

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 1902

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. BRISTOL

Ever since Gloucester's defeat at the County Ground last October, supporters of the City club have anxiously awaited the date of the return fixture at Kingsholm. The eventful day at length arrived, and the 20th contest between the premier clubs in the county on Saturday excited exceptional interest.

Bristol came with a splendid record, their card only showing two defeats as against 22 wins, whilst they could claim an unbeaten certificate so far as English teams were concerned.

Gloucester had suffered five defeats this season, but the City team in three out of the five matches were below strength, especially in the two games with Leicester.

To-day Gloucester were in the position of playing their best available team with the exception of Spiers (injured at Leicester), and with this knowledge local opinion was inclined to favour the chances of the home team, though a close and exciting game was generally expected.

Bristol came short of Eddie Baker (who was unable to get away from Edinburgh), Mathias, Claridge, and Davis, but good substitutes were forthcoming. The weather conditions were most favourable, and there was a splendid attendance, including a large contingent of Bristolians.

The ground, thanks to the over-night's rain, was in grand condition, but a cross wind threatened to interfere with the game somewhat.

The following were the teams :—

GLOUCESTER	Positions	BRISTOL
G. Romans (capt.)	Backs.	J. Oates
C. Smith	Three-quarter backs.	R. J. Vaughan (capt.)
G. F. Collett	"	P. Hussey
J. Stephens	"	C. Y. Adamson
Lewis Smith	"	G. F. Eberle
G. Hall	Half-Backs	W. Needs
R. Goddard	"	S. H. Foster
C. Hall	Forwards	N. Moore
A. H. Click	"	M. Courtney
F. Westbury	"	J. Lewis
F. Oswell	"	J. Sweet
J. Jewell	"	A. Harris
Bert Parham	"	F. Channon
E. Essex	"	H. Wilcox
G. H. Smith	"	Rev. O. G. Loynes

Referee : Mr. F. W. NICHOLLS (Leicester)

THE GAME

Bristol won the toss, and deputed the home team to face the sun and breeze. C. Hall started for Gloucester, and the kick being charged down the ball rebounded to Oates, who kicked to Lewis Smith. The latter replied with a good kick to touch, and the first line took place in the visitors' 25.

The Gloucester forwards got possession from the first scrum, but the passing went astray, Stephens knocking on. The home team, however, playing well together, rushed the opposing forwards in splendid style, and Bristol had some difficulty in saving.

From a pass by G. Hall, Goddard kicked nicely to the Bristol 25, where some keen forward play was witnessed. Wheeling a scrum in fine style, the Gloucester pack got away with a grand rush, and the ball being taken over the Bristol line, G. Smith was credited with a try amidst tremendous cheering. Romans converted with a fine kick, at which success the applause was renewed.

Bristol resumed, and early forced a minor as the result of a big kick over the line. The drop-out was well returned, but C. Hall was collared before he could reply, and Bristol found a footing in the home quarters. G. Hall relieved smartly, but from a punt by Vaughan, Romans failed to field, and Hussey had a fine chance to score. He, however, knocked on badly.

G. Hall and Goddard brought relief to the home team with timely kicks, and then Westbury broke away to the centre in grand style. The Gloucester forwards, with a splendid rush, improved matters, and then from a passing movement "Whacker" Smith made a big effort to cross in the corner. The International beat Oates, but was pulled down by Courtney on the verge of the line.

Some exciting play followed on the Bristol line, but Foster came to the rescue with a nice punt to touch. Heeling by the home forwards saw Goddard pass out to Stephens, but the handling was faulty, and Lewis Smith could only turn the ball into touch inside the Bristol half.

From an infringement Gloucester were penalised, but Romans replied to Adamson's kick with a nice touch-finder. Even play followed at the centre, the efforts of both sides to make an opening being nipped in the bud. Another penalty was awarded to Bristol for off-side by G. Hall, but "Whacker" Smith returned the kick with interest.

An attempt to open up the game by the Gloucester halves failed, and Bristol profited by the mistakes, getting well in the home 25. A combined rush by the City forwards, in which Westbury, Hall, and Smith were prominent, brought play to mid-field, where Vaughan effected a neat save.

Passing by the Bristol backs looked dangerous, but Gloucester tackled well. A forward transfer from Needs to a colleague was passed by the referee, and the ball being kicked to Romans, the latter was pulled down right under his goal.

The Gloucester front rank, with a good wheel, brought relief, but in some loose play Hussey dribbled through, but Romans marked cleverly. With his kick the City captain found touch outside the 25 flag. With a clever punt under difficulties Goddard sent down to Oates, but the latter fielded and returned well.

