



Leicestershire Challenge Cup 1890-91

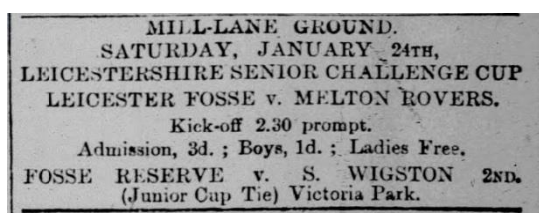
Winner: Leicester Fosse
Runner-Up: Gresley Rovers
No. of entries: 9

For the first time in the history of the Senior Challenge Cup, a “qualifying round” was held. It comprised of a single tie, Gresley Rovers, holders of the Junior Challenge Cup against Coalville, with byes awarded to Hugglescote Robin Hood, Leicester Fosse, Leicester Teachers, Loughborough Athletic, Melton Rovers, South Wigston, and Syston Wreake Valley. Gresley overcame Coalville 2-1 in December 1890 after the initial tie played a month earlier ended in a 2-2 draw.

The first round draw of the third paired the following clubs:

Leicester Fosse v. Melton Rovers
 South Wigston v. Leicester Teachers
 Hugglescote Robin Hood v. Syston Wreake Valley
 Gresley Rovers v. Loughborough Athletic

Owing to the ongoing dispute Shepshed FC entered the Kettering Charity Cup instead of the Leicestershire Challenge Cup in 1889 and for the following few seasons. To the surprise of many, Loughborough withdrew from the Leicestershire Challenge Cup first round tie against Gresley Rovers in January 1891, a week before it was scheduled to take place, to concentrate on the Midland Alliance League. This action must have been deeply disappointing to the Rovers, but Loughborough felt that they had little choice. The primary principle of the Alliance was to play the best possible team in all matches, and in order to maintain their firm adherence to an organisation which had done nothing but good to the Loughborough club, they found it impossible to



Leicester Daily Mercury - Friday 23 January 1891

raise a side for Gresley without poaching from the Alliance team. The executive body of the Leicestershire Football Association after meeting awarded the tie to Gresley Rovers. Loughborough were required to pay Gresley Rovers 5 shillings as well as a small indemnity for breaking the fixture. Other business before the meeting included a protest against the validity of the Fosse v. Melton Rovers cup tie (in which Fosse walked home to the tune of 10 goals- nil), and one by South Wigston - against the bona fide membership of Teddy Thompson, who had assisted

the Teachers to beat South Wigston. Neither of the appeals were entertained, and the draw for the semi-finals took place- : — February 21— Fosse v. Teachers, Mill-lane Ground. Referee, Mr T. S. Ashmole, and — February 28 — Gresley Rovers v. Hugglescote Robin Hood, at Coalville. Referee, Mr. I L Homer.

In foggy weather before a fair number of spectators at Coalville, in an exciting encounter, Fosse beat Leicester Teachers, who required a replay to overcome South Wigston in the previous round, to reach the Leicestershire Senior Cup Final for the second consecutive year. Their opponents were Gresley Rovers who had dismissed Hugglescote Robin Hood in the other semi-final tie. Fosse supporters were outnumbered by Gresley's in a lack lustre final played at Loughborough's Athletic Grounds on Saturday 21 March 1891. Attendance was not large and “they were by no means enthusiastic”. Little was known about Gresley Rovers, even by local newspapers. However, it was noted by one reporter that Gresley “played poor football, relying almost entirely on long and strong kicking, with no combined play worth mentioning.” Playing with the wind in the first half, Fosse scored twice. While both sides wasted several changes Gresley's shooting being especially wild and uncertain. In the second half the play was even worse, no goals were scored, the Fosse thus retaining the trophy.

Qualifying Round

#	Date	Home	Away	Comments
1	8.11.1890	Coalville Town	3 3	Gresley Rovers

Hugglescote Robin Hood, Leicester Fosse, Leicester Teachers, Loughborough Athletic, Melton Rovers, South Wigston, Syston Wreake Valley, byes

Qualifying Round Replay

#	Date	Home	Away		Comments	
2	6.12.1890	Gresley Rovers Jackson Sharp Langford	3	2	Coalville Town Smith Wharmby	A good and fast game.

