

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1903.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLOUCESTER v. LEICESTER.

WEAK CITY TEAM IN THE MIDLANDS.

CITIZENS BEATEN BY THREE POINTS.

With Lewis Smith, "Whacker" Smith, G. H. Smith, and F. Westbury unable to make the journey, Gloucester took anything but a full team to Leicester to-day to meet the Midland Champions. This was the first meeting of the teams this season, and the fact that Leicester had a ground record to maintain added considerably to the interest of the fixture, albeit Gloucester, with their depleted team, could hardly expect to break it. Twice last season Gloucester had to submit to defeat from their Midland rivals, but on each occasion the City Club was weakly represented.

In the series of matches between the teams Gloucester hold a distinct advantage, having 10 victories to their opponents' 5, whilst in the matter of scoring the City Club's aggregate was 110 points against 49.

The brilliant performances of Leicester this season are well known, and the success has been thoroughly deserved. Until last week the Midland Cup-holders were unbeaten by an English team, and their record to-date showed 16 wins and 4 losses (Newport, Llanelly, Cardiff, and Devon Albion).

Glo'ster could not point to such a fine record, theirs reading 11 victories and 6 defeats, but all things considered the City team has not done badly.

For to-day's game, which promised an exceedingly close struggle, Leicester were minus the services of J. H. Miles, who was playing for England at Swansea, whilst A. O. Jones, of course, was an absentee, the famous cricketer still suffering from the effects of his broken collar bone.

Forward, the Midlanders were reported exceptionally strong, and Gloucester, too, had a good pack doing duty, although Westbury would be badly missed.

Lindsay Vears took the vacant position at left wing three-quarter, and, though lacking the experience and pace of Lewis Smith, was expected to prove a useful substitute.

1 Hudson, in the absence of C. Smith, was given a trial, and after his performance against Cheltenham he fully deserved it.

It was hoped to get the Midland Railway Company to run an excursion to Leicester, but the negotiations were not successful.

The following were the teams : –

GLOUCESTER.	Positions.	LEICESTER.
G. Romans	Backs.	W. Gale
L. Vears	Three-quarter	A. E. Hind
J. Stephens	backs.	R. W. Dakin
G. F. Collett	"	A. J. Palfreyman
A. Hudson	"	C. A. Page
L. F. Morgan	Half-Backs	W. J. Foreman
F. Keys	"	J. Braithwaite
A. H. Click	Forwards	S. Matthews
F. Goulding	"	S. Penny
F. Oswell	"	T. Goodrich
W. Peglar	"	– . Foxon
Bert Parham	"	M. S. Scott
A. Purton	"	H. A. Hind
A. Hawker	"	W. Robinson
J. Jewell	"	R. C. Watchorn

THE GAME.

Disappointment was keen with the Gloucester players when it was known "Whacker" Smith could not play, owing to an injury to his leg, sustained at practice on Thursday. There was a further change in the Leicester team, Foxon displacing Atkins in the forwards. Mr. Pritchard, Birmingham, was the referee.

The weather was beautifully fine, and there was a crowd of about 4,000 present. Click started the game amidst excitement, and no reply being made, play opened in the Leicester end. An exchange of kicks followed, and then the Gloucester halves started a bout of passing. Collett sent badly to Stephens, and Palfreyman intercepting, Hind was nearly in.

Gloucester were hotly pressed for a short period, but the forwards gained relief with a sharp burst. Then, from a penalty kick, Leicester forced a minor. Following the drop-out there was a spell of even play. Neat work out of touch by the Gloucester forwards enabled the visitors to reach their opponents' quarter. Stephens was prominent with a grand tackle of Hind, but the ball getting loose, Leicester kicked to touch beyond the centre. Here Foreman picked up smartly in the open, and Hind tried hard to get round, but he was foiled by Romans.

Close scrummaging ensued near the Gloucester line, but off-side by the home team allowed Gloucester to get out of danger. Clever work by the City from a line-out was succeeded by a useful kick to touch by Vears. Leicester came away again, but play was very scrambling.

