

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHRONICLE

APRIL 12, 1902

FOOTBALL AND ATHLETICS

THE RUGBY COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

GLOUCESTERSHIRE v. DURHAM

At Gloucester, on Saturday, Durham defeated Gloucestershire in the final match of the county championship, thus regaining the championship which they won two years ago. The Durham fifteen won by two goals (one from a mark) to one try, and quite deserved their success. There was not, as the score would indicate, any marked difference between the sides, and, perhaps, only in the matter of staying powers, could the winners claim any superiority.

It was unfortunate that the conditions were entirely unfavourable to good football. A fairly strong wind blew straight down the ground, and shortly before the start, and several times during the game, rain fell heavily. In places the ground was little better than a quagmire, and the players experienced great difficulty in obtaining a foothold. The wet, heavy ball, could not be handled with any degree of accuracy, and most of the attempts at passing were of no avail.

The play all round suffered in point of quality, but, though many blunders were committed, there was every excuse for the players. Still, if the football was poor, the 6,000 spectators present witnessed a keen hard-fought contest.

Gloucestershire had the advantage of the wind in the first half, but did not make full use of their chances. They attacked the more frequently, but were only twice really dangerous. On the first occasion a blunder was made at the last moment, and on the second, Watkins-Baker, with a delightful feint, slipped through the Durham defence and over the line. From a penalty kick Durham might, perhaps, have drawn level, but at the interval, Gloucestershire led by a try.

Early in the second half, the home team, through some pretty work by Nicholls and C. Smith, came within an ace of scoring again, but afterwards they were for the most part engaged in the defensive. Romans, the Gloucestershire full back, fairly lost his head, when not at all hard pressed, and gave Summerscale the chance of making a mark, from which Taylor placed a neat goal. Having obtained the lead, the Durham forwards played with increased vigour, and fairly wore down their opponents. A splendid rush on the part of the former led to a try, which was gained by Jolcey, and Taylor kicked a fine goal.

Though fully a quarter of an hour remained for play, the game was now to all intents and purposes over, the Gloucestershire team showing signs of being tired. Their defence was sound, but they could do no more than keep out their opponents, never at all looking like pulling the game out of the fire. After Durham's second score, the Gloucestershire men appeared to lose much of their energy, while their opponents finished with plenty of energy.

The following were the teams : –

#### GLOUCESTERSHIRE

G. Romans (Gloucester), back.

C. Smith (Gloucester), E. Watkins-Baker (Bristol), Gwyn Nichols, and Lewis Smith (Gloucester), three-quarters.

S. H. Foster (Bristol) and R. Goddard (Gloucester), halves.

W. Claridge, J. Sweet, M. Courtney, and J. Lewis (Bristol), C. Hall and F. Westbury (Gloucester), F. Stout and C. E. Miller (Richmond and Gloucester), forwards.

#### DURHAM

E. W. Poole (Hartlepool Old Boys), back.

N. S. Harrison (Hartlepool Rovers), J. T. Taylor (West Hartlepool), J. Gordon (Hamsteels), and N. S. Cox (Sunderland), three-quarters.

B. Oughtred (Hartlepool Rovers) and E. J. Jolcey (North Durham), halves.

G. R. Lewes (West Hartlepool), H. Emerson (West Hartlepool), J. Waller (West Hartlepool), R. Bradley (West Hartlepool), J. Anton (Hartlepool Rovers), T. Summerscale (Durham City), J. Carmedy (Tudhoe), and J. Smith (Hartlepool Old Boys), forwards.

The "Standard" says : – "The Rugby Union County Championship has again gone to the North, Durham having beaten Gloucester[*sic*] in weather which rendered science of little account in comparison with strength. Each side crossed the other's line once, an indication of the run of the play which is more trustworthy than any other. But Durham converted their try, and also kicked a goal from a mark, and thus won on points fairly easily.

The Northerners are entitled to every credit for their victory, they fairly outstayed their opponents, and would have won more easily had time been longer. Their forwards played finely, and Oughtred at half, and Taylor at three-quarter, were at their best; but they might not have won so easily on a fine day, whilst it is a question whether they are as good a side as Devon put in the field when they beat the Rest of England."

Comparing the teams (says the "Times and Mirror") Durham were better at back than the losers, for Poole played a very safe game, while Romans lost his head towards the end especially.

At half honours were about even. Goddard was, perhaps, the best of the quartet, for Foster was a trifle below his usual form. Oughtred was keen in attack, and his kicking was effective. The International, Taylor, was the most prominent three-quarter on his side, but all the others used their feet to advantage. Gwyn Nicholls, for want of opportunities, did not have much chance to show his attacking and defensive powers. Eddie Baker was the cleverest of the three-quarters, and his try was a very fine effort.

On the wing, Whacker Smith was a failure, and he spoilt several openings by his inability to take simple passes, while Lewis Smith did not handle the ball half a dozen times during the afternoon. The Durham forwards lasted better, and were keener on the ball than the Gloucestershire pack, who would have shown to better advantage on a dry ground. C. Hall, Lewis, Courtney, Claridge, and Westbury were among the best of the losing eight, and Carmedy, Waller, and Bradley, led the dangerous rushes for Durham.

The Northerners deserved their victory, for though there was a good deal of tameness in their efforts in the early part of the game, they (says the "Birmingham Daily Post") woke up towards the end, and proved their superiority and resourcefulness. In the scrums Gloucestershire generally held the advantage, and their defeat was due almost entirely to the indiscretion of individual players.

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