

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1896.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

THE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE v. CORNWALL.

A BIG MATCH AT GLOUCESTER.

Gloucestershire started on their county championship campaign to-day, when the representatives of Cornwall were opposed at the City club's enclosure at Kingsholm.

In previous years this fixture has not been seriously thought about by supporters of the home county, as the match has come on for decision after the championship of the South Western group has been practically settled. This season, however, the Gloucestershire secretary was fortunate enough to get the match brought off earlier, hence the increased interest in the present fixture.

Cornwall had lost a couple of points the previous week to Devon, but the losers gave their opponents such a capital game that their chances of victory this afternoon were not considered altogether remote. The rival counties had met on four previous occasions, the results of which will be found tabulated below : —

		Gloucester		Cornwall	
		G.	T.	G.	T.
1892-3,	at Bristol	3(1d)	2	0	0
1893-4,	at Penzance	2	2	0	0
1894-5,	at Gloucester	1	1	1(p)	0
1895-6,	at Falmouth	2	0	0	0

From the above it will be seen that Gloucestershire hold a decided advantage, and on past form ought to experience little difficulty in adding another win to their credit. But previous form is not always reliable, and after the fright the Cornishmen gave Devon the home county were prepared for almost anything.

The Gloucestershire team differed in two or three instances from the side which was defeated by the Midland Counties in the friendly match last week. F. H. B. Champain, who is now in residence at Oxford, was chosen to partner Hailing at centre three-quarter in place of Williams (Cinderford), but the Old Cheltonian was unable to accept the invitation owing to an injured leg. Williams' services were, therefore, again utilised At half-back A. Stephens (Gloucester) fell out from a similar cause, and W. Needs (Bristol) took the vacancy.

In the forwards, Newton (Bristol) and Spiers (Gloucester) gave way to C. Hall (Gloucester) and C. R. Miller (Stroud) respectively. The visitors, who broke their long journey at Bristol on Friday, arrived in Gloucester this morning and put up at the Ram Hotel. Only one change was made in the team which opposed Devon, W. D. Lawry (Penzance) superseding V. Viant (Redruth).

It was thought that given anything like decent weather, the County Union would receive a welcome addition to its funds, as special arrangements had been made for cheap railway trips from the surrounding districts. Unfortunately, however, the elements turned out very unpleasant. Up to nearly two o'clock the outlook was promising, but about this time rain commenced to fall heavily, and the conditions were rendered decidedly depressing.

Of course, the gate was thereby considerably affected, and not more than 200 spectators were present at the time announced for the kick-off (three o'clock). Hinton's Band again discoursed a capital selection of music, previous to the match. The Cornwall team arrived on the ground in good time, bUt it was 3.15 before the rival fifteens entered the enclosure. The referee quickly got the preliminaries settled, and the men lined out in the following order : -

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

CORNWALL.

BACKS.

J. B. Smithson (Bristol)

E. Jasper (Penzance)

THREE-QUARTER BACKS.

E. H. Taylor (Gloucester)

C. F. Mermagen (Falmouth)

A. F. Hailing (Cheltenham)

R. Thomas (Redruth)

H. Williams (Cinderford)

W. D. Lawry (Penzance)

Lewis Smith (Stroud)

T. Wright (Cambridge)

HALF-BACKS.

C. W. James (Clifton)

W. Paul (Redruth)

W. Needs (Bristol)

Z. Rusden (?) (Falmouth)

FORWARDS.

F. M. Stout (Gloucester)

E. Collings (Penzance)

C. Rose (Gloucester)

R. C. Lawry (Penzance)

C. Hall (Gloucester)

O. Triggs (Penzance)

W. Leighton (Cinderford)

R. Trembath (Penzance)

C. E. Miller (Stroud)

R. Smith (Falmouth)

P. Smith (Stroud)

W. Wheeler (Camborne)

W. Gwynn (Clifton)

C. Pollard (Redruth)

J. W. Jarman (Bristol)

R. Jenkins (Redruth)

Referee : Mr. A. J. Gould (Newport).

Rugby Union touch-judges : Messrs. C. A. Crane (Midland Counties) and L. F. Elliott (London District).

THE PLAY.

Owing to the rain the ground was greasy on the surface; whilst the mist which hung over the ground did not tend to improve matters from a spectator's point of view.

Cornwall won the toss, and Jarman kicked off for Gloucestershire from the Dean's Walk end, the ball going into touch in the visitors' 25. From the first scrum the ball came on the Gloucestershire side, and the visiting halves kicked to the centre. Here Percy Smith showed up by starting a bout of passing, but the home backs did not get far.

Some loose play gave Cornwall an opening, but Needs saved nicely, and play was fought out at the centre. Here the visitors were penalised, but Mermagen returned well. The Gloucestershire forwards now showed up with a capital rush, and the ball getting loose Needs secured and sent out to Williams. The latter passed to Hailing, but the Cheltenham man failed to gather, and, the Cornwall forwards being on the spot, they dribbled away to the Gloucester[*sic*] half, where Taylor had to kick into touch.

Loose forward play followed, in which the home front rank showed up finely, and the game was transferred to the Cornwall quarter. Several scrums were fought near the visitors' goal, from one of which Needs started a bout of passing. Hailing and Williams in turn handled, and the latter when near the line, passed to Lewis Smith, but the Stroud man could not get through.

By the aid of loose forward work the Cornishmen rushed out in capital style, and Williams being at fault in fielding the ball they dribbled on to the centre. Mermagen was conspicuous with a couple of useful punts which enabled the visitors to reach the home half. The home forwards heeling out, the Gloucestershire backs had a turn at passing, but little ground was gained, the ball only going across the field.

After this the Cornishmen got possession, but Mermagen, who was the last to receive, was well tackled by Lewis Smith. The effort, however, led to the visitors obtaining a footing in their opponents' end. Rushing several scrums in splendid style Cornwall went close up to the Gloucester[*sic*] line, but they were checked in time.

By dint of hard work Gloucestershire got out of danger, but at this point the visitors were having the best of matters. Clever play by the Cornish forwards enabled their side to get dangerous again, and immediately afterwards they forced the home county to concede a minor. Gloucestershire dropped out, and Thomas replying with a neat punt, the game was left in the home end.

The Gloucester[sic] forwards headed by Stout, at length got away in grand style, and James, charging down a return, play was conveyed to the Cornwall half. Here Needs was prominent with a smart piece of work. He had passed the ball out to James, but the latter lost possession. Needs, however, received the oval again, and with a clever kick sent the ball over the goal-line, Cornwall touching down. The drop-out was replied to by Frank Stout with a well-judged punt into touch near the visitors' line, and this effort led to a severe attack on the Cornwall goal.

Bad mistakes by the home men, however, enabled the visitors to ward off the threatened danger. The passing of the Gloucester centres was slow in the extreme, and the wing men got no chance whatever. Lewis Smith was at fault in failing to field the ball from a kick by one of the Cornwall backs, and Thomas dashing up, secured.

Then followed a pretty bit of inter-passing between Thomas and Mermagen, as a result of which play was carried into the home half. Good forward work enabled Gloucestershire to get back to the Cornwall end, where some splendid loose forward play was witnessed.

HALF-TIME SCORE :

Gloucestershire.....1 try
Cornwall.....Nil.

RESULT :

Gloucestershire.....2 tries (6 points)
Cornwall.....Nil.