

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1904

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL

GLOUCESTER v. LEICESTER

VISIT OF THE MIDLAND CHAMPIONS

CITY TEAM'S REMARKABLE VICTORY

LEICESTER OUTPLAYED

Gloucester and Leicester should have met in the Midland town for the first match between the teams, but owing to the International trial being arranged to take place at Kingsholm on March 15th, the fixtures were transposed, and accordingly the Leicester team appeared at the City Club's enclosure to-day.

Neither team has been performing very successfully this season, but a decided improvement has recently taken place on the part of Gloucester, who have won the last three games in succession, and scored 83 points to 5.

There were several alterations in the visitors' team, A. O. Jones, W. J. Foreman, and H. P. Atkins being prominent absentees.

The Gloucester fifteen was as announced.

The weather was fine, and there was a capital attendance of spectators.

The teams lined up as follows : –

GLOUCESTER	Positions	LEICESTER
G. Romans	Backs	J. W. Dixie-Smith
C. Smith	Three-quarter	J. H. Miles
J. Harrison	backs	N. Sutton
J. Stephens	"	A. J. Palfreyman
T. Curtis	"	A. E. Hind
D. Gent	Half-Backs	M. Swain
G. Williams	"	J. Braithwaite
B. Parham	Forwards	S. Matthews
F. Goulding	"	T. Goodrich
G. H. Smith	"	R. F. Russell
W. Johns	"	G. H. Keeton
F. Pegler	"	A. Goodrich
G. Vears	"	D. Atkins
A. Hawker	"	H. A. Hind
J. Gough	"	S. Penny

Referee : Mr. J. MILBURN (Bristol)

THE GAME

Gloucester won the toss, and the visitors started from the Worcester-street goal. George Smith received and punted to Hind, who kicked to touch. A good punt by Romans placed Gloucester on the Leicester 25, but the Midlanders rushing a scrum soon relieved to the centre. Here the Midland forwards heeled, but Swain missed and Williams gained a dozen yards by a dribble.

Loose forward work followed in the Leicester half, but Gent at length robbed Braithwaite, and a useful rush took the ball to the Leicester quarter. Leicester worked back, and there was a spell of scrambling play, which did not gain much to either side.

A lucky punt by Parham gave Gloucester an advantage, but it was slight, and ensuing play was very tame. Picking up in the loose, Gent passed to Stephens, who handed to Harrison, and the latter put in a clever bit of work. After punting he raced through and again secured possession, but was floored from behind.

After this Curtis made his mark, but Romans' shot for goal went very wide of the mark. Stephens, however, secured from the return and cross-kicked towards the goal mouth. A Leicester man secured, but he was put down immediately and Leicester were hard pressed.

The visitors worked out a little, but "Whacker" Smith, with a sharp dash, got back, and the Midlanders were again called upon to defend. Some indifferent passing lost ground for Gloucester, but Harrison recovered beautifully and had a drop for goal, but only a minor resulted.

On the restart play continued to favour Gloucester, but there was no finish to the movements, and one or two possible openings were lost. Miles and Keeton in turn were tackled on the visitors' line, but Leicester managed to save. A long pass out by Stephens to Curtis saw the latter fumble and kick to touch, where there was a chance for a smart three-quarter.

The Leicester forwards heeling, Swain gained ground for his side with several kicks, though Romans returned well. From one punt Harrison fielded nicely and kicked to the right wing, where Hind failed to gather. Smith came along and dribbled down touch with a clear field, but the ball unfortunately went out of play.

Still, Gloucester kept on the aggressive, and a kick to Miles saw the latter pressed. He punted out, the ball going to Williams, who feinted and beat several opponents.

A pass to "Whacker" Smith enabled the latter to run to the full back, when he passed back to Williams, who went over with a fine try. Romans just failed to add the extra points.

Resuming, Leicester were early awarded a penalty, but Romans replied well, and play was in the Leicester half. Here "Whacker" Smith brought off a magnificent run and beat all the opposition, fairly jumping Dixie-Smith. He, however, was not quite fast enough to reach the line. He, however, passed, and some smart work saw Hawker apparently cross near the posts, but only a touchdown was given.

Following the drop-out Harrison did a nice run and kick, and the forwards working well Leicester were placed on the defensive. Another fine run by "Whacker" Smith looked all over for a score, but the Gloucester right winger was caught right on the line and bored to touch. For an infringement Leicester were penalised, but Romans failed to land a goal from a mark.

