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ASSOCIATION FOOTBALLER**

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DRIBBLING

# **THE COMPLETE ASSOCIATION FOOTBALLER**

**BY**

**B. S. EVERS**

**(C.U.A.F.C. 1911-12; A.F.A. INTERNATIONAL ;**

**AND**

**C. E. HUGHES DAVIES**

**WITH TWENTY-NINE ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND SEVEN DIAGRAMS**

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## PREFACE

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL does not seem to have received its fair share of recognition, at least so far as literature on the subject is concerned. For while every other game has two or more handbooks dealing with its problems and practice, Association Football has been left almost entirely to the mercies of the casual writer who merely wishes to fill half a column or so in an evening paper. Throughout the football season articles upon various points appear in the papers, and occasionally one of the monthlies contains a few remarks upon the game, but these are disconnected and far too brief for the purpose, and therefore perhaps no apology is necessary for giving a comprehensive account of the various movements and stratagems essential to the game. In this book we have tried to explain at length the duties and difficulties of each position upon the field. We have not, of course, dwelt upon every single device which might be employed, for that would fill many volumes, but we have

attempted to elucidate the various problems which confront every player at some time or other during the course of play. We have discussed, as impartially as possible, all the movements and theories in general use, and though we are firmly convinced of the accuracy of our conclusions, we admit that there may be exceptions in extraordinary circumstances.

We have sought outside opinion, and this has generally confirmed our own notions. We owe our best thanks to Mr. G. Hedley, Wolverhampton Wanderers, for the help he has given us in criticizing various portions of the book. For the chapter upon goalkeeping we are indebted to E. R. Hopewell, Esq. (C.U. goalkeeper, 1912), whose work it is entirely.

The photographs which illustrate various movements have all been taken specially for this book, and we are greatly obliged to all those who so kindly lent their assistance, viz., Messrs. H. G. Bache, J. L. Cromwelin-Brown, E. R. Hopewell, and others.

B. S. E.  
C. E. H. D.

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**THE COMPLETE  
ASSOCIATION FOOTBALLER**



# THE COMPLETE ASSOCIATION FOOTBALLER

## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

THE average man seems to imagine that to play Association Football an elementary knowledge of the rules is all that is necessary, and occasionally deems even that beneath his notice. Perhaps no more is required merely to play at the game, but to play it and play it well it is essential to have a thorough acquaintance with the general theory of the game. Possibly it looks so simple that it does not seem worth while to go into the matter deeply; perhaps it does not appear intricate enough to satisfy modern intellect; perhaps one is apt to underestimate the "game of the people," but all the same the more one plays, the more one realizes

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that one can never cease learning the game. There is still plenty of scope for devising new tricks and new movements.

No one would venture to take up "rugger" or hockey or lacrosse seriously without first getting to know something about the theory of each, and the same applies in no less degree to "soccer."

Even men who have played from boyhood often seem lamentably deficient in inside knowledge of the game, and though, of course, a certain amount of knowledge can be—and is—picked up by practice, yet it stands to reason that, all other things being equal, the man who starts with a thorough knowledge of the theory will prove himself infinitely the superior in practice.

Of course no game can be learnt merely from the handbook: no one could be so foolish as to assert that; but the handbook will teach the budding international the right lines on which to work, and after all, half the battle consists in knowing the right way to apply one's energies.

Assuming, then, that the would-be player has the necessary health and strength—though it is not strength alone that makes the first-class

player—it would be well to find out the place in which he is to play. The beginner cannot always judge this for himself, and perhaps should ask the advice of some experienced player. He must play in the place which suits his capabilities, and not choose the position for which he has not got the necessary gifts—*e.g.*, the slow runner will not try to turn himself into a wing forward, but will select some other place where an extra turn of speed is not so essential. However, one soon drops into one's right place, as most men gravitate naturally to that position for which they are most suitable.

But simply because a man has got his own particular place he should not be content with finding out merely the type of play which suits that place. He should learn the points of other positions too. This is an enormous advantage, for if one knows the requirements of other places, one is more capable of adapting one's play so as to be of the greatest assistance to the men who occupy them. And after all, what is wanted is the man who is a specialist in his own place, but who, if necessary, can also play well in other positions. Thus every half should know how to play back, and forward too at a

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pinch, while the forward should know more than a little of the play needful in the back division. Sometimes a man may be called upon to play in a place alien to his own, and a previous knowledge of the requirements is essential for success. Perhaps this may sound rather dangerous advice, and the half found talking about the duties of the forwards will be urged to mind his own business. But on the "soccer" field other people's business *is* one's own, and the sooner this is recognized the better, if the team is to play well as a whole. Besides, there are other reasons for learning the tactics of other places. The backs and halves should know the game from the forwards' point of view in order to circumvent them. And the forwards also (in order to get through) must learn what steps the backs are likely to take. If one has learnt to think from the opponents' point of view, it is so much easier to anticipate their movements, and this is no less important in "soccer" than in real warfare. Also the player who always plays in one position is apt to get stereotyped in his play. The halves and backs get into a fatal groove, and almost seem to play without intelligence. The forwards, on the other hand, become finicky, employ far

too many movements to achieve the end in view, and lose that sterling simplicity which is the hallmark of every good player.

Perhaps, too, the player has not been playing in that place for which he is really suitable, and a change of position may reveal his proper place upon the field.

Then, again, give some thought to the game, and do not regard it merely as a means of getting exercise. Thought is an important factor; far more than is generally imagined, not only during the actual play, but before and after, especially before. The team should talk tactics over now and then, and should not be satisfied with using the same strategy time after time, for in that case the enemy can find the weak points in the first fifteen minutes, and will be sure to take advantage of them. The forwards, particularly, should adopt variety in attacking. Always keep the opposing backs guessing. Don't try the same tricks too often, and don't always play in the same style. There are, perhaps, half a dozen recognized systems of attack—they will be discussed in full later—but forwards should not confine themselves to one alone. The value of surprise in attack must not be overlooked; if the enemy never know what



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to expect, the work of the forwards becomes much easier. Working out various movements in attack and defence by diagrams on paper is always useful, and even though the actual movements themselves may not come into play, yet some part of them, or even the principle, may frequently help matters in a hard-fought game. Also, in course of play, be quick to seize any opportunity given by the opponents for putting into execution any previously arranged movement. Before an important match it stands one in good stead to learn something about one's opponents' style of play; devise means for coping with it, and then you go on the field with a big advantage. One example of this will be enough for the purpose. When the New Zealanders were over in England a few years ago playing "rugger," the Welsh not only sent up men to watch their performance in half a dozen matches, but also took the field with a very clear knowledge of how to frustrate their tactics, and a complete plan of action themselves. As a result they inflicted upon the "All Blacks" the only defeat of their tour.

There is another golden rule—it has become so trite and so hackneyed that one is in danger of forgetting it—it's the old golf maxim, "Keep your

eye on the ball." One really needs several pairs of eyes: the ball, the opponent, and the man to be passed to, all come into account, and all claim an equal share of one's attention. However, a swift glance round will fix in your mind the position of the man you desire to put in possession of the ball, and frequently by practice one gains an instinctive knowledge of where he is, and no glance is necessary to assure one of his position. However, do not trust to luck or instinct always.

Then, again, always keep the ball on the grass. The grass is its natural resting-place and when it is there it is much easier to control, and therefore it is much easier to pass it to any one else or put it where it should go.

Another considerable factor in the making of good teams and good players is coaching. Why it is that taken on the whole professional<sup>1</sup> football is so very much better than that played by amateurs? And also why is there such a high standard reached in so many of the public schools<sup>1</sup>? And why, again, does one so frequently hear the complaint that boys deteriorate after leaving school? There must be a reason for this,

<sup>1</sup> Professional and school football is dealt with more fully in later chapters.

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and the one that naturally occurs is that in professional and school teams there is definite coaching. If the captain of an amateur side would get his men to turn out for practice alone, occasionally, and bring them together now and then to discuss tactics, and were to throw out hints during the game, his side would undoubtedly improve out of all recognition.

Then, again, as to passing : one expects frequent and accurate passing among the forwards themselves, and between backs and forwards, but to our mind passing in the back division itself is not employed nearly as much as it might be, and its value is vastly under-estimated. The full-back should not always try to get the ball directly to the forwards himself, for a pass to a half will often be of more service : and the half should not forget that at times another half, or the full-back is far more advantageously placed than himself for getting the ball away, and that in such cases it is his duty to give the ball to the man who can use it best, whoever he may be. By this means one frequently gets oneself out of a tight corner.

Many and many a goal has been lost or presented to one's opponents simply because one

particular player was not in his place ; therefore it must be laid down as a hard and fast rule, "Keep your own place." There is only one player who is permitted to exceed his duties ; he is the centre half, for he has, to a certain extent, a roving commission ; but even his permission must be exercised with judgment, and it is judgment that just makes the difference between the first-class and the ordinary player. But no one else on the field should dash about at his own sweet will. The ball is bound to be sent where he is not, but ought to be, and the result is that the team, as a team, is thrown out of gear.

And this is something of the utmost importance, that a team should play as a team and as a whole, and not as a collection of eleven individual members. But it must not play as a machine ; far from it : a machine has no thinking powers and no judgment, and, moreover, the machine ceases to work if one of its parts go wrong ; but a team can always play as a team, even if one of its members happens for the day to be off-colour. And so the members of the team should know each other, not only on the field, but off it as well. A team can hardly play well together if, for instance, the inside right and right half

will not speak to their wing man off the field. Meet the other men socially—even if you dislike particular individuals you need not show it ostentatiously, nor, on the other hand, is it necessary to go to the length of making lifelong friends of them all.

Again, when you are in possession of the ball, you must remember to “kick to, not from,” *i.e.*, your object is not to kick the ball away from yourself, but to kick it to some other person or place. Aimless kicking is sometimes almost as bad as not kicking at all, and in many cases is worse. Also, do not pass if the only man you can pass to is in a worse position than yourself.

Always play to the whistle. Do not stop because an opponent cries “Off-side.” If you are off-side it will do you no harm to play on, and if you are not and stop, you will have lost an opportunity that may not come again. The referee is there to see that no rules are transgressed, and he does not need advice from any one on the field. So do not let the claims of opponents hinder your play in the least.

Then as to practising—as, for instance, when some half a dozen men are at shooting-practice—make it a rule never to touch the ball with

your hands. Take each ball as it comes. Practise shooting and kicking in any and every position ; if you constantly use your hands for stopping balls that come to you, you will inevitably do so in a match some time, and no good can come of that.

Always keep cool and think before you do anything, though your thinking need not take the twentieth part of a second.

Just a word or two about training. In the case of sports such as rowing and running, the strictest possible training is necessary, not only to do one's best, but even to keep one's health. The heart in such cases is easily strained by over violent exercise when out of training. This does not apply to football in quite the same degree, and yet it does apply. Even a centre half, far the hardest worker on the field, is not likely to strain his heart, no matter how strenuously he works when in bad condition, but at the same time there is no doubt that in a hard, even game that team which is in the better training will win. It is not necessary to diet oneself specially or to go for a run before breakfast every morning, save possibly at the beginning of the season, but all the same keeping generally fit improves one's

football almost as much as continual practice. Also a word of warning : practice improves one's game tremendously, but beware of overdoing it : the penalty of that is staleness, and when one is stale it is impossible to reproduce one's true form. After all, one can keep fit for football by playing other games in between matches, and then one goes back to "soccer" with renewed vigour. Also, when in training for any particular game, do not necessarily drop smoking—knock off cigarettes, perhaps—for the total loss of an habitual comfort is likely to make one's temper very bad, and it is no use taking the field in an irritable state of mind.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CAPTAIN

**P**ERHAPS it would be as well to sketch in next the duties of the captain. They fall naturally into two halves—on and off the field.

*On the Field.*—The ideal place for the captain on the field is undoubtedly centre half. That is the most important place, and therefore the one for the captain. And the qualities that fit a man for that place are just those which a captain should possess. In no other place has he such control over his men and the game, and from no other position can he perceive so well how the team is playing. Next to centre half one would recommend centre forward, for that, too, is a commanding position. But if he plays in neither of these there are, at all events, two places in which he certainly ought not to play. These are goal and wing forward. The goalkeeper, it is



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obvious, has no control over the team ; he cannot encourage his men in midfield, nor inspirit them when attacking the opponents' goal. Almost as bad is the position on the right or left wing. Any wing is dependent on the rest of the team for his food, *i.e.*, his passes, and if the team is getting the worst of it, it is surely a fatal thing for the captain to have to stand about aimlessly on the wing waiting for passes that never come. So he cannot encourage his men by example if the ball does not come his way, nor from that position either is it very easy to do so by precept. Other positions, such as back, wing half, or inside forward, do not carry with them such disadvantages as these two, but they cannot compare with the more central ones.

The captain must never be afraid of directing his men by voice ; it is taken for granted that he will always do so by example. He must always be cheerful, no matter how badly the game may be going against him ; a team always plays much better if kept in a cheerful temper : one never gets much out of men in a sullen frame of mind. And in encouraging his men he should never single out any particular individual for public reproof. "Steady" to a player who rushes about

blindly and begins to lose his head, and "Buck up" to a "slacker," is likely to do far more good than continual gibing, which holds up the individual to the derision of both players and spectators. At half-time he must see that his team does not go to pieces—the interval is a very dangerous pause—and should cheer up any one who is obviously off-colour—the captain has to play the mother a good deal. He might talk, not to his own especial friends—he can rely upon them to play their level best—but to men who are not in his own particular set. One knows from experience what a few words of encouragement can do.

Again, he must be quick to adopt any new tactics or formation that his experience will tell him may improve matters. One naturally does not advise frequent changes during the game, but sometimes the hazardous policy is the best, and many a time defeat has been changed into victory by a timely transposition of players. A captain who is always cheerful, always a worker, an opportunist who has the knack of handling and leading men, will generally be successful.

Then should there be any tendency to foul play he must rigidly repress it: if an opponent chooses to foul or trip, he must not allow his

men to retaliate. Apart from being unsportsmanlike, as a general rule it does not even pay. There is no doubt, unfortunately, that there is a certain amount of foul play, but one or two teams—and therefore one or two captains—can easily stop it.

Possibly one ought to have mentioned before another extremely important duty: he must see that his team arrives on the ground punctually, and at full strength as far as numbers are concerned at all events. It is always an inconvenience for the home club to have to supply a man or two to the visiting team, and besides it tends to spoil the game. The evils of not starting punctually are almost too well known to need comment, and yet it happens time after time. To have to stand about the goal, or even in the pavilion, because a team or part of a team has not turned up is extremely annoying, and besides that, the men frequently, when the game does start, are already tired and not in the best of tempers. So if the game is billed to start, say, at three, let the captain see that it does start then, and not at a quarter to four. Some captains try to get their men to turn up punctually by saying the game will start earlier than it is supposed to, but this is rather rough luck on those who make a habit of turning up punctually.

Then when his men are practising he should see that they practise properly and not anyhow. Often, if players get into a slipshod way of doing things in practice, they will do so in actual play.

*Off the Field.*—His duties are quite as important. He is largely responsible for making his men into a team : he ought to get to know his men apart from “soccer,” and also induce them to know one another. Also he should always be ready to talk matters over with them. All this perhaps sounds trivial, but means so much. If there is any truth in Wellington’s saying that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton (Ruskin, apparently, denies it) we may truthfully say that many a game of “soccer” has been won off the field. The captain also, presumably, has to pick the team—a difficult job ; and perhaps for this it would be advisable for him to get the opinions of others on the respective merits of the players available. Let him remember that a good individual member will not always fit into the team. One must take into account whether he will play well with his partners. This is particularly important with regard to the forward line, for a single man, though individually good, may spoil the combination of

the line.' The captain's duties with regard to visiting teams we need not touch upon. The captain's orders must be implicitly obeyed, or else the discipline—and consequently the play—of the team will suffer.

It is perhaps convenient to say here a word or two on the disposition of the players when one man is off the field. It will fall upon the captain to decide. If the team has got a winning position it will be best to keep the defence intact and play with four forwards, while if the reverse is the case, the forwards must be kept at full strength and the defence weakened. It is best then to play only one full-back, and one of the defence should be shifted into the forward line if it is one of the forwards who has been injured.

## CHAPTER III

### OUTFIT—KICKING

THE outfit required for football is little enough compared with some games, but little as it is, it is none the less important, and the authors feel bound to say a word or two on the subject. Of course, the most important part is the boots. The first and foremost feature necessary in them is lightness. They *must* be light. Some people seem to imagine that the heavier the boot the stronger the kick: that may be so in some cases, personally we do not believe it: but the player must not forget that he will be running about for an hour and a half, and that his pace and quickness must suffer if he wears heavy boots, and the loss of pace and quickness in a game where those count for so much can never, never be counterbalanced by any extra modicum of power he may think he gains by kicking with heavy boots. Every extra ounce of weight in

the boots increases his handicap, and the average player can afford to give away nothing in that line. Many men have studs or bars fixed on to an old pair of ordinary walking boots, thinking they will be more comfortable. The comfort is doubtful: the lack of efficiency certain, for the ordinary walking boot is not so light as a pair of specially prepared football boots. Never take the field wearing a new pair of boots for the first time, as they always feel somewhat stiff, and one walks or runs in them as if on stilts. Buy your new boots before you actually need them, have the studs removed, and wear them as ordinary boots for some time till the stiffness wears off and they become comfortable. One of the authors always gets his boots on the small side and goes wading in them for a week or so: by that time they get wet through, the leather stretches, and the boots soon fit like a glove. He then considers them fit for football.

It would be well to avoid ankle guards, for they make neat footwork so much harder to acquire: if the ankles really require protection, a single thickness of cotton wool inside the stocking is just as effective, much lighter, and not so bulky. Also beware of those famous "dreadnought" toe-caps, so

dear to the heart of the manufacturer. In village football they are found to be useful for kicking the ball and one's opponents, but in the ordinary way, well, they are in the way. The case between bars and studs is important. To our mind studs are infinitely the superior. One gets by them a better purchase on the ground, and therefore turning or stopping is much easier. To turn on a greasy ground is always difficult, but for this purpose bars are worse than useless, nor do they seem to get a grip even on the driest turf. The objection that studs wear through the soles of the boots and so make the feet sore can be avoided by having them frequently re-studded in different places. It is not a bad plan to have a special pair for dry days, with rather shorter studs. Conical studs are more effective than the ordinary kind, but the rules do not permit them. It is best to have the studs put on diagonally thus :—



See that all nails are flush with the leather.

On a wet day it is advisable to smear the sole of



the boot with grease or soft soap, particularly round the studs. This prevents mud from clinging. The process should be repeated at half-time. Black lead serves the same purpose—but the effect wears off more rapidly.

Do not wear shoes.

Also eschew shin-guards. They lend one a feeling of false protection. Besides, if by chance they are mislaid or left behind, the hapless owner is not likely to play a particularly vigorous or confident game. In any case the pain from a kick is only momentary, and rather apt to wake one up than otherwise. A certain famous professional said he never played his best until he had had his shins kicked. Besides, if one has started early enough, one gets used to it; the shins get harder and harder, until the extra protection makes no difference. In any case, the use of shin-guards is apt to make the wearer less neat in his footwork—a quality most necessary to the good player.

The “shorts” worn (also shirt) should be very loose and easy, particularly across the hips. It is impossible to play in a pair of knickers that fit like one’s skin. If a belt is worn, care should be taken that the buckle does not rest on the hipbone, as in charging it will cause considerable pain both

to the wearer and his victim. The most useful belt is one formed of two or three football boot laces twined together.

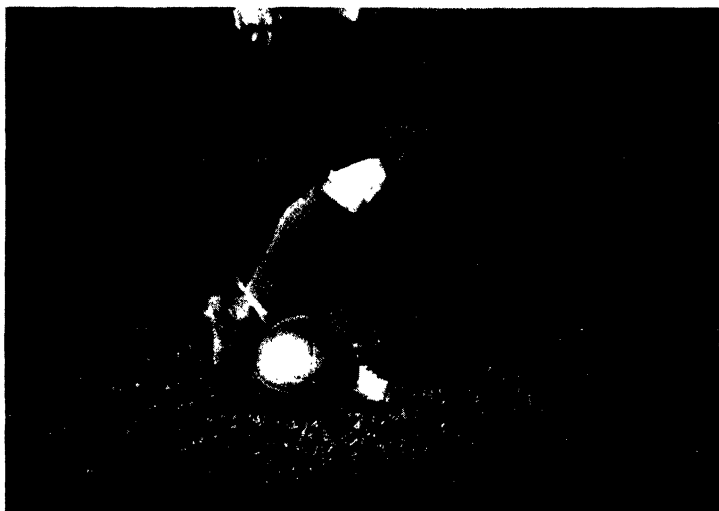
With regard to the ball used, the ordinary leather one, laced up, is still the best, in spite of many recent innovations. There is not very much to say for the rubber ball; in wet weather, of course, it is lighter, but even then it is much harder to kick than the leather one, and seems to go off the foot still more uncertainly. On dry ground it acquires a polished, shiny surface, and is hard to control. In any case, there is an uncanny, unnatural feeling about it. Quite recently, however, rubber balls have been banned entirely. A few years ago there was put upon the market a leather ball with a pneumatic valve instead of a lace. One had merely to pump in air and the ball was ready. But, whenever it gets punctured, it has to be sent to the makers to be repaired, as there is no opening ready by which to get the bladder out. A nuisance this. Otherwise it has no advantage.

Passing on from the necessary outfit, we come to the basis of the game—kicking. This seems the easiest part of the game, whereas in reality it is one of the hardest, and is an art in itself.

