

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1913.

TO-DAY'S FOOTBALL.

GLO'STER v. DEVON.

CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH AT KINGSHOLM.

The South Western tourney, which opened last week at Southampton and provided a sensational victory for Hants over Somerset, was continued to-day, when two games were set for decision : Gloucestershire and Devon meeting at Gloucester, and Somerset and Cornwall at Bridgwater. When Gloucestershire won the championship in 1910, it was Devon who first upset their ambitions the following year, but that contest took place at Exeter.

With the advantage of venue this afternoon Gloucestershire were not expected to make such another slip, though the form at Cheltenham against Glamorgan last week was anything but promising. Devon, however, had also been beaten by the Welshmen, so neither side could claim any advantage as a result of what was regarded as preliminary trials prior to the more important championship series.

Both counties to-day introduced several players new to these inter-county contests. Gloucestershire originally selected the same back division which carried the county triumphantly through the championship last season, but Stanley Cook, who is now with Blackheath, had to cry off, and his refusal allowed of Alex Lewis to partner his club colleague, Hamblin, in the centre. In the forwards there were five changes from last year's pack – Vears, Peckover, Johns, Watkins, and Bradshaw giving place to Halford, Russell, Saunders, Nash, and Carr. The three last-named were playing for the county for the first time, and on paper the front certainly looked a strong one. Whether they would settle down together, however, was an open question.

Devon had many disappointments. Jago was brought out of his retirement to captain the team, and [a] report stated that the veteran International showed all his old form for Albion last week.

Devon undoubtedly placed a good deal of confidence in Jago, than whom there are few better tacticians on the field. The three-quarter line contained good players in Butcher, Lyle and Hodge, though the Newton Abbot man is usually associated with the half-back position. For this match he was originally chosen for full-back, but there was a re-arrangement owing to selected players dropping out.

The revised team was not considered satisfactory as a whole, but the forwards were expected to make a good show, and Jago's individuality might easily turn the game in the visitors' favour.

The following were the teams : –

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Back – W. R. Johnston (Bristol).

Three-quarters – C. Kingston (Bristol), A. Lewis, L. Hamblin, and W. Washbourn (Gloucester).

Half-backs – J. Baker (Gloucester) and A. Robbins (Pontypool).

Forwards – G. Halford, S. Smart, N. Hayes (Gloucester), A. Redding, F. Russell (Cinderford), A. Saunders (Bream), Private Nash (1st Glo'ster Regiment), and Gus Carr (Pontypool).

DEVON.

Back – Holman (Exmouth).

Three-quarters – E. G. Butcher, W. R. Lyle (Devon Albion), P. Hodge (Newton Abbot), and G. Bickley (Exeter).

Half-backs – R. Jago (Devon Albion) and W. Mogridge (Exmouth).

Forwards – T. Woods, J. Wright, E. Lee, W. P. Pope (Albion), R. Sharp (Newton Abbot), S. Mogridge (Exmouth), R. Jones (Exeter College), W. Goff (Cardiff).

Referee : Mr. T. D. Schofield (Welsh Union).

THE GAME.

The afternoon was gloriously fine, and with the ground in splendid order the conditions were ideal. The attendance was excellent, and when the game started the enclosure was well lined, and both stands were apparently full. There was a late change – and a very important one – in the Gloucestershire team. A. Hall, who, as already reported, will undergo an operation on Monday at Bristol, had been given permission to play against Devon, but the Forester reported himself as not feeling fit, and A. Robbins was called upon to take the outside half position.

The teams were five minutes late in taking the field, but no time was cut to waste, and Devon started the game from the Worcester-street goal. Lewis received and punted back to Hodge, who raced across and fed Lyle, who kicked to touch inside the home half. From the first scrum Devon heeled, but no ground was gained. Butcher, however, with useful kicks, kept the game in the Gloucester end, where both sides were penalised for infringements.

Near the centre the Gloucester forwards got in a fine burst, and Robbins, with a nice kick, further improved. Devon, however, responded gamely, and there was some desperate work just inside the Gloucester half. Hodge checked a dangerous rush of the home forwards, and then Lewis failing to handle, Jago was quick to seize upon the ball, but there had been a knock-on. At the ensuing scrum Baker was penalised for off-side, and Butcher with a fine kick landed a goal, giving Devon a three points' lead.

Gloucester resumed, and W. Mogridge getting a kick charged down, the home team secured a good position. Off-side by a forward gave Gloucester a penalty, but Johnston made a poor attempt to drop a goal. Still Gloucester maintained their position, and Hamblin gathering cleverly from a loose kick passed to Washbourn. The wing man got in a fine sprint, but was bundled into touch in time. Gloucester continued the pressure, and Baker opening out there was a chance for the backs. The passing, however, went astray, and Devon cleared with a flying kick. Robbins made a good mark, but the shot at goal failed, Jago touching down.

The drop-out saw some fast play, Bickley shining with a useful kick on the left wing. Gloucester, however, came back, and Lewis had hard lines in slipping after gathering well. Jago was penalised for off-side, and with the kick Gloucester made headway. From a line-out Hayes broke away grandly, but was tripped, and Gloucester were deservedly awarded a free. Hamblin this time was given the ball, and with a superb drop kick equalised the points with a goal.

