

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1902

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. SWANSEA

KEEN GAME AT KINGSHOLM

THE WELSHMEN WIN BY NINE POINTS

The visit of the famous All Whites to Kingsholm as usual proved a popular attraction, and despite the threatening weather there was a splendid crowd of spectators.

This was the only meeting of the teams this season, the first match at Swansea having to be cancelled owing to frost.

Neither club was at full strength to-day, Gloucester being minus the services of Lewis Smith and G. H. Smith, whilst Swansea were without Lockman, Dai Thomas and D. Davies.

In the home team Clutterbuck (who has only played in one game for the City club since he was injured last October) appeared at left wing three-quarter; whilst Purton took the vacancy in the forward line.

The visitors, who came with a grim determination to wipe out past defeats sustained on the "burial ground" at Kingsholm, were accompanied by a large crowd of supporters, who took advantage of the cheap excursion run by the G.W. Railway.

The following were the teams : –

| GLOUCESTER | Positions | SWANSEA |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| G. Romans (capt.) | Backs | G. Davies |
| C. Smith | Three-quarter | A. E. Freear |
| G. F. Collett | backs | R. Jowett |
| J. Stephens | " | D. Rees |
| G. F. Clutterbuck | " | F. Gordon (capt.) |
| G. Hall | Half-backs | R. M. Owen |
| R. Goddard | " | R. Jones |
| C. Hall | Forwards | F. Scrine |
| A. H. Click | " | W. Parker |
| F. Westbury | " | W. Joseph |
| F. Oswell | " | S. Bevan |
| E. Essex | " | W. Coles |
| Bert Parham | " | "Mumbles" Davies |
| J. Jewell | " | W. Taylor |
| G. H. Smith | " | E. Morgan |

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

THE GAME

The rival teams were accorded a hearty reception on entering the field. When the players took up their positions it was seen that George Davies was relegated to the full-back position in the visitors' ranks, Gordon took the vacancy at centre, and Jowett played wing three-quarter.

The start was delayed ten minutes owing to the late arrival of the referee. Swansea won the toss, and deputed Gloucester to face the sun. C. Hall kicked off, but the ball going into touch another kick was ordered with the same result. The third time Hall got the ball to bounce just inside the field of play, but it rolled into touch well inside the visitors' half. The Welshmen heeled from the first scrum, and Jones secured and punted to Romans, who failed to gather at the first attempt.

The City captain, however, recovered himself, and got in a kick to Rees, who punted into touch at the Gloucester 25.

The Swansea forwards heeled cleverly in subsequent scrums, and the backs handled smartly, but Freear was finely floored by Collett. Play, however, was confined to the home half, where there were some exciting scrums. Gloucester eventually got the ball loose, and Collett and Clutterbuck dribbled out of danger.

Midfield play followed, but the City team eventually got set going, and George Davies was hard pressed by Goddard on one occasion.

The visiting custodian with a neat kick, however, got the ball into touch. Collett gained further ground for Gloucester, but Owen, with a smart break away, came down to Romans, when he cross kicked. Gordon gathered neatly and dodged through splendidly, but when on the line he lost the ball, and Romans securing, the City captain punted to touch on the 25 flag – a clever bit of play. "Whacker" Smith and Gordon collided, and the Gloucesterian was knocked out, but he recovered after a few minutes.

Resuming the Gloucester forwards broke away with a good rush, but they were stopped by Rees. Then Clutterbuck misfielded, and Swansea looked dangerous, but Stephens pluckily saved. Play was very keenly contested in the Gloucester 25, but the home team relieved by the aid of a penalty to the centre.

Here there was some loose kicking which ended favourably for the home team, but at length the visiting backs were set going by Jones. Rees shook off Clutterbuck in fine style, and came right down the centre of the ground, but his pass to Gordon was adjudged forward.

Beautiful combination by the Swansea backs looked promising for a score, but the tackling was immense, and the situation was saved. Jowett once made a brilliant run through the home forwards, and a punt placed Freear in a good position, but the ball was lost.

Fast and exciting play followed, and Jowett fielding a kick by Owen, looked likely to clear the opposition, but Clutterbuck floored him. The ball getting loose the City forwards dribbled away, but Freear came across and stopped them.

