

GLOUCESTER JOURNAL

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1889.

The Week's Sport.

Gloucester v. Cardiff was the attraction at the Spa on Saturday last, and a powerful attraction it proved, the "gate" being a large one. This was the third of the four fixtures arranged between the clubs this season, and the fact that the first two encounters had resulted in draws enhanced the amount of interest taken in Saturday's match, as it was thought that one or other would be sure to come out of the ordeal successful, and it was with no small amount of eagerness that the supporters of both clubs waited to see which that would be, the Cardiffians having considerable faith in the prowess of their representatives, while the enthusiasts at Gloucester were pretty confident that the City lads would be able to pull off the match.

The hopes of neither side were, however, realised as the game ended in another draw, and it is pretty certain that a great amount of interest will centre in the last trial of strength between the old rivals for the season.

As on the previous Saturday the home team seemed unable to effect a score notwithstanding the fact that they had the best of the game on the whole. Several chances were thrown away, and in this way Grist twice made bad mistakes by failing to hold the ball when passed to him, though both times the passes were accurate and well-timed; and the only excuse that can be urged in palliation of these offences is the extreme cold – it was a bitterly cold afternoon – and Grist not having had much to do to keep himself warm, doubtless felt the cold severely, to which, perhaps his inability to secure the ball is in some measure accountable.

However, it was not to be, and the game ended as stated, in a draw, Gloucester scoring three minors to their opponents' nil.

The first half was fairly even, though what little balance there was rested with Gloucester, and in the second portion it would have been difficult for things to have been made much warmer for the Cardiffians, who, however, showed grand defence, and stubbornly resisted all the attacks of the home men, frequent and determined though they were.

On one or two occasions Cardiff pressed hotly, but the siege was of short duration each time, and Gloucester quickly drove the Welshmen back to their own quarters, there to engage them in another fierce onslaught on their stronghold, which was, however, as we have already stated, too strongly held.

The Gloucester forwards were better than those of Cardiff, and this superiority, aided by the effective kicking of the backs, gave them the advantage. While the visitors indulged in occasional dribbling rushes, and spasmodic efforts by the backs, the home forward contingent more than counteracted these efforts by the steady determined manner in which they went to work. There was not one who shirked his work or who did not play with great energy, and it would be impossible to individualise any for special praise.

Of the backs, Ball and George played a splendid combined game. The way in which they played into each other's hands was very pretty, and had the passing of the three-quarters been as clean and accurate as that of the halves, they would have done much better and been a great deal more dangerous. Jarman and Merrett, the Cardiff halves, played with a lot of spirit, but they were not so quick on the ball, or so dexterous in getting it out, as were the two Gloucester boys.

At three-quarter Coates was as good as ever, while Taylor played a sound defensive game, and often gained a lot of ground by his punts into touch. "Harry" tackled surely and ran and passed well, but did not show so much dash as Coates, whose dodging was very clever. Brown was in his usual form at saving rushes, and made one or two strong runs, and Grist, barring the mistakes named above, acquitted himself well. Hughes was a tower of strength behind, and seemed thoroughly at home in his old place, his kicking and tackling being of a high order.

On the Cardiff side Hugh Hughes did well at full back, and Norman Biggs was the most dangerous three-quarter, once or twice getting unpleasantly near the line before being stopped. Charley Arthur was very good but his passing was somewhat slovenly. The other three-quarters played a sound game.

The following were the teams : –

Gloucester.– A. F. Hughes, back; H. E. Taylor, G. W. Coates, C. E. Brown, and R. Grist, three-quarter backs; S. A. Ball and W. George, half-backs; T. G. Smith (captain), A. H. Brown, T. Collins, A. Cromwell, R. C. Jenkins, E. D. Tandy, T. Taylor, and G. J. Witcomb, forwards.

Cardiff.– Hugh Hughes, back; C. S. Arthur, F. N. Jones, Norman Biggs, and A. M. Hill, three-quarter backs; W. E. Jarman and J. E. Merrett, half-backs; A. F. Hill, S. H. Nicholls, W. E. O. Williams, Q. D. Kedglie, J. Mahoney, R. T. Duncan, W. T. Morgan, and W. Ropner, forwards.