Indeed, it can be declared that any one possessed of sound judgment and the art of kicking well has in him the makings of a first-class player. It is needless to say that the ball should never be kicked with the toe ; it is unsafe and inaccurate, and can only lead to trouble. There are three parts of the foot which should be chiefly used—the instep, and the inside and outside of the foot. For a long or hard kick, such as the clearance of a back or a long shot at goal by a forward, the instep should always be employed, for by this means one gets most force behind the ball. It will be noticed, too, in cases such as these, that a good player invariably “follows through” until his leg is nearly horizontal. In the case of a forward, however, who is close to the goal and has to get in a short, sharp shot, a kind of “jab” is often used. This method of shooting is rather quicker than the long swing with the follow through. The position of the ball at the point of kicking is one that is seldom considered, is very important, and comes by instinct rather than anything else ; but it might be mentioned that to get in a full kick accurately the near side of the circumference of the ball should be exactly level with the toe of the foot off which the kick



LONG SWINGING KICK: BALL ON GROUND



POSITION FOR THE SHORT "JAB" PASS: BALL ON GROUND



is taken. The length, pace, and accuracy of the kick is obtained by a long (but not unnaturally long) swing of the leg and a straightening of the joints on meeting the ball. It is interesting to watch how a good forward in front of goal instinctively places the ball at exactly the right position for him to get his kick in, and scarcely needs to alter his position at all.

So far we have only dealt with kicking when the ball is on the ground or can be taken half volley. The method of taking a volley or a bouncing ball is entirely different, for if the ball when in the air were met with a straight leg it would practically go straight up again. To avoid this the kick should be taken with the leg bent at nearly a right angle, and the toe should be slightly depressed. This is a kick which the forward simply must acquire, as he frequently has to shoot with the ball in the air. For halves or backs clearing the leg need not be bent so much. There is yet another form of long kicking different from those already mentioned, and that is the cross kick used by the wing men when centring, and by the insides sometimes when passing out to the opposite wing. The ball is swung across at right angles by the

instep, the leg coming round with a semicircular motion. This is a useful kick, and easily acquired. Also it helps sometimes to be able to kick over one's head. For this, one leans back rather and kicks at the ball when chest high; the toe should get well round the far side of the ball. It is impossible to pass accurately with this kick, and, indeed, it is generally only employed when it is necessary to get the ball away, no matter where.

Before proceeding to speak of the general use of the outside and inside of the foot in kicking, the advantage of being able to "slice" the ball might just be mentioned. Here the player kicks at the ball, but does not take it plumb in the centre, so that the ball really flies off the outside of the foot; considerable spin is imparted, and the result is that the path of the ball is at an angle to the swing of the leg. The fuller the ball is kicked, the smaller the angle. Employed for a short shot at goal it completely baffles the goal-keeper, and as a pass it equally baffles the defence. It is, however, not an easy kick to acquire, because it is so extremely difficult to estimate just where the ball should be kicked to slide off at the angle required.

The outside and inside of the foot are chiefly



# DRIEBLING

PREPARING TO PASS WITH OUTSIDE OF FOOT





employed in short passing, as they are more convenient than the instep, and one does not have to turn one's body in the direction of the place to which the ball is to be sent. Some halves use the outside for long passes out to the wings, but this is rather risky, as the ball is apt to swerve a trifle after it has travelled some yards, and so may swing behind the player to whom it is passed.

Sometimes it is useful to be able to flick the ball with the toe, over the head of the opponent. This is done by placing the toe well under the ball and jerking it into the air. Halves occasionally find it a convenient way of passing to their forwards, while the wing man, if he is close in, can drop the ball in front of the goal by this method. It is, however, rather risky, and requires considerable practice.

It is an advantage, also, to be able to pass the ball backwards with one's heel.

Closely connected with kicking is the art of "heading." In amateur football this feature of the game is far too much neglected; but in an average professional team the players' skill with their heads is perfectly extraordinary. Most amateurs, however, can use their heads to a certain

extent in defence, but very few make a practice of initiating an attack with the ball in the air. This always seems a pity, as the art is a comparatively easy one to pick up, and when well learnt is not painful as many people imagine. If taken in the proper place, that is, just above where the forehead runs into the hair, the heaviest ball can be headed almost without being felt. Frequently other parts of the head have to be used, such as the sides and the top, but chiefly by halves and inside forwards. For instance, when a goal kick is taken from his own goal, it is frequently useful for a half to help the ball on to his forwards over the head of the opposing half by facing his own goal and receiving the ball on the top of his head. The side of the head is often used by the inside forwards passing among themselves. This art is an absolute necessity to the centre half who should be an adept at it; it is also a particularly useful method of feeding the wings.

Then every one should learn to trap a ball, and be able to reduce it to immobility at once. This is generally employed with a high dropping ball. The ball should be allowed to drop just in front or slightly to one side, and as it touches the

ground, and before the rebound, the foot should be placed gently but firmly upon it. Some players prefer to let the ball drop between the feet, and so smother it that way. All that is needed is a certain capability for judging exactly where the ball will drop, and quickness in placing the foot upon it.

Then when the ball is in one's possession one must see that one has absolute control over it. The ball must not be allowed to be more than six inches or a foot away from one's feet. If it is more than this there is all the more opportunity for an opponent to dash in and take the ball away. This is particularly true in the case of a forward dribbling. If he loses control for an instant he may be quite certain that the half or back will perceive it and take the ball away.

Above all, every player must learn how to kick with both feet. Most people naturally have a preference for using one foot or the other. The good player, perhaps, may have a preference, but he should be able to use the other almost as well. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. The only way to become equally proficient with both feet is by constant and untiring practice. When at shooting practice, or when otherwise

practising, make it a regular habit to use your weaker foot much more than the other ; in fact, when practising, use that foot exclusively for two or three weeks on end ; after all it is only practice that it needs to become as useful as the other, and the ability to kick with both feet makes an extraordinary difference to anyone's play.

## CHAPTER IV

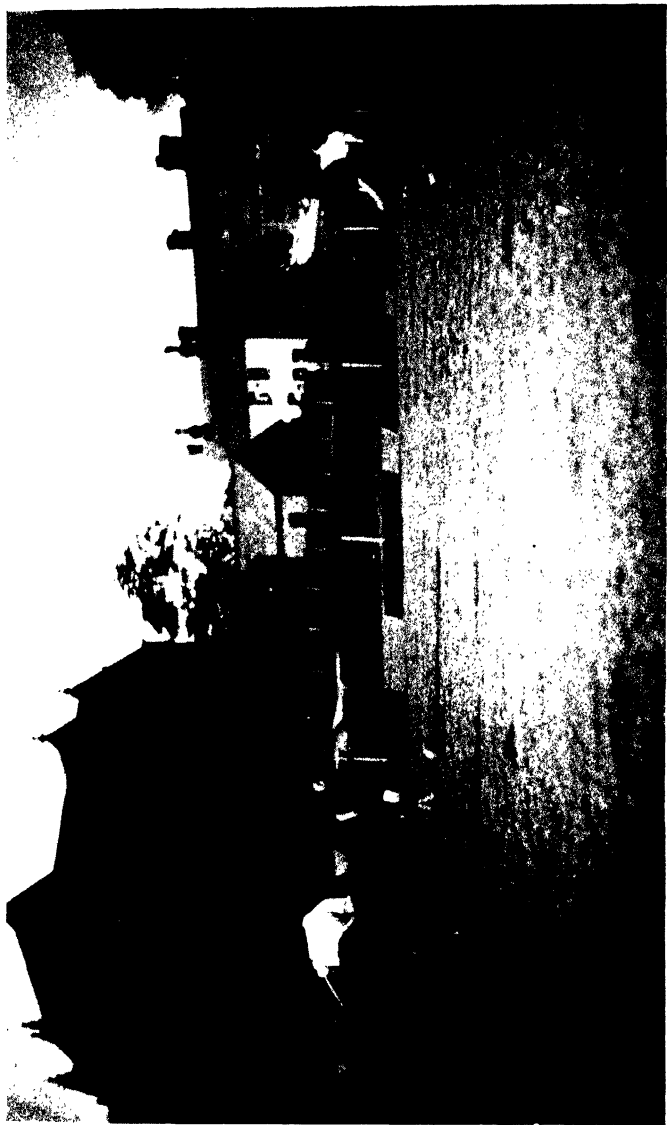
### FORWARD POLICY

#### SHORT AND LONG PASSING

THE main and ultimate object of the forwards on the field is to score goals. In fact, it is true to say that the scoring of goals, directly or indirectly, is, or ought to be, the object of the whole team. If this were more fully realized there would be far less wild kicking and useless and untimely dribbling. Goals being both the object and reward of the forwards, great pains ought to be taken to obtain opportunities of scoring, and to make the best of these opportunities when obtained. The forwards must not expect all opportunities to be made for them, for although the rest of the team will be playing up to them, they are bound to make it as easy as possible for the halves and backs to feed them. This is done by uncovering themselves, so that the

opposing halves cannot intercept passes to themselves from their own half-backs.

There are three distinct styles of attack—the long-passing game, the short passing, and the individualist. Upon these three all other styles are based. In the long-passing style of forward play the game is deliberately opened out by the forwards passing to the members of the line who are in some other part of the field comparatively far from themselves. The pass is a long one, and generally is not directed to the forward immediately next to the one who has just passed. This pass is generally given with the instep, to ensure pace and direction; to prevent the other side getting it, the ball is frequently lifted a trifle above the heads of the defence, if there are any between the giver of the pass and the receiver; if there is no one to intercept it, the pass, of course, travels along the ground in the usual way. The long pass may be given by anybody, but as a general rule it is given by one of the inside forwards or centre half to the wings when the play is in midfield, while it is returned in the shape of a general pass along the line or a centre or a definite pass to some one person as soon as the wing man thinks fit. Of course there



A GOOD PASS OUT TO THE WING

THE INSIDE HAS JUST BEATEN THE WHITE HALF, AND HIS PASS HAS BEEN OF EXACTLY THE RIGHT STRENGTH TO DRAW THE BACK AS WELL





can be no definite rule laid down as to by whom or to whom the long pass should be given, for this depends entirely upon the judgment of the individual players and upon circumstances in each case. There are, however, two very useful passes which are not used so frequently as they might, despite numerous opportunities and obvious advantages. One of these is the long diagonal from one inside forward to the outside forward on the opposite wing to himself. The advantages are obvious. When the ball is on one wing, the tendency, as a general rule, is for the defence to gravitate towards that wing, or at all events shift across slightly ; and then it will be seen at once that a long kick from that wing, more or less towards the opposite corner flag, will not only find the wing man unmarked and so give him the opportunity of a clear run, but also often enough that the wing man will find no one between himself and goal. The other pass is from inside left to inside right or *vice versa*. It is useful because it is unusual, and will, therefore, take the defence by surprise, for it would be natural to suppose that the ball would go to the centre forward or wing.

In this style of play the general position of the forwards is as follows : The wings hug the touch-

lines ; the centre forward keeps to the middle of the field, while the two insides are about mid-way between the outsides and the centre forward. The game will thus be opened up as much as possible. Also the wings should be a trifle in advance of the other players, in fact, as far up the field as they possibly can without being off-side, for one of the objects of the long-passing style is to take full advantage of the speed of the wing men, and as they are supposed to run the ball down and centre, they should, if possible, get a good start of their halves. The ball will generally be sent out to them as soon as possible. The three inside men, on the other hand, hang back a little farther, so as to be nearer their own halves and ready to receive a pass from them preparatory to passing out to the wing.

The long-passing game has many advantages over the other two styles, and is well worth the consideration of any team. In the first place it opens up the game, thereby forcing the defence to stretch and open up too, and a stretched defence is much more easy to defeat than one that is contracted. In this way, too, there is much more room and chance for manœuvres in order to make and take openings. It also, as has been mentioned,



PASS OUT TO THE WING

A BAD PASS, BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL THE BACK IS WITHIN TACKLING DISTANCE OF THE FORWARD



makes the fullest possible use of the speed of the wing men, who will be faster than the average defender. Then again in the case of clubs who cannot always turn out the same line of forwards on two successive occasions, or who have no chance of getting mid-week practice, the open game necessitates far less understanding among the forwards, and less brilliant individualists than are required to play the other two styles in a successful manner. However, one must not assume from this that little or no judgment is needed to play the open game, for there is all the difference in the world between the long-passing open game and the kick-and-rush style of the historic village football club. Even a long pass accurately given is by no means easy to gather when running at full speed, especially if given in the air. But in a case where the direction or length of the long pass has been badly misjudged, it is almost impossible to gather the ball, and so though the opening is good full advantage has not been taken of it, and so an excellent opportunity is wasted. Another point against this style of play is that in front of goal accuracy is absolutely essential to goal scoring, and as it is extremely hard to send a long pass

to within inches of the spot required, the least mistake in direction helps the defence to no small extent and just hinders the attack enough for the ball to be cleared to midfield once again. Also if the day be a windy<sup>1</sup> one the passes may be carried far out of their line unless the strength of the wind be accurately judged, particularly as these passes will often enough be in the air. Despite these disadvantages, however, the open game is an extremely good one, and well worth consideration and trial. It has also one further advantage, it is suited to both dry and wet ground. For though on a wet ground the wings may not be able to make full use of their speed, yet the style more nearly approaches the kick-and-rush game which is useful with all its uncouthness on a wet day because it is difficult for the defence to stop short suddenly and turn round. Also the inside forwards, having little or no passing between themselves in midfield, will arrive at the goal in a much fresher condition than they would have had they passed to each other some six or eight times before reaching the goal mouth.

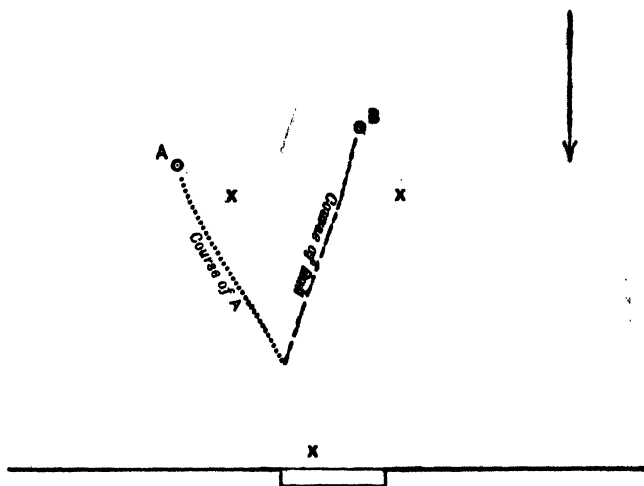
<sup>1</sup> It is wise to pass the ball along the ground when kicking against the wind.

There are two variations of the short-passing game, one in which the three insides do the bulk of the work, the other when the whole line shares it more or less equally. In the former style the three insides should be closer together in midfield than is the case in the long-passing game. The passes here should be given with the side of the foot and not with the instep, for they will not need to be hard. The attacking movements are generally executed by the three insides tapping the ball from one to the other, as they progress up the field, whenever the approach of a half or back renders a pass necessary. Then when they see a good opportunity, or whenever, as a matter of fact, they can carry on this scheme no longer, the ball is dispatched to the wings and centred in the usual way. In the other variation the forwards are spaced evenly, and the ball travels along from man to man by means of short passes; in this case the wing men are employed quite as much as the insides. This latter scheme is more in favour with the professionals, while the other, which may be called the inside-passing game, seems the one generally adopted by amateurs when they play the short-passing game. Of course the inside man and his



wing man may also take the ball down by passing and repassing.

There are many advantages in this method of attack as compared with the other two. If once the three insides are allowed to get going they are extraordinarily hard to stop, as the whole quintessence of the game consists in the making and taking of these short passes with marvellous rapidity and accuracy. Then, too, both in mid-field and near goal there is always a chance of being able to give the "through" pass. This pass, which had better be described here for the benefit of the uninitiated, is, to be perfectly accurate, not a pass at all, inasmuch as it is not directed actually to any player. What happens is this: the player in possession of the ball sees a chance of placing it in such a position behind the opposing full-backs that one of his own side can run round or between them before they are able to perceive it or tackle him, and thus he finds himself with the ball at his feet and a clear run with no one in between himself and the goal. This pass is a favourite one with forwards when they are near goal, but is not used as much as it might be when in midfield. It is true that in most cases the backs will be so placed that one of them can intercept the ball or the man



### THE "THROUGH" PASS

The ball is in possession of B, who passes between the two defenders (X X). A is quick off the mark and reaches the ball before the defenders can recover, or the goal-keeper can reach the ball to clear

To face page 38



for whose benefit the pass is given, but at the same time opportunities arise often enough, and moreover, if well given, the pass will present an excellent opening, though possibly there may not be an absolutely clear run. The man for whom the pass is given must observe two points : (a) He must not infringe the off-side rule. (b) He must be prepared for the pass at any moment and be very quick off the mark. It is, of course, foolish to use this stratagem when one of the defence will most certainly get the ball before the forward.

Another point in favour of the short-passing game is that better opportunities are afforded by it for a shot when near goal. Such accuracy is needed to play the game to perfection that a good forward ought to have no difficulty at all in taking a shot at goal without stopping the ball, waiting to get comfortable, or improving his position. Of course the danger is that in front of goal forwards are apt to indulge too much in passing, thus allowing the defence to get the ball ultimately, and so clear to midfield. The style also is much more accurate than the long passing, the ball is kept on the ground, is more under the control of the forwards, for immediately it leaves one man it is in the possession of another, and keeps the

defence ever on the move tackling one man after another.

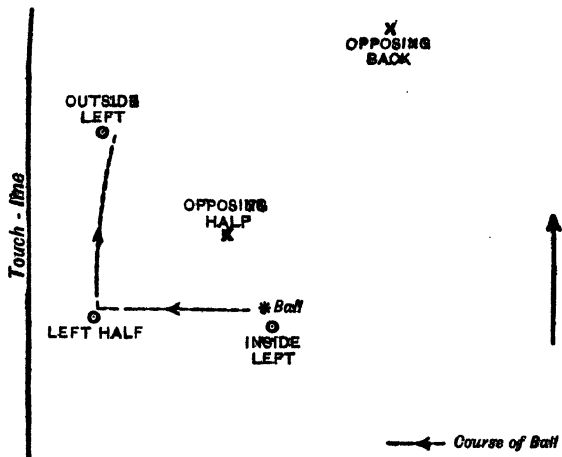
One cannot, however, deal with the advantages of one style without discussing also its disadvantages. The complete understanding between the forwards and absolute accuracy of the passes (both of which are requisite), when really good, give sting to the attack, but when not first-class break up the combination. Thus when one of the inside trio is playing below his form, as occasionally must be the case, or is stale, the whole forward line is thrown out of gear, for they cannot possibly get on without the co-operation of every man. Again, this style demands infinitely more movements than the long-passing game before the forwards reach the goal, for the passes will be rather squarer, and therefore not so much ground is gained on each pass. Also, the more passes there are, the more chance there is of one going wrong, and one inaccurate pass, though the inaccuracy be a matter of half an inch, will wreck the attack for the time being. Then, as there will be more passes, and the forwards will possibly have to stop and turn more frequently, they will in the end tire themselves out before the game is finished. Another point is that when the attack is bunched together like this the

defence should have the advantage, and if the defenders are prepared to bustle they will soon throw the forwards off their game, and that is one method in defence by which an attack of this stamp can be broken up. Also, if the wing halves mark the inside men short passing will be extremely risky, and that is the general method adopted to nullify the effects of the short-passing game, for no inside forward will be able to move a foot unattended by his shadow, the half. Again, in wet weather, when the ball and ground are slippery, passes must of necessity be inaccurate, or at all events will not reach that degree of accuracy so essential for a successful issue to a short-passing movement; the men, too, will not be able to stop, turn or start as quickly and as certainly as on dry ground.

The third method of attack is one which for some years has been obsolete, but should here be mentioned, *i.e.*, the individual dribbling method. Its decay has been necessitated by the great increase in science and combination in defence, and the counter-moves of combination and science in attack. By this method the forward who secured the ball would dribble towards the goal and try to trick everybody who tackled him, only passing it to another member of his own side under extraordinary

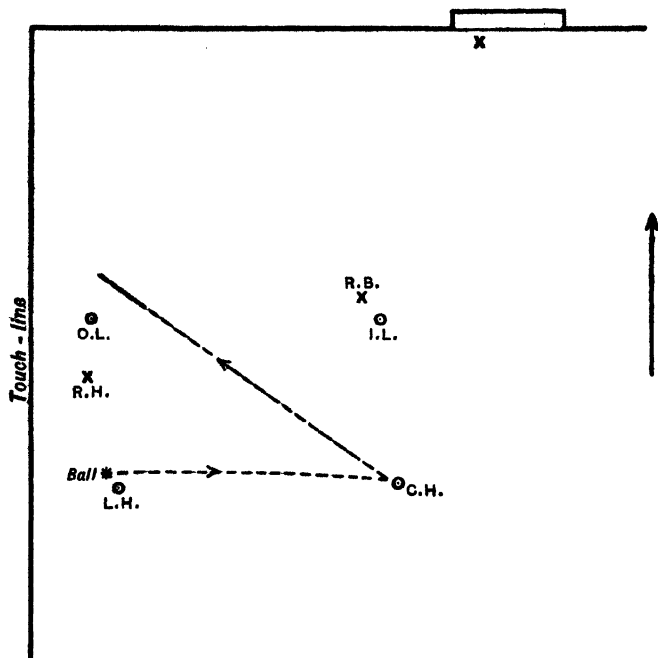
circumstances. This nowadays is, of course, absolutely impracticable as a style of play, for the defence would always have a couple of men set to follow the ball. This style, however, did one good thing. It produced a set of extremely clever and tricky forwards and expert dribblers, such as one does not see nowadays, for neat footwork was essential. And this demand for neater and cleverer footwork than is prevalent at the present day would alone prevent its being revived. Needless to say, however, a forward should always endeavour to go through in this way once or twice during a game, for it may take the defence by surprise and have happy results; but to base one's whole attack on these lines will be found to be fatal.

