

The Citizen

MONDAY, APRIL 10, 1944.

ENGLAND STAGE GREAT FINISH.

BRILLIANT WIN IN GLOUCESTER SERVICES GAME.

A SENSATIONAL OPENING AND AN EQUALLY THRILLING FINISH WERE WITNESSED IN THE SERVICES' RUGBY INTERNATIONAL AT KINGSHOLM, ON SATURDAY, WHEN ENGLAND CONFOUNDED THE CRITICS WITH A GREAT VICTORY OVER WALES BY 20 POINTS TO 8.

Wales had won all five of the previous war-time Rugby encounters between the two countries. In Saturday's game, too, they did most of the attacking, but on this occasion they failed to stay the course and at the close were a well-beaten side.

The ground was packed to the capacity of the restricted accommodation with a crowd estimated at 16,000 who had paid approximately £2,500 for admission. Thus another useful sum will be available for the Services charities.

Before the start there was the usual fun as Welshmen tried to fasten leeks onto the goal posts, but this time all their efforts in this direction were frustrated by the police.

There was an impressive scene as the teams lined up at the centre while the band of the R.A.F. Technical Training Command led the singing of the National Anthems of Wales and England.

Early Score

Three points up in as many minutes as the result of a magnificent penalty goal kicked by Ward, the full-back, from exactly half-way, was an encouraging start for England, but they were only one point to the good at the interval - two penalty goals and a try to a goal and a try.

England were similarly placed at half-time in the corresponding match at Gloucester last year when Wales went on to win by 34 points to 7.

For a long period in the second half on Saturday Wales subjected the England defence to such continual pressure that they looked likely to repeat last season's success. They had chances of getting in front, but failed to take them, and then in the last ten minutes England staged such a remarkable recovery that they converted their slender lead of one point into a decisive victory by 3 goals (2 p.) 3 tries (20 points) to one goal 1 try (8 points).

It was a surprising collapse on the part of Wales, and the crossing of their line on three occasions in those closing minutes emphasises how complete was the breakdown.

The English forwards had a big hand in bringing about the collapse. After much hard defensive play they gradually wore down their opponents and staged a wonderful finish, two of their number, Doherty and Weighill, scoring two of the last three tries following strong forward rushes. Lawrenson converted Weighill's effort.

Fine Try

The other try in the second half came from Francis, England's left wing, from an opening by Lawrenson - a brilliant score.

After England's early lead in the first half, Ward, after 25 minutes, kicked another magnificent penalty goal. A little later Coleman, a Welsh forward, reduced the arrears with an unconverted try, following a kick ahead by Rees. Parsons, the England scrum-half then went over for a good try, which Ward failed to convert. Just before the interval Willie Davies, the Welsh fly-half, slipped the defence and scored a clever try, which Tamplin converted.

A Tremendous Pace

So much for the actual scoring. The match produced many thrills and, particularly in the first half, the game was contested at a tremendous pace, and the fluctuating nature of the play maintained the excitement at high pitch. After the interval the pace slowed down, but England's defence was given a great testing and their line had several narrow escapes. The tackling held, however.

Even when England managed to ease the pressure efforts to open up were stopped by deadly tackling. The exchanges continued tremendously keen for some time. Then it was that the England backs got a chance and encouraged by the brilliant try by Francis, England were afterwards unstoppable. England's great finish compensated for many dull periods during this half.

Ward (full-back), Francis (left-wing), and Parsons (scrum-half) were the best of the England backs and Willie Davies and Haydn Tanner were the shining lights for Wales. Over-keenness caused many missed chances on both sides. Longland, Doherty, Prescott and Gilbert were outstanding among the home forwards and Travers, Coleman and Foster were most conspicuous for Wales.

The crowd of 16,000 included a large number of British and American Servicemen.

The teams were:

ENGLAND

L/Cpl. E Ward (Army and Bradford Northern, Rugby League); Lieut. G. Hollis (Royal Navy and Sale), L.A.C. J. Lawrenson (R.A.F. and Wigan, R.L.), Cfn. J. Stott (Army and St. Helens. R.L.), Sgt. Instr. R. L. Francis (Army and Dewsbury, LL); Lieut. P. R. H. Hastings (Army and Oxford Univ.), Sqdn. Ldr. J. Parsons (R.A.F. and Leicester); Capt. R. E. Prescott, captain, (Army and Harlequins), Cpl. R. J. Longland (R.A.F. and Northampton), Sgt. G. T. Dancer (R.A.F. and Bedford), Cpl. J. Mycock (R.A.F. and Harlequins), Schoolmaster J. B. Doherty (Royal Navy and Sale), Lieut. P. N. Walker (Army, Oxford Univ., and Gloucester), Flt. Lieut. R. G. H. Weighill (R.A.F. and Waterloo), Capt. F. W. Gilbert (Army and Coventry).

WALES

Sgt. Alban Davies (Army and Newport); L/Cpl. J. L. Knowles (Army and Newport), Sgt. T. Sullivan (Army and Swansea), F/O Idwal Davies (R.A.F. and Leeds), Cpl. S. Williams (Army and Aberavon); Sgt. W. H. T. Davies (R.A.F. and Bradford Northern), Capt., Lieut. H. Tanner (Army and Swansea); Lieut. V. J. Law (Army and Newport), Sgt. W. H. Travers (Army and Newport), Sgt. W. G. Jones (Army and Newport), Gnr. R. G. Coleman (Army and Newport), Gnr. Rees Williams (Army and Swansea), Sgt. T. Foster (Army and Bradford Northern), Lieut. W. E. Tamplin (Army and Pontypool), Flt. Lieut. A. M. Rees (R.A.F. and Cambridge Univ.).

Referee: S. H. Budd (Bristol).