

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHRONICLE

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FOOTBALL NOTES.

(BY HALF-BACK.)

The all-absorbing topic of the week has naturally been the suspension of the Gloucester Club and Ground, and both friends and foes have been most expressive in their sympathies with the "martyrs." I call them so for the reason that the players have been held up as football martyrs by no less an authority than one of the Rugby Union officials who sat in judgment upon them.

The suspension of the Club for a period of three weeks is undoubtedly severe, and in any opinion far too severe when the whole of the facts of the Shewell case are taken into consideration. No doubt our friends from Stroud are delighted with the verdict and the sentence; at least I am informed upon trustworthy authority that our neighbours at Gotham are immensely pleased with the finding of the officials who adjudicated upon the case. Before, however, our First Team give them fixtures, the "great and immaculate" Stroud Team will have to learn how to defeat our Second Team, a feat which they have not been able to accomplish this season. It is satisfactory to know that while the "small fry" of this ideal Club are jubilant over the sentence passed upon Gloucester the more respectable members have expressed their sympathy with Gloucester.

As a contrast to the conduct of the Stroud Club I would point out the example of Cinderford, who have most generously permitted W. Leighton to assist the Gloucester Club in all its engagements with the exception of about three matches. This is a spirit which prevails amongst football clubs, but unfortunately such a true sportsmanlike tone does not appear to unanimously exist in the ranks of the Gothamites.

It ought also to be a matter for serious consideration to the Gloucester Club as to the advisability of severing its connection with the County Union, because I hear that the majority of the Committee which investigated the case in the first instance were more or less connected with Gloucester Clubs. If this was the case, then it reminds me of the old saying, "Beware of your friends."

Of the suspension of the Club and ground the sentence is certainly unduly severe, because it does not only affect the First Gloucester Team, but also the Second Team and the Thursday Club. The closing of the Ground will prove not only disastrous to the Gloucester Club, but also to the Thursday Club, an institution that has no connection with the former, but which unfortunately rent the Kingsholm Ground.

They are thus "shut out" of a field through no fault of their own, while members of the Gloucester Club, who also belong to the Referee's Association, will be prevented from acting in the capacity of a referee during the suspension.

It is also a question as to whether the sentence will not affect life members of the Gloucester Club, and if so it will be exceptionally hard upon W. Jackson, who has been selected to play for England against Scotland to-day. It is satisfactory to know that the sub-committee of the Rugby Union have taught the County Committee their duty, and that the latter body have not the right to inflict fines upon offending Clubs; and it must be most annoying to them to have to refund the £10 fine which they imposed upon the Gloucester Club.

I am pleased to state that the action of the Stroud Club is greatly resented by some of the leading Clubs which are on more friendly terms with Gloucester than the "men of Gotham," as they have offered to come to Gloucester at the expiration of the sentence and play matches for the benefit of the Club, so that in the end they will not lose much by the action of the Stroud Club.

It is a matter for congratulation that the English Rugby Union have at last recognised the abilities of Walter Jackson, late of the Gloucester Club, but now with Halifax. He played a splendid game on Saturday for the Rest of England against Yorkshire, and as a result he was selected for International honours. He will play for England against Scotland as a centre three-quarter.

Some surprise may be felt at the inclusion of Mr. W. Jackson (says the London *Daily News*), who until Saturday had not taken part in a match of first-rate importance; but perhaps the strangest fact is that such a skilful player has so long been overlooked by the Rugby officials.

In the West, as the centre three-quarter of the Gloucester team, Mr. Jackson has for some years past been held in high esteem, and it was only through the happy accident of his migration to the Halifax Club that his abilities have been fully appreciated. At centre three-quarter the old Gloucester player and his colleague, Mr. S. Murfitt, of Durham, worked together most harmoniously, and they contributed in no small measure to the success of the England team.

I am pleased to hear that the Gloucester Club are taking the Bagwell Testimonial Fund up. Mr. N. Phelps, the hon. secretary of the fund, has had an interview with the Gloucester Committee, and as a result the latter body appointed a small Committee, consisting of Messrs. H. W. Grimes, J. Mills, and C. H. Dancey, to represent the Club upon the Committee that was selected at a meeting of Mr. Bagwell's friends at the Oddfellows' Hall a few days ago. In the interview Mr. Phelps was informed that the Club would be pleased to co-operate in such a deserving object, and there is no doubt but that the popular Tommy Bagwell will receive a "bumper" in recognition of the valuable services he has rendered the Gloucester Club. Collecting cards are being issued, and anyone interested in the movement can obtain the same from Mr. Phelps.