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FOOTBALL.

THE LINTS-SMITH CHALLENGE CUP
MATCH AND DANCE, 1953.

"The Times" F.C....3 Swiss Mercantile College...2
(after extra time)

This year's football match for the Lints-Smith Cup between "The Times" and the Swiss Mercantile College, played at Ravensbourne, Kent, on Saturday, 11th April, was graced by fine weather and a goodly gathering of spectators. A number of prominent members of the Swiss colony in London were present, among them Dr. E. W. Bircher, First Secretary at the Legation; Mr. W. Meier, President of the Swiss Mercantile Society in London, and Mrs. Meier; Mr. J. C. Schneider, the Society's Secretary; and Mr. W. Burren, Chairman of the Society's Education Committee, and Mrs. Burren. Mr. Burren is a keen spectator on these occasions, having himself played in the College team before the war. All were treated to an exceptionally rousing game.

The two teams lined up as follows:—

"The Times": R. G. Neighbour; D. Olley, J. G. Egan (capt.); R. F. Walker, J. Towers, R. Utton; K. Delmage, C. H. Knight, E. Plummer, E. J. Brisenden, S. J. Marlow.

Swiss Mercantile College: L. Diviani, F. Bassi (both Unione Ticinese), K. Moesch (Lucerne F.C., capt.), L. Iacomelli, E. Berti (both Unione Ticinese), C. Sidler (Sarnen F.C.), E. Berchten (Lausanne Sports), A. Besomi (Lugano F.C.), A. Bouvard (Grasshoppers, Zurich), H. Iten (Wetzikon F.C.), W. Oertly (Zurich F.C.).

The trend of play was considerably influenced by a gusty April wind, by now almost a traditional feature of this match. The team with the wind behind it enjoyed a period of general supremacy. So it was that "The Times" scored twice in the first half of the game, and the College once. All three goals were ten-to-one chances. The first "Times" goal was the result of the ball being rescued from going over the goal-line, Knight scoring from short range. This was in the 7th minute. Four minutes later Iten, about twenty yards out, saw a square foot of "Times" net unattended, shot for it and scored a spectacular equalising goal. A hesitant Swiss defence allowed "The Times" to forge ahead again in the 39th minute. Knight, also about twenty yards out, was allowed to shoot, and a fine rising ball went in off the under side of the bar. In contrast, there were many missed chances and narrow escapes; the more certain the opportunity of scoring, the likelier that the opportunity would be wasted.

In the second half, assisted by the wind, the College took command. But the narrow escapes continued, much to the general excitement of the onlookers. The score by now should have been more like 6-5 than 2-1. Swiss supporters were beginning to despair when Bouvard for once eluded the "Times" defenders and slipped the ball past the goalkeeper into an empty goal. What was going to happen now? During the remaining few minutes both goalkeepers excelled themselves, and full time came with the score still 2-2.

An so to extra time. Both teams made positional changes, the College because of injury. "The Times" were now having the better of the exchanges and hammering at the College goal. And then, suddenly in the 12th minute, Diviani had a difficult lob to deal with, and the opportunist Plummer appeared out of the blue, sailed in head-high and nodded the ball out of his hands into the net. The College team were now more leg-weary than their opponents and there was no fight left in either side. There was almost an audible sigh of relief when the referee blew the final whistle.

* * *

Dr. Bircher presented the Cup and medals after the match, and the losers received their share of the acclamations. There were special cheers for Moesch, Berti, Diviani and Iten, outstanding in the Swiss team.

A pleasant surprise was provided by Mr. C. W. Westcott, past Secretary of the "The Times" F.C., in presenting to Dr. Bircher on behalf of his club a replica medal in recognition of his unfailing interest in this annual event. He let it be known that Dr. Bircher's presence was much esteemed by "The Times" and that he was ever a welcome visitor. Dr. Bircher, in his speech of thanks, remarked that he had that day noticed a steadily improving balance over the years in the footballing standards of the two teams and he hoped that the tide would continue to flow in that direction. He resumed his seat amid warm applause.

This function was followed by the traditional dance, such an enjoyable feature of the event. The spacious "Times" Sports Club's pavilion was the setting, and some two hundred people, a large proportion of them Swiss, joined in wholeheartedly. A group of Swiss students entertained the gathering with an impromptu rendering of three Swiss national songs and infected everybody with the lilt of "s Burebüebli". One felt impressed with "The Times" Sports Club's ever-generous hospitality and that this day would not quickly be forgotten in the years. The root of these feelings can be illustrated with the spectacle of the Swiss student master the intricacies of such well-known dances as the "Palais Glide" and the "Redons". Mr. Westcott deserves a word of commendation on the spirit and efficiency of his work in organising this memorable occasion.

G.R.C.K.

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