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BRILLIANT CHAMPIONS

SURREY COMPLETELY OUT-CLASSED AND DECISIVELY BEATEN

REMARKABLY FINE GAME

Until checked by Surrey at Richmond last month, Gloucestershire had a brilliant sequence of wins in County Championship matches, and in two successive seasons premier honours were carried off by the Westerners. To-day's replay was to decide whether the Champions would again qualify for the final. Surrey made a great effort to oust their powerful rivals from the Competition in January, but successful goal kicking by Reg Pickles enabled Gloucestershire to level the scoring, and thus meet the Metropolitans again this afternoon at Kingsholm. In six Championship games decided at Gloucester since 1919, the home County had proved successful on each occasion, and there were great hopes that another triumph was in store for Gloucestershire this afternoon.

Surrey had again selected a powerful side to visit Kingsholm, but there were several late disappointments, the Internationals – Lowe, Gracie and Brown – all being unable to make the journey. For two of the places, however, the Londoners were fortunate in securing the services of Ernest Hammett and A F Blakiston (Blackheath and England), who qualified by reason of residence in an adjoining county where no Rugby Union exists. Gloucestershire, too, suffered from absentees, Pickles and Spoors both being unable to play. The Bristol captain's business claimed his attention, and his club-mate had not sufficiently recovered from a recent injury to turn out. The vacancies were filled by A J Kerwood (Gloucester) and D Evans (Bristol University); Kerwood has not played since his appearance at Richmond, but his doctor passed him as fit, and it was stated he had kept in training. Evans was making his debut for the County. He assisted Bristol against Cardiff recently, and it was his display in this match that attracted the attention of two of the County Selection Committee present on that occasion. It was generally conceded, however, that Spoors' enforced absence was a serious loss, as he had proved one of the strongest players in the team for the past two seasons.

Dix met with a slight mishap this morning at work, injuring his hand, but he declared his ability to play. There was one further change in the Surrey side, Cummings (London Scottish) taking the place of Macnamara forward. Rain had threatened all the morning, but it held off to the great relief of the County officials and spectators. The match excited great interest, and there was a splendid attendance – some 5,000 – from all parts of the county and beyond. The ground was in good condition, but in places was likely to pick up.

Teams:

GLoucestershire:

Back: A J Kerwood (Gloucester)

Three-quarters: D Evans (Bristol University), L J Corbett (Bristol), captain, Stanley Cook (Cambridge University and Gloucester), and H Feltham (Bristol)

Half-backs: W Dix and T Millington (Gloucester)

Forwards: G Holford, T Voyce, F W Ayliffe, A Hall, S Smart, Major Roderick (Gloucester), J S Tucker and P J Williams (Bristol)

SURREY:

Back: R H King (Harlequins)

Three-quarters: E M Saunders (Rosslyn Park), C A Williams (Streatham), E Hammett (Blackheath and England), and D B Anderson (Old Millhillians)

Half-backs: V G Davies (Harlequins and England) and J B Worton (Harlequins)

Forwards: G T Cockerill (Old Blues), E S Francis (Streatham), A F Blakiston (Blackheath and England), J C Connell (Harlequins), G G King (London Scottish), G E Middleditch (Old Blues), J A Rowe (Streatham), and J E Cummings (London Scottish)

Referee: Mr E Roberts (Llanelly)

The Game

Punctually to time the Surrey team entered the enclosure, quickly followed by the home players. Gloucestershire having lost the toss, Holford kicked off from the Worcester street goal, and play opened at the centre. A clever kick by Worton gave Surrey a nice slice of ground, but Voyce, getting possession from the loose, ran and passed to Cook. The latter missed, but a lucky flying kick took the ball on until King checked by turning to touch. Kerwood checked the Surrey forwards well but an exchange of kicks between the rival custodians left matters equal. From a line out the home forwards broke away, but Surrey were awarded a penalty which took them to the home half.

Heeling nicely, Dix served Millington cleverly, but again Cook mis-handled and nothing resulted. On the left wing Evans showed up smartly with a nice effort, and then Corbett, fielding a kick, ran across and started passing. Cook, Dix, and Feltham in turn had possession, but the right wing stumbled and was collared. Gloucestershire had the better of some fast exchanges, and then followed a series of passes all along the line, but Evans could not retain possession. Dashing forward work by both packs was loudly applauded. Voyce especially distinguished himself with a fine burst, gaining 20 yards before being pulled down. Gloucestershire had gained a good position in their opponents' half, but when Dix opened out Evans failed to take. He recovered, but his pass to Corbett was intercepted by Williams, who punted past Kerwood, but the latter got back in time and sent to touch.