There is yet another method of attack, an extremely useful one, which is played a little among the professionals, practically not at all by amateurs. It is a pity that it has been neglected, for it is very effective. This is the triangular method. In this scheme the ball is taken up the field by the two men on one wing, closely followed by the wing half at a distance of three or four yards behind. All passes given or taken are short passes, and when either of the forwards gets into difficulties the ball is tapped



THE TRIANGULAR PASS FROM INSIDE FORWARD TO OUTSIDE,  
VIA HALF-BACK





**VARIAION OF TRIANGULAR PASS. FROM WING HALF TO WING  
FORWARD, VIA CENTRE-HALF**

back to the half, who returns it to his forwards when they are freed from the attentions of the defence, goes on with it himself, though this is rare, or passes it to some other player who is sufficiently well placed to receive it. Even if it be not played as a regular style—and we do not advise its use entirely—yet its occasional employment will probably result in success.

The ideal game is, however, a combination of all these methods; perhaps all may be played in turn, or all may be employed in a single attack. For instance, the open game in midfield may develop into short passing when nearer goal, and culminate in a through pass or run through. Then, again, a team should always be able to change its tactics and suit them to circumstances. For instance, on a wet day the short-passing game, which needs quickness and neatness, would be hopeless, as the ball would be heavy and slippery, and the ground greasy and tenacious. In the same way, if the ground is dry and there is a high wind blowing, long passing would be equally futile, for when the long pass is given in the air it will be greatly a matter of luck if it reaches its destination, and even if accurate would still be extremely difficult to gather well.

Again, if a team usually plays the short-passing game, and one of its regular forwards is away, perhaps the substitute might not fit in particularly well for the playing of this style. In that case it is to the advantage of the team to abandon the tactics, which are doomed to failure, and play in another style where the greatest understanding between the forwards is not so absolutely essential. In all these methods, however, it must not be forgotten that the object is to score goals, and every opportunity, however slight, for a shot should be taken without hesitation ; also, in attack variety is of the utmost importance.

On paper, it may be said, that all these methods of attack sound very promising. Then, why is it that so few goals, comparatively, are scored? Of reasons there are a legion. In the first place, the best regulated forwards are apt to make mistakes, either in giving or taking a pass. Also, in dribbling they keep the ball for too long or too short a time, or fail to keep it under proper control. But more often than not, sad to relate, it is not incapacity, but sheer, downright carelessness that wrecks many a promising attack : deliberate folly, too, has much to do with it. For the man with the ball will pass anyhow and anywhere when threatened, without

troubling to use that useful commodity called brain. Also, in front of goal there is an excessive amount of passing, for forwards often refuse to shoot except when they think they have got a perfect chance or an open goal. Then often enough, alas that it should be said, forwards will not try a shot because they know that if they do they will be charged over; and so they prefer to keep clean. The object of a good captain is to minimize these faults and mistakes as much as possible; perhaps he cannot force a forward to use his brains, but he can substitute another who will. The other faults, *e.g.*, too much passing in front of goal, can be eradicated with greater ease.

So far we have dealt only with the attacking duties of a forward line. They have also defensive duties which are quite important. But just as the duties of various individuals vary in attack, so also do they in defence. The duties of each will be detailed when we come to write of each forward individually, but it would be well to sketch them in lightly here.

The centre and wing forwards should not, except in exceptional circumstances, do very much defensive work. They should, when robbed of the ball by their opposing half, either recover

it or force him to pass as soon as possible. The inside forwards may legitimately do more than this, and when the two lines of forwards are close together in midfield the insides of the one line should attack the opposing forwards of the other if they have the ball. It must always be borne in mind, however, that the forwards' main duty is attack, and they should never defend at the expense of losing their proper position in attack. The exception to this rule is when the forward and wing half temporarily exchange places.

In this lies all the difference between failing to win and losing a game. Often, after a match is over, the forwards have been accused of losing the game. This is not always a just judgment, for if the forwards have carried out attacks and succeeded in doing everything but score, then they have only *failed to win* the game. But on occasions forwards grow dispirited and slack both in attack and defence, and thus, throwing twice as much work as necessary on the defence, actually *lose* the game.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FORWARDS

#### §I GENERAL

**I**N the last chapter we have explained at length the recognized systems of attack, and these every forward must have at his finger-ends. But before proceeding to deal with each forward individually, it would be well to make a few general remarks on forward play which apply equally to each and all.

The forwards are the chief attacking portion of a team. Their object is to get goals. And one naturally asks, "How many goals should be sufficient to win a match?" As a general rule, perhaps, in a well-balanced team we should say three; four goals ought certainly to be sufficient. And if the forwards have obtained them and the match is lost, then in all probability the fault lies with the defence. One hears so frequently the

complaint that the forwards lost the game through bad shooting, etc. Well, if the forwards have obtained three or four goals, we consider that the blame cannot be put upon them usually ; they have fulfilled their part, and if the team is defeated the defence is probably at fault. But let the forwards remember that, simply because they have got three or four goals in the early stages of the game, this is no reason at all for "slacking" for the rest of the time.

The forwards must play as a line and not as a collection of individuals, each playing his own game without reference to the rest ; combination is the keynote of success. They therefore should know each other's play, and have a common knowledge of the tactics they are likely to use. One man who continually and always plays for himself, and uses his partners only as a last resort, will entirely break up the combination of the line, and but few or no goals are likely to be scored. Selfishness carried to excess is a common failing among forwards, but there are times when apparent selfishness is no selfishness at all, but the right policy. Now selfishness is a difficult and dangerous subject to handle, but because of that very reason it must be dealt with at some length. All

play is for the good of the side, and as a general rule the play that is useful is combined play; but if the play that will be most successful in given sets of circumstances is what is called selfish, then the so-called selfish play is not only useful but an absolute necessity, and it will be a serious mistake not to employ it. Now a great factor in successful attack is variety of tactics: the defence should never be allowed to get the measure of the forwards, so to speak. If the forwards always play the long-passing game, or always the short passing, then the work of the opposing defence is so much the easier. Rather a good example of what might happen took place in the 'Varsity match of 1911. Cambridge had a magnificent line of forwards—perhaps the best turned out in the last ten years at either University. Unfortunately in the 'Varsity match they tried the same tactics all through the game—short passing. The result was that the Oxford defence always knew what was coming, and so easily mastered the attack. Well, if the defence see that the forwards are always passing, they will know how to act, but if one of the forwards suddenly attempts to go through single-handed he is likely to take the defence by surprise, and



so throw all their calculations and settled schemes into disorder. Therefore every forward, and particularly the three insides, should at times go through by himself—or attempt to do so—(and here his trickiness will stand him in good stead) if only for the sake of confusing the defence. The effort may not perhaps always be successful, but if it does succeed in getting the defence into such a state of mind that they do not know what to expect next, then the next attack will be all the more fruitful. Almost every forward gets two or three times in the game an opportunity to go through alone, and these opportunities he should take. Also, a forward should never on any account pass unless he sees some one in a better position than himself for clinching the attack: he must go straight on until he can draw one of the defence from another forward, or until he can himself have a shot at goal. And sometimes it is advisable for a forward deliberately to stick to the ball merely to draw the greater part of the defence over to his side of the field, and then he should get rid of the ball. But nothing is more futile than to trick the same man time after time without gaining an inch of ground or without having any particular movement in view,



CENTRE FORWARD GETTING CLEAR OF CENTRE HALF



for in doing so he is generally merely wasting time and allowing the rest of the defence to get back and mark their men. All attacks should be made at top speed, because time is vital. It is supposed that all who read these words read them with intelligence, and play with intelligence too, for inopportune selfishness is no use, and invariably brings disaster in its train.

Then as to the method of distributing the forwards. The old Corinthian method was for the three insides to keep rather close together in the middle of the field, while the two wing forwards kept well out on the touchline. In the professional clubs the right inside and outside together formed one wing, and the majority of their play was with one another, the same arrangement was employed on the left, while the centre forward formed the connecting link between the two. Both systems have their advantages, and both are played nowadays by clubs among both amateurs and professionals. But there seems no valid reasons for dividing the forward line up into sections, connected though they be. And there seems no real reason why the three insides should be more intimately connected with each other than with the wings, or why the inside and

outside left, for instance, should form a little combination of two by themselves, and only be connected with the right wing men by the centre forward. Surely the ideal method is for the forwards to play as a combination of five individuals and not as a combination of sections. And so the forwards should be fairly evenly spaced; at times the insides should play more with their wing men and be closer to them, and at times it is best to draw in closer to the centre forward and play with him. For the plan of the attack is to spread out the defence as much as possible, to make it cover the whole breadth of the field, while the defence, of course, much prefer the attack to bunch together as much as possible, for then each man in the back division will have a chance of being able to worry two of the forwards at once. When the ball is being run down on the wing the three insides should converge on the goal mouth. And the same applies—though, perhaps, in a lesser degree—when the insides are taking the ball down for themselves. That is to say, they should be well spaced until within shooting distance of goal, and should then come in until the inside right and left are about opposite the goal-posts; the defence is thus kept stretched until

the last possible moment. The advantage of this is seen when play is on a narrow field, for then the forwards have not got so much room to execute their tactics in; consequently the defence have an easier time, and the advantage lies with them, except, perhaps, when the forwards are heavy and play a bustling game.

Another piece of strategy in forward play is to draw the majority of the defence on to one wing and then suddenly swing the ball across to the unmarked men upon the other wing. It is worth while doing this deliberately; for instance, the inside and outside left might attract three of the defence upon the left wing by playing the short-passing game with each other for a short space of time, and when the defence is lured in that direction, they should swing the ball across where the remainder of the defence could not hope to withstand the attack. Or again, the centre and inside left might try the same tactics, and when the majority of the defence has come over to stop the operations, a swift pass might be sent to the opposite wing. It is quite an old piece of strategy to make a feint in one direction while the real attack is to be delivered elsewhere. But it is quite useless to attract the defence to one place and then

pass there. And yet one sees it done time after time.

Again, it is a fatal thing for the forwards to let the full-backs have their own way. A little bustling will put many backs off their game entirely. As long as the back is allowed to get in his kick he may play magnificently, but as soon as the forwards bustle him his kicking is likely to deteriorate rapidly. A back generally has a preconceived notion that it is his part to knock the forwards off the ball, and when his tactics are employed against himself he is apt to lose his head and kick wildly. Also, particularly in front of goal, the insides should not forget that it often pays to keep off a back or half who is rushing to tackle the man with the ball.

Every forward should be able to pass accurately and neatly with either foot ; it is safest to do so with the inside of the foot. But it must be remembered that passing is a means and not an end. Also, he must be an expert dribbler and must keep the ball absolutely in his own control—when dribbling the ball should never be more than a foot away, and should be immediately in front, for then one can pass to either side with equal ease, and the man tackling will not be able to tell beforehand to which side the

ball is going. Passes should be given and taken at full speed, and when a forward sees that a pass is to come to him he should be on his toes to receive it. Again, passes should not be given too hard; a sharp tap is generally all that is necessary to lodge the ball in the required spot. It is rarely advantageous—never for a short pass—to kick the ball with all one's force. We have mentioned before, and shall doubtless again, that in attack time is vital. When an opening is made it must be taken at once and at full speed, or else the defence will have time to get back and pack the goal mouth. A forward must not hesitate.

Then weather conditions must come into consideration. The use of the wind must not be forgotten, and the forwards must know how to make use of any sort of wind. Tactics on a wet day should be different from those employed when the ground is dry. The ball is very difficult to control, and so the short-passing game should not be played so much. It should, however, be tried occasionally, merely for variety in order to surprise the defence, but on a wet day one cannot expect to do very much with it. Also, it is very difficult for the backs to clear a wet and greasy ball, and, in addition, it is extremely hard for them to



turn quickly and get started on the slippery ground ; therefore in such circumstances we strongly advise what might be called the kick-and-rush game and the "through" pass. Of course it must not be used entirely, for the defence will at once form plans to frustrate it, though even so the advantage lies to a very great extent with the forwards. On a wet day it is advisable to see to one's studs carefully before the game.

One other thing. Though each forward can often tell what a partner is likely to do when in possession of the ball, yet it is extremely useful to have a code for signalling particular plans, etc. There are scores of ways in which it could be arranged. For instance, the calling out of a man's name may signify that the man in possession is going to use the "through" pass, etc. Opponents often do not discover the code, and, at all events, one can always change it—and it might be changed frequently—even in the middle of a game.

## §2. THE CENTRE FORWARD

Forward is the most difficult place on the field to play in, and the centre forward is the most important man in the line. The centre half is in constant attendance upon him, and his life is a



THROUGH PASS. I



crowded one. He must be fast, tricky, and well built—rather on the heavy side; for if he be heavy he may be able to burst through by sheer force of weight where a lighter man would have to trust to his wiliness entirely, or else be knocked off the ball. Weight is also a great advantage when it is necessary to bustle the backs; but he must not use his weight always in preference to tricking or passing, for heavy charging is extremely tiring, and he should always have left in him sufficient “go” to make a supreme effort in front of goal. If a centre forward is not on the heavy side, he must be very tricky indeed. Also, he must be possessed of dash and determination; must never lose his head, but always keep cool. Above all, he must use his brains, for he has to direct the tactics of the line. And in choosing his tactics he must remember that variety is absolutely necessary. If he tries to overwhelm the defence time and again by the same method, they will soon learn to defeat that method or even anticipate it; but if he uses the long and short passing game in turns, occasionally goes through himself or uses the “through” pass, he will put the defence in an extremely awkward position, for they will never know what he is going to do

next. Then he must be clever at deceiving; he must shape to do one thing and promptly do another, and as he will be able to kick equally well with either foot, the forwards will not know to which side he is going to pass, or if he is going to pass. He must, in fact, be an adept at throwing the defence off the scent and at keeping them guessing. His own partners, however, will know his play, and will generally be able to perceive what his purpose is. For special purposes he can tell them what he is going to do by using a code of signals. Also, he should have a quick eye for the weak places in the defence, and turn them to full account by directing his attack upon them. He is one of the two men chiefly responsible for feeding his wings, and he must realize that, unless they are fed regularly and often, he is not making the best use of their pace. As soon as he sees one of his wing men unmarked, and that, therefore, there is a good opening for him to sprint down the field, he should at once get the ball across to that man, and if the wing man cannot get in a centre he is at fault. If the centre cannot see an opening for his wings, he must either attempt to make one for them by drawing the defence upon himself, or use his insides. An ex-

tremely useful pass is the long diagonal one to the wing from the centre, for as often as not the wing half may be out of his place ; if he is too far up on the forwards the pass should go behind him towards the touchline or corner flag, or if he has dropped back too far, in front. Care must be taken to place this pass well ahead of the forward, as it is impossible for a wing man to use his pace to the full if he has to wait for the ball. It is, however, a common practice with halves to hang back purposely in the expectation of this, so that by a sudden dash forward they may intercept the ball. However, the centre must be able to judge whether the half can intercept his pass, and, if so, to bethink him of some other plan. All these long passes should be sent swiftly and along the ground, as the ball is so much easier for the man passed to to gather than if it is in the air. Speed in attack is of vital importance, and it is the centre's duty to see that his line does attack on the run. Sometimes, of course, it is advantageous to get the ball out to the wing forward by passing over the head of the intervening half ; it is very effective when successful, but such a pass is more difficult for the wing man to collect at full speed ; besides,

the least miscalculation in the elevation of the ball may enable the half to get his head to it. However, it frequently helps one out of an *impasse*, and the centre forward should not forget it. As a general rule it is not wise to feed the wings when near the opposing goal, but then the ball should be kept as much as possible to the three insides.

Of course one expects the centre forward to be a good shot with both feet, not only accurate but powerful too; also let it be remembered that placing the ball well out of the goalkeeper's reach is often more effective than a hard shot only slightly to one side. He must be able to shoot from any position, and in particular when the ball is in the air, as it often comes across knee-high from the wing, and to stop it first and then shoot wastes time. And when a centre does come across about head-high from the wing he should not always try and head it into goal, for frequently he will only just be able to touch it and turn it gently to one of the opposing backs, whereas if he lets it go the player on the far side of him will be able, perhaps, to get in a good shot with his foot. As soon as he gets to about twelve or fifteen yards from goal—a good many players think twenty—he should shoot when-

ever he has opportunity. When the ball is wet or greasy it pays to try longer shots, for even the best goalkeeper may easily slip or fail to catch the ball, and then the other inside forwards have an excellent chance of rushing the ball through. And this is a point that must be remembered : whenever there is a shot at goal the three insides should at once dash on the goalkeeper, for they may get upon him before he is able to clear, and then there should not be much difficulty in scoring. Perhaps the inside forward who has just done the shooting need not himself rush the goalkeeper, but the other two certainly should. As a general rule a hard drive along the ground into goal is much more difficult to stop and clear than one coming in the air, for if the shot be well placed the goalkeeper has to throw himself full length on the ground to get to the ball ; it is difficult for him to clear them, and if he does not concede a corner the forwards should dash up ; in fact, they should be upon him in any case. Also, the forward, be he centre or not, must not dwell on his shot, but get it in without the slightest delay. Thousands of goals are missed every season simply because forwards will dally in front of goal, or "finick" about and try to get comfortable before



shooting. This is a fatal mistake, for the defence is not likely to allow forwards in front of goal overmuch time for shooting, so in this case, at all events, he who hesitates is lost. However, one must not forget that in whatever way the ball may be lodged in the net a goal is scored, and often—as, for example, when there is a scrummage in the goal mouth—the merest tap may send the ball past the goalkeeper, and that, moreover, is quicker in operation than a hard shot. The “jab” shot, mentioned on p. 24, must not be forgotten. Often, too, in front of goal the centre should pass to an inside man who may be better placed for shooting than himself. But this must not be overdone, for, as a general rule, there is far too much passing and repassing amongst the forwards in the goal mouth.

Then, again, the centre forward should prevent his insides from “bunching” in upon him, especially in the middle of the field, for if they do the opposing centre half will find it much easier to intercept passes between them. Also, the centre must not lack room in which to manoeuvre; for, as it is, he has to move in a very circumscribed area, more so, in fact, than any one on the field, save, perhaps, the goalkeeper, and if the insides hem him



GENERAL FORWARD MOVEMENT



in closely on each side his position will be worse than ever. No ; as a rule in midfield the forwards should occupy the whole breadth of the field from side to side with spaces that are more or less equal between them ; for, in addition to the reasons given above, it is much easier to pierce a defence that is well stretched.

When the ball is in the possession of his own halves the centre, as should every other forward, should do his best to get uncovered by his attendant half-back. Often a few steps to one side or the other will be sufficient for the purpose : by this means he will help the halves materially, as they will be able to get in a clear pass to him. One trick in this connection is worth noting, and it also shows the advantage of arranging matters beforehand, and of having an excellent understanding with the halves. Suppose the centre half be coming along with the ball, desiring to pass to his centre forward. If the opposing centre half is marking the centre forward too well, it is possible to get rid of him by the following dodge. Let the centre forward face his own goal, and as soon as the ball comes to him and he is attacked simultaneously by the opposing half, let him tap the ball back to his own half and take a pace

or two to one side, when his own half will be able to pass to him before the opposing half can recover.

Another case where passing back is of infinite use is in front of goal. For instance, the centre forward may receive the ball but be unable to shoot by reason of the press in front of him. On such occasions it frequently pays to "heel" the ball back to his centre half, who will be about a dozen or so yards behind him. The centre half can then get in a good shot, and even if he does not actually score the forwards may have a chance of rushing the goalkeeper. Preston North End in their palmy days some twenty years ago often used this notion with striking success, but at present it seems to have become less common. It is none the less effective for that.

The centre forward must always be on the lookout for an opportunity of using the "through" pass as described in the last chapter; it is extremely effective, leads up to many goals, and generally has the defence in difficulties. However, it should essentially be used as a surprise and not with such regularity as to play into the hands of the opposing backs. Nor should it be used when one back is behind the other, for then the back behind gets a free clear kick; nor yet too near goal, for

THROUGH PASS. II





then the goalkeeper has merely to dash out and kick; and even some twenty or thirty yards from goal, the pace of the ball must be nicely regulated so that the forward in pursuit of it may get at it before the goalkeeper can reach it to clear.

There is one position in which every forward may find himself at times. He may get clear of all defenders with the ball at his feet some yards from the goal with only the goalkeeper to beat. This is not an easy situation, as may at first sight appear. If the goalkeeper stays in goal there should be no difficulty, for the forward will merely have to shoot. But the real crux of the matter comes when the goalkeeper dashes out upon the oncoming forward. On such an occasion as this the forward *must* keep cool: he must keep the ball under perfect control and not allow it to go one inch farther than is absolutely necessary. It is generally useless to shoot under these conditions, for as the goalkeeper comes out he covers more and more of the goal; the forward must therefore trick his opponent and then tap the ball into the net. And when he tricks he must take care to allow a very big margin, in fact he can scarcely allow one too wide, for the goalkeeper will certainly endeavour to fall on the



ball, and he can cover quite a large extent of ground in doing so.

Also, the centre must watch his chance of going through on his own initiative. The defence is frequently disconcerted to find a forward dodging past them, when they had imagined he would be forced to pass.