Gloucester, however, worked out to the centre by the aid of loose rushes, and Collett kicked high to Davies, who made a clever mark when severely pressed. With the kick Davies found touch just beyond the half-way line, where operations hovered for some few minutes.

For the first time the Gloucester forwards heeled, and Hall set Goddard going, but though the ball went right across the ground to Clutterbuck no headway was made. Jones, with a useful kick, placed Swansea on the home 25, but the City forwards relieved with a beautiful wheel. A penalty fell to the Welshmen for some infringement by the City forwards, but "Whacker" Smith made his mark and punted nicely to near the centre.

A capital bit of combined work by Goddard and Hall resulted in Gloucester reaching the Swansea quarter, but the visitors got out by the aid of a free. Gloucester were now working well together, and holding their own in the scrums. Swansea, aided by some big kicking, worked into the home quarters, but Romans stopped their forwards in fine style and got in a beautiful kick to touch. An individual effort by G. Hall sent the ball to Davies, but the visiting full-back made no mistake, and found touch with a good kick.

Ensuing play was fairly even, but a good effort by Jones gave Swansea a slight advantage. The Gloucester forwards, with a pretty wheel, brought the game out, Goddard doing good work. Both sides were putting in all they knew, and no quarter was given in tackling.

With a big rush the Gloucester forwards went right away, and Davies getting a kick charged down, the ball rebounded to Jowett on the right wing. Clutterbuck brought down his opponent with a grand tackle, but Jowett managed to pass to Rees, who punted out to near the centre.

The game continued to be very hot, and great excitement prevailed. Clutterbuck raised applause with a splendid kick to touch, but though Swansea sent back, immediately after Romans returned with interest. Play for the next few minutes hovered just inside the Swansea half, but all attempts to make an opening failed.

Jones and Owen tried hard to set their third line in motion, but the Gloucester tackling was so close and sure that the passing generally broke down. Once or twice the visitors looked likely clear, and Jowett made one great effort after fielding a kick by Jones, but his pass was intercepted by Romans, who kicked clear.

Immediately after G. Davies made a mark from a kick by one of the home men, but only a minor was forced. Another touchdown was conceded as the result of another kick over the line, and then the interval was sounded.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Gloucester | Nil |
| Swansea | Nil |

Swansea resumed, and after an exchange of kicks play settled down a few yards inside the Gloucester side of the half-way. The visitors early gave a display of passing, and Rees got away with a fine run and transfer (a palpably forward one) to Gordon. The latter cut up the field and ran to Romans, who, however, effect a grand collar. Gloucester got out with a loose dribble, but Swansea returned to the attack strongly.

Passing by the visitors was spoiled by Smith and Stephens, who smothered Dan Rees. The ball, however, getting loose, there were some more transfers by the Welshmen. Gloucester, however, held their ground well. From a scrum G. Hall burst away, but he was collared, and the ball getting loose, Owen picked up and passed to Rees. The latter with a smart kick dropped a good goal, amidst the cheers of the Swansea supporters.

Gloucester re-started, and there were some exciting scrums in the Swansea end. Jones, with a clever kick, sent the game to the Gloucester end. The City team quickly relieved by the aid of a free, but matters were getting too warm amongst the players, and the referee had to administer a caution.

The Swansea halves once or twice started passing movements, but they gained little ground, and a home player kicked down to Romans.

The City full-back came along with a run and pass to Stephens, and in tackling the latter Owen was hurt. The ball, however, was still in play, and the game continued till Romans found touch with a beautiful punt on the visitors' quarter line. Attention was given to Owen, and there were two or three minutes' delay before he was able to resume.

Continuing, Owen was immediately prominent with a neat break-away, but Hall floored him from behind. Jones next showed the way for the Swansea backs, and Freear made a good effort to cross, but he was pushed into touch. Goddard was the means of enabling Gloucester to clear, but his kick was splendidly taken by Davies, who replied finely to touch near the home goal.

A penalty to Gloucester saw Romans punt well out to Jowett, who, with a corkscrew run, beat a good many of the home players. He, however, tried too much, and was floored on the 25 mark.

Swansea continued to confine operations to the home end, but G. Hall eventually started a smart movement which took play to the centre. Here Goddard was laid out by a Swansea man, and there was another stoppage.

Resuming, Goddard missed a pass from Hall, and Owen and Jones had a fine opening, but it was thrown away by a wild pass. In the next minute the visitors lost another opportunity, and then Gloucester, with a mighty forward rush, and a lofty kick came right away to the mid-field before being stopped.