Gloucestershire quickly changed the venue with a neat passing bout, but there was not that finish that spelt success. A burst by Corbett and a wide pass to Evans might have done some good had the wing man accepted, but he fumbled, and a knock-on ensued. From a subsequent scrum Dix got the ball away to Evans on the short side of the scrum, and the University man dashed up the touch and punted ahead. Racing up he beat King for possession and scored the first try – a very clever effort. Millington made a fine attempt to convert.

Resuming, the Surrey forwards replied splendidly to a fast loose rush by the home pack, and Feltham checked daringly. Tucker, Voyce, Holford and Roderick came into prominence with good work, but the visitors were playing with plenty of dash and marked effectively. A passing bout initiated from the Gloucester scrum, saw Corbett and Cook in turn handle. The latter burst away finely and punted ahead, but King made his mark. Fast and exciting play ensued, but there was little in it. Some Gloucestershire passing going astray, the visiting forwards nipped in with some loose footwork which gave trouble to the home defenders. Voyce, however, effected a good save, and then Holford led a magnificent dribble some 30 yards. He was obstructed when about to get clear, and Surrey were penalised.

Centre play ensued until Surrey gained the advantage with a loose rush. Back the home forwards went, with Holford leading, and an open movement followed. Evans, however, could not break away. From an opening by Millington, Corbett set Cook going. Feltham followed up the latter's kick and tackled King, but nothing further resulted.

Subsequent play was very fast and open, with both teams working untiringly. Kerwood checked the Surrey men cleverly with a neat bit of footwork, and this led to an excursion to the visitors' half. Here Tucker gathered from a line-out and dashed away, attended by Voyce. A pass to the Gloucester forward gave him a clear field, and shaking off a would-be tackler from behind, he finished a dashing effort by scoring wide out. Millington failed with his kick at goal. Gloucestershire, however, had secured a six-points' lead, and they were worth it.

From the restart the ball bounced to touch on the Gloucester 25, where play operated for a minute or two. Then Voyce and Holford broke away beautifully from a line-out, but a forward pass stopped the movement at the centre. Soon afterwards Gloucestershire were penalised at the scrum. King had a shot for goal, but sent wide, and Gloucestershire ran the ball out. Cook receiving, he cut through cleverly and kicked to King, who just got the ball to touch in time. Surrey, with some enterprising work, reached the Gloucestershire end, where there were one or two shots for goal, but they were poor attempts. Holford, Tucker, and Ayliffe, with a brilliant passing move, gained more than half the length of the ground and secured a nice opening, but the final transfer was forward. Gloucestershire, however, attacked strongly, and from a scrum brilliant passing and inter-passing by Dix and Millington led to a splendid try by the former amidst great cheering. Millington's kick for goal – another good attempt – missed.

Surrey restarted, and the ball going to Holford in his own 25, he started passing. Some half-dozen players handled in perfect style, and Cook cut through sweetly. The ball eventually was got out to Evans, who raced down touch at a fine speed, but he was successfully tackled. From a high kick by Hammett, Kerwood fielded in fine style and got in a kick to touch, a feat which was heartily applauded. The Gloucestershire forwards were going great guns in the loose, but they also heeled frequently. Dix started his backs going, and fine passing saw Feltham have a dash for the corner, but he was cut off. The interval then arrived.

HALF-TIME SCORE:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.....2 tries
SURREY.....Nil

Some fine football had been witnessed in the first half, Gloucestershire Showing at times most brilliant form. At periods, however, there was not that happy finish to attacking movements by the backs that characterised the efforts of the side against Cornwall. Forward it was a fine struggle, Surrey doing well at times in the loose. In the scrums, however, Gloucestershire held the advantage.

Surrey resumed, and almost at once the Gloucestershire backs shone with running and passing, Cook and Corbett performing special efforts. The latter secured a nice opening, but a long pass to Feltham went wide, and a scoring chance was lost. Gloucestershire attacked sharply through Dix and Evans, but Surrey saved luckily, and Anderson dribbled back. Surrey took advantage of some loose play by the home county, and Saunders punting sharply put the home side in danger, but Millington relieved. Then for an infringement Gloucestershire were penalised right in front of goal, but King failed to land a goal, and the home county escaped.

From the drop out Gloucestershire went right away, and good work by the backs gave Surrey plenty to do in defence. Corbett and Cook were nearly through on the right, and then Dix, Millington, and Ayliffe, with a combined movement, nearly brought about a score. A success for Gloucestershire, however, was not long delayed, for Dix getting the ball away neatly, Millington sent Corbett over with a try. Voyce this time was entrusted with the place kick, but was unsuccessful.