The centre in attack has often to do a deal of spoiling work, and sometimes he is of more service to his insides, if he keeps off, say, a back, and prevents him from tackling the man with the ball, than if he endeavours to place himself where he would be unmarked. This duty also falls to the other two insides, and is a point which forwards generally seem to forget. At all events one sees little of it in practice.

At the kick-off the centre should already have a plan in his head by which to rush the defence. A very common notion is for the centre to start his line by passing, say, to the inside right, then he will dash round to that player's right, receive a short pass from him and be well away before the defence is upon him: or again he may draw the enemy's left half and pass to his wing man,

and so the attack develops in the usual way. A determined attack from the kick-off often results in a goal in the first minute, and this is calculated to demoralise one's opponents, while it inspirits one's own side. Other ways of kicking off are kicking straight out to the wing, and passing gently forward to an inside who heels it to the centre half. The long kick to the wing from the start is more likely to succeed than at first appears, for the half is generally nearer to the players in midfield than to his wing man, and if the kick be well forward and the outside man is expecting it, a dangerous attack may be set up. And then perhaps the next time the wing half will fear this move again and mark his wing man closely, and if this is so, why, then the insides may start off with a short-passing movement. At all events variety in the kick-off is likely to have more chance of success than the same method employed time after time. There are many other dodges at the kick-off, and players can invent still more.

When the game is in progress the centre forward's position is on the line between the two goals. If the game tends towards his own

goal he must shift down accordingly in that direction, but should get into such a position that the opposing centre half (who probably will be following on the heels of his forwards) will not be able to intercept passes meant for him. Then when one of his own forwards is dribbling the ball down, he should not be exactly on a level with him, but a trifle behind. His own judgment will decide when he should attend the throws-in and when not. When his own side is throwing-in his object should be to attend the function without the presence of his shadow, the centre half. However, it is difficult enough to get rid of him. When the other side is throwing-in it is his duty to see that the centre half does not steal a march on him. There are various tricks at the throw-in which will be mentioned in their place. A useful one for the centre forward is the following: When the ball is thrown to him he might kick the ball hard over his head almost parallel to the goal-line, for the defence will naturally be inclined to shift across to that wing on which the "touch" is being taken, and so a long kick thence stands a good chance of giving the opposite wing forward an opportunity of having a clear run down. It

must be admitted, however, that this scheme is attended with risks, as the ball is bound to go into the air, and so the opposing half or back may get to it as soon as, or sooner than, the forward for whom it is intended. None the less it is occasionally worth while trying, and the wing forward must be on the *qui vive* for it.

When his own side is taking a corner the centre will take up his stand in the middle close in to goal. The centre half will, of course, be marking him. When the ball comes along he must do his best to get it into the net with head or foot.

So much for the centre in attack. As to his defensive duties—well, we are not in favour of his doing much in that direction. If the centre half takes the ball from him he should, of course, worry him and make him pass, and particularly in the opponents' half of the field. And when the centre—or any forward—has robbed an opposing half, and that half pursues him hotly up the field, there is a neat way of checking the pursuit. The forward with the ball merely runs across the path of the half, who will be forced to pull up suddenly in order not to charge the forward in the back. This will, of course, give the forward a chance of getting some yards ahead. This process

can be repeated as often as is necessary, and the result will always be the same. Some captains urge the centre forwards to come back and mark the centre half when the opposing forwards are on the attack, but it should be remembered that the centre forward is the pivot of the attack, and therefore he should not be compelled to come back continually to get the ball for himself, for his duties are heavy enough as it is. Moreover, he should not tire himself out by chasing the centre half—admittedly the hardest worked man on the field—for he should always have left in him sufficient freshness to deliver an attack single-handed at a pinch. Nor even when a corner is forced against his team should he go back to help his team to pack the goal, though, as a matter of fact, many captains do compel the centre forward to mark the opposing centre half on these occasions; but the six defensive players and the two insides should be enough for defensive purposes. His place on such occasions is just within range of a good clearing kick, in the middle of the field, so that if the ball comes along in his direction, he may lead a rush on the opponents' goal. If his wing men are also out with him, the attack will be all the more dangerous.

## §3. RIGHT AND LEFT INSIDE

The play of the inside left is identical with that of the inside right, and therefore what applies to one applies also to the other, *mutatis mutandis*. The inside left must be if anything a better shot with his left foot than with his right, and in fact even if he is poorish with his right he must be able to use the left well. The case is the same with the inside right, only the other way on.

The duties of these players are much the same as those of the centre forward, and therefore the same qualities are necessary in all three, coolness, pluck, etc. ; they should be built on the same lines physically, should be quick on the ball and speedy of foot. They should be good dribblers, tricky, able to pass and shoot to perfection : their duties in front of goal are very similiar, such as keeping off a back who desires to tackle the man with the ball, rushing the goalkeeper and following up shots : neither should they forget the trick of "heeling" to the centre half should occasion arise. They too should bustle the backs and prevent them from getting in their kick. They should know their centre forward's style of play, keep in touch with him and combine with him, also they must have a perfect understanding with their wing

man. They should be able to anticipate, with a certain amount of sureness, what the centre's tactics are likely to be when he has the ball, and must readily fall in with his plans. They too have a good deal to do with the feeding of their wings. But simply because this is the obvious thing to do and one that the opposing halves will expect, it is not always wise to do it. They must also remember that to feed the opposite wing is often fairly effective, and it unexpectedly changes the direction of the attack, always a disconcerting arrangement for the opposing defence. For instance, suppose in midfield the left inside has the ball; if he dribbles toward his left as if to get into closer touch with his wing man he will naturally lure the defence over on his side of the field: then is the occasion for what has just been mentioned: it is extremely probable that the outside right will be temporarily unmarked, and a long pass out to him will enable him to run down and centre without difficulty. This pass must be made with extreme rapidity, as the object is to deliver the attack before the defence can pack the goal mouth. In the same way the inside right should not forget that he too has duties to the outside left.

The insides also must always be on the look-



INSIDE FORWARDS COMING DOWN FIELD, HALF IN ATTENDANCE





out for an opportunity to run through on their own account and to play the "through" pass. They must not be absolutely dependent on the centre forward: they have not such opportunities as he for introducing new tactics, but none the less should be able to think for themselves and act for themselves too. After all the most dangerous set of forwards consists of five first-class individualists who combine when combination is the right policy, and make single-handed onslaughts upon the goal when an opportunity is given them. And that opportunity certainly will present itself, at least once in a game and frequently more often still.

The position of the insides is generally about midway between the wing and the centre, though of course at times they will be more closely connected with the wing, and at times more so with the centre. When the attack is in progress they must converge upon the goal. When their own wing has the ball the inside must decide if his wing can get in his centre without further assistance from him, and if so must dash for the goal to take up the position necessary. Also, the inside must be on the look-out for a pass from the wing man near goal, for it frequently happens that it is better for the wing forward to pass to

one man than to send in a general centre. This pass is most dangerous when the inside is some twenty yards from goal and eight yards or so to the side of the near post. When in such a position he is often temporarily unmarked, and so should be able to get in a clear shot. The position of all the forwards when one of the wings centre should be noticed. Suppose the right wing has just centred. The inside right should be just opposite the enemy's left goal-post, the centre forward in the middle, the inside left opposite the far goal-post, and the outside left some ten or twelve yards beyond him, so that if the ball does come through the insides he may have a good chance of getting in a cross shot.

What has been said about heading in front of goal with reference to the centre forward also holds good in the case of the insides, that is to say the ball must not be touched with the head if by so doing the forward prevents the man beyond him from having a shot with his foot. Whenever there is a goal-kick from either end the inside forwards should not forget that it is frequently possible to head the dropping ball out to the wings, especially when there is not time to trap it.

The inside should attend all the "touches" on





his side of the field : on these occasions he marks or is marked by the corresponding inside forward. An excellent trick when his own half is throwing in is to tap the ball back again to the half, who thus has practically a free kick. Tricks such as this are very useful, and for their successful accomplishment the inside must have a good understanding with his half.

When the play tends in the direction of his own goal he must travel down in that direction too, so that he may be within passing distance of his halves, taking care, of course, to get uncovered by the opposing half. If the inside in possession of the ball can see no opening he must "spar" for one. If he has determined to pass to the centre forward he should turn slightly in that direction in order to draw off the centre half and then pass ; at all events he should almost always draw a man before passing.

When his own half comes dribbling up the field and the opposing defence does not seem inclined to tackle him, then the inside must try to get rid of the man marking him, or else draw him off to the side, and so allow the half to get in a shot at goal.

As the game is played at present the inside forwards are supposed to work quite hard in de-

fence. When the enemy is attacking they will naturally come down towards their own goal on the chance of a pass. But many professional teams expect more than this. In most of them when the enemy attacks the inside forwards drop back and mark the wing-halves, who will be waiting some twelve or fourteen yards behind their forwards to return the ball if it is kicked out, and intercept passes meant for the opposing forwards. This is what the insides are to prevent: by marking the halves they stand a fair chance of getting the ball themselves, then they can feed their wing man and sprint up the field in order to push the attack home in their turn. There is much to be said for this plan, but it seems rather a lot to demand of the insides. Perhaps it pays if they are not getting enough of the game owing to the weakness of the defence (and if the back division is decidedly weak, the plan is a good one), but in the ordinary course of events they are hard enough worked as it is, and if goals are to be obtained the inside forwards should be spared as much donkey-work as possible so that they may possess that extra bit of vigour necessary to crown their efforts with success. Of course they must worry the opposing half and make him pass if he has the ball in his

possession, and if the half takes the ball from them, they should not let it go without an attempt to regain it. When corners have been given against their team, the insides retire and help to pack the goal mouth, but as soon as the ball is cleared they must dash forward to take their place in the line and assist the attack.

At "corners" in the opponent's goal they follow the example of their centre forward.

#### § 4. THE OUTSIDES

The two outsides have exactly the same work to do and need the same qualifications, except that the outside left must be able to centre with his left foot, and *vice versa*.

Both should be speedy, if anything faster than their inside men. Also, they must be able to shoot, but should remember that this is not by any means their chief duty; indeed, they do not often have occasion to do so, save when the opposite wing man has centred and the ball comes through the line of forwards in front of goal; when this does happen the wing man will find himself unmarked, and should be able to lodge the ball in the net. Some wing men, like Meredith of Manchester, regularly converge on the goal as they sprint up the field, and finally themselves shoot without



centring. Perhaps this is an excellent plan for a change, and it is the right thing to do if there is a clear run to goal, but it should not be employed if it necessitates the "tricking" of a back. The outside, in fact, always should converge slightly upon the goal as he takes the ball along, for then he will not have to kick the ball so far when he centres. The outsides, too, must possess one or two tricks for getting past the defence in case of need, such as kicking the ball past the defender and running round on the inside or outside of the opponent. They have frequent opportunities for showing their fleetness, for their most usual pass is the long diagonal one from a player who is behind them. It is just their extra yard of pace which enables them to beat a half in the race for the ball. The outsides must always be within a yard of the touch-line when waiting for a pass, and should lie well up the field, taking care not to get off-side. They must always take their passes on the run at top speed. It is absolutely fatal for the outside to stop a pass first and then try and get into his stride, for the half will be on him at once, and if it comes to a tussle the half-back generally stands the better chance of getting the ball, so delay will prove fatal. Besides, rapidity in attack is

almost everything. Even if the half does not actually get to his opponent when he stops the ball, at all events it gives the defence time to get back and make their preparations. Therefore the risk of overstepping the passes when travelling at full speed must be taken. Some wing men, when they have shaken off the half-back, do not travel at full speed until the full-back comes across to tackle; then, just as the full-back approaches they "spurt," and so race past the back with ease. This a useful plan if not tried too often; it applies, of course, equally to the other forwards.

It is not the duty of the outside to attempt to bustle the back, for heavy charging takes away one's wind; and the outside must always be ready to sprint: the bustling is done for him by the inside. But by this we do not mean that the outside is never to charge, but he should not take to it as a regular pastime. He must, of course, know his inside man thoroughly and have an understanding with his half.

He should be able to adapt himself to the tactics of the moment with readiness. He must know by instinct when the diagonal pass is coming, and should be well into his stride almost as soon as the ball is kicked. Supposing, then, that he has eluded or outpaced the opposing half, he will

probably find the back as a last defence. It is always sufficient to draw him, and is not necessary to trick him also, for that wastes time, and it is the outside's object to get the ball in to the centre before the defence can fall back to cover the goal. He should centre when about twelve yards from the goal line, because if the ball is centred too near the result will be a general *mêlée* in the goal mouth, in which the forwards will have no advantage over the defence. The ball should be kept low, along the grass if possible, for then the forwards will find it easier to shoot. The fault of very many outsides is that they stick to the ball too long: they take the ball, in fact, to within a foot of the goal line before centring. But this is a mistake, for it too wastes time, and allows the defence another opportunity of recovering. Also, the risk of kicking the ball over the goal line is greater, and it is, as a matter of fact, harder to centre from that position. But if by chance the ball is taken too far,<sup>1</sup> the outside

<sup>1</sup> It is useful sometimes to take the ball too far deliberately, *i.e.*, the wing man should take the ball on to the goal line as near goal as possible, and then pass back along the ground to his inside forward, who has dropped back in anticipation of this. This scheme, if not overdone, will produce many goals. See diagram.



A CENTRE FROM LEFT WING



should bear in mind that sometimes it is advisable to centre, not to the forwards, but directly to the centre half, who, being some dozen yards behind the forwards, may possibly have a better chance of scoring. If, as occasionally happens, the outside is too fast for his inside forwards, he should always centre back to them and not swing the ball straight across the goal mouth. We have already mentioned in the section dealing with the play of the insides that it is occasionally useful not to centre at all, but to pass directly to the inside some twenty yards from goal. In all cases the wing man must not centre *too hard*.

The outside must also remember that at times it is the right policy to centre long before he gets anywhere near the opponents' goal line, even in midfield perhaps. For instance, by playing the short-passing game for a bit with his inside he may induce the greater portion of the defence to mass on his side of the field; when he has achieved this, he must swing the ball across to an unmarked man; the direction of the attack is thus changed, the defence cannot always recover in time, and an excellent opening is made. Such a pass must be sent across at great speed, so that the attack on goal may be delivered without loss of time.

The outside attends all the "touches" on his line. When it is his own side that is throwing in he is marked by the half, and when the other side has the honour he is generally in charge of the back. Tricks for getting the ball away are common enough; besides those already mentioned there is one greatly favoured by Miller and Fleming, about '95, when both played for Wolverhampton: Fleming was the half and Miller the outside. At times, when Fleming was throwing in, Miller would turn round before the ball was out of Fleming's hands and sprint off in some direction, generally in that of the opponents' goal. Fleming would at once throw the ball just in front of Miller, who would be well in his stride before the half marking him was aware of what was happening. There are times when it is essential that a touch should be taken quickly, and if the half is not on the spot the outside might throw in.

Defence is not a part of the outsides' duty. Some teams make them come back to pack the goal mouth when a corner is forced; but much the best plan is for the two outsides to stand some twelve yards from the touchline, within reach of a clearing kick from the throng in front of the goal. If the defending side does manage to clear,

a very dangerous attack may be set in train. For, with the two wings and the centre well up, the opposing backs will not easily return the ball or cope with the three forwards opposed to them. It must be remembered that these forwards cannot be off-side in their own half, and so the chances are all in their favour. A good many teams play only one outside in this position, but the advantage of having the two as well as the centre ready to attack is too much to throw away; and, in addition, the five defensive players, the goalkeeper and the two insides, should be enough to pack the goal mouth at any "corner."

As it generally falls to the lot of the outside man to take "corners," it would perhaps be as well to say a word or two upon that subject here. It is best to treat a "corner" just as if it were a centre as far as the kicking of the ball is concerned. That is to say, the man taking the kick should run a pace or two along the touch-line and kick the ball at right angles to the course he is taking. But a "corner" is different from a "centre" inasmuch as the ball must be lifted into the air and not sent along the ground. There will, of course, be a throng in front of goal, and as a general rule the ball should be



dropped into the middle of these, if possible to the head of one of one's own side. The various members of the attacking side must then do their best to score. It matters little, however, how the ball is kicked so long as it drops among the crowd in front of the goal-posts. Some men punt the ball gently with their toe, and seem to do it thus just as effectively as if they had used their instep. There are one or two schemes by means of which it is possible for the attackers to increase their chance of scoring. The man taking the corner kick may pass the ball, not to the crowd in front of goal, but along the ground to the half-back on his own wing, who will be within shooting distance, and thus he may score direct, or at any rate will not rob his men in the goal mouth of their chance, for he may send in a difficult shot which will test the goalkeeper and allow the forwards to rush the ball through. The forwards, however, in this case must take care not to be off-side. Or again, instead of shooting, the half-back may "draw" two or three of the defenders upon himself and then pass swiftly to his own half on the other wing, who will probably be able to have a clear shot. But for both of these plans there must be an understanding between the halves and the man taking the corner kick.

## CHAPTER VI

### SHOOTING

**T**HIS department of the game is of such infinite importance and interest that the authors consider that it deserves a chapter to itself. And moreover, although it is one of the chief functions of the forwards, yet it falls also to the lot of the halves and occasionally even to that of the full backs, and so what is written on the subject should not be confined to the chapter on the forwards or forward policy.

Shooting is undoubtedly an art, but fortunately for the many who are not gifted in that way, it is an art that can easily be acquired by continual practice and perfected by perseverance. In fact one of the finest "shots" of those playing to-day in amateur football transformed himself from a moderate "shot" into a genius at the art by continual daily practice.

It will be at once noticed by any casual person watching a good forward shooting at goal, either during a game or at practice, that in the first place he seems to have a sort of instinct as to the exact position of the goal and the goalkeeper, secondly that the ball always seems to be in the right position for him when he wishes to get his shot in. A moderate shot will be seen to hesitate, to look at the goal and goalkeeper, and finally, if it is not already too late, to try and place the ball in the position in which he wants it. The instinct on the part of the good forward is merely the outcome of practice. He has such experience that he knows where the goal is and where to expect the goalkeeper, and a half-glance only is needed to confirm his opinion: also, knowing what to expect, he has already made his preparation and has the ball on the exact spot where he wants it.

But this is not shooting, it is only preparatory to it. No, in golf, in tennis, in cricket, in every other game, in fact, the golden rule laid down is "watch the ball and not the place where you want to send it." This is doubly true in shooting. The player must keep his eye on the ball and not watch the goalkeeper, or the goal, or

cast a furtive glance at an opponent who is coming to knock him down. It is just because this is done that goals are so frequently thrown away by miskicks. Of course even the best shots miss the goal altogether or hit the goal-keeper on occasions, but that is owing rather to lack of power in the execution than to fault in the preparation. It is the rarest thing in the world to see a really good shot, when playing in form, miskick in front of goal.

But important as the preliminaries are, too much space must not be occupied by them, or the actual shots themselves would have to be neglected at their expense. It may be said, at the outset, that in the football of the present day the emphasis laid upon combination at the expense of individual effort is inclined to be extended to actual shooting, with the result that not nearly enough shooting is indulged in, and the standard in consequence is not as good as it ought to be. This, we believe, is more obvious in professional circles than amongst the amateurs. It may be said that if only more long shots were tried in matches instead of combined runs by the forwards into the goal mouth, which sometimes result in a goal, but more often in a scrummage in

which the defence wins, the goal average of clubs would rise beyond all expectation.

A point was made in the beginning of this chapter of the ease with which good forwards place themselves and the ball when wanting to shoot, but that only applies when the forward has got the ball under complete control. It frequently happens that a forward has to shoot when the ball is rolling past him from a centre or a pass, or when it is rolling to him or away from him, or even when it is in the air. Thus it is that a forward must learn to shoot from any position and any angle, and this is only learned by continual practice.

In dealing with actual shots the obvious remark must be made at the outset, that it is practically as futile when shooting to hit the goalkeeper as it is to miss the goal altogether. Thus shots should always be directed to that part of the goal in which the goalkeeper does not happen to be standing at the time, and this generally means to one of the corners. Shots themselves may, perhaps, be classified in two divisions, long shots and short shots, and these two may be subdivided into ground shots and high shots.

We will deal first of all with the long shots.



SHOOTING WITH BALL IN AIR  
(SIDE VIEW)



The efficacy of a long shot depends very much upon whether the player shooting uses the weather conditions to their full advantage. For instance, suppose that on a wet and greasy day a forward, some 20 or 30 yards from goal, tries a shot. If the ball goes through the air for one of the top corners of the goal it will naturally be difficult to stop, as the ball will be both heavy and greasy, but all the same the goalkeeper ought to be able to turn it over the bar. If, on the other hand, the ball is sent low down and bounces once before it gets to the goal, the difficulty of the shot is doubled, as on a wet day we can never tell with certainty which way the ball is going to bounce; or again, it may not bounce at all, but just skid along the ground after pitching. If, however, the ground be dry and there is a high wind blowing, a long shot in the air may be occasionally tried, as the ball is certain to swerve and thus deceive the goalkeeper. Of course it is difficult to tell how far the ball may swerve, and it may often be carried right out of the goal, but none the less a shot of that type is worth the risk entailed. It is not usually a good thing for backs and halves to try long shots along the ground, as there is almost certain to be a number



of players in between themselves and the goal, in which case the shot will probably be intercepted before it reaches the goal. If, on the other hand, a member of the defence takes a high shot at goal there is always a chance that, even if his own shot does not score, the forwards may rush the ball through the goal. It is always a good thing to try a long shot in the air when the goalkeeper is facing the sun, as it is quite possible he may lose sight of the ball and that a goal be scored. Any of these long shots should be taken with a long swinging kick.

