

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1903

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. COVENTRY

ONE-SIDED GAME

THE MIDLANDERS BADLY BEATEN

For this match at Kingsholm Gloucester had the assistance of several players who were "off" in the holiday matches, but the side was not at full strength, injuries keeping G. Romans, J. Stephens, and F. Oswell out of the field. The visitors arrived one short, but found a local substitute. The heavy rain of the morning militated against the attendance, which was very moderate, and the ground was naturally sloppy in places. The Coventry team arrived very late, and it was 3.20 before the game was started, the players lining up as follows : —

GLOUCESTER	Positions	COVENTRY
F. Pugh	Backs	W. J. Dale
L. Smith	Three-Quarter	H. Hutchins
F. Rooke	Backs	T. Dusson
G. F. Collett	"	R. Orton
C. Smith	"	G. H. Tuke
L. Morgan	Half-Backs	G. Simons
F. Keys	"	F. Laxon
F. Goulding	Forwards	H. Allum
A. H. Click	"	J. Cleverley
Bert Parham	"	J. D. Kitson
G. H. Smith	"	— . Ward
A. Purton	"	W. Cleaver
F. Westbury	"	F. Frapwell
J. Jewell	"	W. Oldham
A. Hawker	"	— . Colson

Referee: Mr. H. J. P. Wilkins (Frome).

THE GAME

Coventry kicked off from the Worcester-street goal, and Purton got in a good reply to near the centre, where the opening stages were fought out. Gloucester made headway by the aid of a penalty, and Keys following up collared Tuke before he could get in his kick. The ball getting loose, Goulding picked up and passed to Click, but the latter's transfer on the line went astray.

A sharp attack followed on the visitors' line, but eventually the visitors relieved with a useful kick. Pugh made his mark cleverly, but the Gloucester forwards got in front when the kick was taken, and a scrum was ordered. The Midlanders gained a few more yards by a kick into touch, but Westbury got away with a good burst, and ran to the full-back, when he transferred to Jewell, who fumbled badly and lost a certain try.

Soon afterwards another easy chance of scoring occurred, but again the home men failed wretchedly. Orton got in a punt from near his line to Collett, who made his mark in a good position, but failed to drop a goal.

Coventry, by loose forward play, kept operations well outside their 25, till Westbury and G. Smith dribbled nicely to their quarter. A lot of scrambling play was afterwards seen, but at length Morgan started a bout of passing. Keys fed Collett nicely, and the latter ran to Dale when he passed to L. Smith. The wing man went over the line easily, but in trying to get behind the posts – a silly mistake – he was pushed over the dead ball line, and consequently the try was disallowed.

Coventry dropped out, but Gloucester were soon on the attack again. Rooke, with a clever punt to touch, placed his side in a good position. In some loose play Collett secured, and after some pretty passing and re-passing, Rooke cut through and scored a smart try. Collett landed a neat goal.

The visitors re-started, and play for a couple of minutes was kept to the home half. The Gloucester backs quickly came away with some clever exchanges, but Orton spoiled Collett's pass to L. Smith. A mistake by Dale nearly proved disastrous to his side, but the Gloucester forwards were checked just in time.

Bad judgment in passing lost the home team ground, and then Tuke, by a fine tackle of Lewis Smith, saved what looked like another try. Useful forward work by Coventry, and a mistake by Pugh, enabled the visitors to reach the centre. Coventry once kicked clear, but Rooke got back and saved.

Ensuing play was a hopeless scramble in the mud, and devoid of anything approaching class football. "Whacker" Smith put in a clever dodgy run, but after clearing several opponents he passed badly, and the ball went into the hands of a visitor. At length the monotony was relieved by a smart effort by Keys, who broke through beautifully, and handing at the right moment to Collett, the latter scored an easy try. The place kick failed.

Soon afterwards the interval was called.

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

Gloucester resumed, and the City half-backs at once started the third line going, but "Whacker" Smith slipped when attempting to cut inside. A smart effort by one of the Coventry halves carried play to the home end.

