

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1903

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. CLIFTON

A SURPRISE FOR THE CITY TEAM

CLIFTON WINNERS

A FEEBLE DISPLAY BY GLOUCESTER

For this match at Kingsholm Gloucester were still without their captain (G. Romans) and G. Williams, whilst an injury kept C. Smith out of the team. Goss, however, returned to the three-quarter line, and G. H. Smith and H. Collins were included in the pack. Clifton brought a strong team, four members of the Baker family being included in the side. The weather was gloriously fine, but the attendance was only moderate. At 3.35 the teams took the field as follows : —

GLOUCESTER	Positions	CLIFTON
L. Vears	Backs	F. C. Wills
H. Hall	Three-quarter	E. F. Eberle
J. Stephens	backs	E. W. Baker
R. J. Goss	"	Claude W. Baker
A. Hudson	"	P. J. Slee
F. Keys	Half-Backs	Cecil W. Baker
H. Smith	"	L. W. Baker
B. Parham	Forwards	A. J. Gardner
F. Goulding	"	J. H. Inskip
F. Westbury	"	L. B. Green-Armytage
H. Harris	"	A. V. Board
H. Collins	"	A. C. Godwin
G. H. Smith	"	E. Davis
G. Gough	"	H. Clissold
A. Purton	"	E. Gardiner

Referee : Mr. J. SUCH (Cheltenham)

THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss and Parham elected to defend the Dean's Walk goal. Clifton kicked off against the sun, the ball going to touch in the home half. From the line-out the visitors secured and started a bout of passing, which ended in Slee being pushed to touch. A flying kick by the same player improved matters for Clifton, but Stephens relieved with a useful punt, and Wills being at fault he was soon floored on the half-way line.

Heeling by the City forwards saw Smith send out to Keys, but the latter failed to gather. Hall, however, covered the mistake and kicked to touch. In some loose play Westbury fielded and passed to Goss, but the ball was over-run, and a possible opening was lost.

Mistakes by the Gloucester backs in fielding enabled Clifton to gain some ground, but the play was very scrambling. At length a visitor punted well down to Vears, who gathered well and got in a fine return to the centre touch-flag. Here play hovered for a few minutes, until Cecil Baker got clear away from a scrum, and beating several men cleverly was nearly over. When near the line he essayed a pass, and the receiver was promptly tackled.

Gloucester were severely pressed for a couple of minutes, the visitors making strenuous efforts to score. Gloucester worked out slightly, but the Clifton forwards immediately attacked again, and a forward was only pulled down on the verge of the line by Vears. Hall and Goulding were mainly responsible for removing play to more favourable quarters, and the Gloucester spectators breathed more freely.

Keys, getting possession from a scrum, cut through nicely, but held too long and was tackled. Carrying a scrum, G. Smith, Parham, and Harris headed a fine rush by the City forwards, but the ball was again over-run when there was an opportunity for scoring. Gloucester, however, obtained an attacking position, but though going close to the line they failed to cross.

Clifton gained relief with a useful burst, but Westbury dribbled back to well inside the visitors' 25. The home men, however, lost ground by wretched play, the ball being thrown about in the most wild fashion. Taking every advantage of these mistakes, Clifton attacked strongly, and the Gloucester lines narrowly escaped.

The visiting forwards were doing well in the scrums, and they pressed close to the home line. From a throw-out a forward went over, but he was called back. Then for off-side play by Hubert Smith Clifton were awarded a free in a good position, but Eddie Baker kicked outside the posts.

The drop-out was well returned, and then followed a spell of even play. Stephens at length punted down in good style, and Hudson raced hard for possession, but he just failed to get clear. Gloucester lost a good position by faulty handling, and Clifton dribbled down to the other end. Vears was prominent with a fine tackle of Cecil Baker when the latter looked dangerous, but Gloucester could not get out of their quarters.

Fielding a loose kick near the City 25, Eddie Baker cut out a fine opening for Eberle, who raced for the line, and though tackled by Vears managed to get the ball down for a try. Eddie Baker landed a splendid goal from near the touch-line, and gave Clifton a five points' lead.

Gloucester resumed, but though the City forwards were displaying good work individually they were not together, and Clifton beat them badly in the loose. Goulding was conspicuous with some good work, but the back play was very weak, missed passes being of frequent occurrence.

