

# THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1903

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. PONTYPRIDD

WELSHMEN AT KINGSHOLM

WELCOME VICTORY FOR THE CITY TEAM

Gloucester were at home to-day to Pontypridd, who last week ran Bristol to a goal at the County Ground. The Welshmen have had a successful season, and they appeared at Kingsholm with a strong fifteen. Gloucester had Collett back in the team, but Rooke was unable to play owing to an injury sustained at Northampton, his defection letting in C. Goddard, captain of the West End, at centre. Otherwise the side was identical with the team that lost to Northampton. The weather was fine, but the attendance was only moderate.

The teams were : —

GLOUCESTER	Positions	PONTYPRIDD
G. Romans	Backs	W. Jones
C. Smith	Three-quarter	H. C. Massey
C. Goddard	backs	W. G. Usher
G. F. Collett	"	B. Warlow
A. Hudson	"	W. Pooley
J. Stephens	Half-Backs	I. Phillips
L. F. Morgan	"	J. Whiles
A. H. Click	Forwards	A. Williams
Bert Parham	"	M. Phillips
G. H. Smith	"	D. John
W. Johns	"	J. Warlow
H. Collins	"	W. Williams
F. Pegler	"	T. Vaughan
H. Harris	"	E. Thomas
A. Purton	"	B. Lewis

Referee : Mr. H. Smith (Bristol)

## THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss, and the visitors kicked off against the wind. Stephens misfielded, but regained possession and punted to touch well inside the Pontypridd half. A couple of scrums followed, from which the Gloucester forwards heeled, but Morgan failed to do anything. A minute later Usher started his backs in motion, but the collaring was very close, and no ground was gained.

Out of some loose play G. Smith picked up and sent to Goddard, who punted to touch near the 25. From here Stephens got away prettily from a scrum, and, sending to Hudson, the latter raced down in good style. When confronted by the visiting full-back the wing man passed inside, but Collett knocked on when there was a good opening. Goddard was at fault on the next occasion when the ball came out, and Gloucester thus lost a couple of good openings.

For legs up in the scrum Pontypridd were penalised, and Romans had a shot for goal, but the ball went wide. Jones ran the ball out pluckily, and punted to Collett, who was collared. He passed back to Hudson, who in turn was hampered, causing him to send to Romans, who got in a lovely screw kick to touch.

Smart play by the Pontypridd half-backs gained the visitors a lot of ground, but Stephens sent play to the centre with a useful kick. The same player made further headway with another kick, and Harris, Smith, and Johns dribbled some dozen yards before being pulled up.

Some scrambling play followed in the Welshmen's 25, but a loose rush brought them to near midfield. The Gloucester forwards worked back, and despite a good effort by W. Jones, operations remained in the visitors' quarter. From a scrum Morgan secured and passed to Stephens, who ran across and sent out a wide transfer to Hudson. The ball bounced up nicely for the wing man, who shook off Warlow and scored a nice try. The place-kick failed.

From the drop out G. Smith made his mark, and his kick found touch ten yards from the Pontypridd line. Here some hot forward work was witnessed, but Pontypridd eventually got the better and rushed to beyond the 25 line. The visitors' heeling, Morgan failed to stop Usher, and the Pontypridd backs handling smartly, considerable ground was gained. Hudson went across, but failing to gather the ball, Romans had some difficulty in clearing.

A penalty to Pontypridd did not gain them much ground, and ensuing play was fought out at the centre. Useful kicking by the visitors caused Romans to handle, which he did effectively. Once the City captain ran and punted cleverly, and "Whacker" Smith had a good opening, but he overran the ball.

More mistakes by the City backs lost ground, and Pontypridd profiting, they got down to Romans. The final pass, however, went astray, and Goddard got in a lucky kick to touch. Soon afterwards Collett put in a clever dribble, but he, too, failed to keep command over the ball, and a Pontypridd player kicked back.

A smart combined effort by the Gloucester forwards looked promising, but Jones stopped them at the critical moment. Pontypridd worked out from a dangerous position, but Gloucester kept operations at the centre line. W. Jones beat "Whacker" Smith cleverly once, and got in a good kick to Romans, who ran round, but his pass to Hudson was forward.

The Gloucester forwards were working well together, and G. Smith headed a fine rush to the visitors' goal. Click tried hard to break through, but the ball was lost near the line. Following this, Stephens, well led by Morgan, initiated several smart movements, but the handling of the third line was very faulty. On one occasion the ball went through several pairs of hands, but with a clear opening Goddard passed too high to "Whacker" Smith, and a visitor securing transferred play to the opposite end.

Pontypridd in the next few minutes had the better of the play, and some neat handling caused the home defence a lot of trouble. C. Smith and Goddard broke down a dangerous movement once, and Stephens picking up, punted down the field. Gloucester had a splendid chance of scoring, but it was not accepted, and a Pontypridd player got the ball to touch from a rebound. Ensuing play was of a poor standard, and nothing of incident occurred to the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucester ..... 1 try  
Pontypridd ..... Nil

Click restarted, and the reply found touch ten yards from the centre flag. Stephens was early prominent with a good break-away, but the passing broke down badly, and though Stephens recovered nothing much was done. Gloucester were awarded a penalty after this, and from the kick Romans forced a minor.