Subsequent play was all in favour of Gloucester, Gent being prominent in stopping a rush of the visiting forwards. Attempting passing, Leicester lost the ball, and Curtis cleverly keeping it out of touch, he dribbled down to Dixie-Smith, who saved but lost the leather. This gave the City forwards a chance, and Johns picking up crossed easily. Romans failed at goal.

Resuming, Leicester showed very poor form, and operations were entirely confined to their half. Clever work by Gent, Harrison, and Williams enabled Gloucester to keep up a hot pressure on their opponents' line, but they were lacking in finish at the critical moment.

At length Gent started Williams going, and though tackled the latter managed to pass to Goulding, who cleared nicely and passed to Harrison. Feeding Smith at the right moment, "Whacker" jumped Dixie-Smith and ran round behind the posts with a very fine try. Romans added the extra points, and Gloucester led by 11 points.

Leicester re-started, and there being a good return, the game was at once taken to the visitors' end. They cleared slightly, and a passing bout looked promising. Harrison, however, intercepted, and cleverly evading the opposition nearly added another try. To the interval Gloucester pressed.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucester 1 goal 2 tries
Leicester Nil

Gloucester re-started and play opened at mid-field. A useful punt by a visitor gained his side some dozen yards or so, and then followed a series of scrums. The Gloucester men heeled several times, but the passing attempted did not gain much ground.

Then a big kick to Romans was followed up by Hind, who caught the City captain by the jersey, and interfered with his kick, which went almost straight. Fortunately Curtis secured, and kicked to touch, thus saving a dangerous situation.

Working energetically Leicester had the better of the subsequent stages, and the Gloucester defence was tested. For off-side play Gent was penalised, and Russell had a place for goal, but the ball went wide. Leicester replied finely to the kick out, and the Gloucester line had a narrow escape.

A passing movement initiated by Braithwaite looked promising, Palfreyman running strongly, but the tackling was sound.

Useful kicks brought the necessary relief, and then followed some particularly keen work at mid-field. Leicester got the best of a good rush, but a kick out by a City player to Hind saw the latter miss, and "Whacker" Smith gathering, he tried hard to get away, but was foiled. The ball, however, got loose, and Goulding, with a brilliant piece of footwork, took the ball to Dixie-Smith, who was at once floored.

In a scramble a Gloucester man was injured in the face, but was soon able to resume. Immediately Gough showed up with a strong burst, but could not quite get clear. With a loose rush the visitors came away in fine style, and Curtis making a mis-kick they reached the centre.

A splendid bit of passing by Williams and Harrison nearly let the latter through, but he was collared in trying to cut inside.

A determined burst by the Gloucester front rank took the ball past the Leicester custodian, but another player got back and saved.

Then in the loose Hind had a fine opening, but he hesitated in front of Romans, and essaying a pass the ball was knocked on. This was the visitors' best chance of the game, so far.

Following this Gloucester went off with a great burst, and the backs putting in some lovely passing bouts the Leicester defence had an anxious time.

Pretty inter-passing between Stephens and "Whacker" Smith was heartily applauded, especially when the latter again skipped over Dixie-Smith, but he was collared from behind when going for the line.

Leicester worked out to more favourable quarters, but Gloucester were not done with, and from a punt by Curtis, Parham followed up and collared Dixie-Smith on his 25. The City team struggled hard for a score, but they could get no luck.

From a mark by Braithwaite, Romans kept the ball beautifully from touch and sent well inside the Leicester 25. From this point the home halves got the ball only [*sic*], and Harrison presented Curtis with a walk in, but the Second teamer failed badly, and allowed the visitors to relieve.

A superb rush by the City forwards soon placed Gloucester on the aggressive again. Johns, Goulding, and Parham took part in a lovely dribble, but Dixie-Smith just managed to stave off disaster.

A minute later another burst took the ball over the line, but it went into touch-in-goal.

After the resumption, Leicester made one or two spasmodic bursts, but they were easily held in check, Romans kicking well.

Wheeling well, the City forwards dribbled finely, and keeping the ball at their feet it was carried over the line by Gough, G. Smith, and Parham, Gough being credited with a try, which Romans converted.

From this point Leicester did not have a look in. Gloucester carried the scrums, and the backs, also doing good work, the Midland champions had all their work cut out to keep their lines intact.

