

THE CITIZEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1927.

FAMOUS RUGBY CLUBS.

Gloucester's Great Players.

A London Critic's Review.

The famous Rugby club to come under the review of C. W. Packford in the "Sporting Life and Sportsman" this week is Gloucester – "the team which makes a speciality of defeating famous Welsh fifteens." A great deal of the information contained in the article was covered in the souvenir compiled by "W.B." for the jubilee celebration of the City Club, but some of the comments of "C.W.P." on great players produced by Gloucester will be read with interest.

THE LATE MR. H. J. BOUGHTON.

The late H. J. Boughton – he died in 1900 – who was its president for many years, and was the first representative of the county on the Rugby Union, was a wonderful organiser, and a man tremendously keen on the advancement of the game.

What he did for Rugby football in the West (says the writer) cannot be measured in mere words, but it would not be too much to say that this Gloucester sportsman, more than anyone else, "made" the game in a centre that was honoured by his activities, and that was deeply grieved at his loss.

GREAT PLAYERS.

To the many great players who have represented the club it is impossible to make individual reference, but there are one or two who deserve to be included among the "giants" of the game.

It is, of course, merely a personal opinion, but if a choice had to be made I would select A. T. ("Tom") Voyce, Frank Stout, D. R. ("Dai") Gent, A. Hudson, and George Romans as among those Gloucester men whose deeds will never be forgotten. Curiously enough, Romans, who is now a capable referee, was the only one of those who did not obtain International honours. He was so unfortunate as to be contemporary with H. T. Gamlin, to whom I believe he was reserve on some dozen occasions. It is always a matter of regret to Gloucester men that Romans was never "capped." He was a very reliable full-back indeed, and supremely successful with his kicking. I have heard it stated that during his career he kicked over 500 goals, and while this may be a pardonable exaggeration there is little doubt that he converted an enormous number of tries.

Frank Stout was undoubtedly one of the greatest forwards who ever represented England, while one could write for hours of the ever-popular Tom Voyce.

TOM VOYCE.

From the very day, just prior to the War, when a tall, fair-haired boy played for England in a junior international encounter, it was realised that here was a player much above the average. These anticipations were completely fulfilled. Tom – for everyone in England connected with the game calls him by his Christian name – has represented his country in post-War days on 27 occasions, and no more fascinating personality, no more lion-hearted player, has ever worn the red rose on his breast. The harder the game, the fiercer the exchanges, and Tom was in his element.

It is W. W. Wakefield, I believe, who tells a good tale of "the uncrowned king of Gloucester," as he has been called. It may be remembered that in that memorable game between England and the 1924 All Blacks the happenings during the first ten minutes were of a hectic nature. At the end of that time, during a temporary stop, Tom turned to "Wakers" and, with a broad grin, remarked, "I think we shall enjoy ourselves to-day." This is so characteristic of the man that I hope it is true.

Voyce has now practically retired from the game, but we shall never forget him. The fact that we shall not again see him in the English pack appears unthinkable. A happy and charming personality, one of the most loveable fellows I have ever been privileged to know, Tom Voyce, of Gloucester, will live long in memory.

GENT AND HUDSON.

Of "Dai" Gent, who fortunately still retains a keen interest in the game, I can only say I have always held the opinion that his skill entitled him to more than the five "caps" he obtained. Small, but courageous to a degree, Gent possessed more football "brains" than the average player, and his work was always of a constructive nature. He is one of the "big" men that Gloucester has given to England.

A. Hudson will also be remembered for one rather unique performance apart altogether from his valuable services over many years. In 1905-6 Gloucester were in tremendous form, and in 37 matches scored 661 points to 165. Hudson obtained no fewer than 41 tries – a remarkable feat in view of the strong opposition.

SPLENDID LEADERS.

The club has always been fortunate in its leaders. Among these have been F. Hartley, T. Bagwell, J. F. Brown, W. Taylor, G. Romans, W. Johns, D. R. Gent, A. Hudson, S. Smart, G. Holford, and, of course, Tom Voyce, and of these Brown possesses the distinction of being the only one to captain an undefeated side as long ago as 1882-3.

The Gloucester internationals have been W. Jackson, C. A. Hooper, F. O. Poole, F. M. Stout, P. W. Stout, C. Smith, C. Hall, D. R. Gent, A. T. Voyce, A. Hudson, A. E. Wood, H. Berry, W. Johns, D. Holland, S. Smart, and G. Holford, many of whom would be received with open arms to-day by the English selectors.

While Gloucester actually commenced their career on the site of the present enclosure, it was not until 1900 that Kingsholm was definitely secured as the permanent home of the club.

With an excellent ground, an enthusiastic membership, officers such as A. Hudson who literally live for the game, Gloucester have established themselves as a club with which it is an honour to be associated.

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