Swansea, however, were not long in getting back, and Jowett had hard lines in not scoring, he knocking on right on the line. From the next scrum, however, Owen got the ball out neatly to Jones, who deceived the home men with a feint, and went over the line with an easy try. George Davies goaled, and Swansea led by nine points.

Gloucester resumed, and the City team at once showed up with a clever bit of passing, C. Hall, Goddard, and Click taking part, but a forward transfer spoiled the movement.

Two penalties fell in quick succession to the home team, but Romans' shots for the goal, though the one from a drop-kick was a good effort, missed their mark.

Gloucester, however, continued to hold the advantage, Romans shining with a good run. He, however, should have kicked instead of passing after making so much headway. After this the Swansea backs had the ball repeatedly, but they did not do much, the handling being very faulty.

From a mistake by Gordon, Collett came through cleverly, and punted over Davies' head and towards the Swansea goal. There was a big race for possession of the ball, and both "Whacker" Smith and Collett got close up, but at the critical moment Gordon got back and kicked the ball over the dead ball line.

A scrum followed five yards out, and Gloucester made desperate efforts to score, but the defence was very sound. The Welshmen gradually relieved, and soon afterwards "no-side" was whistled, with the game somewhere near the centre.

RESULT :

Swansea 2 goals (1d) (9 points)
Gloucester Nil

REMARKS

It was a red-hot game, but spoiled in a great measure by the unpleasant incidents which frequently resulted in players being disabled. We are not disposed to blame one side more than the other, but such exhibitions cannot be too strongly condemned both in the interests of the players and spectators.

Swansea were clearly the cleverer team, but considering the times their backs had the ball it does not say much for their scoring abilities to find only one solitary try booked in the course of 80 or 90 minutes' play. The dropped goal by Rees was a smart effort, but the visitors were fortunate in getting the point allowed, as the Swansea centre clearly knocked the ball on before he took his kick.

Forward, the home eight did splendidly in the loose, but they were outweighed in the scrums, and the visitors got possession of the ball nearly every time.

With such clever half-backs as Jones and Owen behind, the Swansea backs were served beautifully, but they made poor use of their opportunities. There was a lot of running and passing, but it was not effective, and the Gloucester backs were able to keep their lines intact to within ten minutes of the finish. When Jones did finally cross it was by a simple move, in which the home men were fairly caught napping.

The whole of the Gloucester front worked hard, and Hall, Oswell, Westbury, and Parham were often noticeable in open play, but occasionally the tackling was very weak. Goddard and Hall were mainly confined to smothering tactics, and it was rare indeed the City half-backs had a chance of opening up the game. All things considered the Gloucester pair gave a capital display, and with equal opportunities would have given the Welsh Internationals something to do.

Owen, on the Swansea side, worked the scrums wonderfully well, but his tactics were not above suspicion, and he was several times penalised. At outside half Jones ran strongly, and he took a lot of looking after.

At three-quarter, Gloucester were mainly occupied in tackling, though now and again there was a bright individual effort. Collett was the more prominent of the four, though Stephens, as usual, was very sound, and made no mistake. "Whacker" Smith was opposed to Freear, and the old Irish International had the advantage of the Gloucesterian both in pace, dash and cleverness. Considering Clutterbuck has been absent so long from the team he gave a very creditable show, and Gloucester are indebted to the old Post Office player for consenting to fill the vacancy.

The Swansea third line was a strong one, but the attack was not so finished as might have been expected. The introduction of Jowett at three-quarter certainly did not weaken the visitors, for the right wing proved himself the smartest player in the quartette. He displayed considerable pace and a lot of cleverness in cutting a man, but had a fatal mistake of trying to do a bit too much. A timely pass by him on one or two occasions would probably have beaten the home defence in each half, for there were openings.

Considering Romans was not altogether fit for the match – he is suffering with a bad shoulder – his exhibition was a good one. He had a tremendous amount of work to do, but his tackling all through was very safe; whilst he got in some fine touch kicks during the game. On the other side, George Davies shaped extremely well in the position, and made a very efficient substitute for either Bancroft or Lockman.

The victory of Swansea was received with enthusiasm by their supporters, as it ensures for them the title of Welsh Champions.