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The Week's Sport.

The first match in the competition for the championship of the south-western group was played at Kingsholm, on Saturday, when Gloucestershire and Somersetshire met to try conclusions. A very closely contested game was the result, but neither side could gain a definite point, and the game was left drawn. There was a large number of spectators present to witness the encounter, but the game, taking it all through, was very monotonous to watch.

Each county was strongly represented, Jackson, Bagwell, Page, Jenkins, Ball and George of the city fifteen all being successful in gaining places in the Gloucestershire team, whilst Wallace Watts, of the invincible Newport fifteen, also turned out for the county of his birth. F. H. Fox, S. M. J. Woods, P. F. Hancock, Vernon, Soane, T. England (the Newport back), and Manfield were the principal players of note that were found in the Somerset ranks.

In the first portion of the match the play, which was fairly fast, was evenly contested, each side in turn having to defend its lines. Passing by the visiting backs nearly effected a score, but the collaring of the homesters was very deadly. Smart forward work by Gloucestershire carried the scene of operations near the opponents' 25, and here several excellent chances were thrown away by bad passing.

Vernon, one of the Somerset forwards, was responsible for transferring play to the other end by securing the ball in a line out, and breaking away, only being upset just in time by Hughes. Woods was also brought down when within an ace of scoring, but at half-time not even a minor point had been obtained.

The opening stages of the concluding half were in favour of Somerset, the game hovering between the half and 25 on the Gloucester side of the field. By long kicks three minors were conceded by the homesters, but try as they would Somerset could not score. In the last ten minutes the Gloucesterians exerted themselves and, aided by a capital dribble and run by Bagwell, a score seemed imminent, but it was not to be. Gradually the Somerset men relieved, and the play was taken to the 25, where it was being keenly waged when the referee put an end to hostilities.

The result about fairly indicated the relative strength of the two teams on the day's play, and neither side could claim any advantage. Each fifteen had about an equal number of chances, and though Somerset kept Gloucester penned in their 25 for some time in the second half, it was only by their superior weight in the front. They were, undoubtedly, a fine set of forwards, and ought to have run over the home eight. The Gloucesterians, however, were more tricky and clever with their feet than their opponents, and thus neutralised the above advantage possessed by the Somerset scrummagers.

Neither side showed much combination in packing, and few players were very fast. The visitors were smart in the lines-out, and frequently gained ground. In the second portion the game was very uninteresting, and little passing was attempted by either set of backs. What little was done, however, with about two exceptions, was extremely disappointing, the Gloucester men being equally as bad as, if not worse than their opponents. Kicking appeared to be the prominent feature of the back play, and in this respect several players on both sides were very conspicuous.

For Gloucestershire Hughes, although his display all round was not so good as he has previously exhibited, was seen to considerable advantage with his kicking, some of his returns being exceptionally fine. Jackson and Fenner were the pick of the three-quarters, but there was little to choose between the halves, Ball and George. Of the forwards W. Watts, R. C. Jenkins, and Ford were the most conspicuous for honest work throughout.

Boucher, the visitors' full back, could not be compared with Hughes, whilst of the three-quarters T. England and "E. Hancock" put in a lot of hard work, the first-named making a successful *début* in his new position, his excellent punting powers serving him in good stead.

T. N. Parham was smarter than H. Merry behind the scrimmages, but the combination of the pair was poor in comparison with that of the Gloucester couple. The old international, P. F. Hancock, made excellent use of his long reach in the lines-up, and with Vernon, Soane, Manfield, and Aldridge, played a sound forward game.