

FOOTBALL STARTS IN CRICKET WEATHER

Well over a million people - about one Briton in every 35 - crowd the turastiles as the Football season wakes from its Summer sleep. At Main Road, Manchester, skipper Westwood and veteran Frank Swift are again the heroes. Wise guys come dressed for cricket - for soccer chooses one of the year's hottest days to steal the Saturday afternoon spotlight once again. Behind the scenes, a last minute drama as ex-England goalie Swift comes out of retirement to help his old club and thrill the 40,000 crowd. City kick off against Aston Villa, with white sleeves, in the battle for first points of the season. And it's Villa first off the mark. Seen in the picture is the man who pulled Villa out of the rut last season, Welsh International Iver Powell. His forward pass is snapped up by Swift, Ford and All.

Now it's Powell again - feeding his forwards with long, raking passes. In a goal-mouth scramble, left-winger Lealie Smith nets Villa's No. 1.

City spring back to the attack and their forwards sweep down the field. Another Smith (George of Manchester) slams in the half-time equaliser.

In the second-half Villa soon take the lead with a snap goal by Goffin.

Neither side plays copy-book football, but the crowd has its consolations, in a glut of goals. Here comes Manchester's second equaliser - another one for centre-forward George Smith.

Yet another is soon on the way. A pass from Emtage finds City's Sandy Black and Manchester leads for the first time. But, minutes from time, Villa level the score. The hot weather unsettles the game at Highbury too, where 50,000 turn out to see Arsenal clash with white-shirted Burnley. But if the crowd expected the Gunners to start another long winning run like their 47 season, they had another think coming. Burnley goalie Strong lives up to his name, though momentarily put out of action.

McPherson fastens on to a stray pass and finds winger Valance, who centres to Roper. But Strong's in acrobatic form. Reserve Daniel shines as Arsenal starts the second half, all set to wipe out a one-goal deficit. But this was keeper Strong's day. Mather and Macaulay succumb to heat-wave nerves.

Arsenal have their chance to equalise from a penalty awarded for a foul. Centre-forward Roper shoots straight to goalie Strong. Down go a million home-bankers on soccer's first Saturday.