Round 1

#	Date	Home	Away		Comments	
3	?	Hugglescote Robin Hood	W		Syston Wreake Valley	Result not known.
4	24.1.1890	Leicester Fosse Murdoch (2) Johnson Davis OG Atter (2) Webb (2) Flint	10	0	Melton Rovers	Mill-lane Ground, Leicester. Rain fell throughout the game, making the ground slippery.
5	24.11.1890	Gresley Rovers	W		Loughborough Athletic	Loughborough withdrew. The awarded to Gresley
6	22.11.1890	South Wigston AN Others	2	2	Leicester Teachers Eyles Wilkes	An unruly crowd of spectators, who frequently broke into the field of play

Round 1 Replay

#	Date	Home	Away		Comments	
7	24.1.1891	Leicester Teachers	2	1	South Wigston	Evington-lane Ground, Leicester. After the match Wigston lodged a protest against Thompson, of the Teachers, as not being eligible to play.

Semi-Finals

#	Date	Home	Away		Comments	
8	21.2.1891	Leicester Fosse	3 (2)	1 (1)	Leicester Teachers	At Coalville. Fair number of spectators. Foggy weather.
9	28.2.1891	Gresley Rovers Hart (3) Sharp	4	2	Hugglescote Robin Hood AN Others	At Coalville. Large number of spectators. .

Final

#	Date	Home	Away		Comments	
10	21.3.1891	Leicester Fosse Webb EJohnson	2 (2)	0 (0)	Gresley Rovers	Athletic Grounds, Loughborough. Attendance of spectators was not large, and they were by no means enthusiastic - the majority present supported Gresley.

Match Reports

#1 FOOTBALL NOTES – A match was played at Coalville on Saturday, in connection with the Senior Challenge Cup Competition, between Coalville FC and Gresley Rovers FC. after some very fast play the match ended in a draw, each side scoring three goals.

Leicester Journal – 14 November 1890

#2 LEICESTERSHIRE SENIOR CUP

GRESLEY ROVERS v COALVILLE TOWN – These teams again met on the Gresley ground on Saturday, a good fast game ending in favour of the home team by three goals to two. Jackson, Sharpe, and Langford each scoring for the visitors and Smith and Wharmby for Coalville.

Leicester Daily Post – 8 December 1890

#3 ?

#4 LEICESTERSHIRE SENIOR CHALLENGE

LEICESTER FOSSE v MELTON ROVERS – The tie in this competition between the crack Leicester and Melton teams was played off on Saturday afternoon on the Mill-lane Ground. Rain fell heavily during the greater part of the game, and the ground was a most slippery condition, rendering accurate play extremely difficult. This, and the fact that after such a long enforced holiday the form shown by the players could not be expected to be very grand, tended to make the game a very poor exhibition of football. The home team had the best of the play throughout; in fact, the Rovers never had a "look in." The Fossils started the game, and in a few minutes Murdoch ran up with the ball and scored. Shortly after the visitors conceded a corner, and from the kick E. Johnson scored a second point. Following this with another attack, Bailey had to kick out. From the throw-in Ted Johnson kicked the ball back over his head, and Hazlewood missed it. The home team continued to press heavily, and the Melton goalkeeper had his hands continually employed. But his defence was excellent, and to him alone is due to the fact that his side had not a greater number of points against them. A few minutes before the expiration of the first half Davis sent in a long kick from mid-field which Hazlewood ought to have stopped, but which scored the fourth goal for the Fossils. Melton then got down once or twice, but were unable to do anything against the strong play of the backs. In the second half the visitors fared even worse, almost the whole of the game being in their territory. The fifth goal against them was obtained by Atter, whose shot went through off Brain, one of the Melton backs. The next was got by Atter, who received the ball from Webb, and the goal after was obtained by Webb himself. Then Hazlewood saved several shots well, and the ball was got away for a short time, Bailey and Smith working well. Then Webb shot, and Hazlewood fisted out, but Murdoch headed the leather through for the eighth goal. Within the last five minutes Flint and Webb added another goal apiece, bringing the total up to ten, while the visitors were unable to get a single score. The teams were as follows:—Fosse: C. Walker, goal; S. Rowson and W. Davis, backs J. Johnson: R. Perry, E. A. Nuttall, half-backs; J. Flint, J. Murdoch (right), H. Webb (centre), R. Johnny and J. Atter (left), forwards. Rovers: Halewood, goal; Bailey and Rawlings, backs; Clarke, F. Brewin, and Belton, left-backs; Priestman, Turner (right), Berridge (centre), Smith, and Fendall (left) forwards. Messrs. Cooper and Lee officiated as umpires, and the referee was Mr. R. Small.