A kick to Hind was fumbled by the ex-Cantab., and the Gloucester forwards being up they were not slow in pouncing on the Leicester flyer. The ball was got from in under him[*sic*], and Parham dribbled to the goal mouth. Here a visitor came across, but failed to gather, and Parham picking up went over the line, and touched down with a fifth try. Romans easily converted, making the score 21 points, and then the end was sounded.

RESULT :

Gloucester 3 goals, 2 ties (21 points)

Leicester Nil

REMARKS

Continuing their run of success, Gloucester to-day achieved their most notable victory of the season so far. Twenty-one points to nil is a remarkable score to run up against a team of the standing and class of Leicester, but the Midland champions were hopelessly out of it, and failed altogether to hold the City fifteen.

At the outset there was an indication that Leicester were going to make things lively, but once Gloucester got fairly in their stride the issue was never in doubt.

For a considerable period the Midlanders were penned in their half, and they were fortunate in only having eleven points against them at the interval. The three tries obtained in the first half were the result of very fine work, but Gloucester missed as many again by the merest shave.

It was a repetition after the change of ends. For a time Leicester held their own, and several times got dangerous, but after ten minutes' play Gloucester took a strong lead again, and fairly rushed their opponents off their feet.

Except for a few dull moments the game was a fast and interesting one, and the splendid form of the City men aroused great enthusiasm. The Gloucester forwards were immense in loose rushes and dribbles, and their fast following-up and close tackling completely upset the combination of the Leicester rear division.

With the exception of H. Atkins, the Midlanders had out their full strength forward, and the pack came with the reputation of being one of the best in the country. In the scrums the eight did good work and they wheeled well at times, but taking the game throughout they were decidedly worsted to-day.

The Gloucester eight has rarely played with more dash and devil, and there was not a weak man in the pack. Goulding, Parham, and Hawker performed splendidly in the open, and a trio of hard workers were Johns, Gough, and Smith. Peglar and Vears, too, were always to the fore.

Outside the scrum Gloucester's superiority was equally marked, the visitors giving a disappointing show. At half, Gent got the ball away continually, and Williams made excellent use of his opportunities. The first try was a lovely combined effort between Williams and "Whacker" Smith, and the performance was nearly repeated on two other occasions.

In the three-quarter line the City players showed to better advantage than in any previous game at Kingsholm this season, despite the fact that Curtis was not a big success. The Second teamer is a sturdily-built player, and possesses a good heart, but he lacks pace, and is too slow in his movements.

We rather fancy Foulkes would do better in the position, as he used to play on the wing when connected with the now defunct St. Catherine's Rovers club.

On the right wing "Whacker" Smith was in great form, and gave by far his best display of the season at home. "Whacker" seemed to have suddenly recovered all his old dash, and some of his runs to-day were electrical.

Though only scoring once, Smith deserved another point or two, for on two or three occasions he "skipped" the full back beautifully, but having to slow down to accomplish this feat he was collared from behind. "Whacker," despite his success in attack, was not found wanting in other departments, and he fairly had the measure of A. E. Hind. Once the latter had a fine opening, but he eased up when faced by Romans, and passed feebly to an opponent.

In the centre for Gloucester, Harrison was in rare trim, and his display all through was of the highest class. Besides making several pretty runs, he was never at fault in fielding, and his kicking and tackling were of the best. Stephens, though not shining so refulgently as his colleagues, was smart and resourceful and, as usual, very safe.

The Leicester half-backs compared very moderately with the home pair, and they were often lacking in judgment. At three-quarter the visitors showed poor form.

Hind has already been referred to, and Miles, on the other wing, has deteriorated considerably since he gained International honours. Several times he was collared in possession of the ball, and he was guilty of other mistakes. The other two players in the line did not distinguish themselves.

At full back, Romans was inclined to do too much running, but otherwise he gave a capital display, and far outshone Dixie-Smith. The latter was new to the position of custodian, and therefore there was some excuse for him.

Gloucester have carried everything before them since the victory over the Old Merchant Taylors on Boxing Day, and in the last four games have notched 104 points to 5. This is getting back to old times, and should greatly encourage the team for the important fixtures on hand next month.

GLOUCESTER A v. YORKLEY

At Yorkley.

Yorkley 1 goal, 2 tries (11 points)
Gloucester A 1 try (3 points)

JC