In the case of short shots from near goal the weather is not such an important factor. Sometimes the shot is taken from so near into goal that it is impossible for any goalkeeper to stop it or turn it unless it is straight at him, but if there is some little distance between the shooter and the goal it is better to shoot low, for in the first place a goalkeeper can spring upwards more quickly than he can fall downwards, and secondly it is easier to turn a ball over the bar than it is to turn it round the post. Possibly the hardest shot for a goalkeeper to stop is one flying parallel to the ground about two feet high towards the corner of the goal. If a shot of this kind is at all

out of his reach it means that he has to throw himself at it, and if he is either too soon or too late the ball is bound to go into the goal, as there is no chance of recovery in time. Half-backs occasionally have chances of short shots, but as there is generally a crowd in between them and the goal, their task is more difficult. As a general rule it is best for them to send in a high shot in order to avoid the players in between, unless, of course, there is a ready-made opening waiting for them. However, this difficulty is in a great measure compensated by the fact that the crowd which impedes his shot also prevent the goalkeeper seeing the ball clearly, and so the advantage lies rather on his side. The short shots may be taken either with the swinging kick or the short "jab" kick.

To shoot when the ball is in the air is an extremely difficult thing to do properly. The great point to remember is to keep the toe of the foot well down. This will tend to keep the ball from rising high, and so there will be less chance of lifting it over the goal-posts. In connection with this also there is a trick which is useful. When a wing man centres fairly close to the goal, and the ball comes across about two feet

above the ground, it is often effective to "jab" at the ball with the sole of one's boot. This often deflects the course of the ball into the net, and it is neater and quicker than a long swinging kick.

Also it must be remembered that a shot taken half-volley tends to fly high, while all shots on a wet day are inclined to stick to the ground. For ground shots at long and short distances, particularly the latter, it is useful to be able to shoot with the outside of the foot, for the ball curls slightly to one side and so baffles the goalkeeper.

Accurately speaking, the subject of heading goals ought not to be included in a chapter on shooting, but a word in time saves nine. Practically the only persons who ought to head goals are the three inside forwards and, very occasionally, the centre half. As a rule the ball ought to be taken on the side of the head, as the ball usually is coming in from a centre from the wing and must be faced, thus leaving the player with his side towards the goal. No forward, however, ought to use his head if he thinks there is any chance of another of his side getting in a shot with his foot, as heading is, after all, a last resort of the desperate. Occasionally the shoulder, or the chest, or even the



SHOOTING WITH BALL IN AIR  
(FRONT VIEW)



knee, should be used to force the ball through the goal, but these also are last resorts, and must be used as such.

Sometimes a forward cannot get in a shot however quick he is, and in such a case he should never hesitate to pass to another of his side who is better placed than himself. There is one ruse which may be mentioned here, and that is, in the case of a centre from the wing, for the centre forward or the inside forward nearest the man who originally had the ball purposely to let the ball pass under his foot to the next player. This ruse invariably throws the defence out of gear, as the attack comes from an angle different from the one expected. All tricks, however, and all shots, can only be learnt and perfected by practice, which, as in all other things, is the golden rule of shooting.

## CHAPTER VII

### SYSTEMS OF DEFENCE

THE chief objects of the back division are to prevent the opposing forwards scoring, and also to pass the ball to their own forwards, and so give to them such opportunities as will enable them to deliver an attack. Although these two objects overlap, and although the duties attached to each run into each other, yet in this chapter it is pure defence that is to engage our attention, and the passing of the ball to the forwards will be regarded as a mere corollary that will follow as a matter of course.

There are two main systems of defence, one in which the full-backs and half-backs form two separate lines of defence, which perhaps one may call the independent system, the other by which these two divisions combine to thwart the defence in unison; this we may name the com-

bined method. We will first discuss the independent system.

In this each man acts for himself. The defensive players form two ranks, by which method the front rank, that is the half-backs, bear the stress and strain of the attack, and it is only when their defence is broken through that the full-backs take any part in the game. Now it will at once be noticed that the halves, in having to do the bulk of the work, start right away with an enormous disadvantage in mere numbers, for they are but three opposed to five: to withstand the attack of these they will have to be absolutely untiring, superb tacklers, and possessed of far more than ordinary strength, ability, and judgment. It will be seen that scarcely any trio playing at present could hope to hold a forward line, consisting of five scientific players, throughout the game without failing quite often. When the forwards, therefore, have broken through the halves, they will then meet the full-backs, who in the independent system would probably be more or less on a level, some distance behind the halves. Well, if the forwards have succeeded in passing the three half-backs, and no time has been lost, they should be perfectly capable of outwitting the full-backs, either by



ordinary passing or a "through" pass, and when once the second rank of defence has been defeated, they should have no difficulty in scoring. This is what theoretically should happen if the independent system is played. What often does happen is that the forwards hesitate and lose time when they reach the full-backs, and so the halves are enabled to race back and tackle again, or perhaps the backs deliberately retire before the oncoming forwards, in order to achieve the same purpose. But as a drawback to this one may mention that the attack is ever drawing nearer and more near to the goal, and therefore *ipso facto* becomes more dangerous: for a mistake in midfield may perhaps be retrieved—at all events there is more time to do so—whereas in front of goal it is rarely that one has a second chance, for the forward will not be likely to miss his opportunity of putting in a shot. The independent system is played often enough by "scratch" teams, though there is no reason why they should not play the combined method. A very good instance of the state of affairs that might easily arise under the independent system happened during the A.F.A. international match between England and Wales, at Tufnell Park, in 1912. The Welsh halves and backs played independently of each

other, and the result was that the English forwards came through time after time, and finally won by ten goals to nil.

Now, in order to thwart the attack the object of the defence is not so much to rob the forwards when they are in possession of the ball, though this has to be done time after time, as to intercept the passes to them and prevent them getting the ball, for it is ever so much harder to part a forward from the ball when once he has it under complete control. And it is this harder task that falls to the share of the full-backs under the independent system, and in a lesser degree to the halves, for when once the defence of the halves has been penetrated, which will not be infrequent, the full force of the attack will fall upon the full-backs, even if the halves are coming back hot-foot to the rescue.

Under the combined system the whole defence plays with a settled scheme in which each defender has one of the opposing forwards to mark and look after generally. There is, in fact, practically no difference between the play of halves and backs as far as pure defence goes, although it must be understood that both backs must not be in an advanced position at the same time.

This system was brought to its highest stage by the brothers A. M. and P. M. Walters, of the Corinthians, who perhaps were the best pair of full-backs that have ever played. With them one of the full-backs was always up practically on a level with the halves, and in such a position that he could always intercept a pass coming to the opposing inside forward on his wing. The other brother would be hanging back some distance in order to cover any mistake or miskick by the other back, and also to prevent the "through" pass being employed. Of course the full-back will have settled with his half previously as to whom of the opposing forwards he is to mark; as a general rule the full-back takes the inside forward on his wing, while the half manages the outside. Occasions will arise in a game, somewhat naturally, when the positions are reversed. Also, the back who occupies the advanced position is the one on whose wing the ball was last taken down by his own forwards. As an illustration of what the position of the defenders should be we may take the following instance: Suppose the attacking left outside forward to have the ball. The position of the defenders will be as follows: The right half will

be looking after the man with the ball, the right back after the inside left; the centre half will mark the centre forward, while the left half will take up such a position that he will be able to prevent either of the two right wing men from getting the ball, being perhaps a trifle nearer to the inside right as he is nearer the ball. The left full-back meanwhile will be behind this front rank of defenders, moving perhaps a little across the field in the direction of the attack in order to get to the ball in case it is kicked beyond the right half and back, and yet not so far across to the right that he will not be able to tackle one of the forwards on the right attacking wing in case the ball is passed to them. The advantages of this system are many and obvious. In the first place, it distributes the work much more evenly among the members of the defence, and therefore does not make absolutely necessary that supreme individual excellence which is the backbone of the independent system. Also the full force of the attack does not fall upon the two divisions separately, but upon all together.

Then it is a preventive method, for to a great extent it prevents the opposing forwards from getting the ball, and if by any chance one of them

does get the ball, this system puts a bar upon any combination among the forwards whatever, for each of the forwards is marked individually by one of the defenders, and so there is no open space between halves and backs in which the forwards can get together and manœuvre, nor even will there be an unmarked man to pass to, except possibly on the far wing, and even then the defence is more likely than not to get the ball if it is passed in that direction. Of course no system is infallible, and one can easily imagine a forward tricking his attendant half or back and so getting clear; but in the first place the forward's chance of getting the ball is reduced to a minimum, and in the second there will still be the last back to get past, and that will probably enable the defeated defender to make up ground. Each system has its good points. The independent system would perhaps answer in a scratch team where the players do not know each other's style, but even so there is no reason why the combined system should not be played, for if each man knows what he has to do the result should be good. Of course the better the understanding between the members of the defence the more successful will their efforts be. At all events for a club or a college team, where presumably the

same men will often enough be playing together, undoubtedly the "Walters'" defence is the ideal.

As a matter of fact the majority of clubs and teams, if they have any settled policy in defence, play neither the one nor the other of these two methods, but rather a mixture of both: for one full-back is, as a general rule, farther up the field than the other, though the system is not carried to a fine art as in the case of the "Walters'" defence. This haphazard system more nearly approaches the combined than the independent, for the wing halves mark the outside forwards, gradually coming in to mark the inside men in front of goal, especially if the attack comes from the other wing, when the wing half *must* mark the inside man in front of goal: the one full-back marks the other inside man, while the remaining full-back is still a trifle behind his confrères, though perhaps a little nearer to the attacking wing, and the centre half marks the centre forward, so, at all events in front of goal, the "Walters'" defence is the one usually employed; but it is rarely so up the field, which would in all probability prevent the attack coming near with such frequency.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE HALF-BACKS

WE now proceed to deal with the most important members of the team, their qualifications and duties. The importance of the half-back line lies in the fact that both phases of the game, attack and defence, are incomplete without their service, for, as a general rule, the attack is first set in motion by a pass from the halves, and then it frequently requires their presence to be effectual, for following close behind their forwards the halves are enabled to return the ball to them, and so keep their opponents on the defensive. Their use in the defence is self-evident. In spite, however, of their importance, their position is not by any means the most difficult on the field to play in, although their manner of working is quite unique: for in their duty of attacking they have but little of the running combination of the forwards, and as far as

defence goes they do not often have to clear with long kicks like the full-backs, nor ought they to have the tackling of the opposing forwards who have already got the ball under complete control, a duty which so often falls to the share of the full-backs. Ideally in defence their duty is to intercept the passes of the opposing halves to the forwards or of the forwards among themselves, and failing this to attack them before they have the ball under full control; however, as the ideal can rarely be realized, and least of all on the football field, the half finds that he has over and over again to tackle the man who has the ball under perfect control. Doubtless the better the half, the less frequently will he be placed in such circumstances, but to be effective the half must be a good tackler.

The two chief qualities required are quickness and "wind": quickness implies not necessarily power of sprinting, but quickness at starting and getting to the ball. And "wind," too, will most certainly be needed, for, whoever has got the ball, the half-back will be on the run continually; if he has passed the ball to his forwards he must be running up behind them on the chance of their passing to him, or if one of the opposing defence clears weakly, to return the ball: if the man he



'is marking has the ball, the half must be after him, and if the opposite wing is making an attack the half must still be running back to protect the goal. He is always on the move, and to fulfil all his duties thoroughly he needs wind and stamina. But wind and quickness will be comparatively useless, unless they are wedded to discernment and judgment, discernment to frustrate and nullify the tactics of the opposing forwards, and judgment and decision to take advantage of any opportunity to assist those of his own side. Then he must be cool and collected, and must never lose his head in the most critical situations. Pace is useful, especially as the half is opposed to the forwards, who will in almost all cases be fast, for then the half may be able to come up with a forward who has eluded him, and may possibly gain possession of the ball if the forward makes a mistake. But quickness and wind will in many cases atone for lack of pace. Then the half should be able to kick with both feet and in any position, whether the ball is in the air or on the ground; at the same time he should be capable of heading, and heading well and accurately, should occasion arise. And occasions will arise. For instance, the half may receive

a clearance from the goalkeeper on his head and pass to his forwards in this way, when delay would give an opponent an opportunity to get the ball. But such a ball, when possible, should be trapped, for this places the ball at the half's feet, and with them he can pass much more accurately. And the power of passing accurately is another feature of half-back play. Even in good football there is far too much wild passing and kicking. Actual passes will be dealt with later on, but it is such an important point that no harm will come from mentioning it several times. The pass should, when possible, be along the ground, for it is much easier for the forwards to receive.

Passing accurately is an art which can easily be acquired, for it is merely a question of practice. For instance, take a ball out on to a tennis-court: a good half should be able to hit either pole with the ball from any point in the court, using either foot, every single time. It sounds easy enough, and so it is when once the art has been acquired. Perhaps the average half could do it with a slow pass, but as most passes have to be given swiftly and at full speed, it is important to be able to pass accurately under those circumstances. Half

an hour's practice on a tennis-court will improve one's passing out of all recognition. For short passes absolute accuracy is vital, for the deviation of a single inch from the true line will often make all the difference between a good pass that reaches the forward and a bad one that will be intercepted by an opponent. A long pass need not, of course, be so absolutely accurate, and frequently it does not matter whether it goes a yard to one side or other, but still, even then, the accurate pass is the one that will be of most service to the forward. Passes may be given with the outside and inside of the foot as well as with the instep. For instance, the half right can pass to his right wing man with the inside of his left foot or the outside of his right; for long passes it is safest to use the instep, and such a pass is really a hard drive along the ground; the toe should be kept well down, for if it is not the ball will most certainly rise in the air. A pass, as a general rule, should not be a kick with a full swing of the leg, but rather a "jab" with the calf or foot almost at right angles to the thigh; for short passes and those of medium length this will be found to be quite powerful enough, and greater accuracy can be obtained.

The toe should not be used, for it gives one no control over the ball.

There are one or two tricks which the half will find useful in stopping the ball and getting it under control preparatory to passing. The ordinary ball that comes rolling to him along the grass he will, of course, rarely stop, but rather take in his stride; but a high-bouncing ball or a dropping ball from a big kick it is often best to trap in the manner described in a previous chapter, for, by trapping, the ball is left on the grass at his feet, immediately under his control; if, however, he thinks that one of the opposing side will be on him just as he traps the ball and that he will lose time—and possibly the ball—by doing so, he must use his head. Then frequently the half—and indeed every player—has to stop a ball that has been kicked hard and is coming towards him three or four feet above the ground. It is, of course, impossible to trap it, and to head it may be dangerous, not only because he may not be able to place it where he wants to, but also because an opponent may kick at it and so endanger his head. Merely to place one's chest in the way means that the ball will bounce off, possibly at any angle, out of control. Therefore

'such balls should be received, when possible, in the stomach ; by contracting the muscles to prevent oneself getting "winded," and bending forward with the stomach well back at the moment of impact, it will be found that the ball will be smothered in the little nook formed by the stomach and the thighs, and will drop gently to the ground between the feet. It will then be under perfect control, and the half may do what he pleases with it.

To speak with any degree of confidence or accuracy about the physical build of the halves is an almost impossible task, for one sees good halves of practically every build and size. Assuming, then, that the half has the necessary qualities of quickness, wind, judgment, stamina, and accuracy in passing as well as deadliness in tackling, it would be well if the half be well built, strong, of average height and rather on the heavy side. One cannot say that managers of professional teams have in mind any particular build of man when choosing halves for their teams, for, as has been mentioned above, they seem to be of all sizes, though as a matter of fact one rarely sees a very tall, thin and lanky half. In fact the one quality which they all seem to have in common is pure physical strength, which perhaps is the outstanding feature

of most good halves, though of course even here there are exceptions. It seems obvious that a half should not be too big, for he must be neat and quick, and these qualities rarely go with very big men, for they are inclined to be clumsy and slow. He must be well built and a trifle on the heavy side, for then he will be more capable of standing the strain and the knocking about which he will have to give and receive. As has been pointed out, he should be determined, keen and quick, and therefore lithe and supple. And while we are discussing the physical qualities of the half it would not come amiss to say a word or two on charging. If his cleverness and quickness have availed him nothing in the struggle for the ball with an opponent he still has one weapon left to use, and that is sheer physical strength; and so in such cases he should be able to knock his opponent clean off the ball and obtain it in that way. Quite often it is the quickest way to get possession of the ball, but then the half must take care that at the moment of falling the opponent does not tap the ball away: always in charging it is vital to keep the eye on the ball and not merely account for the man alone. Then again it often puts forwards off their game to be

knocked about: for charging and being charged is apt to affect one's speed, and as a general rule the forward relies upon that to a great extent. The half, however, does not, and so he can afford to charge more heavily and frequently than the average forward. Besides, if the forward in possession of the ball knows that he is liable always to get knocked over whenever the half comes near, it is possible that he will try to get rid of it hurriedly and inaccurately, and not in such a fashion as would be of most service to his side. For instance, if the half is playing against a team which possesses three insides of exceptional brilliancy in the short-passing game, then charging is of considerable value: for their passes to each other will have to be all the more hurried and quick, and even if the half fails to get the ball in charging his opponent to the ground, still his team will have the advantage, for that forward will not be in his usual position to receive a pass from the other insides, and so it may well worry them to lose their partner even for the few seconds it takes him to recover. So they may be forced to employ tactics to which they are not fully accustomed, and then of course the advantage lies with the defence to a still greater degree than is usually the case.

It has already been explained that the functions of the half-backs are two, attack and defence, and these two, although they closely overlap and are intimately connected the one with the other (for, as every one knows, attack is the best possible defence, and defence none the less is a species of attack), and although the transitions from one to the other are made with lightning-like rapidity and swiftness, yet these two must be dealt with separately for the sake of clearness. We will discuss the defence first.

In defence it must be taken for granted that the halves will have a complete understanding with the backs, and the backs with the halves, for without this the members of the defence will be at sixes and sevens, and there can be no settled plan of defence which will distribute the work evenly, and not throw an undue proportion on one individual or one division. And combination, just as in attack, is the secret of defensive play too. If the back division has arranged beforehand whom each defender is to mark in general, and in particular circumstances, the work will be much easier and far more effective. In general, the position of the half-back line on the field is about half-way between the two lines of forwards, not, however, so far up that



the ball can be passed over their heads easily or between them, for in that case the opposing forwards will have a practically clear run: and yet not so far down as to be unable to help their own forwards when in difficulties. The ideal position for the half is such that he can easily get to the ball when it comes towards him without being troubled or harassed by the opposing forwards, or if the ball does not come to his wing that he may be enabled to fall back swiftly and easily to mark his man, or if by any chance the ball is kicked past him that he may be upon his forward before he can get the ball properly under control. In the case of a half failing to recover his position in defence there arises the question of one half doing another's duty, but that will be discussed in the pages dealing with the work of individual halves later on.

Then, again, in defence the halves have another very important duty, that of massing in front of goal when a hot attack is being made by the opponents. For instance, if the right attacking wing has the ball and is taking it down, then the right defending half will gradually converge towards the goal until in the goal area, or even before, he is marking the inside left of the attacking team. The advantage of this is obvious,

for when the ball does come across from the wing, each of the inside forwards will find himself marked by one of the defence, with another back and the goalkeeper still to pass, if he eludes the man who is marking him particularly. And if, in such a case, the half is tricked by the inside man when the ball comes across, he must fall back at once and take the position occupied by the full-back, who will at once tackle the man with the ball.

When the opposing team has forced a corner the advantage should always lie with the defenders. The position of the halves must be noted. The centre half will, of course, mark the centre forward. The insides will probably be marked by the defending insides, who will come back to pack the goal mouth, or sometimes they will be marked by the wing halves, but that must be arranged between the halves and the insides. If the halves do not mark them, they will, of course, take up a position which they think most suitable for obtaining the ball. If the attacking wing forwards come into the goal mouth the wing halves will mark them, and leave the opposing insides to their own inside forwards.

In the case of a clearance from in front of goal a special word is needed. Unless a half is a strong kick and feels absolutely certain that he can kick

beyond the opposing halves to his own forwards he should not kick straight up the field, because if he does it merely means that he is presenting the ball to his opponents, who will, of course, return it to the goal mouth ; and so by kicking feebly up-field he is opening up a fresh attack for his opponents, and thereby making the position of his own side about three times as dangerous as before. The only alternative to this is finding touch as far up the field as he conveniently can. Now the question of finding touch is one that must be discussed briefly. Except in cases of absolute necessity it should never be done, for it does not seem to be "playing the game." Of course if a man is ringed round with opponents, or in such a position that he cannot pass to one of his own side, it is the only thing to do. But one so often sees a half in defence tapping the ball off the feet of, say, the opposing wing forward into touch. This should be discountenanced. The half must do his level best to get the ball away without finding touch. At all events he can generally charge the man over and then collect the ball afterwards. But kicking into touch, except in cases of absolute necessity, should be "barred." There has been for a long time a prejudice against a half-back dribbling, and

one frequently hears the captain shouting out to his halves, "Don't dribble." This is an excellent piece of advice in certain circumstances, but like all good advice it is apt to be carried too far when used at all. No doubt it originated from the fact that some halves are inclined to dribble round an opposing half and in doing so lose the ball. In such cases the half is undoubtedly wrong, for this must not be done except in very exceptional circumstances, and these circumstances are so rare that one might lay it down as a rule that no half should attempt to dribble round another. However, as matters stand at present, this rule has become too strict : there is not sufficient elasticity in it, and the result is that the half tries a long pass which is more likely to be gathered by one of his opponents than by the man for whom it was intended ; whereas had he dribbled he would have been able to get to short range and pass with accuracy.

