

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHRONICLE

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FOOTBALL AND SPORT

There was an idea that the brutal element had been eliminated from Rugby football, but the game between Gloucester and Cheltenham, played at Kingsholm on Saturday, dispels that idea – at all events to some extent. Those who have followed the fortunes of the game in Gloucester remember when a certain amount of savagery was always expected during a match – when spectators urged players to "mark" their men and knock them out. Happily a better spirit now prevails and it is only on rare occasions that complaint has to be made of rough or unsportsmanlike behaviour. There was by far too much of it on the part of the "Garden Towners" in their match with Gloucester on Saturday.

With the cream of the City team incapacitated, the supporters of Cheltenham believed they had an exceptional chance of snatching a victory. The aspiration was perfectly legitimate and laudable; but in their eagerness to snatch a victory some of the players were unnecessarily rough.

And in this they were supported and incited by the strong contingent of Cheltonians who had journeyed over to witness the match. So demonstrative were they, and so violent in their remarks in the closing half of the game, that the referee on one occasion was compelled to remonstrate with a section on the left of the grandstand.

In the first portion of the game Westbury, one of the Gloucester forwards, received a blow in the face which laid him low, rendering him insensible, and covering his face with blood. The injury may have been accidental, but to the majority of the onlookers in the grandstand the blow appeared to be deliberately given. If this impression was correct, the action must have been unnoticed by the referee.

The Cheltenham touch judge, too, was either strangely imaginary or decidedly partial. On one occasion a Gloucester player got away with the ball and scored fairly, but the try was disallowed because the touch judge (Mr. Sawyer) declared the player had stepped into touch. This, in the opinion of nearly everyone, was a mistake.

On several occasions glaring mistakes as to the spot at which the ball went over the touch line were made by the judge. Fortunately, this had no effect on the ultimate issue. In the opening passages the Cheltonians delighted the hearts of their supporters by scoring two tries in quick succession; by some really good bouts of passing and clever footwork, and on changing ends they held the advantage by a goal and a try; but it was soon apparent that they were nearly pumped out.

The homesters at once took up the aggressive and hotly pressed their opponents, whom they eventually defeated by 14 points (a goal and three tries) to 11 points (two goals (1 p.) and a try). Champain, Fry, and G. T. Unwin played well for Cheltenham, and for Gloucester L. Vears, "Whacker" Smith, and Hudson were frequently conspicuous.

The win was a narrow one, but was thoroughly deserved. The visitors played a good game on the whole, but lacked staying power. George Romans was in good form, and saved in grand style on several occasions.