

International Football Matches - Victory of Upton Park

The able Paris correspondent of "The Morning Advertiser" sends that journal the following interesting account of the international football match at the Exhibition.

Pursuing their programme of athletic sports held in connection with the Exhibition, the authorities have provided a "France contre Angleterre" Association football match, the contestants being the Club Francais, holders of the championship here, and the Upton Park Club, of London. The posters visible through Paris and the suburbs bore the stamp of the Ministry of Commerce, and a fairly large crowd assembled at the Velodrome within the Vincennes annexe of the Exhibition to witness the so-called international encounter. It will be remembered that the Ministry of Commerce issued placards representing the two days cricket between the Devonshire Wanderers and fifteen of Paris as "France against England". The local fifteen consisted entirely of resident Englishmen, there being as yet no French cricketers of ability; but in football, as in tennis and sculling the French have the need to rely upon other than native talent. Every member of the Club Francais team is of French nationality, and they have been captained for several years by a man who learnt his football at a boarding school in England, and has been conspicuously keen about beating the English at their own game ever since. Under his captaincy indeed, "le club", as it is familiarly spoken of here, has beaten the Association teams of resident Englishmen over and over again. The Club Francais are fast, well together for their class, and occasionally good in front of goal. They possess no very clever individual player, if the goal player Huteau is excepted, but they practice far more assiduously than the members of the English club, and they keep in better condition. Most French Athletes willingly encourage the notion implanted in foreigners that they "will not train", or "do not train". The truth is that under emulation they are capable of long and remarkable self denial, and while professing to be heedlessness itself, often toil in secret, and neglect no detail that may help them to victory.

The Upton Park side was composed of Forwards Haslom (captain). Zealley, J Nicholas, Spackman, Turner; half backs, Chalk, Burrige, Quash; backs, Buckenham, Gosling; goal, Jones. Paris won the toss and began at the higher end of the ground, with the sun behind them and a slight breeze in their faces. The visitors at once showed the cleverer play and within seven minutes had shot two goals. Better defence on the part of the home team kept them out for the remainder of the first half, but the game had degenerated. With one or two exceptions, shots at goal on either side were poor. The French had hard luck in not scoring once when they had changed ends. The ball struck the cross-bar in the centre and bounded over the net. They ought also to have scored subsequently. During the major portion of the second half the visitors played a man short; one of the backs received a kick which disabled him. Eventually, in midsummer weather, Upton Park won a rather scrambling and uninteresting game by three or four goals to nothing. They put the ball through five times, but the game was restarted three times. It was agreeable to note an absence of the offensive shouts with which the French spectators had destroyed the "characteres sportif" of the Anglo-French Association matches here last winter. We were no longer deafened with allusions to the Boer war, to Ladysmith, and to the British Generals; we no longer saw moody British residents yielding to the provocation and shouting the insults back with vernacular appendages that they knew would go straight home. I heard a French spectator call to the English players in a match between the Club Francais and the Standard for the championship, "Surrender, as your soldiers have done in South Africa!". "C'est la France qui detient le record", came the reply: "in surrenders we are still a long way from Metz and Sedan!". Those were not pleasant incidents. At the Upton Park match the cries in which the high-spirited French youth gave vent to their feelings did not vary from the "Aoh, Yes!" "shocking!" and "Tres biang!" which are now established greetings for the Anglo-Saxon, and are doubtless taught in cours de dause et de maintien.

In the principal French sporting Journal the following comments on the match appear: "We all expected a more complete defeat in view of the reputation which the Upton Park Club enjoys in London. After having been surprised by superior pace at the commencement of the match our compatriots recovered themselves little by little, and equalised the play until towards the end of the second half, when the closing minutes saw them succumb through lack of training. After the interval, it was the French who, pirating by the lesson set them at the opening of the game, attacked vigorously. We had a momentary hope of a goal, but it was an illusion. Notwithstanding all the ardour of our forwards, whose usual cohesion suffered from changes in their positions of the players, and despite the praiseworthy efforts of the defence the English got through again, and secured two further goals". If the displacement of individual players had an effect so radical upon the efficiency of the first line, the captain could have readjusted them. Accustomed to work together in their inter club matches here, however, they can scarcely have been handicapped by the actual arrangement and any modification that has been resolved upon for the meeting with Upton Park - which the French public believe to be an absolutely first rate English team - was adapted because it promised to strengthen the side.