

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 1913.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

SOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP.

Gloucestershire v. Midlands.

BRILLIANT WIN FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

FINE TRIES BY COOK AND KINGSTON.

(By W.B.)

Gloucestershire and the Midlands, both undefeated in their respective divisions of the county championship, met at Kingsholm on Thursday for the honour of contesting with Cumberland in the final match of the competition. This was Gloucestershire's third appearance in the semi-final during the past twelve years. On the two previous occasions the Western county were successful, Middlesex being defeated at Richmond in 1902 by 13 points to 10; and in 1910, at Blackheath, Kent were beaten by 6 points to 3. The match aroused great interest, and though a mid-week fixture there was a capital attendance. The Midlands had to make four changes in their team - Bream (full-back),

Hunter (three-quarter), and Hopkins and Greasley (forwards) being displaced by G. Assinder, S. Farmer, A. Dalby, and Frank Taylor respectively. Gloucestershire made one alteration from the selected team, F. Hopkins (Cheltenham) taking the place of C. Merry (Cinderford) in the forwards.

Rain, which had threatened at times during the morning, commenced to fall about 2.45, but the ground was in fair order. The kick-off was timed for 3.30, about half an hour too late for this time of the year, for with the light bad there was more than a possibility of the game finishing in semi-darkness.

The following were the teams: -

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Back — W. R. Johnston (Bristol).

Three-quarters — W. Washbourne, L. Hamblin (Gloucester), Stanley Cook (Cheltenham Training College), and C. H. Kingston (Bristol University).

Half-backs — A. Hall (Bristol) and J. Baker (Cheltenham).

Forwards — W. Johns, G. Vears, S. Smart, N. Hayes (Gloucester), A. Redding, J. Watkins (Cinderford), W. Bradshaw (Bristol), and F. Hopkins (Cheltenham).

MIDLANDS

Back — G. E. G. Assinder (Old Edwardians).

Three-quarters — P. W. Lawrie, F. N. Tarr (Leicester), H. J. Pemberton (Coventry), and S. Farmer (Leicester).

Half-backs — G. W. Wood and F. M. Taylor (Leicester).

Forwards — H. Lawrie, W. J. Allen, G. Ward, F. Taylor, A. Dalby (Leicester), W. L. Oldham, S. G. Wolfe (Coventry), and F. H. Deakin (Moseley).

Referee: Mr. L. Bulger.

The Game.

The Midlands' colours being white with cherry hoop, Gloucestershire played in their old jerseys. The visitors won the toss, and Vears kicked off from the Worcester-street goal. The ball was well followed up, and the rival forwards fought for possession. It rolled loose, however, and the Midlands dribbling they were not checked until the home 25 was reached. Gloucestershire rushed back, and centre play followed.

Heeling well, Baker got the ball away to Hall, who sent to Cook. The latter dashed through and fed Kingston, who side-stepped Farmer but was pushed to touch. Breaking up a scrum, the Gloucestershire forwards dribbled nicely, but Tarr gathered and ran round, finally punting to Johnston, who got in a fine touch-finder close to the Midlands' line.

The visitors kicked out, and Kingston was collared at the centre. Here Hall picked up from the feet of his opponents and made a grand burst. He ran up to the full back and then parted to Kingston, and there was every chance of a run home. Taylor, however, got back and touched the Bristol man's heels, and brought him down.

Gloucestershire went close after this, but they were beaten back by a long flying kick. Near mid-field Wood opened out, and the visiting backs passed smartly, Lawrie punting to touch at the home 25. For off-side the Midlands were penalised, but Farmer, who received Johnston's kick, raced across the field and initiated a bout of passing, Lawrie slipping before he could get away. Working the blind side of the scrum

cleverly, Wood gave a nice pass to Lawrie, who cut through and secured a grand opening. His pass, however, was ruled forward.

Hard forward play followed in the home 25, Johns gaining relief with a useful bit of footwork. The Midlands again attacked, and Gloucestershire were kept busily defending. Baker and Hall gained ground on the left, and then Cook, taking advantage of a miss by Tarr, broke away to Assinder. A timely pass followed to Kingston, but the latter was tackled by Lawrie, and though Cook got up he could not take the re-pass.

Even play followed, the game being very fast. Hall stopped Taylor well when the latter was attempting to cut up the field, but the Midland backs made headway a minute later. Farmer, however, lost the ball, and Hamblin and Washbourne took the game to the other end. For off-side the Midlands were penalised, but Hamblin made a poor attempt at goal, and Pemberton and Farmer came right away to the centre. Gloucestershire were being beaten in the scrums, and the Midland backs handled neatly, only to find the tackling very deadly. Baker at length was able to open out, but Cook kicked straight up in the air, and nothing was gained in consequence.

The rain had made the surface of the ground and the ball very slippery; but the teams were bent on keeping the game open as much as possible. A bad pass from Taylor to Tarr spoiled a movement by the Midland backs, and then Baker being at fault the visitors' gained some 20 yards. Continuing to heel, the Midland halves again set their threes in motion, but the passing went almost straight across the ground. Gloucestershire were more successful a minute later, when Hamblin cut in and threw a wide pass to Kingston, which the wing man just failed to gather. Again Wood and Taylor outwitted the home halves prettily with interpassing, and only a forward transfer stopped a possible opening.