Gloucester resumed strongly, but the kicking on both sides was lacking judgment. The home forwards, with a grand breakaway from a line-out, tested the Devon defence, Pope getting the ball to touch just in time. Robbins put his side very close with a touch-finder, but the advantage was lost for some scrum infringement.

Subsequent play was close, but the backs so far had not had much to do. Robbins, receiving from Baker, tried to break through, but was collared, and the ball got loose. Kingston received, and doubling Bickley, punted high and followed up, but Holman sent to touch in time. Then Baker forced a minor with a kick to touch-in-goal.

Continuing, play was fast but scrappy, many mistakes being made in handling, and in over-running the ball. A free to Devon enabled the visitors to change the venue, Butcher sending to touch at the 25 line. Gloucestershire quickly came away, only to see Devon start handling. Lewis, however, slipped in and intercepted. He beat a couple of opponents cleverly, but was collared from behind. The ball was got away again, Robbins feeding Kingston, who kicked ahead, and following up collared Bickley. The latter managed to get the ball away, and then followed some scrambling play, in which neither side shone to any great extent.

Devon, with useful kicking, gained a position in the home half, where Jago marked from a kick by Robbins. Butcher had a shot for goal but his kick was short. Devon were masters of the situation just now, and confined operations to the home territory. Still there was no open play worthy [of] the sides, the forwards monopolising the ball.

Jago once sneaked away from a scrum on the short side, but Mogridge was not up to take his pass, and a good opening was lost. Gloucester relieved through a fine kick by Hamblin, which Kingston followed up and stopped a return. The ball coming across the ground Robbins gathered and passed to Lewis, who fed Hamblin. The latter yielded to Washbourn, but the wing man failed to accept with only Holman in front. Devon got out of a dangerous position by the aid of a free, and some desperately close work followed.

Nash, Russell, and Carr were distinguished in subsequent play, which kept Gloucestershire to the fore, and Washbourne further improved with a clever left foot kick to touch well inside the Devon 25. It was all forward work, however, and as a spectacle the match was keenly disappointing. At the interval nothing further had been scored.

HALF-TIME SCORE :
Gloucestershire 1 goal (p)
Devon 1 goal (p)

Gloucestershire resumed, and a Devon back running round started passing. Butcher, however, was tackled, and Gloucester kicked back to Holman, who ran and punted to Kingston. The Gloucestershire right winger got in a splendid return, and the ball went out of play in the Devon half. Gloucester attacked strongly now, and Devon were hard pressed. From one dashing burst the visitors were lucky in saving, a knock-on spoiling a chance of scoring.

Gloucestershire set to work again, and Robbins was sent away by Baker. But the outside half tried to do too much and was collared. Then Bickley brought off a great clearance for Devon, and a big kick transferred operations to beyond the halfway. Here followed some very erratic play, the ball being thrown about with a reckless abandon seldom seen in a championship. Inside his own half Robbins was at fault badly, and allowed Devon a fine opening, but Jago was not fast enough to reach the line before being tackled.

After this Devon had two more openings, but Johnston and another brought off magnificent tackles. Hayes eased the pressure for Gloucester, and later there was a passing bout by the backs, ending in Washbourn being thrown to touch. Devon came back through Mogridge, and even play followed. There was little of real interest, however, the backs scarcely getting a sight of the ball.

It was a kick by Washbourn that led to Gloucestershire finding a footing in the visitors' half, but immediately after a long punt back sent the ball past Johnston, who was collared on the line. For some infringement Gloucestershire were penalised, but Butcher failed to land a goal, and the points still remained three all.

At length Baker got the ball away to Robbins, who took his pass nicely and sent to Hamblin. Washbourn was next placed in possession, but though trying hard to beat the defence the opposition was too great. It was the same three players who again shone in a pretty bit of combination, but again Washbourn was tackled and sent to touch.

Devon, after this, had a look in, a long kick going to near the Gloucester line. Kingston, however, robbed Bickley and relieved nicely. From the ensuing scrum the Gloucester backs handled cleverly, Hamblin making ground with a useful kick. More passing was attempted, but Lyle intercepted and had an open field with a couple of colleagues in attendance. Kingston spoiled the transfer, and the ball going to Lewis the latter sent to Hamblin, who punted to touch. Gloucester continued to open out, and Lewis brought off a clever run, only to succumb to a tackle from behind.

Some missed passing later gave Devon a glorious opening. The ball was kicked past Johnston, and there appeared a certain score, but Lewis got back and saved. Devon played up desperately now, and Hodge cutting through finely, the Gloucester defence was in danger. He punted over Johnston's head, but the ball went to touch-in-goal. Gloucester had another turn after this, a fine effort by Redding taking the home team close.

Fielding a ball amidst a number of opponents, Robbins took a left foot drop for goal, the ball just dropping short and going over the line for a minor.

The last five minutes were very exciting. In the Gloucester half Lewis snapped up a pass from Jago and secured a good opening. A pass to Kingston sent the right winger away, but though making a splendid effort, the Bristolian could not clear Holman. This was the last item of interest, and the game ended.

RESULT :

Gloucestershire	1 goal (p) (3 points)
Devon	1 goal (p) (3 points)