

THE CITIZEN

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1908.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

French Champions at Gloucester.

THE VISITORS OUTPLAYED.

FINE GOAL-KICKING BY WELSHMAN.

The French champion Club team, the Racing Club de France, opened their Christmas tour at Kingsholm on Thursday, when they were opposed to a strong side captained by Gordon Vears.

The visitors arrived in Gloucester at noon, and were met at the railway station by the acting City captain, Messrs. Nigel Haines (hon. secretary), and the Rev. O. E. Hayden, L. Vears, H. M. Taynton, and G. Bland (members of the Gloucester F.C. Committee). The Frenchmen at once proceeded to the Ram Hotel, their headquarters in Gloucester, and partook of lunch. The weather was favourable, and there was a capital attendance of spectators when the teams took the field as follows : —

Gloucestershire Team. — F. Welshman (Gloucester); F. Smith, W. Hall (Gloucester), L. W. Hayward (Cheltenham), and L. Vears (Gloucester), W. Dix and J. Stephens (Gloucester); G. Vears (capt.), W. Johns, H. Berry, D. Hollands, B. Parham (Gloucester), W. H. Williams (Cheltenham), J. Hyndman and J. Watkins (Cinderford).

Racing Club de France. — Burgèn; H. Combemale, M. Combemale, Gaulard and Martinet; *Decamps and Baudouy; *Borchard (captain), *Dedeyn, *Guillemm, *Gommes, Gaudermen, Tricot, Bertbet and Vincent.

Referee : Mr. F. Abbey (Gloucester).

THE GAME.

The Frenchmen, smartly attired in pale blue and white striped jerseys, entered the enclosure to the strains of the "Marseillaise," and met with a hearty reception from the crowd.

The visitors kicked off, and an exchange of kicks left the game at the centre. From the first scrummage formed Dix secured, and a smart bout of passing gave L. Vears possession. The wing man made off grandly, but he was beautifully collared and thrown to touch by Burgèn. A couple of free-kicks to the Frenchmen enabled the visitors to reach the home half, where they opened out nicely, but M. Combemale knocked on when going through.

The Frenchmen showed smart football in the scrums and were not afraid to give the ball plenty of air. A clever move by Dix and a pass inside to Berry saw the City forward burst away, but on reaching the full back he lost the ball, and a Frenchman gathered and saved. Fast play followed, ending in Martinet kicking down the field, where Hollands got back and sent to touch. Gloucester worked out with loose footwork, and then Dix, fielding cleverly, made a fine opening for Hayward, who received at the centre and raced home behind the posts. Welshman failed at goal.

The Frenchmen dropped out, and operations were contested in the visitors' half. Parham secured and passed out, but the ball struck the referee. L. Vears, with a nice dribble, took the ball past the full back, but it found touch ten yards from the line. Some neat exchanges by the Gloucester backs looked promising for a score, but F. Smith was pulled over just in time by Burgèn.

Ensuing play was confined to French territory, but several passes were missed with every chance of an opening. By dint of useful footwork the visitors cleared to mid-field, where some scrambling play was witnessed. At length Stephens opened out, and Hayward worked out a nice opening for L. Vears, who hit off the full back and notched a fine try. Vears' shot for goal struck the cross-bar.

Hyndman, receiving from the drop-out, started a bout of passing, but Hayward was collared, and the ball smothered. Dix and Stephens next tried to break through, but the latter was checked, and then with a long punt the Frenchmen gained a footing inside the home 25. From this point Johns came away with a fine burst, but L. Vears failed to take the transfer with practically a clear field. Berry a little later was prominent with a dashing run, in which he left his opponents, but when confronted by Burgèn he passed forward to Hollands.

The Frenchmen played up very pluckily, their tackling especially being close and sure. Some pretty passing and interpassing between Dix and L. Vears looked promising, until a forward transfer stopped them. Loose scrambling play ensued for the next few minutes, in which the Frenchmen held their own. Then Hyndman, picking up in the loose, opened out, and after a series of exchanges Dix received. Dodging and jumping several opponents cleverly the City half-back cleared all opposition and scored a good try, the place-kick failing.

Subsequent play was fairly even, but Gloucester held the game pretty safely. Hayward was conspicuous with some tricky play, and Stephens was nearly through on his own from a pass by Dix. Working well together, the home team attacked strongly, and following a cross-kick by Dix, Stephens pounced on the ball and went over near the posts. Welshman this time converted.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucester 1 goal, 3 tries.
Racing Club Nil.

Vears restarted, the Racing Club being a man short forward, but he quickly resumed. Gloucestershire early took up the aggressive, Berry being to the fore with a strong run. A subsequent transfer, however, went straight to an opponent, and a good opening was lost. A penalty to the visitors gained relief, but it was only momentarily, as Hollands, gathering on the run, fed Hall, who raced down and sent to Dix. The latter jumped Burgèn cleverly and scored a nice try. Welshman added the extra points.

Soon after the resumption, Smith, Stephens, Hayward and Hall shone in some clever combination, but the latter's pass was snapped up by an opponent, who kicked to touch. After a brief visit to the centre the Frenchmen tried passing, but Smith cleverly intercepted, and beating the full-back scored in a favourable position. Welshman again added the extra points.

Hyndman received from the restart, but mis-kicked. Fortunately Hayward recovered and sent to touch. The visitors subsequently heeled from several scrums in succession, but Smith again intercepted and dribbled down to Burgèn, who saved. The Gloucestershire forwards were still being beaten in the scrums, but the forwards were dashing in loose footwork, and the visitors were seriously pressed at times. After Welshman had failed with a penalty, W. Hall showed up with a lovely run, and passing inside to Smith, the latter ran over easily. The goal points followed by Welshman.

With a lead of 29 points Gloucestershire were content to take things easily, and there were cries from the spectators to let the Frenchmen have "just one." The home team responded by attacking strongly, and Stephens, when looking certain to go through, was pounced upon from behind. Losing the ball, it was picked up by a Frenchman and kicked out of play. The visitors made further headway with loose rushes, but Hall ran back in clever fashion and passed to Hyndman, who, however, was hauled down from behind. Parham spoiled a certain try by touching down off-side, but a little later, after smart work by Johns, Hollands crossed with the eighth try, Welshman again goaling.

In subsequent play Gloucestershire were immeasurably the superior team when the ball got into the open. Hyndman was conspicuous with a splendid run and pass to Johns, who let the ball go, but Berry knocked on. The Frenchmen, getting the ball out, tried handling, but the passing broke down. Smith snapped up the ball and raced away. He was pulled down by the leg by Burgèn, but got up again and scored smartly. Welshman landed his sixth successive goal. In the last few minutes the Frenchmen made a big effort to score, but though getting very close they failed to cross the line.

RESULT :

Gloucester ... 6 goals, 3 tries, (39 points)
Racing Club Nil.

REMARKS.

The Frenchmen played a plucky game, but they were overwhelmed by the combination of the Gloucester backs. Forward, the visitors showed cleverness in heeling, and the whole team tackled well, but the backs displayed little judgment in passing, and three or four tries came through interceptions.

The game furnished an interesting display from a spectator's point of view, and the good sporting qualities of the visitors were fully recognised by the crowd. The Gloucestershire team showed clever football in the open, and all the backs distinguished themselves. Forward Johns, Hyndman, Berry, and Williams were the most conspicuous.