The City captain put his side in a good position with the reply to the drop-out, and did better still from a penalty a minute later. The ball was misfielded on the Pontypridd line, and the Gloucester forwards were nearly over. From the ensuing scrum "Whacker" Smith received and tried to dodge through, but he was held outside. A score, however, was not long in coming, for from the next scrummage Morgan got hold and went over with a good try. Collett made a poor kick at goal.

Resuming, Stephens distinguished himself with a beautiful effort, but Collett failed to handle, and Pontypridd dribbled right away to the Gloucester end. The home side was hotly pressed for a minute or two, but the forwards wheeled, and in the open Johns fielded and passed to Stephens, who cut across the ground cleverly. Yielding to Collett, the centre put on full pace, and shaking off two or three opponents scored a very fine try. No goal resulted.

Pontypridd dropped out, but Purton had his kick charged down, and the ball rolled into touch inside the home half. Stephens fed C. Smith, who tried to break through, but he was pulled down.

Pontypridd, by dint of hard forward work, confined play to the Gloucester end, but there was no finish about their play behind the scrum. Goddard fielded once cleverly in the loose, but threw the ball away wildly and very little came of the opportunity of making good headway.

Usher did one or two smart bits of work for the Welshmen, and Romans had to be very sharp once to kick dead. The drop-out saw a lot of even play, but at length a good dash by Hudson placed Gloucester well inside their opponents' 25. The ball coming out to Stephens, the latter set Hudson on the move, but the wing man essayed a drop at goal instead of continuing the movement – a palpable mistake.

The ball went under the posts, and Usher tried to run out, but he knocked on, and a scrum was ordered five yards outside. From this a Pontypridd man kicked down to Romans, who ran round and transferred to Hudson. The latter re-passed to his captain, but the movement stopped at this point.

Gloucester, however, continued on the attack, and from a beautiful bit of passing C. Smith was nearly over on the right wing. There was a couple of scrums [*sic*] close to the visitors' line, and then from a lovely bout of passing – Morgan, Stephens, Smith, Goddard, and Collett took part – the latter scored a fine try. Romans landed a goal, and placed his side with a 14 points' lead.

Restarting, there was a spell of even play in the home end. Stephens, who was playing a great game, set his backs in motion several times, but though some clever handling was witnessed openings were few and far between.

Hudson was prominent with another sharp dash from a pass by Collett, but he was eventually pushed into touch. To the end Gloucester held the advantage, but there was no more scoring.

RESULT :

Gloucester .... 1 goal, 3 tries (14 points)  
Pontypridd ..... Nil

## REMARKS

At last! After a succession of defeats Gloucester found winning points to-day, and a break in the monotony of reverses was duly appreciated by the supporters of the City club.

The game was not of an even quality, for at periods the football displayed reached a high standard of excellence, whilst at others play was very scrambling. Gloucester thoroughly deserved their win, and though one cannot lose sight of the fact that the team was lacking in tactics, judgment, and accuracy on several occasions, the form all round was a distinct improvement on what has been seen of late at Kingsholm.

Pontypridd, we know, are not in the front rank of Welsh combinations, but they are a side capable of giving the best of English clubs a good game, as witness their close fight with Bristol only a week ago. Gloucester's chief weakness today was faulty handling, and it was a big disappointment to see so many chances going astray owing to this defect.

The City forwards, though deficient in headwork in the open at times, made a good show in the scrums, and all appeared workers. A pleasing feature was the improvement in heeling, and the Gloucester backs have not had the ball so often for weeks past.

The veteran Click and George Smith were in splendid fettle, and Collins, Parham, Johns, and Harris were conspicuous for good work all through. Purton, too, was always well up in the open, and of Pegler's abilities as an honest scrummager there can be no question. The pack wants a little more finish to their movements in the open, but this should come as the players get together.

Pontypridd had a strong eight, and they played with determination to the end. They were clever at wheeling, but did not always take the ball with them.

At half-back Gloucester held a decided pull, Morgan and Stephens combining in a manner that was gratifying in the extreme. Stephens, at outside half, was in great form, being equally effective in attack and defence. He initiated some exceedingly clever movements, and with decent support from those behind Gloucester would have scored double what they did.

None of the Gloucester three-quarters were free from the charge of mistakes in passing, the centres being principally to blame. Collett, however, made amends later in the game, and did some splendid work. His first try was a beauty, and he also showed rare dash in going for the line on the second occasion. Goddard did not realise anticipations, and "Whacker" Smith suffered as a result of the weakness of the West End captain.

Hudson played cleverly on the left wing, being wonderfully smart at fielding the ball. He got his try in good style, [1 or 2 words unreadable] equally smart effort enabled him to cross [1 or 2 words unreadable] second time, but the visiting touch judge ruled he had gone into touch – a very doubtful decision, and one that was certainly not in accord with the spectators at the spot.

The Pontypridd backs had numerous opportunities of showing their abilities in attack, but though there were one or two nippy players behind the scrum, nothing tangible resulted from their combined efforts. Romans effected relief to his side on several occasions in clever fashion, and his kicking generally was exceedingly good.

On the other side W. Jones and Massey in turn took the full-back position, and both shaped fairly well. Phillips was the better of the two half-backs, and Warlow and Usher the more prominent at three-quarter.

Gloucester's display on the whole was encouraging, and they should greatly improve their record in the remaining matches.