Therefore when the half finds the ball at his feet, and a clear space of some twenty or thirty yards between himself and the nearest opponent, he should as a general rule dribble up the field towards his own forwards. As a result of this the opposing half will practically be bound to come out to tackle and leave his forward uncovered, or if he

advances in such a way as to cover his forward, then that forward must get in such a position that his own half can pass to him without trouble. But in cases like this the half dribbling must remember that his duty is finished when he has drawn the opposing half off the forward he is marking ; he must not attempt to dribble past him or trick him, but transfer the ball at once to the forward whom his opponent has left unmarked. But when a half starts dribbling like this he must take care that he is not caught up and tackled from behind by one of the opposing forwards ; however, it must be assumed that he will have intelligence enough to guard against this. And now let us look at the other side of the shield, and examine the moves that will be made by the opponents to thwart the half. We will suppose the right half to have got the ball from a *mêlée* in front of his own goal and to have cleared himself of the opposing forwards. He finds himself with the ball under complete control and the opposing left half some twenty yards ahead of him. He may, of course, try a long pass to his own forwards, but as has been already pointed out the defence will probably get such a pass in spite of the fact that the centre half may not have yet fallen back. However, if he dribbles and draws the left

half he can at once place the forward supposed to be marked by that half in possession of the ball. And then the matter rests in the capabilities of the forwards. If the left half, on the other hand, refuses to be drawn and retires down the field, still marking his wing forward, it will be supposed at once that the half finds himself in a very awkward position, for he will have all his forwards in front of him, each marked by one of the defence. However, the defence cannot go on retiring *ad infinitum*, for they will soon find themselves on their own goal line, and the result is that the half in possession of the ball will be able to have a shot at goal. It is extremely unlikely that the defence will carry matters to such a length as this; sooner or later one of them is bound to come out and tackle the oncoming half, and the half will, of course, at once pass to the man left unmarked; or again, if he sees fit, he can pass to his own centre half, who will be level with him by that time. Or yet again, if the half finds himself in such a position, he can easily have some arrangement with his forwards by which one of the forwards drops back and assumes for the nonce the duties of a half-back, while the half-back becomes for the time being one of the forward line. It will be observed that by this movement the half

has cast aside his rôle as defender and has taken up the part of attacker, beginning the attack almost from his own goal area. But this shows clearly how inextricably are the half's duties of attack and defence intermingled. It will be best now to resume his duties in defence.

We have already sketched out the general idea of the half's duties and positions in the various phases of the defence ; no hard and fast rule can be laid down, but he must vary his play and position according as circumstances demand, and as far as his judgment or experience will tell him, if he has to meet any peculiar set of circumstances which urge him to play for a time in a manner different from that sketched in above. But it must not be forgotten that a bad half in his right place in defence, at all events, is of infinitely more value than a good half out of his place, if indeed such a phenomenon has ever been found. So far we have dealt with the general system of half-back defensive play ; we will now go more into detail.

In all defence there is one quality or feature that is of great use : it also comes into attack, but in a different way. This is the power of deception. This sounds rather a curious statement, and perhaps might be put in a better way ; but in

reality there is nothing underhand about it at all.\* In defence it is most prominent in the matter of reach. The half who gets the ball most frequently from an opponent is the one who is able to reach three inches or half a foot farther than one would think possible for him, and not necessarily the half who is trickiest. Thus the forward with the ball dribbles to a point where he thinks he will be safe before passing, and then finds he has underestimated his opponent, for the additional few inches of reach will frequently be sufficient to enable the half to get the ball. It is also of inestimable service in intercepting passes, for the man with the extra reach will be able to cover more ground than is expected, and so he will get many a pass that a man with a shorter reach would not come near. It seems very little, perhaps, this extra six inches or so, but in practice it is of infinite value. Such a half may often seem to leave a path open to the forward he is covering, and the too-trusting opponent will try to pass along that line, with the result that his pass will be stopped and his opportunity gone. This is a quality, however, which is largely natural and not artificial, though of course it can be developed. Then, again, it is useful to be able to get up to the man to be tackled a fraction of



a second before he expects it, or indeed to get to any position of advantage sooner than seems possible; this has the same effect as deceptive reach, and the result is that the man with the ball does not expect his opponent at that precise moment, and so is not quite ready for him, and in such a case the advantage lies with the attacker. This effect may be achieved by reserving sufficient strength and wind to make a final effort just as one reaches one's object of attack. Tackling, after all—that is successful tackling—is largely a matter of reach and quickness, and if the half is determined to get to his man or the ball and does not mind running the risk of being knocked over—and in football the man who takes too much care of his own skin will be practically useless—he will find that he reaches the point desired much sooner than his opponent, or even possibly himself, imagines. Then reach can be cultivated in rather a more easy manner. When a half gets within a certain distance of the forward with the ball and thinks he cannot just get his foot to it, if he fall upon one knee and stretch the other leg straight out in front of him he will find that he can reach six inches or a foot further than he is expected to be able to. This is most

effective when running at a fair speed, but even when at a standstill it can be employed, and the reach is increased quite considerably. Of course this is apt to be a risky and dangerous trick if its employer is not an adept at it, for the ball may be missed and the forward will be yards away before the half can recover himself and start again. However, at times risks have to be taken, and on the whole this trick is worth the risk involved.

Then there comes the question of recovery. Of course, time after time the half will be beaten by his forward either in a race for the ball or in a tussle for it, or the forward may be clever enough to dribble round him. In such case, his only chance of salvation lies in a quick recovery. The half, when tricked or passed, must never despair, but get back at once to cover the goal. If one of the full-backs comes to tackle the man missed by the half, then the half must race back at once to mark the man left by the full-back. At all events, he must do his best to get in a position to help the rest of the defence, and, though often the speed and quickness of the attack may seem to render his recovery impossible, yet he must hope for his opponents to make a mistake and try to be there to take advantage of it.

Earlier in the chapter we have mentioned that the interception of passes is one of the half's chief duties, and it must be mentioned again to lay emphasis upon it. It is all important. Time after time, in second-rate football, one sees a half-back waiting for the forward whom he is supposed to mark to get the ball, and then trying to take it off him when he has it under control. This is really foolish ; the half will have to tackle the man with the ball often enough through no fault of his own, and it is quite absurd to add to his own burden in this way. And, besides this, it is much easier to get the ball first ; and this leaves less room for mistakes. This may be achieved very frequently by the half putting himself in the place of the forward and anticipating the latter's intention. If, however, the half cannot intercept the pass, the only thing left is to tackle his man. This is a matter of individual taste, but one or two hints may be given as to the safest and surest method. If one watches half-backs carefully enough one generally notices that they manœuvre until they have an opportunity of bringing off their favourite tackle. And before going further we are pulled up short by the question, "What is tackling?" It is getting, or trying to get, the

ball from an opponent. That is a very inadequate definition, because it leaves out of count altogether the method. And there is the difficulty. At the outset, one may inquire who is the hardest man to tackle. The answer, of course, is the man who has most control over the ball, and not necessarily the strongest and biggest and fastest (though these qualities of course increase the difficulty in a way); in other words, the man who makes the fewest number of mistakes.

Thus we come back to the old argument, that the half-back is the opportunist who profits by the mistakes of others. But there is more than that in tackling, else it would not come about that some are better at tackling than others. And here again another previous statement comes up, that he is the best spoiler who deceives his opponent into making some mistake and takes advantage of it, or gives his opponent an opening which the half knows he can frustrate if taken; or, again, he reaps some advantage from being able to anticipate the forward's movements and so prevent them, for, as has already been said, the half should know the forward game thoroughly, so that by mentally putting himself in the place of the forward, he can judge what the forward will be

likely to do, and then will be able to take measures to turn that movement to his own advantage. How to proceed when a half actually comes to close quarters with his man it is almost impossible to state, for each half has some particular method or trick of his own, and what will suit one man will possibly be impracticable for another. If the half actually gets his foot to the ball his experience will tell him how to eliminate the other man, for he can tap the ball to one side or another, or kick it gently between the other man's legs, or even draw it backwards behind himself; or, again, he may rush across his opponent's path and take the ball with him; or, still again, he may hook the ball from the forward's feet and let him dash on, carried forward by his own impetus. Occasions will arise, too, when the half has to leave the forward, whom he is marking, to tackle another. In this case the forward with the ball will in all probability try to pass the ball to the man whom the half has just left unmarked. This, however, may be prevented by the following ruse: Suppose the right half has left the outside left in order to tackle the inside left who has just received the ball. Now the inside left may well attempt to

pass to his outside. As soon as the half gets to within tackling distance he places his right foot across the path of the ball so that the forward cannot pass diagonally to the outside, at the same time dragging his left foot behind the right, along the ground, into the direct line between the two forwards, so that if the forward attempts to send a square pass to his wing man, the ball will naturally be impeded by the half's left foot. The efficacy of this particular tackle is obvious. The half's right foot being placed directly in the course of the ball and the forward, prevents the forward passing to his left diagonally or going straight on himself. For if he tries to go straight on the ball will be stopped by the half's foot and he will trip over it, while if he attempt the square pass the half's left foot will stop that too. The result is that he will either have to pass to his right, where in all probability all the men are marked, or else lose the ball to the right half. Still, whatever the method the deceptive reach will always prove of value. In the case of a half-back having been beaten by his forward the back-tackle is frequently useful. In this case the half-back closely pursues the forward with

the ball; when he is just drawing level, or is perhaps an inch or so behind, he lunges forward with the full extent of the leg that is nearer to the forward and places his foot upon the ball, so that the ball is trapped, as it were, in the angle formed by the foot and ankle, at the same time dropping upon the other knee. The forward, of course, is carried onward by his own impetus, and, as a result, generally trips over the ball that has been thus suddenly stopped. His fall naturally allows the half to make his recovery, and before the forward can get up ready for action, once more, the half has collected the ball, has it well under control, and is probably departing with it at his best speed in the direction of his opponent's goal. It is not absolutely essential in this tackle to fall upon one knee, but as a general rule it will be found advisable to do so for several reasons. One is that the half can more easily bring himself up short and sharp; the other, that by doing so he will have a greater leverage on the ball itself, and the forward in his fall will not be able to kick it away. Also, if he does not fall on one knee, it is quite possible that any kick the forward may give to the ball, or even the impact as he



BACK-TACKLE. FIRST PHASE



BACK-TACKLE. SECOND PHASE. HALF RECOVERING





stumbles against it, may strain the muscles of the leg which is already stretched out to its fullest extent. This is, however, a dangerous tackle, both for the forward, if it be successful, and for the half if it fails; for should it not be judged accurately and to a nicety the half will be left stranded with practically no chance of a rapid recovery. The "split" tackle used upon a man whose course is at right angles to that of the user is a variation of this.

There is also another method of back-tackling which may come in useful at times. For this the tackler has to be on a level with the man dribbling, in fact running along with him shoulder to shoulder. He merely places the outside of the foot nearest to the man upon the far side of the ball, and then as the ball is suddenly stopped the result is the same as before—the forward falls over the ball and the half is left with it. But this tackle is not so dangerous as the other, because in the first place one cannot get so powerful a hold on the ball with the outside of the foot, and as a result the forward may take the ball along with him in his fall and be able to scramble up and fight for its possession. Care must be taken in all three cases not to trip the man with one's foot.

Perhaps after a successful tackle the half will perhaps find himself in such a position that he cannot pass to one of his own forwards immediately; in such a case, apparently, he can only kick into touch, and this must be discountenanced as far as possible, so he must glance round to see if he can find some other member of the defence to whom he can pass. And this passing of the halves among themselves, or to the backs, or even to the goalkeeper, is of the greatest importance, and is a feature of the game which is often far too much neglected in amateur football. For a judicious pass given to another member of the defence will not only relieve matters and free one from an immediate difficulty, but even open up an entirely different line of attack. For instance, suppose that the right half has the ball and desires to give it to his wing forward. If the opposing half is covering that forward effectually, the right half has merely to pass the ball to his centre half and he will be able to place the ball with the wing man simply because his pass will be at a different angle from that of the right half. Such a pass can be made with such rapidity that the opposing half will not be able to cover his forward from the new direction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For this triangular pass see diagrams.

Another important point is the "keeping-off" of forwards to allow a fellow defender to get in his kick. This also must be remembered, for by doing so the half can often shield his back from the attack of the forwards and so allow him time to get the ball into a position favourable to a good pass elsewhere.

But the half must not forget that when he has made a successful tackle and robbed an opponent of the ball, that opponent will not let him depart without making a strenuous endeavour to regain possession, and here his quickness and judgment will stand him in good stead in order to get rid of the ball swiftly and to the best advantage. Also, quite often the half will have done all that can be expected of him if he has forced his opponent to pass to some one else, for it cannot be hoped that a half will succeed in gaining the ball every time that he tackles.

It has been mentioned above that a half may sometimes retreat before the approach of the man with the ball, whether he be forward or half. Retreating is thought by many to be a bad practice and a dangerous scheme, but provided that it is done with judgment—that is, not too near one's own goal—it is often the safest and surest method

of obtaining the ball. Its advantages are numerous ; for instance, this scheme can be employed to allow the rest of the defence to fall into their proper places and mark the forwards. Then again, it wastes time, for just as it is of the greatest importance in attack that the attack should be delivered swiftly, so in defence it should be the object of the defenders to hold off the attack and impede its course by dallying ; for when an attack has lost its speed it has lost also most of its sting. Also, by hanging back the defence is apt to make the attackers bunch together, and then when this object is achieved it is so much easier for the defenders to obtain the ball. As has been said before, one of the objects of the defence is to bunch the attack as much as possible, and this is one of the ways by which it can be done. Again, a half-back may retreat slowly, waiting for the forward to make a mistake, thus enabling him to get the ball.

The opposite stratagem to this is to rush the man with the ball, and this, of course, has its uses and occasions. It should be used when the half is certain of getting to the man with the ball before he is expected, or thought to be at hand, or before the opponent has the ball under perfect control. This rush, however, must not be made wildly or



SPLIT TACKLE



rashly, for if that is done no good can come of it. When the half has staked all upon one wild rush he will find it almost impossible to make a recovery if that rush fails. The rushing tactics, if they are to be employed—and circumstances must arise in which they are necessary—must be employed scientifically and carefully, and in such a way that if the rush is unsuccessful the half still allows himself an opportunity of recovering. For though in attack the hazardous policy is frequently the best and the most fruitful, yet in defence it is as well to be on the safe side.

There is one other word of advice. The defence must not all crowd on to the attacking wing when the opponents have the ball. This is just what the forwards want, and if they can draw the majority of the defenders upon the attacking wing a swift pass will be sent to the unmarked men, and the goal will then be in peril. The half may converge slightly towards the centre on such occasions, but he must take care not to get out of touch with the forward he is marking.

So much, then, for the duties of the halves in defence. We will now turn to the part they play in attack.

In attack, as in defence, the half must play up to



his forwards, for in no team are the tactics of the forwards regulated by the halves, except, perhaps, in a secondary degree. The forwards will decide upon the tactics to be employed, and the halves must fall in with these and further them to the best of their ability. It would, for instance, be absolutely useless and foolish for the halves to sling the ball about from wing to wing, or kick up-field for the forwards to rush down when the forwards are adepts at the short passing game. And in the same way it would be fatal to try and make the forwards play the short passing game when they are more at home with a different style of play, or when some different manœuvre would be more effective. So it is obvious that the halves must not force their forwards to play in a manner in which they do not want to; the strategy in attack must be left to them, and the halves must conform to it.

Now the attacking duties of the halves are, if anything, a trifle more important than the defensive, for without their aid the forwards would scarcely ever get the ball or be able to drive home an attack. The initiation of an attack by making openings for their forwards is the chief form which these duties should take. Whenever the half gets the ball, whether he

has obtained it by intercepting a pass from the other side or by receiving it from his own side, or by taking it away from the opposing forwards, he should, as a general rule, get rid of it to his forwards as quickly as possible, and always as effectively as possible, for the quicker the opening is made the more chance there is of its being effective, for the simple reason that the opposing defence will not be able to recover. The qualities necessary for the making of these openings are numerous; first and foremost comes the power of passing accurately, both for long and short distances, for unless the pass is accurate the forwards will be handicapped more than anyone realizes, and, in addition, time will be wasted. Then, again, there is the power of grasping any weak spot that there may be for a moment or so in the enemy's defence, and then passing the ball to the forward who can deliver an attack upon it. In all good teams each player should know, as it were, by instinct, the position of every other player on his own side, and the half should have this instinct highly developed, but it is just as well to make certain by a swift glance round: then there will be less chance of a pass going wrong. On occasions, perhaps, there

will be no opening to hand, for all the forwards may be well marked, and this calls forth another quality, that is the power of drawing off a member of the opposing defence and then passing. Perhaps this may be rendered doubly difficult by the fact that the defence will not be drawn, but retreats, and how the half should proceed then has already been discussed in a previous page. We have also mentioned how a half by passing to another half can indirectly get the ball to the forward who is covered by an opposing defender, for the angle at which the pass will be given by the subsidiary half is different from that at which the pass from the half originally in possession of the ball would have to be sent. But if the half with the ball finds himself in such a position with no other half to help him, he can, perhaps, flick the ball over the head of the opposing half to his own forward: this, however, is apt to be dangerous, and is certainly difficult; however it is none the less effective, and if tried occasionally may perhaps take the opponent by surprise; but if the least mistake in altitude is made the opponent may get his head to the ball. It is a trick which can be acquired by practice.

Then from a goal kick at either end the half must be prepared to head the ball on to his forwards if he cannot trap it, and so get it on the ground.

So far we have dealt only with what may be called passive attack. It will, perhaps, be well to explain when and how far a half should take part in the real attack. We will suppose that the forwards have the ball and are running it down towards the goal. What then should be the position of the attendant halves? There are three possible answers. One, that the halves should lie back and mark the other forwards waiting for a clearance from their backs ; but this is an unenterprising scheme and one that is but rarely used, perhaps only when halves are phenomenally slow. Again, the halves may be about midway between the two lines of forwards, but if anything a trifle nearer their own. This position has much to recommend it, and possibly is the safest. For they will be so placed that none but a very big kick can pass them, and they will also be able to return to their own forwards any weak or moderately strong clearance. Also if the ball is kicked behind them they will have a good chance of getting back and tackling the forwards before the ball is under proper

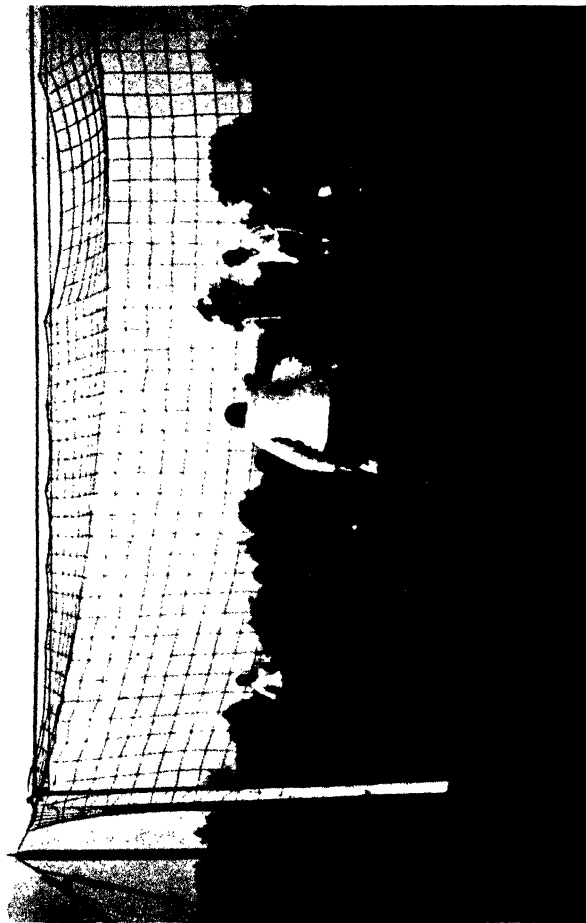
control. In such cases the wing forwards will lie out rather near the touch line—some 10 or 12 yards away—and slightly behind the centre-half. The third scheme is that the halves should follow quite close upon the heels of their forwards, sometimes not more than 5 or 6 yards behind, sometimes a trifle more. This may seem at first sight to be somewhat risky, for the halves will not have such a good chance of getting back to mark the opposing forwards if the ball is cleared properly. However, it may be safely said that the advantages more than counterbalance the disadvantages. They will still be able to reach a weak clearance, and besides that they are nearer to their forwards and can assist them more easily by taking a pass from them. This triangular method of taking the ball down the field is a very effective one, and can be brought to a high pitch of perfection, particularly if the half and the forwards have an intimate knowledge of each other's play.

Perhaps it is best to give an example. Suppose the outside left is given the ball: he will be at once tackled by the right half; this being so he may have to pass: his inside man will probably be too well marked by the full-back to be able to receive a pass, or if he does receive it to put

it to good service. The wing man then has merely to tap the ball back to the left half, who at once draws one of the opposing defence and passes again to his forwards. And even near the goal line this is useful, for the wing man may not be able to get in his centre, in this case again he can pass back and the half will be able to do his centring for him. The ball can be taken from one end of the field to the other by this triangular method; besides it adds what are practically three extra forwards to the line: and, again, in attack, as a general rule, it is best for the attackers to stake much on the success of their attack. Also, even if the ball is cleared by the defenders it is highly probable that the two backs will be able to dally and hold back the attack of the other forwards until reinforcements arrive in the shape of the three halves. Needless to say the halves must be speedy to play this game with success. At the time of writing this plan is in use far more among the professional teams than in the amateurs. The greatest exponents of this game were Basset, Macleod and Perry, who played for the West Bromwich Albion Club some time ago. Whether it is played or not depends, as has been mentioned, upon the adaptability of the men and also whether

the team decides to take risks which will probably prove advantageous in attack.

