

Swiss footballers in England

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SWISS FOOTBALLERS IN ENGLAND

The sun shone brightly on the 75,000 spectators who assembled on Saturday, May 11th, 1946, at Stamford Bridge to watch the International Football Match, England v. Switzerland.

The Band of H.M. Royal Marines (Chatham Division) played some lively tunes before the play began. A large Swiss contingent was noticeable by the carrying and wearing of little Swiss flags, and I was pleased to see a considerable number of our compatriots from the Swiss Colony in Birmingham amongst the Swiss supporters.

It was mentioned in the English Press that about 3,000 Swiss football "Fans" intended to accompany the Swiss Internationals, but, that at the last moment the British authorities refused the visas. I have no complaints to make with this decision, in view of the difficulties with regard to accommodation and food supply. I am of the opinion that such an application ought never to have been made, it would not have met with the approval of the British public, and it goes to prove that our people at home do not sufficiently appreciate the existing conditions in countries which have gone through one of the biggest upheavals in world history. Now, as the frontiers are once more open, it would be desirable that our people at home should

come out of their "splendid isolation", and study the psychology of other countries, who have borne the brunt of warfare during the last six years, with more understanding.

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In the directors enclosure, one noticed the presence of the Swiss Minister, accompanied by Madame Ruegger, Mr. Noel Baker, Minister of State, Mr. Rous, President of the English Football Association, and a number of Swiss and English Football Association officials.

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The two opposing teams received a rousing reception on their appearance on the field, the Swiss Minister, Monsieur Paul Ruegger, accompanied Mr. Noel Baker, shook hands with the two teams which were lined up opposite each other. The respective National Anthems were then played after which the French Referee, M. De La Salle, called the two captains (Amado and Lawton) to the centre of the pitch for the usual "toss up".

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It is thirty-six years since a Swiss National team has visited this country, and on that occasion England, which was represented by an amateur side, won 6 - 1, the match being played at Park Royal.

Minister Ruegger shakes hands with members of the Swiss team. and Courtrat. With the Minister: Amado.

Right to left: Ballabio, Friedlaender, Bickel, Andreoli, Springer

Photo by courtesy of PHOTOPRESS, A.G., ZURICH.





A critical moment in front of the Swiss goal. Ballabio clears a dangerous corner kick. Photo by courtesy of PHOTOPRESS, A.G., ZURICH.

During the last twenty years, the quality of Football in Switzerland has risen rapidly, which could be noted on the occasional visits paid by such teams as the Grasshoppers Zurich and Servette, Geneva. In 1938, for the first time in Swiss Football history, the Swiss National team defeated a strong English side, this feat was repeated in July of last year, when a F.A. Services XI were beaten in Berne by 2 - 1. It is interesting to note that seven of the English players, who played in Berne, also faced the Swiss team at Stamford Bridge.

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The run of the play has been widely reported in the English Press, and we therefore do not propose to go again into details, except for making a few general remarks.

The result of the match, a defeat of the Swiss side by 4 - 1, was disappointing, and although we do not like to make excuses for our National team, a few facts should be mentioned.

First of all it has to be borne in mind, that the Swiss National team is solely composed of amateurs, and none of the footballers follow football as a full time career. The remuneration, apart from travelling expenses, consists in 30 francs each for a win, 20 francs each for a draw, and 10 francs if they are beaten. This compares modestly with the wages received by an English professional player, let alone the huge transfer

fees, reaching often five figures, which are changing hands in English Professional Football.

Secondly, it was unfortunate that two of the Swiss players were knocked out early in the game, and although they were replaced by reserves it must have had, at least, a psychological effect on the run of the match.

It stands to reason, that a professional side, which is subject to intense training, has considerable advantage over amateurs. Their stamina is, for one thing, supposed to be on a much higher level, and this was unmistakably proved at Stamford Bridge. It was a tired Swiss team which faced the English side after a crueling and goalless first half, and although the Swiss team scored the first goal of the match (Friedlander) shortly after resuming the second half, they were unable to maintain the pressure, and towards the end of the play went to pieces.

Amado, centre-forward and captain of the Swiss team was disappointing, he had no chance against Scott (Arsenal) and Hardwick (Middlesborough), who stuck to him like glue. Time after time the Swiss forwards were caught in the offside trap, and it is hoped, that Lawton, the Chelsea centre forward, who is going to act as a coach to Swiss Footballers this summer, will give them some useful hints and tips how to avoid being "caught."

There is no use beating about the bush, the Eng-

lish National team were the better side, and deserved to win. They were by far the faster side and showed greater staying power. If it would not have been for the splendid goal keeping of Ballabio and the steady and brilliant defence of Steffen and Gyger, especially in the first half of the play, a much higher score might have resulted. Amongst the Swiss forwards, Friedlaender excelled himself, but alas too often he was caught in the off-side trap.

The game was a delight to watch, clean and straight forward, and although it was lost by the Swiss side, they gave, on the whole a creditable performance.

Team (Swiss): Ballabio (Grenchen F.C.); Steffen (Cantonal F.C.); Gyger (Cantonal F.C.); Rickenbach (Grenchen F.C.); Andreoli (Lugano F.C.); Springer (Zurich F.C.); Friedlaender (Grasshopper F.C.); Fink (Young Fellow F.C.); Fatton (Servette F.C.); Amado (Grasshopper F.C.); Bickel (Grasshopper F.C.).

Team (English): Swift (Manchester City); Scott (Arsenal); Hardwick (Middlesborough); Wright (Wolves); Franklin (Stoke City); Johnson (Charlton); Carter (Sunderland); Brown (Charlton); Matthews (Stoke City); Lawton (Chelsea); Smith (Aston Villa).

It was hardly to be expected that the Swiss International Team would be the winners in the second

match played against a Scottish International side at Hampden Park, Glasgow. They were beaten by 3 - 1 before a record crowd, after a hard and strenuous game. Monsieur A. Escher, Counsellor of Legation, Monsieur R. Hunziker, Secretary of Legation and M. Hofstetter, Swiss Consular Agent in Balloch, witnessed the match.

By the time this report is being read our Swiss footballers will have returned home, after an interesting though arduous stay in this country.

The social side of their visit was not neglected, it included a reception by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House, a trip through the London Docks by Steamer, an excursion to Windsor by coach, a tea party given by the Swiss Minister at the Dorchester Hotel, an invitation by the City Swiss Club to dine at the Dorchester and a Banquet offered by the English Football Association, also at the Dorchester, etc., etc.

We are glad to have had an opportunity to meet our Swiss Internationals, and witness their performance, which, although not accompanied by success, was never-the-less delightful to watch; they have proved to be good sportsmen, a fact which was stressed in all the comments which appeared in the English and Scottish Press. We are proud of them, and wish them success for their next encounter with the English National team, wherever and whenever it will take place.

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Fink tries a first hand shot at the English goal but his shot is intercepted. On the right: Friedlaender.

Photo by courtesy of PHOTOPRESS, A.G., ZURICH.

