

The Citizen

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 1943.

WALES ROUT ENGLAND AT KINGSHOLM.

Winners Always the Better Side.

Until the last 20 minutes the Services International between England and Wales at Kingsholm on Saturday was exhilarating, interesting, and at times most exciting. England lost Ward, who had concussion, and a little later, Mycock left with an injury to his ankle, and the team went completely to pieces.

Wales, who let it be said never looked other than fairly easy winners, did in those last 20 minutes almost exactly as they pleased. Their backs and wing forwards ran through nearly everywhere and every time they wanted to, and in fact Wales practically doubled their score, and turned what was a good win into a complete rout.

I would not have believed it possible for a team, which comprised so many tip-top players to be so completely upset as England was by the absence of two men. It was plain that the re-arrangement of the side caused by first Ward and then Mycock having to go off, shattered England's defence into small pieces.

Prescott put Walford in Ward's place at centre, brought Campbell from full-back to stand-off half, and robbed the pack of Sadler to be full-back. Then he lost Mycock, and the pack, reduced to six, could not hope to maintain the slight mastery they had held most of the time until then.

Prescott's decision was perfectly sound and logical, as one would expect from a campaigner of his experience and capability, and England's tragedy was that whatever he did with his backs, whose cohesion at the best of times was shaky, the result in the circumstances which arose would probably have been the same.

Wales' Superiority Clear

Going back to the earlier part of the game, Wales, who took a little time to settle down, were always clearly the better side. They missed Travers to hook for them, and were generally beaten for possession of the ball in the scrums, but the backs overcame this difficulty with a brilliance which completely outshone the spasmodic individuality of the England three-quarters.

In B. Williams and S. Williams, and to a lesser extent Sullivan and Edwards, Wales had four very fast and clever players making a three-quarter line, who played football splendidly together.

England had two wings just about as fast and probably as clever as the Welshmen, and in Laurenson at any rate, a centre who knew a centre three-quarter's job, which is to cut through and make the openings, but as a three-quarter line they were not in the same street as the Welshmen.

Backs Hesitated

Even before the debacle the Englishmen's hesitancy in tackling gave Wales an advantage. Each three-quarter, time and again, refused to bring his man down if he showed the slightest intention of passing the ball. The natural result was that the Welsh wings were through to the full-back in no time, and Campbell, all the time he occupied that position,

played a hero's game, stopping rushes, fielding, tackling and kicking perfectly.

Another reason for Wales' superiority was at half-back. Davies and Tanner played, as usual, like a couple of rockets, liable to shoot off suddenly anywhere at any time, and constantly dangerous. Against them Walford was never happy, with Cunningham a hardworking, but unenterprising scrum-half, whom it would be unfair to compare with the missing Ellis.

Hudson's Good Game

Sadler, Milman, and Hudson did their best to look after the Welsh halves, and Gordon Hudson, particularly in defence, added laurels to his reputation and to the good name of Gloucester football.

He saved a certain try in the first half, when Tanner was slipping through in the English 25, by bringing the Welshman down good and true. In the loose he vied with the best of them, and was concerned with Hall, Sadler, Milman and Mycock in some good forward rushes.

It was a pity that he had no chance of showing what he can do with the ball in his hands instead of at his feet, for if there were potential scorers anywhere in the England team they were in the back and middle row forwards.

With their advantage forward, England might have done better to have kept the ball tight to gain ground, and then allowed the wing forwards to handle the ball, because behind the scrum England were up against a better team and would always have been beaten in an open game.

Both England's scores, Unwin's beautiful drop goal almost from the touch line in the first half, and Francis's neat pick-up in the second half to get a try, were pretty to watch, although lost among the spate of good moves which brought Wales their points through S. Williams' two tries, B. Williams' three tries, Tamplin two tries, and two goals, Sullivan a try, and A. A. Davies three goals.

This made the final score of England 1 goal (d) one try (7 pts.); Wales 5 goals 3 tries (34 pts.).

There were 16,000 people present. The gate money amounted to £2,443.

R. C.