Surrey resumed with vigour and the Londoners were conspicuous with some capital forward work. But a brilliant passing run put Gloucestershire on the move again, Feltham running well but failing to escape the tackle. The game continued to be splendidly contested, and though Gloucestershire were more often in the lime light Surrey gave a capital account of themselves. Stanley Cook came into the picture with a superb run down the centre of the field, but his pass was captured by an opponent when there was every chance of a progressive movement. Down the field went Surrey, and they were assisted by a good touch finder by King. By a big effort Gloucestershire reached the centre, and clever play by Dix put his side on the attack again.

Feltham was just kept out on the right, following a capital dribble by Williams, and then came the most spectacular effort of the afternoon. Gloucestershire attacked on the left, but Evans worked his way inwards and passed out. Millington and Cook were on top of one another, and for the moment one did not know which of the players had the ball. Cook, however, was seen to dart clear, and beating the defence with a marvellous run finished up by scoring a great try behind the posts amidst terrific cheering, which was renewed when Dix added the goal points. The tally was now 17 points in favour of Gloucestershire, and a brilliant victory was assured.

The Champions, however, showed no relaxation on the restart, and worked with a will to increase their lead. Surrey offered a stubborn resistance, though as a team they were well beaten. Gloucestershire heeling, Dix outpointed Worton at the scrum and served Millington nicely. Cook and Corbett in turn received, and then a pass to Evans

saw the Bristol University player run round King and score a splendid try. Voyce made a poor attempt at conversion.

Surrey had a short period of attacking on the restart, but Williams broke away with a strong run from a throw-out, passing forward to Ayliffe when there was a possible chance. This move led to Gloucestershire making another strong attack, but Corbett and Cook were foiled in succession. Just afterwards Corbett missed a certain try by kicking too hard over the line, the ball going dead. Roderick next made a capital dash and pass to Tucker, which just missed a score, followed by Corbett losing a dropped goal by a yard.

Gloucestershire continued to have the better of the exchanges, Surrey being a well-beaten side. Still the Londoners played up pluckily, the forwards working resolutely in all departments. Gloucestershire, however, were too clever for their opponents, and before the end brilliant tries were scored by Dix and Cook, the movements leading up to these tries being superb. Dix converted both, and the end arrived, Gloucestershire being decisive winners.

RESULT:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.....	3 goals, 5 tries (30 pts)
SURREY.....	Nil

Remarks

Gloucestershire's team to-day reached a high standard, and the game furnished one of the best exhibitions of the season. Lack of time forbids any lengthy comments to-night – a "special" will appear in Saturday's Football "Citizen".

A defeat by 30 points to nil admits of no excuses. Gloucestershire asserted superiority over their rivals at all points, and though credit must be given Surrey for a downright plucky display, as a combination they were completely eclipsed. Gloucestershire's advantage forward laid the foundation of this further notable triumph; those critics who complained that there were too many veterans in the pack had their answer to-day. Holford, the senior of the eight in point of age and service, was the finest forward on the field, and once again his leadership and dash were of incalculable service. The old International was magnificently supported, and the pack as a whole never played better. Surrey were a resolute lot in the loose, but in finesse and general ability they lacked the all-round brilliance of the home forwards.

Behind the scrum Dix once again displayed wonderful form, opening out the game with remarkable success, and always being in position to take part in passing moves. His two tries emphasised this fact – and they were finishing touches to some of the finest combined moves one could possibly imagine. Millington, as pivot, was all that could be desired; his service was perfect, and rarely did he fail to make the best use of his chances.

At three-quarter, the Gloucestershire line started a bit shakily, and there were mistakes at critical moments with tries almost certain. But later in the game the men handled with machine-like precision, the "dummy" was repeatedly in evidence, and both

Corbett and Cook got in some beautiful runs. At times the Surrey defenders were completely befogged and were left standing. Feltham did splendid work on the right wing, though he failed to score, but the popular success of the afternoon was the recruit Evans. The University man shaped confidently from the start, and exhibited a pace, dash and knowledge of the game that electrified the crowd. In scoring two tries in his debut in County football Evans certainly made good, and his future will be watched with the greatest interest. Gloucestershire certainly should not lose sight of him.

At full-back Kerwood again deputised Pickles with credit to himself and his side. His defence was sound, his kicking and fielding excellent, and he was never found wanting in any emergency.

Surrey, apart from King at full back, had no player more than useful behind the scrum. Hammett did very little, and the half-backs could not compare with the Dix and Millington confederation. Forward, Surrey were seen at their best in the loose, where Cockerill, Connell, and Francis were a hard-working trio. But as a pack they had not the cohesion of the home men, and were clearly out-pointed in all the finer points of the game and in individual ability.

I understand North Midlands have suggested Saturday week, at Moseley, for the final, and Gloucestershire will accept; in fact the match, according to the rules, must be played by the last Saturday in February.

W B