Ensuing play was confined to the Gloucester 25, where Eberle, taking a pass from Needs, secured a fine opening. He, however, passed instead of going on, and a fine chance of scoring was lost. After this Bristol attacked again, and following a neat round of passing Hussey scored in the corner. Adamson failed at goal.

Gloucester dropped out, but play was immediately taken to the home 25. G. Hall and then Stephens made headway for the home team, but the Bristol forwards replied with a good rush, which Stephens checked neatly. A mistake by Needs let Gloucester gain a few yards, but the visitors still confined operations to the home half.

G. Hall and Lewis Smith, by working down touch, tried hard to get away, but Bristol more than held their own for a time. At length Goddard started a useful dribble, which was taken up by the forwards, but Oates stopped them just inside his half.

Subsequently Bristol worked back, and Eberle, out of some loose play, made a great effort to break down the defence, but he was finely tackled by "Whacker" Smith. In the next minute, however, Bristol were given a penalty, and from the kick Adamson placed a splendid goal from near touch. This gave Bristol a lead of 1 point, and tended to increase the excitement.

Gloucester re-started, and the game was fast and keen. The home half-backs got away smartly from a scrum, but little ground was gained. From a kick by one of the Bristol backs Eberle followed up and prevented a return, a performance which was greeted with applause by the Bristol supporters. Soon afterwards the interval was sounded.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Bristol 1 goal (p), 1 try (6 points)
Gloucester 1 goal (5 points)

Courtney resumed for Bristol, the ball rolling into touch 10 yards inside the Gloucester half. From the line-out the visitors broke away, but Romans secured and dropped out of play.

Then a free to Gloucester saw Romans gain some 20 yards, but the visitors replied with some loose footwork, which looked dangerous. Stephens, however, saved neatly and got in a nice kick to touch.

Heeling out by the Bristol forwards saw Foster feed Needs, but the latter missed, and Collett dribbled away cleverly. Adamson stepped in the breach, and with a splendid screw-kick sent the ball into touch near the home quarter.

Gloucester, by strong forward play, made considerable headway, but they were stopped at the centre. At length G. Hall, from a scrum, put in a high punt to Oates, who fumbled, and Lewis Smith, securing, raced over amidst great enthusiasm. Romans kick went wide of the posts.

Bristol re-started, and play was fought out with increased energy. Smart combination by Goddard and "Whacker" Smith looked promising, but Goddard just failed to take the re-pass. Then from a kick by Vaughan, Lewis Smith got hold, and though severely pressed got in a neat kick.

Ensuing play was fairly even at the centre, but Gloucester were eventually set going again by Goddard, who, taking advantage of the wind, punted high down the field. Adamson, however, saved this time. A punt by Needs sent the leather to Lewis Smith, but there was a crowd of players around him, and the ball being knocked-on a scrum was ordered. A splendid bit of play by Westbury eventually enabled Gloucester to rush right to the visitors' line, where Oates saved daringly.

Several tight scrums followed in close proximity to the Bristol line, but Gloucester failed to penetrate the defence. A useful kick by Needs brought timely relief to Bristol.

Subsequently the ball was sent high to Romans, who got in a fine return, but some of his forwards were off-side, and thereby lost a good slice of ground. By the aid of a fine, loose rush the City forwards removed the scene of operations to beyond mid-field, where Gloucester obtained a mark. Romans punted for touch, but the ball just missed its mark, and went over the line for a minor.

Re-starting, there was some exciting play at the centre, but there was not much in it. G. Hall came away with a good dribble, and, several forwards joining in, the ball was taken past Oates. Vaughan, however, saved at the critical moment. Bristol got out of danger by short kicks, but they were shortly afterwards forced to concede a minor as the result of a kick over the line by Goddard.

On the drop-out Bristol tried hard to raise an attack, but "Whacker" Smith was great in defence, pulling Eberle down several times in fine style. Following a run and pass by Needs, Hussey punted, but C. Hall turned the ball nicely into touch.

Then Lewis Smith, fielding another kick, ran finely to Oates, when he put in a short punt. The Bristol custodian, however, charged bodily into the Gloucester three-quarter, and both players were laid out. After attention the men were able to resume from close to the Bristol line.

The visitors, after severe pressure, eventually relieved, and a kick brought play to mid-field. Gloucester made a few yards, but Bristol worked back with a passing movement. This, however, was broken down, and the home team rushed back to beyond the centre flag. Here Stephens was prominent with a smart run, but he was sent into touch by Adamson.

Gloucester attacked desperately now, and worked hard to add to their lead. From a bout of passing Stephens broke away prettily, and worked out a nice opening for Lewis Smith, but the latter failed to take the pass.