Then comes the question of whether halves should shoot when they have the chance. The answer is undoubtedly "yes." Just as there is too much passing in front of goal by the forwards amongst themselves, so too there can be far too much passing by halves to their forwards, and never more so than in front of goal. For a half to pass to his forwards in front of goal is sometimes more futile than for the forwards to pass amongst themselves in that position, because at any time it is difficult to receive a pass from behind, and in front of goal particularly so, because every member of the defence will be packing the goal-mouth and marking the forwards. Then, if ever, they will be on the *qui vive*, and the forwards will probably have no chance to turn a pass to advantage. So it is best for the half to shoot when he can, it is even his duty to do so, unless, of course, he *can* pass to a forward who is unmarked and able to get in a shot without any difficulty at all. And even then it is *sometimes* best for the half himself to shoot, for even if his shot be weak and feeble there is always a possibility of the forwards rushing the goalkeeper, and scoring, for they will



### CENTRE HALF SHOOTING FROM A CENTRE FROM RIGHT WING

IT IS WELL TO NOTE THE CUR IN THE SHOT WHICH TAKES PLACE IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS THE CENTRE. THE GOAL-KEEPER MUST CONSEQUENTLY ALLOW FOR A BIG BREAK OFF THE GROUND. IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE THE BALL FOUND IT'S WELL WIDE OF THE GOALKEEPER'S RIGHT HAND IN THE CORNER OF THE NET





know what to expect, and can be dashing for the goalkeeper even while the ball is travelling to him. And so not only do we advise halves to shoot but recommend the forward who cannot get in a shot or pass to a forward who can, to pass the ball back to one of the attendant halves.

Then the position of the halves when their side has forced a corner must be touched upon. The centre half will be just outside the crowd in the goal-mouth so that he can if necessary get in a shot. He may be marked by one of the spare defenders on the defending side. The wing halves should be eight or ten yards outside the crowd so that they can shoot if the ball trickles out to them as it so often does. The defending side will probably have three forwards up the field, but these must be left to the mercies of the full-backs. This is the best position for the halves. They may, of course, lie farther back in case of a big clearance, but as this is rare, they will be of more service in the place stated above.

There is one other point, perhaps rather a general one, that may be dealt with here: it is the question of whether a half should assist a forward, when attacked by an opposing half, by

actually taking part in the tussle for the ball. It would be rash to say that he never should do so, but, as a general rule, he should not, for the assistance he may give will be more than counter-balanced by the fact that he will in all probability hamper his own man and get in his way. His position should be a few yards away from the struggling pair, perhaps two yards will be sufficient. Then he can at once tackle the other half, if he is successful, before he has the ball under complete control: also there is a possibility of the ball rolling out to him, so that he can get it before either of the other two.

### THE CENTRE HALF

The centre half is the most hard-worked man on the field. He should be a combination of all the football virtues and qualities which have been mentioned: he should possess the guile of the serpent, the strength of the lion, and the staying power of the horse. To be a success he needs all these, but if he lacks some, it should not be physical strength, for he will need that most of all by reason of the amount of work that will fall to his share. He is certainly the centre of the defence, and by a stretch of the imagination

could almost be called the centre of the attack ; for most centre halves seem to get the ball more often than any other member of the team, and so it is he who most frequently is the originator of the attack. In defence his chief duty is to look after the opposing centre forward, to prevent him receiving passes whenever he can, or, failing that, to tackle him when he is in possession of the ball. He also has to keep an eye upon the two insides, and frequently has to tackle them and break up any combined movement between them and the centre forward. When near his own goal, however, the full-backs or wing halves will take the insides, and he is left with the centre forward to manage—a task that is often no easy one.

In defence, as well as in attack, he must be able to “head” the ball and do so well. In defence, he will probably have most opportunity for this when a corner has been forced against his side, and then when the ball drops anywhere in his vicinity he should head it as far as possible in the direction of his own forwards up the field. But he will also have innumerable occasions for showing his skill in the art all over the field, and will frequently have to pass to his forwards by this means. But he must remember that he

must use his head only when it is impossible, or unsafe, to trap the ball, and so get his feet into play. He will have to head balls which he cannot trap often enough, *e.g.*, when to trap it would mean that an opponent could tackle him when the ball is not under complete control, or, again, even when the short time taken in trapping the ball is absolutely vital to his side, for sometimes by heading immediately, and not waiting to trap and then pass, he can get the ball to his forwards before the defence has time to intervene.

When his own forwards have the ball and are taking it up the field, the centre half, at all events, should be close behind them to render assistance, and take a pass from them, if they are in a difficulty, whether the wing halves have followed up or not, and more particularly so when it is the inside forwards that have the ball. Also when a hot attack is raging round the opponents' goal-mouth, he should be five or six yards outside the crowd in order to shoot if the ball trickles out to him or is passed to him deliberately, and here, too, he must have a complete understanding with his forwards and encourage them to pass back to him when they are not



HEADING



HEADING



themselves in a position to shoot. His position should be precisely the same when his team has forced a corner against the other side.

The centre half has very important duties in connection with the feeding of the forwards. It is commonly supposed that in this department the chief men to be supplied by him are the wing forwards. Perhaps, on the whole, this is right. But simply because this is a general rule he must not, and will not, neglect the insides. In fact, he must pass the ball to the forward who is in the best position for delivering an attack. He must have a quick eye to see the weak spots in the opposing defence, if, for instance, a half is out of place, and a quick brain and foot to take advantage of any such momentary weakness. Then, again, if it is possible to pass to a wing forward or one of the insides, and if each of these has an excellent chance of getting through, he should in preference pass to the inside, for the simple reason that an attack is far more deadly when it comes down the middle of the field; also when the ball is in the centre it is much easier to play the "through" pass there than on the wing, and with far more chance of success. Also the centre half can place the "through" pass for his



forwards with almost as much ease as the forwards for one another.

At goal kicks from either end, the centre half must place himself just about where he thinks the ball will come if it is kicked straight down the field. He need not on such occasions actually mark the centre forward, but he will generally be within tackling distance, for both will, as a rule, come to the same conclusion as to the most likely place for the ball to drop. If the centre half decides to play the safe game he will, of course, merely content himself with looking after the centre forward, irrespective of his notions as to where the ball will come, except when his own side are taking the kick and the centre forward stays near the goal to prevent the keeper handling the ball: then he may be safely left to the backs. When the opposing side are taking the kick he will of course be behind his own forwards. Then when the ball does come to him he will decide quickly whether he will have time to trap it, and if not, then help it on to his own forwards with his head, or even sometimes with his foot, while the ball is still in the air.

The centre half is given a roving commission. He alone is justified in going anywhere he likes

if he sees that his presence is imperative. But he must not take advantage of this, or get so far away from the man or men he is marking as to leave them with a clear field if the ball comes to them. Occasionally he will be forced to stake everything on a bold move, particularly in defence, but then even if he fails it is generally because his *confrères* by bad play or mistakes, have forced him into such a position. Sometimes the centre half will have to tackle even the wing man, especially if he is converging upon the goal; in fact, in defence, whenever one of the other defenders fail, it will probably fall upon the shoulders of the centre half to make up the deficit: and this he must always be ready to do. But let him remember that a tendency to rove too much will play havoc with the chances of a team's success, for then he is abusing his prerogative and will probably be a hindrance rather than a help to his side.

Then, again, he must always be prepared to take a pass from one of his wing halves or the backs; he will also find it advantageous to pass to them sometimes instead of to a forward, for this will frequently get him out of a difficulty.

When the ball is thrown in he must be on the

watch. If the opposing team has the honour he must stick to the centre forward like a leech. If the centre forward attends the throw-in he must follow him and see that he is not eluded. If, on the other hand, the centre forward elects to stay in the middle of the field, the half must stay by him or get into such a position that he can intercept passes to him; however, when the throw-in is far up in the opponents' territory the centre half has a little more licence, for his team is on the attack and he need not stay so close to the centre forward (if he too does not move down), but follow up the field in order to support his forwards. When his own side is throwing in, however, it is to the half's interests to shake off the centre forward if he can and attend these meetings by himself, for as he will be unmarked, the wing half will frequently throw the ball to him, and then he can pass it to whomsoever he thinks fit.

The centre half must also be possessed of infinite perseverance; if he fails to get the ball at the first tackle he must try again and again, and must harass and worry the forward until he has gained the ball or forced him to pass. He must never give in. Also he must be a master of anticipation. He

should be able to judge with unerring skill what the forwards are likely to do, and here his knowledge of forward play will be useful. He should also be able to feint, so as to induce the forwards to show him what their intentions are, and then must take measures to frustrate them. He will frequently find that he will have to tackle the opposing centre half who may be dribbling the ball up the field. On such occasions it is wise to hang back for a short time in order to allow the rest of his defence to get into position, then he should tackle warily ; it will be quite sufficient if he can force the half to pass, and then he will have to deal with the ordinary forward attack, but it is generally inadvisable to go very far forward to meet the half, for then he will get out of striking distance of the enemy's forwards. The rushing policy is rarely advisable here, for it is so hard for the half to recover swiftly if unsuccessful. At all events when he advances it should be in such a way that he covers the centre forward, so that a pass cannot be given to him. But it will be seen that he starts with the odds against him.

In front of his own goal he should redouble his vigilance and watchfulness, for then the least mistake will be fatal. Quite often he will have to tackle the insides if they happen to be unmarked,

and then he must do so with incredible speed and rapidity: the dallying process is out of place, for the forward will need but a fraction of a second to get in his shot. In such cases the centre-half will have to tackle without a thought of his centre-forward. He will have to stake all on the success of his effort. Also, near goal he must watch for the "through" pass and be on his guard in order to thwart it. Here, too, as in other places, he must always be ready to keep off a forward from back or goalkeeper to allow them to get in a clear kick.

In attack, again, his play must be to a considerable extent regulated by the style of play adopted by his forwards, and also by the immediate area of the field in which the play is taking place. If the ball is in the middle of the field and the style of play is the inside short passing game, he should continually be trying to pass the ball to his insides, more particularly as the attack is most dangerous when it comes from the centre. Then should the tactics be the open long passing game he can feed either of the wings directly, or pass again to his insides with the intention of their doing so. Or, again, if there is a strong wind behind him the centre half can frequently drop the ball gently over the heads of the opposing full-backs for the forwards to rush,

a variation in fact of the "through" pass along the ground. However, should he try this he must take care that he does not give the goalkeeper an opportunity of dashing out and clearing: such a pass must be well judged and not merely a kick. If necessary, also, in attack he should have some arrangement with one of his inside forwards by means of which the forward should drop back temporarily into the place occupied by the centre half, while he assumes for the nonce the duties of the forward. Much more could be written about the duties of the centre half, but all the important points have been expanded above. Centre halves are born and not made: born, too, with the wind of a horse. We will now pass on to the wing halves.

### THE WING HALVES

The wing halves need the same qualities and powers as the centre half, though perhaps they are not so highly developed, but if they are it is so much the better, and all that has been said with reference to the centre may apply equally to the wings for the most part. There are, however, a few details and special points in their play upon which to expatiate. As their duties are precisely the same, what applies to one applies also to the other.

We have already discussed the question of whether a half should mark the inside man all the time, or the outside, or both, and it will be taken for granted that he is to mark the wing man. In this game, then it will be the duty of the half to mark his wing man always in defence except in front of goal, when he comes in and looks after the inside. The other exception which some wing halves make to this rule is the marking of the inside man in the middle of the field, when the ball is in the possession of the far opposing wing. The only excuse for this is that the half should do it well, for if he fails to get the ball as it comes across, it means that an excellent opening has been made for the wing man, and he will not fail to take full advantage of it. And as a general rule it is best to leave the inside to the full-back, unless of course an agreement has been made with the full-back about it. At a corner in his own goal-mouth he frequently marks the inside forward, generally so, perhaps, unless he has arranged that his own inside shall do so. At corners he must try and get his head to the ball. At goal kicks he should be well out on the wing to prevent his opponents' wing getting the ball; this holds good for goal kicks at both ends, and as the goalkeeper often kicks out

A CORNER







to the wing he must be doubly watchful. Whoever is taking the kick, he should be between the forward he is marking and the goalkeeper. On such occasions he will generally have to use his head, though if there is time he will trap the ball.

With regard to kicking into touch we have already given advice, and also in connection with dribbling and following up their forwards when they are on the attack. When close to their own goal in defence they should be on the watch for the "through" pass being employed against them, and may even hang back a little in order to prevent its taking effect. Also, in difficulties, there is always the goalkeeper or full-back to pass to. Then as to their passes. There are technically five possible forwards to whom they can pass, but if there is any preference, or if a choice is left to them, they should pass chiefly to their own wing man or to the inside man on the other wing. Thus in the case of the right half it will be to the right outside or the left inside; to the outside because the half can generally draw the other half, and that leaves the outside with a clear run (and he will probably be nearest to the half), and to the far inside because very often that man will be temporarily unmarked, far more frequently in fact than the centre forward

or the inside man on his own wing. These are the passes to use, though naturally more often than not no choice at all is left to the half for there may be no man or only one to pass to. If there is no one unmarked then he must proceed to draw one of the defenders by dribbling towards the enemy's goal. One disadvantage in passing to his own inside man is that it is very difficult for any one to take a pass that is coming from directly behind, and the centre forward is generally too well shadowed by the centre half to be accessible. So if he can possibly manage it the half should never pass from straight behind a man, but always diagonally and at as wide an angle as he can.

There is one other point which applies chiefly to wing halves, and that is taking "touches" and marking men there. When he is taking a "touch" he should never wait for the opposite side to collect, but throw in as quickly as possible to his own men. Let him, however, take care in his haste that he brings the ball over his head or else he will be penalized. His object should be, when throwing in, to throw the ball to any unmarked man of his own side who is present, whether that man be forward, back, or centre half. When no one is unmarked, as is generally

the case, he must throw it to what he considers the best advantage : there are a certain number of schemes for getting the ball to his own men which he should know, and should therefore have an excellent understanding with his forwards in order to bring them to a successful issue. Many have been mentioned already, such as throwing the ball to a forward, who will tap it back to the half who can then get in a clear kick ; or, again, he may bounce the ball at once on the ground for a forward to kick over his head, or in short, employ any such stratagem which he has worked out with the forwards ; he must also be on the watch in case his centre half dashes up at the last moment unattended. When a half is taking a "touch" near the opponents' goal his object should be to get the ball as far into the centre as he possibly can. Some halves can throw half the breadth of the field, and if this power can be cultivated it should be used to the full. Also, on such occasions, he can generally centre himself if his forwards will pass the ball back to him. When his opponents are throwing in, the wing half should mark his wing man and see that he does not get clear away. To prevent this it is best to stand almost exactly behind the forward,

perhaps a trifle nearer to the centre of the field, and keep as close to him as is possible. Then if the forward tries to move backwards the half can gently obstruct by keeping behind and not budging backwards himself. He must be on the look out for the ball being thrown over the heads of both of them, for that is a common dodge, and the wing man will generally know if it is to be employed, and, being prepared for it, will possibly turn round swiftly and try to get a start on his half. This must be prevented; also the half must do his best to prevent the wing man tapping the ball back to the half who has just thrown in.

It may be gathered from the above account that a half must be a versatile kind of player, and moreover an opportunist of the first water.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FULL-BACKS

THE position of full-back is probably the easiest place to play in on the field. The duties of each are identical and therefore may be explained together. The requirements are much the same as those for a half-back. It is absolutely necessary that there should be a perfect understanding between full-backs and halves (and between the two full-backs too), for the generally accepted theory is that the five defensive players should act in unison and harmony, or, at all events, on some definite system of co-operation. Indeed, the tactics of the backs must, to a considerable extent, be regulated by those of the halves, and their policy will be guided in no small degree by the movements of the half-back line. Similarly, the backs will be influenced by each other's play, so that they can support each other mutually.

The full-backs should be possessed of considerable physical strength ; they should also be rather on the heavy side, and an extra inch or so of height will prove no disadvantage, but rather the reverse. The backs have to stand quite often a large amount of the heavy work. They will have to bustle the forwards, and the forwards will endeavour to bustle them and try to put them off their game, for many backs are apt to kick wildly and lose their wits when rushed by the forwards. Then, too, occasions must arise when it comes to a question of pure physical strength, and in such cases the weaker is likely to get worsted : the back must see to it that this is not his fate. The question of charging or using one's weight has been discussed in a previous chapter, and what has been said there applies equally to the backs. Possibly the backs may indulge in a little heavier and more frequent charging than the halves, for they are not always on the run, as are the halves, and often they have time to recover wind before tackling again ; therefore they should never hesitate to charge if that is the easier and quicker way of getting the ball. Charging frequently breaks up the short inside passing game.

Needless to say the back must be able to kick

accurately and strongly with both feet ; strongly, because sometimes he will have to kick merely to clear, and in such cases he should attempt to find touch as far up the field as possible ; accurately, for the simple reason that the back must on no account kick wildly, but pass definitely to some forward, or to a half who is in a better position than himself for feeding the forwards. The maxim, "kick to and not from," applies most particularly to the back, for he is the man most likely to kick wildly in any direction, so long as it is away from his own goal ; but wild kicking should find no place on the football field, for even when the back is at his wits' end and very hard pressed, he can generally kick into touch. The back should always keep the ball low except when he has to clear for touch, when a high kick will prevent anyone getting the ball before it reaches the touch-line. (Though kicking into touch has been mentioned somewhat frequently in the last few lines it should never be resorted to except in cases of absolute necessity ; but that question has been discussed before.) The tendency, doubtless, is to "balloon" the ball, for it is so much easier to lift the ball into the skies, particularly when it is bouncing, but though to some this may look pretty, and though it generally fetches



a big cheer from the crowd, it is of no practical use at all, for if it is directed to any one in particular (which is doubtful), and not to the forwards at large, the opposing halves and backs have quite as much chance—even more—of getting it as the man for whom it may have been intended, and if it does reach that man he will have to waste time in trapping and stopping it and starting again (for he cannot take it on the run as all passes should be taken), and while he is stopping it the opposing half will have his opportunity. Nothing can be more foolish, futile and ineffectual than a wild kick over the heads of one's own forwards to the feet of the opposing backs (and most of these big kicks do fall to the opposing backs), for it at once places them in possession of the ball and they can therefore pass it to one of their own forwards and so give them a chance of attacking. In spite of this, however, one sees wild bouts of kicking between the two pairs of backs in almost every game one watches, and this goes on until one of the backs mis-kicks or is rushed by the forwards.

Not only must the back be able to kick strongly and accurately, but also in any position and however the ball comes to him; for the ball does not always come rolling gently along the grass, and



**VOLLEYING; KEEPING THE BALL LOW**

**NOTE STRAIGHT LINE FROM KNEE TO TOE, WITH THE MAIN BULK OF THE FOOT LYING DIRECTLY BEHIND THE POINT OF IMPACT, SO AS TO GET MAXIMUM FORCE**



the back must know how to take the ball half-volley or in the air. And in addition to being able to kick it in this position, he must be able to keep it low from such a kick. And whenever he kicks he must in an instant fix upon the man to whom to pass, and here his quick judgment will prove useful. Often enough, as has been said, it is better to pass to a half, who may be in a better position for setting an attack in train. Then there are many tricks which the back ought to have at his command. Here is one. Suppose a high-bouncing ball to be coming towards him, with a forward hotly pursuing it and almost upon it. In such a case it is effective for the back to stab at the ball in the air with the sole of his foot, and so tap it past the oncoming forward; probably the forward will not be able to pull himself up sharp enough, and the back has merely to dodge past him and collect the ball; in all probability he will be able to get in a clear kick. This was a favourite trick of Dick Baugh, who played for England and Wolverhampton many years ago. Or, again, in such a case the back may be able to head the ball gently over the onrushing forward and collect it as before. It will, in any case, as a general rule be found

more effective to tap such a ball past the forward than to draw it to one side, for it is easier for the forward to swerve across and charge into the back than to stop himself short suddenly and turn round. Thus the back turns to his own advantage the very thing which the forward thought would give him the best chance of obtaining the ball.

Then pace should be a quality possessed by the back, for he may be sure that the forwards opposed to him will not be lacking in that, and if by any chance they get away he should be fast enough to catch them, or at all events to come near enough for a back-tackle. Then, in addition to pace, there is agility and quickness. Quickness is a different matter from pace, as has already been said; it implies ability to start quickly, and reach the top of one's pace in a couple of strides, and this, of course, means that the back will be able to reach the forward before he is expected, and before the forward can pass the ball to a *confrère*. In fact, if the back possesses quickness, and is able to sprint fast for a short distance, perhaps sheer pace all the way will not be of vital importance.

The art of heading the ball should also be in the back's repertoire, for at corners it will be found to be a necessity, and will be extremely useful too

at other times in midfield play, though the back will, of course, remember that when it is possible he should get his foot to the ball, as one has far more control over it with one's feet than with one's head, and therefore passes can be given more accurately with the former, and will have the additional advantage of being along the ground. But at times to head the ball is the only way out of a difficulty, and here superior height will stand in good stead.

The back, too, must be a good tackler ; in fact, his tackling must be first-class, for he, more than any one else, has to face a forward coming down the field with complete control over the ball, and then tackling is absolutely necessary. To rob a forward of the ball is rarely an easy task, and experience only will tell how it is to be done. And when the back has got the ball he should never keep it an instant longer than he must, for the success of an attack depends upon the rapidity with which it is set up. It will be, therefore, unnecessary to add that the full-back must never dribble. There will always be a half or forward to pass to, and unless the back arranges that the half should take his place temporarily he should on no account be tempted to dribble himself.

