



Rolleston Cup 1896-97

Winner: Syston Swifts
Runner-Up: Belgrave St Michael's
No. of entries: 15?

Only one Round 1 result has been found, a replayed tie between Enderby Granite and Leicester Waverley. It seems probable, since the number of teams in the Round 2 was 14, that the vast majority of entries were given a bye in Round 1.

Leicester Fosse Amateurs were exempt from the first two rounds and were knocked out by Leicester Waverley in their only game in the competition. Fosse Amateurs were as the name implies a team of amateurs based at the professional club.

The finals of both the Association Football and Rugby Union Rolleston Charity Cup competitions were played on Filbert-street on Saturday 27 February in the presence of 4,000 spectators. Belgrave St Peter's beat Belgrave Rovers by three tries to nil in the opening game. After the presentation of the cup, another Belgrave team, St Michaels drew 3-3 in a pulsating game for the Association Rolleston Cup. Two weeks later at the same venue Syston won the cup, overcoming Belgrave 2-1.

Round 1

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
1	??.1896	Enderby Granite	D	D	Leicester Waverley	

Round 1 Replay

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
2	31.10.1896	Enderby Granite	0	1	Leicester Waverley	

Round 2

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
3		Aylestone United	W		King Richard's-road	
4		St Matthew's	0	3	Leicester Waverley	
5		Railways' United		W	Leicester Emmanuel	
6	28.11.1896	South Wigston	2	0	Syston Swifts	The game was ordered to be replayed at South Wigston. Syston Swifts were censured for playing unregistered men. Pickard and Williamson were suspended for a month for playing as professionals without being registered.
7		St Mary's Rovers		W	Anstey Town	
8		St Paul's Church		W	Belgrave St Michael's	
9	28.11.1896	YMCA	1	6	Leicester West Leigh Flaxx Goldbourne (2) Bentley (2) Hemsley	Victoria Park, Leicester.

Leicester Fosse Amateurs exempt from the first two rounds

Round 2 Replay

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
10	19.12.1896	South Wigston		W	Syston Swifts	

Round 3

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
11	19.12.1896	Aylestone United	0	7	Belgrave St Michael's	
12	19.12.1896	Anstey Town	3	0	Leicester West Leigh	
13	19.12.1896	Leicester Fosse Amateurs Jones	1 (1)	2 (1)	Leicester Waverley Berry Dobson	Filbert-street ground, Leicester. Fair number of spectators. Waverley played in red.
14		Syston Swifts	W		Leicester Emmanuel	

Semi-Finals

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
15	30.1.1897	Anstey Town	1	6	Belgrave St Michael's	
16	30.1.1897	Syston Swifts Harriman (3) Harris (2) AN Others Cooper	10	-0	Leicester Waverley	

Final

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
17	27.2.1897	Syston Swifts Bunny Hollins (2)	3	3	Belgrave St Michael's Dalby Wright Curtis	Fosse ground, Leicester. 4,000 spectators. Played after the Rolleston Final for Rugby Union between Belgrave St Peters and Belgrave Rovers

Final - Replay

	Date	Home			Away	Match Details
18	13.3.1897	Syston Swifts White (2)	2	1	Belgrave St Michael's Wright	Filbert-street, Leicester. Good attendance. "After the conclusion of the match Mr J F L Rolleston presented the cup with a few appropriate remarks to the captain of the Syston club and Mrs Rolleston presented the medals to the players. Much enthusiasm was displayed in the proceedings.

MATCH REPORTS

A selection of published match reports.

#2 LEICESTER WAVERLEY v ENDERBY GRANITE

At Enderby. Result:

WAVERLEY, one goal;

ENDERBY, none.

Leicester Daily Post - 2 November 1896

#4 WAVERLEY v ST MATTHEW'S

On the Victoria Park. Result:

WAVERLEY, three goals;

STMATTHEW'S, none.

Leicester Daily Post - 30 November 1896

#6 SOUTH WIGSTON v SYSTON SWIFTS

At South Wigston. Result:

SOUTH WIGSTON, two goals;
SYSTON, none.

Leicester Daily Post -30 November 1896

#9 ROLLISTON CHARITY CUP

YMCA v WEST LEIGH

Played on the Victoria Park. In the first half YMCA had rather the best of the game, and at the interval led by one goal which was put in by Flaxx. In the earlier portions of the second half the YMCA continued to have somewhat the best of matters, and during the last 20 minutes a change came over the scene. West Leigh ran their opponent's their legs, and piled on goal after goal. Goldbourne scored two, Bentley two and Hemsley and Hall one each. The game ended:

WEST LEIGH, six goals;
YMCA, one.

Leicester Daily Post -30 November 1896

#11 BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S v AYLESTONE UNITED

Played at Aylestone. Belgrave pressed in the final half, and led at half-time by two goals to none. In the second half Belgrave added more five goals, and a very one-sided game ended.

BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S, seven goals;
AYLESTONE UNITED, none.

Leicester Daily Post - 21 December 1896

#12 ANSTEY TOWN v WEST LEIGH

At Anstey. Result

ANSTEY, three goals;
WEST LEIGH, none.

Leicester Daily Post - 21 December 1896

ROLLESTON CHARITY CUP

THIRD ROUND

#13 FOSSE AMATEURS v WAVERLEY

For some years now the Fosse Club has been looked upon as consisting of professionals, so therefore the above title may sound very queer to the uninitiated, but to meet their engagement in the Rolleston Charity Cup a truly set of amateur players had to be got together. By the rules governing Fosse were exempt from participating in the first two rounds, but Waverley had made good their claim to take part in Saturday's tie by knocking out Melton and Enderby Granite. With the first and second teams of the Fosse away, the match took place on the Filbert-street Ground before a fair number of spectators. The ground was in good condition, and Thompson having lost the toss, Jones kicked off towards the town end. Fosse at once ran down, but play to commence with was of a scrambling character, but both sets of backs were called upon. Wood shot over after a corner had been conceded, and at the opposite end the Fosse custodian had to throw away from the Waverley left. The ball, however, was well returned, and a shot from the same quarter struck the upright, glancing out of play. Waverley now pressed hotly, and Thompson had to kick away Wood relieved and passed to Jacques, the latter after having made a lot of ground passed nicely to Bamford on the wing to make the shot. The left winger went straight for goal, and Limbers failing to clear several Fosse players rolled on to him, and Jones completed the goal. From the centre kick Berry had a run down, eventually passing the ball over to the extreme wing, where a corner was forced, but it was of little advantage to the Waverley who were playing extremely well together, but they had one fault, that of being too eager, with the result that they frequently overran the ball. Waverley kept up a hot fusilade, but for the most part their shots were taken at too long a range and went wide of their intended destination. At length, however, their forwards, who had been very energetic throughout, swarmed round the Fosse goal. Thompson appeared to have cleared, but Wright put the ball back amongst his forwards, and Berry equalised the score. This had the effect of spurring both sets of players on to greater efforts, and for some time the game progressed at a fairly good pace, and, if anything, Fosse, who were playing a man short, had slightly the better of the exchanges. Wood passed out to Bamford, the latter shooting, and Limbert clearing, Jones kicking over just afterwards. Dobson got the best of a tussle with Wood, and for some minutes the Fosse goal was in immediate danger, shots being poured in from all quarters. At length Harris threw out to

Thompson, who, with Cassell and Wood had been putting in some very strong work. From now up to half-time each side attacked in turn, the score at that time being:

ONE GOAL EACH

On resuming Waverley got down and Harris fumbling the ball, a goal looked certain to be scored against him. Cassell, however, came to the rescue, and Jacques caused play to go on at the opposite end. Fosse lost a lot of the ground gained, owing to an infringement, but the ball was soon back again, and Wood receiving forced a corner. The flag-kick was safely headed away, and Cassell lying too far up the field, was unable to get in his kick, the ball went right along the line Walton was left in possession, but he was not allowed to get his shot, and at the other end Beckley had a pop at goal, his shot just going over. In quick succession frees fell to each side, which in the end favoured Fosse, Wood kicking across to Beckley, who shot from a long range outside. Fosse kept their opponents penned to their own half for some time, until Collett received, and tricking the halves, passed to Dobson, who ran in and scored, which gave the Reds the lead. At this stage Thompson, who had been playing back changed places with Beckley, and soon made his presence felt amongst the forwards, striking the crossbar with a good shot. Play by this time had greatly degenerated, and was of a scrambling character, until Collett took possession, and made a pretty run down, but Willis put a stop to his careering before he became dangerous. Thompson had a sprint on his own, and although he got through the halves, he found more than his match in Wright. However, the movement was not ended until a corner had been conceded, and placed behind by Willis. Fosse continued to have the best of the general field work but were generally robbed of the ball when within shooting range. Jones made an unsuccessful attempt at goal and Thompson soon after had a clear course, but had the ball taken off him in the goal mouth. The play which followed was of a fast and exciting nature, and a regular scramble for the ball, and when the referee's whistle sounded time, the score was:

WAVERLEY, two goals;

FOSSE, one goal.

Leicester Daily Post - 21 December 1896

LEICESTERSHIRE ROLLESON CHARITY CUP

SEMI-FINAL

#15 ANSTEY TOWN v BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S

At Anstey. The visitors had considerably the best of play, and won by six goals to one. Syston and Belgrave St Michael's will therefore meet in the final, the date for which for which will be fixed by the Council of the Leicestershire Football Association.

