



First Leicester Schools' Football Match (Feb. 1893)

LEICESTER v SHEFFIELD BOYS A PRETTY NOVELTY

An attractive football novelty was witnessed yesterday afternoon on the Fosse ground, Walnut-street, kindly lent for the occasion of a match between Board School boys of Sheffield and Leicester. The match was arranged by the Leicestershire Scholastic Association, with the view of assisting to popularise Association football amongst scholars and it can at once be said that as far as the game be concerned those responsible for its arrangement are to be warmly congratulated upon the success of their efforts. The Sheffield boys are far-famed for their wondrous skill in the game and their first appearance in Leicester was awaited with considerable interest more especially as much time and labour had been devoted by Mr Holles, Mr Horner, and other local masters in the education of the Leicester team. Expectations were finally formed that the homesters would not be disgraced and these deductions were fully realised, for the Leicester lads sprung quite a surplus packet upon those who had not seen them performing private practice. Notwithstanding that the visitors secured a substantial margin of goals, which could only be expected from their past experiences, the Leicester lads clearly showed that they not only had an excellent idea of the game but possessed plenty of skill to exploit it. When they have played a few more games together we shall see them in winning colours. And who knows but what there may not become budding "Fossils" amongst them? In the first half according to one of the Sheffield masters, the Leicester boys gave their opponents the best game they have experienced this season, the form being quite equal to that shown by the London boys. In the second half, however, Leicester fell all to pieces, whilst the "blades" were not slow to avail themselves of every opportunity, with the result given below. Despite the showery weather which prevailed, there was a capital gate. The stand was crowded with adults, whilst the ropes were thickly lined with an enthusiastic crowd of youngsters who shouted and cheered in the most approved fashion.

Sheffield won the toss, and played in the first half from the gasworks end with the wind behind them. for several minutes play of an attractive description took place on the Leicester left wing. The football was of a highly scientific character, and the passing and re-passing most accurate. The Sheffielders had generally the best of the game, but for Leicester Cotterill and Platts played with splendid combination, and made several spirited rushes into the visitors' quarters. Once a mis-kick gave Sheffield a corner, which was nicely cleared, and Marsden on the Sheffield left just afterwards shot wide. Then the game was transferred to the other wing, and the Sheffield boys again taxed the Leicester defence. An exciting time ensued in the vicinity of the Leicester goal, and excitement reached quite a Fosse pitch as, the Leicester backs were proved to be quite equal to the occasion. Marsden shot straight to the hands of the Leicester custodian, and Cotterill was applauded for a very clever save. Still keeping up a strong pressure, the Sheffield boys were continually in Leicester's ground, but many shots went behind. At length, in the course of a warm attack, one of the Leicester backs, Groocock, unfortunately put the ball through his own goal in attempting to clear, thus putting on the first point for the visitors. The subsequent play went a little more in favour of Leicester, who succeeded in getting right up to the Sheffield backs, but the general play took pace in midfield and was of a most interesting description. Platts, on the Leicester right wing, showed really fine tricky play, but the short passing of the Sheffield team was beautifully precise, and generally they had no difficulty in eluding the Leicester halves, of whom, however, Turner played a splendid game. Getting down to the Leicester end, Sheffield forced a corner, and then from a good centre Walthall sent in a shot which struck the post and just rolled through. More midfield play followed, and then by means of a left-wing rush Leicester reached the Sheffield ground, where the half-time sounded after 40 minutes' scientific football which would have done credit to many a team of much greater pretensions. The score at this period was:

SHEFFIELD, two goals;

LEICESTER, none.

Resuming, a rush which showed the good understanding that existed amongst the Sheffield front rank took the play to the Leicester end, where a stoppage ensued for an accident to one of the Sheffield lads, and from the throw-up near the Leicester goal the ball was sent through by Needham almost before the goalkeeper had recovered his position, while the next minute Needham scored the fourth with a fine shot. The home lads seemed now to have lost their heads somewhat, while on the other hand Sheffield were as cool as ever, and

from a scrimmage in front of goal Simpson scored again. The subsequent play went almost all in favour of Sheffield, who showed evidence of very careful training, and after a rush by the Leicester right wing the ball was crossed over and returned to the Sheffield right, who, easily passing the home backs, had the goal at their mercy, Smith scoring with a shot that struck the crossbar and bounded through. Towards the end the game lagged a little, but a little life was infused into the proceedings by the Leicester right wing getting down, and forcing a corner – the nearest point they had ever been to the Sheffield goal. The flag kick was placed out in the field, and Sheffield got away, the centre lad – Simpson – scoring a sixth point. Having all the best of the play, Sheffield fully maintained their advantage, and Simpson added the seventh point after a pretty dribble through the backs. Leicester were engaged with hard defensive play to the end, and several times their goal had narrow escape, many shots missing by inches only. Throughout the Leicester boys were outplayed, the Sheffields giving a beautiful exhibition of football as it should be played, and playing in all positions with equal skill. The final score was:

SHEFFIELD, seven goals;

LEICESTER, none.

The names of the lads are appended:

Leicester: Cotterill (Ald. Newton's School), goal; Grocock (Hazel-street) and Chadwick (Melbourne-road), backs; Turner (Mountsorrel), W Borman (Hazel-street) and A Holyoake (Melbourne-road), half-backs; Cotterill (Ald. Newton's), John Platts (Oxford-street), right wing; Andrew Nicholson (Hazel-street), centre; Sam Clements (Ald. Newton's) and Fred Mason (Hazel-street), left wing, forwards.

Sheffield: Steele (13), goal; F Adams (13) and C Cooper (13), backs; A Battye (11), E Brameld (14) and J Myers(14), half-backs); W Smith (13), A Needham (11), J Simpson (12), C Walthall (13), and F Marsden (13), forwards.

Referee: Mr Horner, Leicester.

Leicester Daily Post - 15 February 1893

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Referee : Mr. Horner, Leicester.