

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

BRITAIN'S CONVINCING WIN

FROM OUR ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL

CORRESPONDENT

The match between Great Britain and Rest of Europe—"the match of the century," as some had labelled it—took place at Hampden Park on Saturday and ended in an overwhelming victory for Great Britain by six goals to one.

Glasgow certainly had become the meeting place of the nations; for a short span it was the focal point of European interest. But for those of us inside Hampden Park—some 134,000 of us—the interest after half-time was purely academic, for by then Great Britain had secured a commanding lead of four goals to one and the contest, as such, was over.

Only for the first half-hour did the Rest of Europe live with Great Britain. Indeed, had Nordahl taken two quick chances from promising positions early on, before Great Britain opened the scoring, the Rest would have snatched that flying start so necessary for the upsetting of Britain's balance and for their own hopes of victory. But it was not to be. There was, too, a period of some 10 minutes, immediately after Prest had twice sold Hardwick the dummy in a splendid dribble and had given Nordahl the opening to equalize Mannion's first goal, that Europe's forwards really got into gear with their quick, short passing. Great Britain's defence during those moments wore a very ordinary look about it, but the spasm was brought to an end by an unfortunate action by Ludl inside his penalty area when he handled a pass from Matthews to Mannion. Mannion exacted the full penalty, Great Britain immediately scored twice more, and within the space of four breathless minutes they had emerged into the bright sunlight with a lead of three goals. The matter was settled.

This was no mere flash in the pan. From the very beginning, even through those moments when the Rest of Europe were at their peak, Britain's forwards gave us an impression of control and penetration. All the time they were beautifully linked and moving along lines of longitude; the European attacks too often sought the lines of latitude and, against a defence in depth, these were ultimately doomed. Britain's forwards indeed stole the match and heroically as Parola—a defensive centre half—Carey, Steffen and Petersen fought, there was simply no stopping them after a while. But for Da Rui in goal, Britain's score might well have reached double figures.

INTO THE OPEN SPACES

Mannion gave us a superb exhibition of inside play. He brought all his forwards—and particularly Matthews—into the game and he was also up and into the open spaces to score goals. Steel, too, was a great success; Lawton did many fine things, and finally there was Matthews. Of him, what remains to be said that has not already been said a thousand times? On Saturday he mixed his game very cleverly and he lost Steffen and the others from the beginning. But Steffen need not reproach himself. In that mood and with the service he received no back on earth would have stopped Matthews for long. Britain's defence was something of a disappointment, though Macaulay and Burgess came more into the open once they had worried through that sticky period with Gren, Nordahl and Wilkes; but Prest, who was Europe's most dangerous forward, worried Hardwick to the end.

Great Britain forced four corners in the first six minutes, but shortly a quick move between Carey and Gren gave Nordahl an opening he failed to accept. Parola once headed a shot by Steel off the goal line, but again Nordahl missed a splendid chance, this time from a centre by Lembrechts. And then, after 22 minutes, Great Britain scored, Mannion completing some fine passing between Lawton and Steel with a left foot shot. Almost at once Europe were level, and the goal, scored by Nordahl, belonged to Prest, whose beautiful dribble had made it possible. Europe now lived their best moments, but just after half an hour's play came Mannion's penalty. It was the beginning of the end. Two minutes later Steel came through on a long dribble and with the European defence retreating and expecting a pass he shot a superb goal from 25 yards range. Europe were now well and truly nailed. They had scarcely recovered from that when Mannion rolled a pass from Lawton past Da Rui and the centre forward was up to make sure of the goal.

The second half was an anti-climax and Britain played exhibition football. In the last quarter of an hour two further goals were added when first Parola put the ball past Da Rui and then Matthews found Lawton's head with a perfect centre. They merely underlined our total authority.

The teams were:—

GREAT BRITAIN.—Swift (England); Hardwick (England) (captain), Hughes (Wales); Macaulay (Scotland), Vernon (Ireland); Burgess (Wales); Matthews (England), Mannion (England), Lawton (England), Steel (Scotland), Liddell (Scotland).

REST OF EUROPE.—Da Rui (France); Petersen (Denmark), Steffen (Switzerland); Carey (Eire) (captain), Parola (Italy), Ludl (Czechoslovakia); Lembrechts (Belgium), Gren (Sweden), Nordahl (Sweden), Wilkes (Holland), Prest (Denmark).

REFEREE.—G. Reader (England).