Sporting Life - 3 February 1897

#16 SYSTON v WAVERLEY

At Syston, the Leicester Waverley met the home club to contest the right of entry to the final of the Leicestershire Rolleston Charity Cup. The visitors won the toss, and during the first ten minutes they played a better game than Syston, showing good combination, but were weak in shooting. Afterwards Syston assumed the upper hand, and the game became of one of the most one-sided character. Harriman opened the score, Harris put on a second goal, and three more were added before the interval. Crossing over, the Leicester club opened in a more prominent fashion, but Syston gradually wore them down and piled on the score at a rapid pace. Harriman was responsible for two goals and Harris and Cooper one each, the final reading - Syston, ten goals; Leicester Waverley, nil.

Sporting Life - 3 February 1897

ROLLESTON CHARITY CUP

FINAL

#17 BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S v SYSTON SWIFTS

At the conclusion of the rugby match, the final for the Association Cup was contested between another Belgrave club - St Michael's - and the first eleven of Syston Swifts. By this time the attendance had considerably increased, and there were about 4,000 people present. The ground was in splendid condition for a fast game. Both teams were well represented. St Michael's won the toss, and Syston had to defend the town end and face a strong sun. Belgrave were the first to attack and Barker with a miskick let them in, but fortunately he was well backed up by White, who relieved to centre. Belgrave were soon back again, the result, however, being only a goal kick. During the first 10 minutes the game was played at a terrific pace, but after the first burst of spurts the players settled down to steady play, and Belgrave at once began to

assert their superiority, and gradually worked their way to the vicinity of the villager's goal, and Dalby put in a shot which Lewin had no chance of saving, a feat which was greeted with loud applause by the Belgrave partisans. Then Syston had a look in and Harris sent in a smart shot, but Ward cleverly fisted away. A pretty piece of combined work was seen on the part of the Syston forwards, but it did not prove of much advantage to them, and the Belgrave front rank was soon in evidence again. Another wretched piece of play on the part of a Barker led them in, and Wright slipped the ball into the net for the second goal, appeal for offside being disallowed. For a long time after this game was very even, and confined almost entirely to midfield, neither side being able to gain any advantage. Then at Belgrave pressed again, and Lewis had to save twice, while on another occasion the ball struck the crossbar. After a stoppage owing to Barker getting badly kicked, Belgrave again commenced to assert that superiority, and Curtis headed the ball in for a smart centre from the right wing. Soon afterwards half-time arrived with the score:

BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S, three;

SYSTON SWIFTS, none.

As soon as the second half was commenced Belgrave got their opponents penned in their own half, but it was only for a few minutes, and then Syston by the aid of some clever passing amongst that forwards forced St Michaels to act on the defensive. Baxter and Smith, however, defended well, and played on several occasions, when it looked almost certain that the Swift's would score. A good tackle and kick by Bunny gave the Swift's an opening, but after taking the ball right down, Harrison and Radcliffe bungled it, and a fine chance was lost. Syston were now having much the best of the game, but they were very weak in front of the net. At last they bundled the ball into the net, but the referee disallowed the point. Soon afterwards Harris put in a splendid shot, which struck the crossbar, and rebounded into play, and Hollins, running up, banged the ball in before Ward had recovered himself. The game had hardly been started before Syston down round their opponents' goal, and were given a free close in. The ball was placed well amongst the players, and four or five of the Syston forwards rushed the leather straight into the net. Syston now appeared to have a chance the moment that Belgrave had kicked off the ball was sent across to Harris, who smartly around down the wing, and while in difficulties got in a magnificent centre and amidst great excitement Hollins equalised. Then the game became most exciting, and all the players exerted their utmost to put on the winning point, each movement being watched with interest by the spectators. From a miskick Syston forced a corner, but the ball went behind. Then Belgrave took up the attack, and for some minutes had considerably the best of the game, but were unable to score, and time was called with the score.

THREE GOALS EACH

Teams

Syston Swifts: W M Lewin; H White and B Barker, backs; G Bunny, A Cooper and W Byatt, half-backs; C Harris, W Ratcliffe, W H Harriman, E Hollins, and W Cooper, forwards.

Belgrave St Michael's: T H Ward, goal; W Smith and Baxter, backs; H Betts, T Smith and F Cufflin, half-backs; J Harris, S Dalby, G Wright, C Rowland, H Curtis, forwards.

