. Hall, whose chief lieutenants were Cecil Miller and J. Lewis. They were a fine built set of players, with plenty of pace, only failing at heeling out.

Goddard was the better of the Gloucester halves, and he worked well with his colleague, who spoilt his play occasionally by offside tactics. The former taking his passes on the run means a much better chance of opening out the game. Timms was well marked by the three-quarters, and under the circumstances had no chance to break through. His kicking was splendid, and his work in the line-outs sensational.

The London "Standard" remarks : When two such rivals as Bristol and Gloucester meet it is well that the result of the win of either side should include a majority of tries to the winners. In Saturday's game each side gained one try, and the home team won their victory by a dropped goal.

The dropped goal is, of course, a meritorious incident in a game, but it contains no guarantee of the superiority of the side to whose credit it goes. Bristol are, at the moment, at the head of English football, and have done extremely well in beating both Cardiff and Gloucester. Cardiff succeeded against Newport on Saturday in exactly the same way as Bristol did against Gloucester, and there is probably very little between these four teams.

GLOUCESTER A v. BRISTOL A

These teams met at Kingsholm, Gloucester, on Saturday, when the visitors proved victorious by two goals (one field goal) to a goal and a try, or 9 points to 8. Unfortunately, a dispute arose as to the legitimacy of the Bristol try, it being contended that the player was over the dead-ball line.

The referee stepped the distance, and awarded the try, but the ground was afterwards measured with a tape, when it was found that it was correctly marked, and therefore the try given by the referee was no try.

The result of the match will remain the same until the County Rugby Union has settled the matter.

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