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THE 1958 LINTS-SMITH CHALLENGE CUP FOOTBALL MATCH.

" THE TIMES " F.C. 2 SWISS MERCANTILE COLLEGE 5

No one peering out of his window on the morning of Saturday, 29th March, could with any certainty have foretold the outcome of the day's events, least of all the day's weather. Few can have been so optimistic as to forecast a beautiful sunny afternoon; or, for that matter, so convincing a victory for the football team of the Swiss Mercantile Society's College on the lush green of " The Times " Sports Club's attractive ground at Ravensbourne, Kent.

In fact, the clouds cleared as the teams, " The Times " in white and black, the Swiss students in red and white, came out to be greeted by a fair crowd of Swiss and English spectators and took up position as follows :—

" THE TIMES " F.C. (Challengers) : B. Hind ; J. Lubin, R. Richardson ; B. Forbes, G. Doorne, S. Marlow (Captain) ; K. Delmage, F. Mackay, R. Walker, E. Brisenden, P. Jesshope.

" SWISS MERCANTILE COLLEGE " (Holders) : H. Gafner (Ecole de Commerce La Neuveville) ; F. Wespi (Young Boys Bern), F. Zumwald (Biel F.C.) ; P. M. Bucher (Grasshoppers Zürich), R. Bachmann (St. Gallen F.C.) (Captain), R. Dubach (Telegraph Basel) ; H. Sidler (St. Gallen F.C.), E. Brand (Zürich F.C.), R. Elsener, M. Märki (Aarau F.C.), E. Wollenmann (Luzern F.C.).

Both teams immediately started to play some very attractive football, " The Times " using long English passes and the Swiss the short Continental variety. For twelve minutes the game remained even, but then a fine Bachmann pass found Sidler waiting unmarked in the centre. With speed and persistence he rounded Richardson and Hind and shot into an empty net.

After a brief " Times " counter-attack the students now settled down to play in a manner that belied their brief association with one another. Architect of all was their captain, Rico Bachmann, undoubtedly the finest and most complete footballer seen in these matches since the war. Breaking up a " Times " attack at one moment with astute tackling he was at the next up among his forwards and causing consternation in the " Times " defence. His was indeed an inspired performance. At this stage the Swiss team were having at least two-thirds of the play, and there were many awkward situations in the " Times " goal-mouth. " The Times " by contrast were highly menacing in short, sharp raids, and so, without any further goals materialising, the game remained full of thrills and excitement.

Märki and Wollenmann changed places after the interval, and on resumption there were some immediate and unexpected fireworks. Wollenmann scored a fantastic goal ; Sidler sent a perfect centre across to the far side of " The Times " goal, and Wollenmann met it on the turn and volleyed it into the net past a helpless Hind. A mêlée in the Swiss penalty area brought no reward to the terrier-like " Times " forwards, and a similar situation the other end was frustrated by cool heads and the goal-post. On another occasion " The Times " beat defence and goalkeeper, only to see Bachmann head the ball off the goal-line. " The Times " deserved a reward for their persistence, and it eventually came. Forbes shot

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hard for goal from twenty yards out, and the ball was in the net before Gafner, dazzled by the sun, could see it. With the score at 2-1, the situation was full of possibilities.

Encouraged by their first goal " The Times " now began to press, and only bad luck stood between them and an equalising goal. Gafner saved two or three perilous situations, and Wespi and Zumwald kept cool when it was most necessary. Corner kicks by Delmage and Jesshope had the Swiss defence several times in a tangle. The relief, when it came, was both unexpected and dramatic. Elsener collected the ball in his own half and with superb anticipation and speed beat one man after another before dribbling the ball round the goalkeeper and into the net. 3-1 for the College; the shouts had barely died when Wollenmann shot past the goalkeeper from the left and made the score 4-1. Still " The Times " pressed, but much of the sting had gone. True, following a succession of corner kicks and a nasty scrimmage Walker managed to get his foot to the ball and push it home. But then Märki had his reward, and Hind had to pick the ball out of his net for the fifth and last time. Teams and spectators were almost equally exhausted when the final whistle sounded. It had been a fine game; and if laurels are to be bestowed on individual players, one should perhaps quote Bachmann, Elsener, Brand, Dubach and Wespi in the Swiss team, and Jesshope, Marlow, Mackay, Forbes and Walker of " The Times " as those outstanding.

* * *

About a hundred sat down to tea in the spacious clubhouse after the game. Mr. Westcott, honorary secretary of " The Times " F.C., in an introductory speech welcomed all the visitors: in particular the club's president, the Hon. Hugh Astor, and Mrs. Astor; the president of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Mr. O. Grob, and Mrs. Grob; M. Ansermoz, Attaché Social at the Swiss Embassy; the Chairman of the Education Committee of the Swiss Mercantile Society, Mr. A. Jaccard, and Mrs. Jaccard; the Society's Secretary, Mr. Burren, and Mrs. Burren; the principal of the Society's College, Mr. Slade; and a number of members of the teaching staff. Mr. Westcott had himself witnessed all the matches that had taken place over the past twenty-two years. Mr. Astor congratulated both teams on a fine display and remarked that this match, together with the Grand National, would give radio commentator Eamonn Andrews much to talk about; then he presented the Lints-Smith Cup to R. Bachmann, captain of the Swiss team, and medals to all the players. Mr. Grob's speech in reply was an expression of thanks to " The Times " for their evident spontaneous hospitality and of the hope that next year would provide an equally enjoyable occasion.

Later on in the evening some two hundred people were entertained to a dance at the club, at which the " Times " members and the Swiss students were about equally represented. The Cup was duly filled and appropriately made its rounds among those more closely connected with the event. The occasion was its usual brilliant success and a credit to its organisers, and only too quickly did the curtain ring down for another year.

G.R.C.K.

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They would also welcome very warmly any members who would care to attend at the Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, on the first Tuesday in each month.