Referee, Mr Marson,

Leicester Daily Post - 1 March 1896

ROLLESTON CUP

REPLAYED FINAL

#18 SYSTON SWIFTS v BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S

On The Fosse ground before a good attendance, in ideal football weather. Belgrave won the toss, and put Syston to face the wind and sun. Harriman put the ball in motion for the Swift's, who were quickly robbed, and Belgrave rushed down by means of the left wing, though the Reds were prevented from centring however, Betts tried a shot from back, which landed over the net. The game went on at an exceedingly fast rate, and much enthusiasm was displayed. Belgrave had the best of the exchanges hereabouts, all the play being in the Syston half, and a combined bit of play in front of the Syston goal ended in Wright drawing first blood for the Belgravians. This early reverse did not suit Syston, who from the centre kick rushed by short passing to near the opponents goal. However, W. Smith cleared, and try as they would, the Syston forwards could not get past Baxter and Smith. Curtis and Rowland got down again, and an attack was kept up at the Syston end, though that matter the Syston backs were playing quite as good a game as their opponents, and Lewin was never tested. A fast ground shot by Harris only just missed the mark by a few inches, and later on Barker headed a grand shot out, which came from the foot of Wright. "Hands" spelt danger for Syston, but "hands" by Belgrave again got them out of a difficulty, and Harris sped away up the wing, giving

Ward his first handful in the game, but the whistle had a previously gone. Play was now in the Belgrave half for a few minutes, but Ward was never troubled. Marris, for Belgrave, next got in a grand run and centre, which ought to have been turned to account by Rowland, but that player missed his opportunity, half time arrived soon afterwards, with the score:

BELGRAVE ST MICHAEL'S, one goal
SYSTON SWIFTS, none

Syston now taking advantage of the wind and sun were expected to turn tables on their opponents, but Belgrave were the first to take up the running, and Lewin was troubled to get rid of a shot from Wright, and quickly aroused enthusiasm for his clever effort. Harris (Syston) came out with a clear opening, but was badly tripped, and after the ensuing free the ball was sent high over the net. Syston, however, were now having the best of the play, but the game was not going so fast as in the first portion, though interesting. T. Smith was next conspicuous with a capital dodging individual effort, but the ball was eventually put behind. Then the game livened up again, Harris and Hollins putting in some clever work, and the Belgrave goal underwent an anxious time, several shots only just missing the mark. Then a brief visit was paid to the other end, but Lewin was applauded for another fine save from Wright. Syston again attacked in earnest, and as Belgrave began to fag, the Swift's seemed, if anything, to take new life, and fast and exciting play took place in the Belgrave half, though Baxter and W. Smith defended in gallant style. Hereabouts Hollins was rather badly hurt, and after being held to the touchline, he determined to resume his part in the game, though for the remainder he was hopping about on one leg and a "swinger." After Lewin had again been tested, the Syston forwards rushed down to the other end, and after the ball had been bandied about, Hollins kicked forward to White, who with a grand shot equalised the score. Ward having no chance to save. Both teams now put in all they knew to wrest the lead again, the Swift's showing the best, and as a result of a capital movement, White again came into possession, and beat Ward amidst uproarious cheering from the Syston partisans. The Reds now had got their opponents beaten, the Belgrave forwards doing very little. Syston forced a couple of unproductive corners and time was eventually called with the score:

SYSTON SWIFTS, two goals;
BELGAVE ST MICHAEL'S, one goal

PRESENTATION OF THE CUP

After the conclusion of the match Mr J F L Rolleston presented the cup with a few appropriate remarks to the captain of the Syston club and Mrs Rolleston presented the medals to the players. Much enthusiasm was displayed in the proceedings.

Leicester Daily Post - 15 March 1896

Additional Information

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THE ROLLESTON CHARITY CUP.

The match between Leicester Waverley and Enderby Granite to be re-played at Enderby on Saturday next.—I. Hoyland, late of Carr Bros., having paid his share of the fines due from that club, was reinstated.—Claybrook Rovers were admitted as members of the Association.

ROLLESTON CHARITY CUP.—November 28th.
Railways' United v. Leicester Emanuel, Mr. G. Carter (Leicester); St. Paul's Church v. Belgrave St. Michael's, Mr. T. H. Plummer (Leicester); South Wigston v. Syston Swifts, Mr. Linthwaite (Leicester); St. Mary's Rovers v. Anstey Town, Mr. T. A. Sowter (Leicester); Y.M.C.A. v Leicester West Leigh, Mr. P. Clarke (Leicester); Aylestone United v. King Richard's-road, Mr C. Wells (Leicester); Enderby Granite or Leicester Waverley v. St. Matthew's Vicarage, Mr. Green (Leicester).

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Leicester Chronicle - 31 October 1896

**ROLLESTON CHARITY CUP.—THIRD
ROUND.**
To be played on the ground of the first-named
in each case on Dec. 19.
Aylestone United v. Belgrave St. Michael's;
South Wigston or Syston Swifts v. Leicester
Emanuel; Leicester Fosse v. Waverley; Austey
Town v. West Leigh.

Leicester Chronicle - 12 December 1896