- On Monday a big crowd for a Monday match assembled to see the Civil Service (London) team perform against the local men.

The visitors were aided by G. R. Phillips and G. S. Marshall, of Newent, at three-quarter, and Ll. Bonsor Williams, of Llanelly, half, and these proved very valuable inclusions in the team, as the kicking of the two former, the running of Marshall, and the good play of Williams, had a good deal to do with the smallness of the score as compared with that piled up by Llanelly against the Londoners on Saturday – 4 goals and 4 tries.

The visitors' forwards winged very much, and as a consequence, in the first half followed up like hares, and time after time completely spoilt the Gloucester passing, though it was quick and good.

Gloucester had a bit the best of it up to half time, but were unable to claim any tangible point, the winging game having succeeded against the heeling out of the home forwards, and the only noticeable features having been a splendid drop at goal by Dere, who played in Coates' place – the latter unfortunately being laid up in the Infirmary with an injured knee – several runs by Grist, Bagwell, Brown, Cromwell, and Ellis, and some excellent kicking by Marshall, Phillips, and Hughes.

After the interval the home forwards adopted different tactics, and instead of heeling out, they went through their opponents, Jenkins and Ellis always prominent, in fine style, Jenkins repeatedly picking up and making telling runs.

Two or three times he got close to the line, and twice he crossed it, but was as often recalled, only, however, to run in again, and register the first try for Gloucester. C. E. Brown followed with a neat try, and just on the call of "no side" Grist brought off a brilliant run in, and from the first two of the tries Collins kicked excellent goals, the first especially being a fine kick.

The third kick was an almost equally good one, and passed over the post. Hughes put in some immense kicks in this half of the game, and a number of minors were added, the final score reading : Gloucester two goals, one try, and seven minors to nil.

Of the home forwards Jenkins and Ellis were the most conspicuous, the former particularly showing magnificent form, while Cromwell and A. H. Brown were not far behind; in fact, they all played well, but their tactics in the first half were frustrated by the winging of the visitors. Grist played a fine game, and besides upholding his reputation as a sprinter and tricky runner, he kicked and tackled well. Bagwell also was in good form, and had hard lines, as did Dere. Brown played a good defensive game, and ran well, but his passing was deficient.

Teams : –

Gloucester. – A. F. Hughes, back; T. Bagwell, G. F. Dere, C. E. Brown, and R. Grist, three-quarter backs; S. A. Ball and W. George, half-backs; T. G. Smith (captain), A. H. Brown, T. Collins, A. Cromwell, R. C. Jenkins, William Taylor, G. J. Witcomb, J. Williams, and E. Ellis, forwards.

Civil Service. – B. M. Wylie, back; C. W. Dix, G. R. Phillips, S. W. Matthews, and S. S. Marshall, three-quarter backs; B. Williams and W. S. Warren, half-backs; F. J. Brett (captain), C. F. Warren, E. W. Witham, J. H. Hardcastle, E. M. Cavanaugh, W. Bullock, F. Lowry, and F. S. Jones, forwards.

- On Wednesday the Gloucester County team journeyed to the Metropolis to meet the representatives of Oxford University, and though they returned home defeated they were by no means disgraced, for they played an equally good game to their opponents and were the victims of decidedly bad luck.

Quite as much of the game was fought out in the varsity territory as in that of the County, and as instances of the ill-fortune which attended their efforts it may be mentioned that not only on two occasions would another yard have placed a try to the credit of the County, when Bagwell and Grist in turn were held within a yard of the goal line, but a little earlier in the game a drop kick by George only fell short of the cross-bar by a few inches.

After these narrow escapes, the Dark Blues visited the County end, and Christopherson dropped a goal, which was quickly followed by Percival scoring a try, which was not converted into the major point.

In the second half Christopherson just got over the line, and the kick again failed, and, nothing further being scored Oxford won by a goal and two tries to nothing.

The county team included the following Gloucester men : –

A. F. Hughes, H. E. Taylor, T. Bagwell, C. E. Brown, R. Grist, S. A. Ball, W. George, G. J. Witcomb, A. Cromwell, and T. Collins.

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