Bristol struggled hard to keep Gloucester out, but a few minutes to time Goddard, receiving from G. Hall, slipped down the short side of the scrum with a splendid opening. Oates came across to stop the Gloucesterian's progress, but Goddard jumped the visiting custodian and went over the line to the accompaniment of loud and prolonged applause. Romans took the shot for goal, but failed to raise the ball. Bristol re-started, but the end was near, and in a couple of minutes the whistle sounded "no-side."

RESULT :

Gloucester 1 goal, 2 tries (11 points)
Bristol 1 goal (p), 1 try (6 points)

REMARKS

By their triumph to-day, Gloucester took ample revenge for the dropped goal defeat at the County Ground in the early part of the season. And the success was deserved, for the score showed Gloucester three times over the line to their opponents' once.

Summing up the game, it cannot be said the display was a great exhibition of football; it was too keen for this, both teams working desperately hard and showing no quarter. At the start Gloucester went off with a terrific bang, and were "all over" Bristol in the first ten minutes. It was during this period that Gloucester put on their goal, a very useful lead in a game where the teams were so closely matched.

This early reverse put Bristol fairly on their mettle, and aided with the wind – which proved an immense advantage to the side favoured throughout the game – they gave the City team an anxious time. Before they actually scored, Bristol had one or two good openings, but the defence of the home men, "Whacker" Smith in particular, was great.

Adamson's penalty goal – a splendid effort – placed Bristol in the ascendancy at the interval, but the supporters of the home team were not despondent, for with the breeze Gloucester were fully expected to get on terms again.

As events turned out, the City team more than balanced matters, and thanks to Lewis Smith and Goddard, emerged with a five points' victory. Thus Bristol, hitherto undefeated by an English club this season, lost their record on the famous burial ground at Kingsholm; whilst they also failed in their one great ambition, viz., to wrest the club championship of the county from their great rivals.

Comparing the two teams, both have done better, but the players were so anxious that mistakes were only to be expected. The Bristol pack, though short of three of their usual players, held the advantage in the tight scrums, and were thus able to control the ball more often than the home eight. Gloucester, however, did splendidly in the loose, and on the whole they were cleverer, and showed more cohesion than their opponents.

C. Hall, Click, Westbury, and G. Smith were ever to the fore, the vice-captain also doing an immense amount of saving and tackling. In the lines-out matters were fairly even, some excellent work being done by the players on both sides.

Bristol were best served by Courtney, Sweet, Loynes, and Channon, but the whole pack worked their hardest, and as far as could be seen, there was not a shirker on the field.

With regard to the back divisions, we should like to have seen Gloucester with the chances that fell to Bristol. Not more than a half dozen times did the home third line get possession from the scrum, this being due, not to the weakness of the half-backs, but to the inability of the forwards to get the ball back.

G. Hall and Foster watched one another very carefully, and taking the play through there was little to choose between the pair. Hall showed rare pluck in stopping rushes, and was repeatedly prominent with footwork and tackling. When the opportunity arose he also fed Goddard with rare skill, and the latter's try easily stood out as the best effort of the match.

On many other occasions, Goddard displayed his smartness and general resource, and, as an outside half, was more effective than Needs. The veteran Bristol half was never allowed to travel far, and was often so hard pressed that many of his passes went astray.

At three-quarter, Gloucester had few real chances of attack, but the whole line did well in other respects. "Whacker" Smith's big effort in the first half deserved a score, but in slackening down to dodge Oates, a Bristol forward just got up in time to pull him down.

For defensive work Smith surpassed himself, Eberle especially finding the International an insurmountable barrier.

On the other wing, Lewis Smith displayed his usual dash, and was always on the look out for an opening. But for the unfortunate charge by Oates, there is little doubt the Gloucesterian would have scored another try.

Collett and Stephens worked hard in the centre, the latter, with more chances, being the more prominent. For Bristol, Adamson kicked well, and the other players in the line showed up individually, but they were not great in combination. At full-back Romans played a consistent game, but Oates' defence was shaky at times.

GLOUCESTER A v. BRISTOL A

Played on the County Ground, before a fair gate. Gloucester started play. Bristol opened out well, and a fine run and transfer by Evans put Gibson over. Innes failed to improve the point. Bristol had much the better of play, but their passing broke down at the critical moment. At last Rice dropped a fine goal, Bristol leading at the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Bristol 1 goal, 1 try
Gloucester Nil

Phelps started the second half for Bristol. Gloucester got down, but Arbery intercepted and ran to half-way, where he transferred to Heaven, who scored. Evans converted neatly.

Following this Bristol were nearly over again. Gloucester kept them out for some time, but at last Gibson scored in the corner. Evans failed to improve. Bristol could not add to their score.

RESULT :

Bristol 2 goals (1 d), 2 tries (15 points)

Gloucester Nil

JC