Gloucestershire retaliated with a useful effort, in which the left wing showed up prominently. Washbourne, however, could not clear the opposition. From a loose movement the visitors opened out, Pemberton doing well, but again a forward transfer was given. Near the centre Baker gave a reverse pass cleverly to Hall, who fed Hamblin. The latter yielded to Cook, who dashed up the field and fed Kingston. The Bristol man cut Assinder beautifully, and running hard for the line scored a brilliant try. No charge was allowed, but Hamblin missed the goal points. The Midlands restarted, but soon afterwards the interval was called.

HALF-TIME SCORE:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.....1 try
MIDLANDS.....Nil

The Midlands restarted, and the first item of interest was a missed pass from Wood to Taylor. Baker was quick to seize on the error and dribbled away, but Pemberton checked. Again Baker beat the opposing halves with footwork, but Pemberton coolly picked up from his toes and started passing. The ball was kicked to Johnston, who fielded grandly and got in a fine kick to touch. Lawrie was prominent on the right wing with a couple of dashes, but he was stopped in time. From a loose rush Hall gathered and got in a characteristic burst, but being held he passed, and it was ruled forward. Baker accomplished a good bit of tackling, and next Cook was nearly clear, but Lawrie put a stop to his career.

The Midlands worked back, where Hall threw away wildly with his backs well placed. Working well together, Gloucestershire got away, and the visitors were hard pressed. Tarr attempted to kick, but the ball was charged down by Hall. Cook came through at a nice pace and

kicked past Assinder. Running hard, the Collegian gathered the ball again on the bounce, and with a determined burst got over the line and scored near the posts amidst tremendous cheering. Hamblin failed at the easy place.

Six points to the good was a useful lead, but the game continued with unabated vigour. Hall effected a fine tackle of Lawrie with the latter going strongly, but later the Bristol half-back fumbled and allowed the Midlands to reach the home half. Smart passing by the Gloucestershire backs saw Kingston sent off down touch, but he lost the ball. Then the Midlands were awarded a couple of penalties, but nothing resulted, and centre play followed. Cook was again to the fore with a brilliant dash and pass to Kingston, but the wing man was pushed to touch.

Some terrific tackling followed in subsequent play, and the contest was waged with great determination. Johnston and Assinder were both cheered for some effective work under difficulties, and then Gloucestershire came into the picture with some fine work. From a long kick across Farmer ran round and passed to Assinder, but Smart tackled his man finely, and from the subsequent line the Gloucester players dribbled away, only to have the misfortune to see the ball go to touch.

Still the effort led to Gloucestershire attacking, but a penalty for "loose head" enabled the visitors to clear. There was a spell of quiet play after this, but the game was confined to the Midlands half. Hall failed to take a clever reverse pass by Baker with his men well placed, but Johnston recovered with a glorious touch-finder. A desperate forward rush by the Midlands was not stopped until the home end was reached.

The visitors here tried a round of passing, but the marking was too close. From a kick over the line, however, Gloucestershire conceded a minor. On the drop-out the Midlands forced the pace, but they were

well held. From a pass by Hall, Hamblin ran across, but a mistake occurred, and Lawrie kicked down and over the line. A home player, however, got back and kicked out. Soon afterwards, from another cross-kick by Lawrie, Gloucestershire again touched down.

The Midlands were having the better of the exchanges now, but scoring ability was wanted. Once the visitors looked to have a grand chance, but they lost the ball near the line and Kingston cleared. Johns followed with a splendid dribble, and mid-field was the scene of operations. Just before the finish the Midlands made a determined effort to open their account. The defence was severely tested, but it proved safe, and the game ended.

RESULT:

GLOUCESTERSHIRE..2 tries (6 points)
MIDLANDS.....Nil

Remarks.

Once again Gloucestershire have reached the final, and the County are to be heartily congratulated on upholding the honour of the West against such sturdy opposition as that furnished by the Midlands. Considering the conditions, it was a fine game, with plenty of open play and many exciting passages. Forward, Gloucestershire were again beaten for possession, but weakness in this department was made up for by the dash, resolution and cleverness displayed in footwork, keen tackling and fast following up.

Smart was a rare worker in all phases, and stood out as one of the best forwards on the field. Johns, too, worked heroically, his splendid dribbling being a prominent feature. Of the others, Hayes, Redding, and Watkins also came under notice for special efforts. The Midland pack were a sound lot, but some of the men who hung about off-side were given plenty of licence. Oldham, Lawrie, Allen, and Ward were about the pick.

The Gloucestershire half-backs both did a lot of good work, but were not so nippy as Wood and Taylor, especially in opening out. Hall, however, did wonders in defence and in smothering the Midlands' passing. The three-quarter back play was very effective at times, and there were some pretty passing bouts.

The Gloucestershire right wing, Cook and Kingston, were continually in evidence, the Collegian's judgment and resource being almost perfect. Early in the game Cook made some delightful openings for his wing, and had Kingston only tried the re-pass tries could not have been prevented. It was fitting that the two scores registered should have been credited to these two players; both were grand efforts. Kingston side-stepped with his accustomed cleverness, but he appeared to lose pace on the greasy surface when in his stride.

Hamblin and Washbourne did not get so much of the ball as their colleagues on the right, but both played well, and the marking of the whole line was too good for the Midlands. The visitors were splendidly served by Wood and Taylor at half, and the threes ought to have done better. Tarr was the pick of the line, with Lawrie a good second, but there appeared a lack of scoring ability in the division.

Johnston, at full back, fully sustained his reputation, and was soundness itself. Assinder, too, gave a downright good display for the Midlands.

The gate receipts amounted to £127 odd.