Gloucester quickly worked out, but off-side play lost the advantage. Keys, taking a good pass from Morgan, doubled nicely, and then passed to Rooke. The latter ran and punted and put his men on side. Westbury failed to field, but the ball was taken over the line, and Jewell credited with a try. Collett failed with the place.

On the drop-out Coventry made an incursion to the Gloucester half, where Pugh got out of a dangerous position very cleverly. Gradually Gloucester worked out, and when near the centre some beautiful combination between Morgan and Keys gave L. Smith an opening, which he seized and ran round behind the posts with a smart try. Purton landed a goal.

Coventry resumed, Rooke replying to touch cleverly. The visitors got a mark, but this availed them little, for there was a good return, and the home team being placed on-side the Midlanders' lines had a narrow escape. "Whacker" Smith made a big effort to beat the opposition, but though getting near he just failed in the attempt. Then a forward pass lost a certain try on the line, but Gloucester were not to be put off. Tuke intercepting, ran and punted to Rooke, who broke cleverly away, and feinting to pass got right through with a neat try. The goal-kick failed.

On the resumption there was some more smart work by the Gloucester backs. The three Smiths shone in one pretty movement, the final outcome of which was a try to G. H. Smith. Purton failed at the easy place. Gloucester now fairly had the measure of their opponents, and for the last ten minutes Coventry were wholly on the defensive. "Whacker" Smith scored two smart tries, and Parham also crossed. Pugh converted one. Just on time Lewis Smith raced over from near the centre after a fine effort, but Pugh failed at goal.

RESULT :

Gloucester 3 goals, 7 tries (36 points)
Coventry Nil

REMARKS

Gloucester showed very poor football in the first half, the forwards playing a listless sort of game, and the backs making mistakes innumerable. The greasy state of the ground and the ball of course handicapped the players considerably, but allowing fully for the conditions the City team should have crossed over at the interval with something like 15 points instead of 8.

The Coventry pack worked hard, and profiting by the slackness of the home men maintained a pretty good defence. In the second half the home team gave a far different exhibition, and there was some delightful bits of play. The forwards combined splendidly in the loose, and controlled the ball in the scrums to such an extent that the backs were plied with plenty of chances.

At the scrum Morgan and Keys were exceptionally active, the latter making repeated openings and performing in a style reminiscent of Goddard. The Gloucester three-quarters, after a very moderate opening, improved almost beyond recognition after the change of ends. Rooke was in splendid trim, his play all through being marked with extreme cleverness and resource. He worked beautifully with "Whacker" Smith, who just now is playing at the top of his form.

Collett was not always happy in judging his passes, but he made several capital runs. Lewis Smith's last try was a brilliant effort, and there was no checking him when he got into his stride. The left-winger had one try disallowed, but he only had himself to blame, as he had plenty of time to get the ball down before going out of bounds. Fortunately the loss of one try did not make much difference, but if the mistake had cost Gloucester the game there would have been some heartburnings.

Pugh was not overburdened with work, but he shaped well in all that he did. He was clearly superior to Dale, the visiting custodian, in all respects.

Forward, the City pack were a long time before settling down, and the form to-day will not stand against Leicester. The men were better together in the second portion, but one or two of the players lost their heads when in an easy position for scoring.

Goulding, Purton, Hawker, and Parham were always in the van, the last-named getting in some clever dribbles.

Coventry were best served in the back division by Orton and Tuke, both of whom shone conspicuously in defence. The half-backs were not particularly noticeable, but the forwards were a hard-working body, though lacking in finesse.

We are informed that the Midland Railway Company will issue ordinary tickets at excursion fares to Leicester next Saturday in connection with the Gloucester match.

GLOUCESTER A v. NAUNTON PARK

At Cheltenham.

RESULT :

Gloucester A 2 tries (6 points)
Naunton Park Nil

JC