The Midlanders looked dangerous with a forward rush, but they lost the ball, and Stephens picking up sent to Hudson, who got in a splendid touch-finder. Immediately after Romans forced a minor. Resuming, Leicester got a couple of frees, and Romans knocking-on, Gloucester were placed in a serious position. The City captain eventually cleared, but the forwards getting off-side, play was taken back to the visitors' lines.

Ensuing play was scrappy and uninteresting. Foreman and Hind made strong runs in quick succession, but they were badly supported, mistakes in handling being frequent. Leicester continued to have the better of the game, but the Gloucester backs eventually got a chance, and Vears reached the home 25 before being stopped. Then Collett dropped for goal, but the ball went wide.

Gloucester played up splendidly after this, but Collett misfielding let the Midlanders right down, and Romans only saved near the line. Immediately after Hind punted down and, racing up, was credited with a try.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Leicester 1 try
Gloucester Nil

Leicester started the second half, Romans getting in a splendid reply to touch. Early on there was a series of exchange kicks between the rival full-backs which ended favourably to Romans. A fine rush by the Gloucester forwards took the game to the Leicester quarter, where the visitors set up a hot attack. Leicester tried passing, but both Foreman and Hind were at fault. Purton, receiving the ball, scored an easy try near the posts. Romans failed unaccountably at the place-kick.

Stephens replied finely to the drop-out, and Gloucester improved vastly in their play. Collett punting high, Hudson just missed fielding, but Stephens was at hand, and, with a tricky punt over Gale's head, only just failed to get up for a try, a dead ball resulting.

Resuming, the Gloucester three-quarters were conspicuous with a smart bout of passing, and Vears looked like going in at the corner, but he was stopped in time. Braithwaite relieved the severe pressure on the Leicester lines with a useful kick. With a strong forward rush Gloucester looked dangerous, and Leicester were hard pressed. Morgan was temporarily disabled for the second time, but resumed. He was almost immediately penalised for picking out of the scrum, and from the kick the Midlanders got out of danger.

Romans put in several fine kicks which greatly helped his forwards, but thanks to a splendid effort by Hinds, Leicester forced a minor. On the drop-out the home forwards showed up with a splendid rush, which Romans stopped in daring fashion. He got in a beautiful punt under difficulties, but Vears was off-side, and a scrum was ordered under the Gloucester posts.

Leicester, urged on by their supporters, attacked vigorously. Hind, with a fine sprint and punt further improved the home team's position. Exciting play followed in the Gloucester quarter, but the City offered a grand defence. Leicester had several chances, but they fumbled badly, and Gloucester gradually worked to more favourable quarters. Eventually Gloucester had to concede a minor from a kick over the line by Gale. After the drop-out, Keys punted well down, and Hind was pulled down before he could reply.

RESULT :

Leicester 2 tries (6 points)
Gloucester 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS.

Leicester were lucky to win, and on the play a draw would have better represented the state of the game. Except for brief periods the football displayed was scrambling, and neither side enhanced its reputation.

Forward it was a particularly hard struggle, Gloucester performing grandly in loose work and the open, but being slightly the inferior in the scrums. The Leicester backs had more opportunities in attack than the City men, but the passing was crude and faulty, and often ground was lost.

Hind was easily the best three-quarter on the ground, and he used his great pace to the best advantage. Without him Leicester would have fared badly. For Gloucester Romans played in his best style, and at three-quarter Stephens did an immense amount of sound work.

The City half-backs were not particularly noticeable, and the Leicester pair were not up to form. Goulding, Oswell, Purton, and Hawker did splendid work in the front, the former's break-away being a prominent feature.

GLOUCESTER A v. CHEPSTOW.

DROPPED GOAL WINS A POOR GAME.

These teams met at Kingsholm before a small attendance. The Seconds had a weak side out, and Chepstow were not at full strength.