Leicester Daily Post - 26 January 1891

#5 Gresley v Loughborough Athletic – Loughborough withdrew from the competition.

LEICESTERSHIRE SENIOR CHALLENGE CUP

#6 LEICESTER TEACHERS v SOUTH WIGSTON – Played at South Wigston before an unruly crowd of spectators, who frequently broke into the field of play. In the first half the Teachers, who played with the wind in their favour, scored twice (Eyles and Wilkes), but in the second half the home team equalised, one goal, however, being alleged to have been unfairly awarded by the referee. Result of two goals each.

Leicester Daily Post – 24 November 1890

#7 LEICESTER TEACHER v SOUTH WIGSTON —It will be remembered that in November these teams played a drawn game of two goals each for the above cup, and on Saturday afternoon they met on the Evington-lane Ground to re-play their "tie." The ground was in a very unsatisfactory condition, pools of water standing in all the hollow places. The Teachers kicked off against the wind, and immediately began to press, and after about ten minutes play Handford scored after a capital run down the wing. Some give and take play was followed by a good bit of combination by the Teachers, and Rowntree got a "good 'un " past

Crooks, which put the Teachers on fairly good terms with themselves. From now up to half-time Wigston, who had woke up, did all the pressing, three unproductive corners quickly following, but the teams changed ends with the score standing at two goals to nil in favour of the Teachers. After the restart Wigston still pressed, and H. Smith managed to score. More fast play followed round the Teachers goal, but Handford relieved splendidly, and subsequently made one or two very pretty runs down the field. Corner after corner fell to both sides, but although Wigston tried all they knew they could not get on terms, and suffered defeat by two goals to one. After the match Wigston lodged a protest against Thompson, of the Teachers, as not being eligible to play. Teams :—Teachers: Preston, goal; H. Taylor and F. Cater, backs; R. Martin, T. Linaker, and J. Bailey, half-backs; Wilkes and R. Thompson, right-wing; Rowntree and Handford, left-wing; Kyles, centre, forwards—Wigston: Crooks, goal; W. Bolsover and J. O'Shea, backs; Cunliffe, Weston, and Bridgford, half-backs; H. Bolsover and Storer, right-wing; W. Smith and W. Hanney, left-wing; Medley, centre, forwards. Umpires, W. Voss and T. Hollis. Referee, T. Ashmole.

Leicester Daily Post - 26 January 1891

LEICESTERSHIRE SENIOR CUP

SEMI-FINAL

#8 FOSSE v TEACHERS - This match took place at Coalville on Saturday afternoon before a fair number of spectators, in foggy, weather. Eyles kicked off for the Teachers, who at once began to press. The ball was returned, and Atter ran down the left for Fosse and showed, the Teachers following suit. At half-time the score was two to one in favour of Fosse. In the second half Fosse scored again, and after an exciting seen game they proved the victors by three goals to one.

Leicester Daily Post - 23 February 1891

LEICESTERSHIRE SENIOR CUP

#9 GRESLEY ROVERS v HUGGLESCOTE ROBIN HOOD - This semi-final match was played at Coalville before a large number of spectators. The game at once became very fast, neither side claiming an advantage until fifteen minutes after the start, when Hart scored for the Rovers. Hugglescote then made matters lively, and equalised, the score at half-time being one goal each. On restarting, both teams worked hard, but the Gresley forwards' better combination enabled them to score through Hart (2) and Sharp (1), the final result being Gresley four goals, Hugglescote two.