Clifton were not slow in profiting by the home men's poor showing, and though for the next five minutes the game was confined to their half, they were easily able to keep their lines intact. An attempt at passing by the Gloucester three-quarters broke down at Goss, and though Stephens recovered, nothing resulted from the subsequent movement. When the interval arrived Gloucester were attacking.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Clifton 1 goal
Gloucester Nil

Parham re-started, and the Gloucester forwards getting up Purton secured and punted to the goal mouth. The ball, however, went over the line, and a touchdown was given. H. Smith replied to the drop-out, and play settled near the centre.

From a scrum the brothers Baker initiated a passing movement which was well carried out, but Goss threw Slee into touch. The City forwards combined in a good rush until checked by E. Baker. Then the Clifton backs tried more passing but not much headway was made. Out of some close kicking Stephens fielded neatly, and was making for the line in good style when E. Baker came across and stopped his progress.

The Gloucester front with some useful footwork carried play to Wills, but the ball was lost and a Cliftonian punted dead. Then for off-side play Clifton were penalised, and Vears had a shot for goal, but a fine attempt just faded.

Following the drop out there was a lot of keen play, in which Clifton more than held their own. Subsequently Gloucester did better and worked dangerously near their opponents' line, but there was an entire absence of resource when the ball came out. Stephens once looked like doing something, but Hall, to whom he passed, was stopped outside.

Then Clifton came clear away, and operations were fought out at mid-field. Goss was conspicuous with one smart dash in which he broke through the opposition splendidly, but his pass went wide.

Clifton gradually worked out of danger, but the home team were soon on the aggressive again. There was absolutely no finish, however, to the attacking movements, the ball being handled in the most elementary style. For an infringement Clifton were again penalised, but Vears failed at goal.

Still Gloucester were not to be put off, and following a tricky bit of play by Stephens, Hall, and Westbury, the latter scored near the corner. Vears made a splendid attempt at conversion, but the ball went wide of the posts.

Resuming there was some vigorous play by both sets of forwards, Gloucester holding a slight advantage. Weak half-back play, however, lost the City team ground, and Clifton were found operating near the centre. From this point the Gloucester front took part in a loose rush which gave Clifton considerable anxiety.

In the last few minutes Gloucester made desperate attempts to gain the lead, but they were met by a sterling defence. In a scramble near the line Howard Harris picked up and tried to bore himself through, but he was held up. The game continued in front of the Clifton goal, and right on time Goss had a drop for goal, but without success. G. Smith raced up and touched the ball down, but he was adjudged off-side. Immediately the whistle went for "no side," and Clifton were returned victors by two points.

RESULT :

Clifton 1 goal (5 points)
Gloucester 1 try (3 points)

REMARKS

Disgust was plainly written on the faces of the home supporters at Kingsholm to-day, and certainly they had cause for it, for a more feeble exhibition of football on the part of the City team we cannot remember in the long history of the Club.

There was not one single redeeming feature in the play of the home men – if we except Vears' display at full-back – and on the day's form Clifton thoroughly merited their win.

The margin was a narrow one, but after performing so well all through the game it would have been distinctly hard lines on the visitors to have been deprived of the sweets of victory.

The result came as a complete surprise to everyone, for though good accounts had been heard of the form of the Cliftonians, it was generally anticipated Gloucester would have a fairly comfortable journey.

Expectation, however, received a rude shock, and in the end Clifton had the satisfaction of claiming their first triumph over Gloucester for something like 22 years. It was a proud moment for the victorious side, and one cannot withhold congratulations to the whole team on the performance.

They have had a rough experience in their engagements with Gloucester of late years, and a hurried glance through the records reveals the fact that in 15 matches since 1894-5 the City team have piled up the huge score of 59 goals 53 tries (452 points) to their opponents' 2 goals 5 tries (24 points) !

On this showing it was time Clifton took a turn for the better, but from a Gloucester point of view defeat from a second-class combination was anything but palatable.

Concerning the Gloucester team's exhibition to-day, the form is absolutely unaccountable. At no point and in no department did the men shape as a first-class combination, and in the finer points of the game behind the scrum Clifton were streets ahead.

Forward the visitors had a vigorous pack. They worked energetically in the scrums, kept well together, and showed judgment and cleverness in the open. The tackling, too, was exceptionally close and sure, and the home backs were continually hampered by their effective marking.

On the Gloucester side we had occasional glimpses of good individual efforts on the part of Goulding, G. Smith, and Westbury, but the men packed badly as a whole, and were slow in getting on the ball; whilst clumsiness in the loose was repeatedly in evidence.

If the forwards were not up to form, what can be said of the half-backs? Keys and H. Smith made no sort of show, and the display was painfully weak.

