

THE CITIZEN

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1903

FOOTBALL NOTES

GLOUCESTER v. NEWPORT

WELSH PRESS COMMENTS

Commenting on Saturday's match at Kingsholm, "Dromio" ("South Wales Argus," Newport) says : "Unfortunately the game as a spectacle and also as an indication of football capacity, was largely spoilt by the very bad temper and roughness displayed throughout the game. It is a long time since Newport have taken part in any match where there was so much deliberate roughness, and I can hardly recall a time when a Newport player was ordered off the field. In fact I believe that during the many seasons that I have followed the Newport team I have never seen a man ordered off for roughness. But it is difficult to speak from memory.

The bad feeling commenced early in the game, and it is a matter for regret that Hodges should have foolishly tackled Romans unnecessarily, and thus have intensified the feeling that was working up for trouble. From that time onwards it seemed as though the members of both teams – of course, not all, but some – were determined to do their best to 'get their own back.'

It is a bad policy anywhere and it is an exceptionally bad policy at Rugby football, for it brings discredit to the teams, and, of course, to the players concerned. At the same time, as it always happens, the man who was less to blame than the others who escaped, was the victim of the referee's displeasure. A more unnecessary piece of roughness than that which Westbury displayed when he knocked down Dai Boots has never been seen on a football field, and it was not surprising that Adams felt indignant that one of the strongest and the biggest man in the Gloucester pack should have gone for one of the light members of the Newport team in the way he did.

Of course his indignation ought not to have taken the form it did, and to have led him to strike an opposing player. The referee did not show the grip of the game and of the players which makes for a pleasant match when old rivals meet. He was weak, and ought to have interposed strongly long before matters reached the point they did."

Remarking on the play of the Gloucester team, the Newport critic says Romans kicked very finely time after time, and Vears and Smith did excellent defensive work. They were beaten at half, but their kicking on the whole was much better than Newport's. Stephens was the smarter of the halves, Hudson and Rooke made one good run, but otherwise did not do much.

Their forwards played their characteristic game. They were good in the scrummage, though they hardly heel as well as in past seasons. They were very determined in their tackling, and got through a number of close rushes which were hard to stop, while their one try came from a bashing, dashing rush for the line in which the men passed the ball from hand to hand until the goal was reached.

The "Western Mail" remarks the meeting between the teams was marked by a paradoxical position – it was satisfactory and it was unsatisfactory. It was satisfactory in the sense that it showed Newport had made a considerable stride forward towards old time prowess. It was unsatisfactory in the exhibition of quite a number of unfortunate incidents which go to mar the pleasure of the game and to lower sport to a most undesirable level by the introduction of not only a spirit of roughness and coarseness, but the actual perpetration of acts of almost spiteful malevolence. "Tis true; and pity 'tis, 'tis true.

The little bout of fisticuffs between Adams, of Newport, and Westbury, of Gloucester, will no doubt lead to both being suspended by their respective Unions. Gloucester not only badly lost, but there was a section of both players and spectators who were bad losers. As the players left the ground for the dressing room a small knot of spectators got round them and loudly hooted them.

Whether this was directed, however, against the referee, who was regarded as having rather a loose rein, or against the Newport players, was not very certain. It was not improbably directed against both.

The game altogether could not "by any stretch of the picturesque" be termed a pretty or a class affair. It was keen and vigorous, and determined to a degree – in fact, the vigour was carried to too great a degree at times, especially when the unfortunate incident of the two forwards, one from either side, were, in the middle of the second half, ordered off the ground.

Gloucester, to say the least, has always been a little more noted for its eagerness and vigour than for its cleverness. This was rather more apparent than ever on this occasion. There was less combination or keen back play than usual, though in front both the spirit and the flesh were willing for anything.

RESULT :

Newport 3 goals (2d), 2 tries (19 points)
Gloucester 1 try (3 points)