Leicester Daily Post - 2 March 1890

#10 LEICESTER FOSSE v GRESLEY ROVERS —In the semi-finals of this competition the Leicester team beat the Teachers, and the Hugglescote Robin Hood went down before the Gresley Rovers. Between the Leicester and Gresley teams, therefore, rested the final contest, which was played on Saturday afternoon, at Loughborough. The attendance of spectators was not large, and they were by no means enthusiastic. The majority of them favoured the Gresley club. The Fosse put a good average team on the field, and their opponents were also well represented. The game, however, was most disappointing from a spectator's point of view, being throughout very tame and uninteresting. Of the form shown by either side but little in the way of commendation can be said. The Gresley Rovers, of whom very little known in the county town, played poor football, relying almost entirely on long and strong kicking, with no combined play worth mentioning. To their loose play may perhaps be attributed the moderate show of the Fossil.#, who were unable to get on the ball with their usual facility. The Gresley defence was the best part of their play, so that this was due the inability of the Leicester men to make a large score. In the first half the Fosse, playing with the wind, scored twice, while both sides lost several good chances, the Gresley shooting being especially wild and uncertain. In the second half the play was even worse, and no goals were scored, the game ending in a victory for the Leicester club by two goals to none, they thereby obtaining possession of the Cup for this season. Details: Gresley started at 3.30 from the end opposite the entrance, and the Fosse speedily took the ball into their opponents' territory. Atter shot in well, and Mansfield barely succeeded in saving at the expense of a corner. The Rovers then worked the game steadily down the field end threatened the Leicester goal. J. Johnson was compelled to give a corner to save, and Perry conceded another directly after. Webb cleared easily, and the Fossils assumed the offensive. A sharp piece of play between Flint, Webb, and Atter resulted in a free kick for hands, in dangerous proximity to the Gresley goal. A warm shot by Davis forced a corner, which was followed by another, Harrison heading over the goal-line to save. Another free ensued close to the Gresley goal, and the ball was cleared, and passed to the Rovers' right wing. Robinson ran down capitably, and centred, but Sharpe missed his opportunity, and Rowson saved with a long kick.

Directly after, Langford got well down and send in a hard shot, which was, unfortunately for his side, not straight, his Leicester team continued to press heavily after the and from a corner a warm scrimmage took place in the Gresley ground. Murdoch missed a good chance, and Mansfield fisting out well, the leather was got safely away for the time being. A few minutes after Atter put in a splendid centre, and Webb scored the first goal without difficulty. Loose play ensued for a time in the middle of the field. Another shot from the Gresley right went behind. The ball was returned directly to the Leicester goal, but Nuttall relieved, and Webb, gaining possession, took it well up, and forced a corner. From the kick the Fosse right crossed, and E Johnson sent in a shot which was too good for Mansfield. From this point until half time was called the play was very poor, and ends were changed with the score- Fosse, two goals; Gresley Rovers, none. Perry started the second half, and after a spell of quiet play, the Rovers, with the wind now in their favour, succeeded in attacking more continuously. Webb got away, and passed to Flint, who run close on the Gresley goal line, and following up with a neat shot the ball fell on top of the crossbar and dropped behind. The Leicester left wing then forced a corner, which was neatly placed, and after made an oblique kick, which Mansfield had to stop with his fist. The ball was transferred to the other end, and Walker had to handle. Fosse were compelled to defend after this, and gave two corners in succession. From the second E Johnson cleared, and Webb running through sent in a straight shot, which Mansfield caught without difficulty. The latter was taken up the field, and Johnson shot well for goal. Walker nearly missed the ball, and only just reached it in time to turn it behind the post. From the corner kick the ball was got clear away. Returning to the attack, Gresley had a good chance, but Hart kicked very wide. In a subsequent attack by the Rovers, Walker conceded a corner to save. Another followed on the other side of the goal, but the kick went behind. The attack was continued, and then other corner kick obtained. Then a free for hands was given close to goal, and the ball went over the bar. Edward Johnson and Webb got away from the goal kick, but was stopped by the Gresley backs, and the ball returned up the field. Up and down play followed, and then Atter got in a careful centre, enabling E Johnson to shoot. Mansfield with a strong fist out, however, cleared, and shortly after the whistle blew for full time. The final score was Fosse, two goals; Gresley Rovers, none.

Players. Fosse: C Walker, goal; S Rowson and W Davis, backs; J Johnson (captain), R Perry and A Nutall, half backs; J Flint and J Murdoch (right), H Webb (centre), E Johnson and J Atter (left), forwards. Gresley Rovers: R B Mansfield, goal; J Harrison and G Topliss, backs; W Dale, A Ensor and S Cox, half backs; W Langford and J M Robinson (right), J Sharp (centre), W Jackson and J Hart (left), forwards. Mr W H Wells officiated as referee, and the umpires were Messrs W Taylor and Ball.

Leicester Daily Post - 23 March 1891