Keys missed his passes frequently, and when he did get away from the scrum he generally held too long. He is evidently of little use as a stand-off half, and Gloucester will have to experiment further if Williams is not available for future matches.

Coming to the respective three-quarter lines, here again Gloucester were badly beaten both in individual smartness and combination.

Eddie Baker's presence in the Clifton quartette considerably strengthened the visitors alike in attack and defence, and the County centre was always doing something good. He was the prime mover in the try scored by Eberle, though the latter deserves every credit for the manner in which he went for the line.

Claude Baker was a useful partner for his brother, and Slee did well on the other wing.

The Gloucester men were seldom able to do the correct thing, and mistakes in passing and handling were of frequent occurrence. Stephens accomplished a lot of useful work, but he was not so clean and efficient as usual, and Goss at times was decidedly off colour.

On the respective wings Hudson and Hall were not taxed to any extent, and it was precious few passes either player got.

Vears at full-back gave a bright display, and was really the only Gloucester player among the backs who did himself justice. He tackled splendidly whenever called upon, and found touch cleverly at times with his kicks.

Wills, on the other side, saved well once or twice, and proved more than a useful custodian.

The referee came in for a hostile demonstration from a portion of the crowd after the Clifton match, some of the spectators thinking that George Smith should have been credited with a try after Goss's attempt at goal, but, as already mentioned, Smith was some yards off-side.

GLOUCESTER A v. WEST END

THE SECONDS ON TOP

This match followed on after the Clifton game. The Second had another scratch team out, many of those who played for them last week assisting the West End.

The teams were : –

Gloucester A. – F. Pugh, back; H. Cook, W. Hayward, C. Coldrick, and A. Lloyd, three-quarter backs; L. Morgan and J. Romans, half-backs; T. Spiers (captain), A. Hawker, E. Essex, H. Taylor, R. Sly, H. Aston, G. Vears, and J. Webb, forwards.

West End. – H. Barlow, back; H. Hall, E. Hall, G. Goddard, and W. Davis, three-quarter backs; H. Ewers and A. Hall, half-backs; F. Pyart (capt.), H. Watts, W. Willetts, J. Dovey, W. Bray, H. Quixley, C. Voyce, and F. White, forwards.

Gloucester started facing the sun, and the game was contested for some moments in the West End 25. Some good work by the two Halls and Goddard gained the West End a lot of ground, and they centred play. Pugh was called upon twice in quick succession, but he was not found wanting.

After play at the centre for some time West End were awarded a free, but the kick was returned and the venue of the game was not changed. Some good passing was shown by the home three-quarters, but Barlow saved.

Gloucester continued to keep West End in their own quarter, and eventually forced a minor. A long exchange of kicks took place, ending with the advantage to Pugh.

Play was of an even character for some time, and neither side could claim much advantage. Gradually, however, West End worked up into Gloucester's 25.

Hayward and a West End man went off the field owing to injuries, and the game was resumed with each team one short. Immediately after Lloyd was laid out, but was able to resume. Play was not of an interesting nature, and nothing of interest occurred to the interval.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucester A Nil
West End Nil

On re-starting, more even play followed in neutral ground, until eventually the West End, with a good open movement, carried the game right under the home goal posts, but the Seconds just managed to save, and worked out of danger.

Both teams fought hard, but neither side could get far away from the centre mark. Eventually, however, Gloucester got into a good position by the aid of some good kicks, but immediately after the West End replied with a telling rush, and Pugh being at fault, the venue of the game was changed to the other end.

Davis had a splendid chance to score, but he knocked on at the critical moment, and Gloucester cleared their lines. Gloucester worked up to the other end, and Pugh dropped a magnificent goal from outside the 25-line. The end was whistled a minute after.

RESULT :
Gloucester A 1 goal (d) (4 points)
West End Nil

REMARKS

The game is not one that calls for any extended comment, as neither side gave much of an exhibition of football, and at times the play was dull and tedious.

It transpired that Hayward had broken his collar-bone, and when he had been rendered first-aid he was driven to the Infirmary with the West End man, who had been kicked in the abdomen.

As to the game itself, Pugh played well at full back, and although he made some mistakes he deserves a place in the team. Cook and Coldrick were the better of the home three-quarters, but the latter tries to do too much on his own and holds the ball too long.

Vears was fetched out of the scrum in Hayward's place, and his defence was good. Of the forwards, Hawker, Essex, Taylor, and Sly were the pick of a not too clever pack.

The Brothers Hall, Barlow, Ewers, and Bray served the West End well in their respective positions.

JC