The teams were : –

Gloucester. – F. Pugh, back; Martin, F. Rooke, C. Curnock, and Mayster, three-quarter backs. H. Smith and L. Rudge, half-backs; G. Vears, W. Curnock, W. Phelps, Russell, W. Johns, W. Jones, A. Pyart, and W. Essex, forwards.

Chepstow. – Walter Gardner, back; H. Edwards, A. Ellis, C. Edwards, and H. Greening, three-quarter backs; G. Jones and C. Priest, half-backs; D. Edwards, G. Huggett, T. Spencer, H. Jones, C. Holley, S. Holley, and T. Parnell, forwards.

Referee. – Mr. J. N. Oswell.

Chepstow kicked off from the Deans-walk end, and after a spell of give and take play, Rooke was responsible for some pretty work. After some good passing Gloucester attacked strongly. Walter Gardner, pressed into service for the visitors, kicked out well but Pugh replied with a pretty touch kick to near the corner.

Gloucester then had a good opportunity, but by superior footwork in the line-out Chepstow worked clear and reached the centre. The Seconds returned to the attack, but the passing was erratic, and golden chances were lost.

By the aid of some good three-quarter work Chepstow got well over the centre, but were quickly beaten back, and Rudge had hard lines when, having got clear, his pass was adjudged forward. Pugh took a shot for goal from Gordon Vears' mark, but Gardner received and cleverly dodging past his men kicked to the centre. Chepstow kicked dead, and centre play again followed the drop out.

Chepstow were one forward short owing to injury, but they had the best of the exchanges for some time, and H. Edwards, after a tricky run, dropped a neat goal. Ellis broke away beautifully from a line-out and ran up the field well punting to Mayster who returned. Priest marked, but the kick was a failure. Chepstow pressed at the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Chepstow 1 goal (d)
Gloucester A Nil

On resuming, the injured Chepstow forward returned to the game. A long series of kicks, none of which found touch, was the feature of the opening. Chepstow were penalised and Gloucester gained ground, but Chepstow returned to the charge. Rudge raced away in good style, and was only stopped just in time. Play, which was of a wholly unscientific nature and not very interesting, kept near the centre mark for a long time.

Eventually Gloucester played up hard and pressed, Rudge putting in a very neat touch-kick to within yard of the line. Gloucester carried the next scrum, but Johns just missed scoring, and Vears a minute after tried hard to force his way over, but he was held. Jones then had a try for it, but was held again, and Chepstow worked out of danger after the first exciting few minutes in the match[*sic*].

Gloucester attacked again strongly, and scrum after scrum ensued almost on the line. Curnock foolishly kicked to touch-in-goal, and gave the visitors a breather when they were hard pressed. Chepstow now held their own better, and by the aid of kicks put Gloucester on the defensive.

With Essex in the van the Gloucester forwards came away grandly, but Gardner saved beautifully and checked the movement. Gloucester pressed once more, but the visitors by a lucky flying kick relieved, and play was again fought out in neutral territory. Curnock put in a long kick which put Gloucester in a good attacking position, and Rooke and Mayster made a bid for a score, but the latter was floored. He was badly fouled a moment later, and from the free Gloucester pressed again, but could not score, a minor only resulting from a kick by Rooke. There was nothing of interest to the end.

RESULT :

Chepstow 1 (d) goal (4 points)
Gloucester A Nil

REMARKS.

It was a very poor game. The Gloucester forwards fairly held their own, but the outsiders could do little with the chances provided for them. Rooke was the best three-quarter on the field. Martin was practically useless, and Curnock is an inferior tackler, and makes poor use of his reputed pace. Mayster did his best when he had the ball, but he cannot or will not tackle low.

Forward Johns and Vears worked very hard, and Essex was good in the loose. Pugh played well, and his kicking was good.

On the other side Gardner gave a good show at back, and the visitors have much to thank him for. Greening and Priest in their respective positions were conspicuous, and of the forwards Huggett and one of the brothers Holley (they were not distinguishable) served their side best.

An effort must be made to get something more like a team to meet Cinderford next week.