The back, too, to be of real service to his side must use his intelligence ; his pace, pluck, strength, and endurance will be handicapped if he does not employ his brains to the full. He must not be content with getting rid of the ball, but he must get rid of it to the best possible advantage. He must realize, too, that the forwards opposed to him will scarcely be satisfied with a stereotyped style of play, but will try every trick, scheme, and stratagem at their command in order to outwit the defence. And so he should know the game from the forward's point of view, for if he does know it he will be all the more capable of coping with the attack when it comes and however it comes. Also, by knowing what the forward is likely to do, and what he is aiming at, he may be able to prevent his doing it, or so place himself that he may be able to over-reach him. And here he must be cautious, for the forward will be doing his best to deceive the back as to his real intention. He will feint in one direction and then pass in another, or perhaps attempt to run through himself. All this must be taken into account, and though the back cannot hope to be successful every time, yet by using his intelligence he will soon minimize his mistakes.

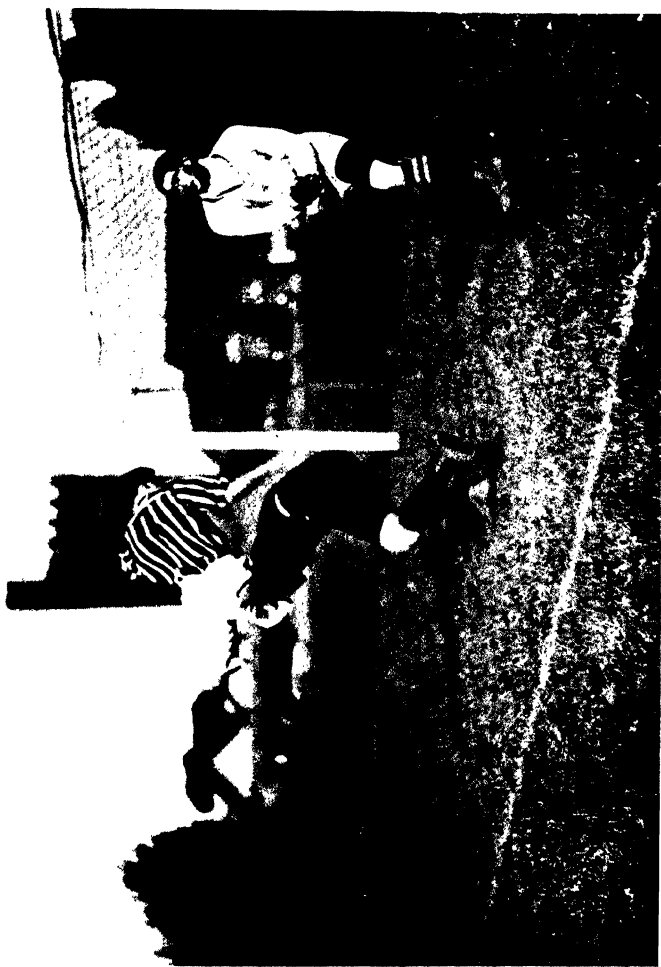
The back should also remember that he will be often enough practically the last defender, and this must have some bearing on his tactics. So, sometimes, it will be the best policy to fall back a little before the oncoming forward, instead of rushing him, in order to allow the rest of the defence to come back and mark their men: for just as the object of the attackers is to bring the attack to a head as quickly and suddenly as possible, so the defenders will do their best to impede its course and gain time until such as are not in their places can come back to help. But he will not, of course, fall back so far that the forwards can come within range of the goal. Also, the object of the backs should be to bunch the attack as much as possible, as it is much easier to thwart the attackers when they are close together than when they are spread over the breadth of the field, for the forwards will not have a large amount of room to manœuvre in, and as a result of this their play must necessarily be cramped. Also, if the forwards are bunched together, one defender will have more chance of marking two men, which on occasions is a good thing.

One full-back should always take up his posi-



tion, as far as general play goes, somewhat behind the other, so as to cover him in case of a mis-kick, or in case the latter is defeated by the forward; it is fatal for the two backs to be on a level, for it at once gives the forwards an opportunity of playing the "through" pass, and in any case leaves no one in between the forwards and the goal when once the backs are passed.

Another thing which the full-back must be prepared to do at all times is to hold off an on-rushing forward, and prevent him tackling or reaching another of the defence in possession of the ball, in order to allow the latter to have a clear kick. This is a most important part of the back's duty; and he should perform it not only when a back or half behind him has the ball, but also, and most particularly, when the goalkeeper comes out to clear. This holding off need not be done roughly; a heavy charge is quite out of place, but one's object can be achieved by shouldering the man gently, or even falling back slowly in such a way that the forward cannot get past; at times, of course, one has to charge the forward heavily to attain this purpose, but in these cases it will generally be the forward's fault if he is seriously inconvenienced; for the



KEEPING OFF FOR GOALKEEPER TO THROW



back will be quite content with gentle obstruction. Again, when hard pressed, the back must not forget that at times he can pass back to his goalkeeper, and if this is well done the goalkeeper will be able to get in a clear kick at his leisure to any man on the field. But when the back does pass back in this way he must certainly keep off any forward who attempts to rush the goalkeeper, otherwise his passing back will be attended with considerable risk. This passing back to the goalkeeper might be employed considerably more than it is. One must admit that it is not infrequent, but even so the back is more inclined to kick wildly down the field when in an *impasse* than to pass the ball to his goalkeeper, who in turn will be able to kick to any unmarked forward. In any case it is far better to pass back like this than to kick the ball over one's head, for one cannot kick over one's head with any accuracy, and so the opposing defence will stand as much chance of getting the ball and returning it as the forward for whom it is intended.

The positions in which the full-back must be at various stages of the game both in attack and defence must be noted.

When there is a corner in his own goal-mouth

the full-back does not mark anyone. He places himself in a position where he thinks the ball will come, and when it does come he should make a desperate attempt to get at the ball with his head and clear it from the goal area, preferably out to the wings, and if necessary must be prepared to follow it up instantly and pass to one of the three forwards waiting for it about the halfway line. But often enough this duty will fall to the halves. It is as a general rule more effective to head the ball away than to wait for it to drop within kicking distance—the waste of merely a tenth of a second will allow the forwards to try a shot; but, of course, at times the ball comes low and straight to one's foot. But, however it comes, the back must do his utmost to get it away as rapidly as possible, with head or foot or knee.

The position of the backs is totally different when their own side has forced a corner in the opposite goal. Then the two backs, if speedy, should be about level, just so far from the enemy's goal that a fairly hard clearance would reach them. If one back is very slow, then perhaps he might drop back a little, and his speedier partner will remain in his advanced

position. When a corner is being taken the defending team will generally have three forwards, the centre and the two wings, up the field, so that they can attack in case of a clearance from the goal. It is the backs' duty to prevent these forwards from getting the ball, and to carry this scheme to a successful issue it is best for the two backs to place themselves in the open space between the forwards, so that they can tackle either centre forward or wing man when the ball comes out, or prevent the ball reaching the forwards at all, which is the better policy. They must remember that if these three forwards do get the ball, the attack will be made too rapidly for the rest of the defence to come back and assist; therefore when the ball is cleared from the goal-mouth they must do all that lies in their power to return it whence it came, or, failing that, at all events prevent the forwards from getting away with the ball at their feet.

The full-back will also take notice of "touches." In his own half, and perhaps a few yards beyond the half-way line, when his own half-back is throwing in on his wing, the full-back will mark the opposing wing man; if he

does not actually mark him shoulder to shoulder, he should be within easy tackling distance in case the ball happens to get passed to that man. Then, again, at such times and on such occasions as he thinks fit he should rid himself of the wing man, and so place himself that the half-back can throw the ball to him, so that he will be enabled to get in a clear kick; for having shaken off his wing man, he will be unmarked himself. He will, of course, have some understanding with his half by which such a scheme can be executed, and the half must glance round to see if his full-back be disengaged or not. This is particularly useful near one's own goal, if it can be managed. On such occasions the other back will be some considerable distance behind his *confrère* more or less in the centre of the field, but not so far that he cannot tackle the opposing centre forward or inside in case they get the ball from a pass and attempt to break through. When his own wing half is throwing in far up in the enemy's territory the back will not follow right up, but merely incline in that direction, for it is unlikely that the opposing wing man will attend these touches, but rather lie down the field on the

chance of getting a long pass ; however, the back should see that the outside man does not get it, but his own judgment will decide how far he is to advance into the opponents' half of the field.

But when the opposing half is taking the "touch," the full-back on that wing does not actually mark anyone, but rather takes up his position some ten yards or more, as he thinks suitable, from the knot of men clustered round the half throwing in—in fact, in such a position that he can best tackle one of the opposing forwards should they break away with the ball. The same considerations must influence his position whether the throw-in be in his own or the opponents' ground. Possibly he should drop back a little in the latter case, while in the former, when the touch is near his own goal, he will be just about opposite the near goal-post, possibly a trifle behind the men engaged around the half throwing in ; and here it is not only a man breaking away from the touch-line that has to be dealt with, but also a pass from there to the rest of the forwards in front of the goal ; such passes must be intercepted if possible, and if not, the man to whom they go must be tackled at once before he has time to shoot.



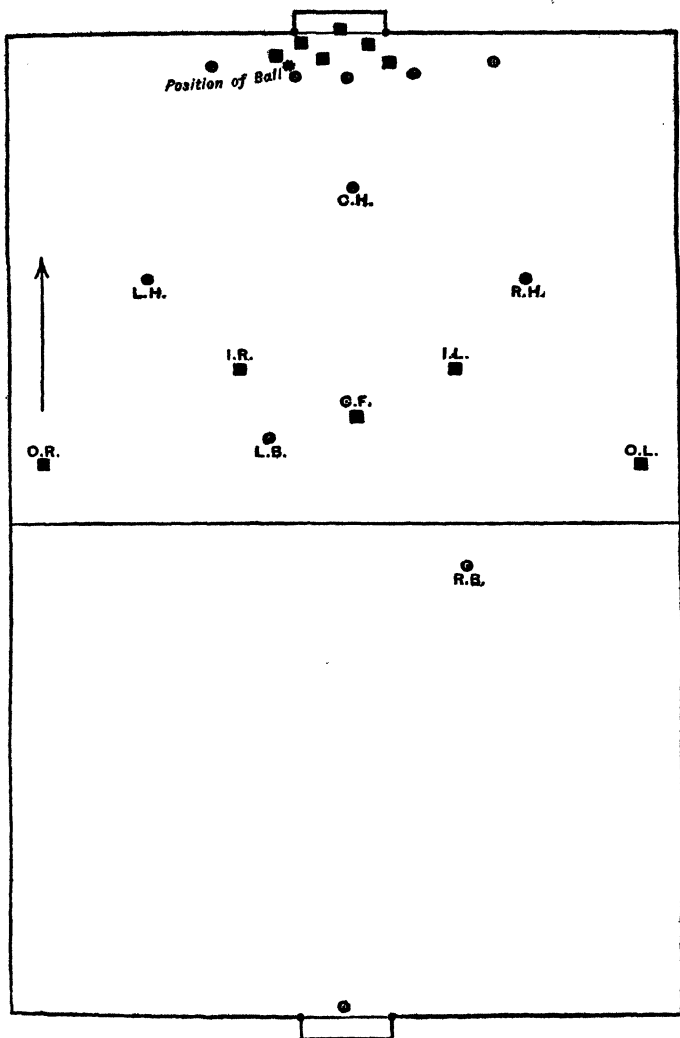
Then as to the position of the backs in the general run of the play. At the actual kick-off they will be more or less level some twenty yards or so from their goal. If their team starts attacking, then the full-back on the wing which is taking up the ball will advance up the field ahead of the other back until, if the attack is well pressed home, he will be well in the opponents' part of the ground, about a distance of a hard clearance from the enemy's goal. He will generally find one of the opposing inside men in that locality (the inside right, if it is the left back that is advancing), and it is his duty to prevent that inside man from getting the ball, or to tackle him if he does get it. If the inside retires back almost on to his own goal, the back will not of course follow him, but still keep the distance of a fairly hard kick from the opponent's goal, and not so very far behind the line of his own halves, who will also be on the look-out for a clearance. When the full-back is in this position he should be able to get any ball that comes in his direction, whether it be intended for the inside right or the centre forward, if it is the left back that is in this advanced position. If the back, however, be rather slow, he will take care not to advance too far in case he should be outpaced by the forwards

when they get the ball. In such a case the right full-back will be some distance behind the left back, and slightly over towards the other side of the field, so that he can cover a miss-kick by his partner, or tackle a man let through by him (in which case the left back will at once sprint back to take the place of the right back), or again to tackle the other inside man who may come through. Perhaps it would be as well to sketch in clearly and fully the positions of all the defenders in this typical condition of affairs. We will suppose the left wing to have run the ball down and centred. There will be the mass of the halves and backs on the defending side, and the forwards of the attacking side in front of goal: the attacking centre half will be some ten yards behind this mass, and the two wing halves rather out towards the touch-line and still a little farther back than the centre half. Then the forwards on the defending side will be arranged as follows: the two wing men near the touch-line about the half-way line, though perhaps nearer their own goal; the centre forward will be a trifle nearer his own goal than the wings, but in the centre of the field, and the two insides will possibly be still a little nearer to their own goal than the centre forward. Then the left back on the attacking

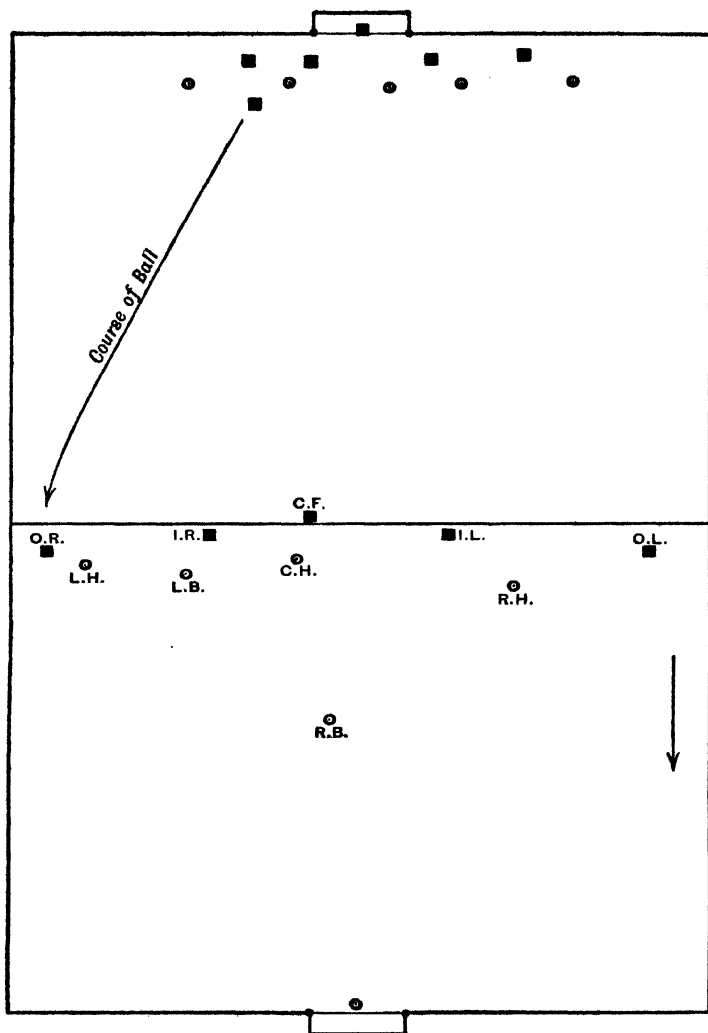
side will be perhaps on a level with the centre forward, almost directly behind the inside right, the right back again will be behind him in the position already described. The diagram (A) will make all clear.

Now if the ball be cleared from goal to one of the wing men, then the half on that wing should be able to get to the wing man and tackle him before he has the ball under control. When this happens the rest of the defence drops into position for marking their men; the left back keeps fairly close to the inside right, the centre half looks after the centre forward, the right half comes across slightly so that he can, if necessary, tackle the inside left as well as the outside, and the right back retires yet farther down the field still behind the other back to render assistance or stop a "through" pass (see plan B).

Now if the ball is cleared from goal right beyond the wing half so that the right wing forward has a clear run down the field, then the left back should tackle that man, and the half will come on and mark the inside; it will be perfectly obvious to both half and back when this must be done, and therefore there should be no difficulty about it. If, on the other hand, the ball is cleared down the



**A**  
**THE "WALTERS" DEFENCE.**—The ball is in front of goal. This diagram illustrates the position of attacking defenders. ■ defending team. ○ attacking team.



B.

THE "WALTERS" DEFENCE.—The ball has been passed from in front of goal to the right wing, so that the real defenders of plan (A) have become the attackers.

left wing, then the right back, who is lying back, goes up to take the wing man, the left half taking the inside, while the left back falls back behind the rest of the defenders.

If, again, the ball be cleared down the centre of the field in the direction of inside right or centre-forward, the left back should get it and return it at once. If the left back fails, the right back will come across and perhaps delay his tackle until the left back can take the place vacated by the right back, and the rest of the defenders fall into their usual places. But if the ball goes straight to the inside left, and is not intercepted by the right half, then the right back tackles the inside left, the right half takes the wing man, the centre half the centre forward, the left half takes up his position so that he can intercept passes to the inside and outside right, while the left back drops back and covers the right back in case he makes a mistake or the "through" pass is played.

This system will, of course, be modified according to circumstances, but it applies equally to all stages of the defence and attack.

It will be thus seen that as a general rule the full-back takes the opposing inside man in mid-field, while in front of goal the wing half generally

converges inwards, and marks the inside man himself, thus leaving the backs free, unless, of course, the wing half is pursuing his outside forward; in that case the back looks after the inside forward on that wing.

A word might perhaps be said on the position of the full-backs at goal kicks. When the opponents are taking the kick, one of the backs should, as usual, be in front of the other, and not so very far behind the centre half, so that, if the ball is driven past the centre half down the middle of the field, the back may tackle before the forward gets the ball under control or, if possible, intercept the ball. This is one of the occasions when the head may be used to advantage. However, it is not very often that the full-back receives the ball from an opponent's goal kick, but one of the backs should not be too far from the forwards, on the off-chance that the forwards get it. When it is his own goalkeeper that is kicking, the backs should be fairly close to the goal. If the ball is wet and heavy, it is often advantageous for one of the backs to tap the ball to the goalkeeper so that he can catch it and punt it up the field. However, when this is done one of the opposing forwards frequently stays near at hand to prevent it. Under

these circumstances one of the backs must hold him off while the other taps the ball to the goalkeeper, if these tactics are still to be played. If the goalkeeper is a weak kicker, then the duty will fall upon the full-backs. It is generally best to kick from goal to the insides slightly on the wing, and always to a particular man, and not to the forwards at large.

Of the independent system of back play there is little to be said. The backs do not go, as a general rule, so far up the field, and they act more independently of the halves; it is merely a question of each man doing as best he can for himself. To be really successful this system requires a far higher standard of individual excellence than for the combined game.

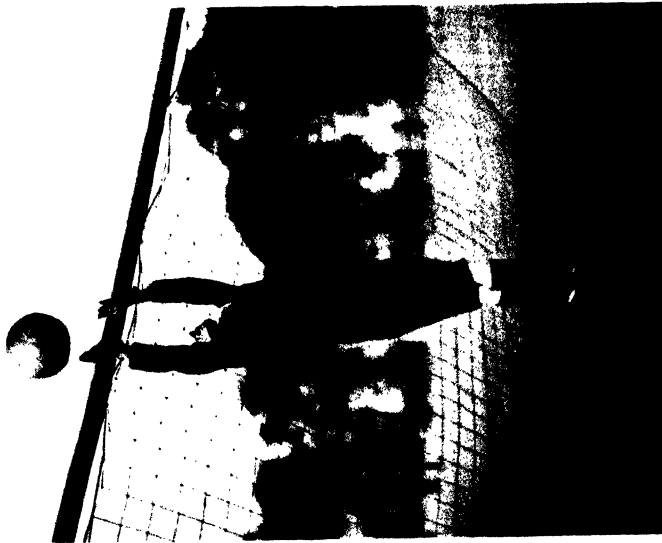
However, as long as a man has a fair amount of strength, can kick well, is fairly fast, always keeps cool in tight situations as well as in ordinary play, is able to anticipate the movements of the forwards, and above all, uses his intelligence, he will have most of the attributes of a first-class full-back. Full-backs must be warned particularly against spectacular and fancy kicking.



## CHAPTER X

### THE GOALKEEPER

ONE occasionally comes across an article on goalkeeping in some sporting paper or magazine, but as a general rule even in books or manuals specially dealing with Association Football little mention is made of the goalkeeper or his art, and this is so, presumably, because the goalkeeper is but one among eleven and his task differs considerably from that of the rest of the side. But all the same his position is one of the utmost importance, except in games where the one-sidedness of the play either gives the goalkeeper no scope for employing his powers, or else allows him no chance of stopping the multitude of shots with which he has to deal ; and even in the latter case, good play on his part can do an infinite amount to keep the score down, and if he does play well and is aided by the merest trifle



PUSHING THE BALL OVER THE BAR



JUMPING UP TO DROPPING BALL



of luck, he may encourage the rest of the side and induce them to play in a way they have never played before, and so make a good match of what would otherwise have been an uninteresting game. Again, it is an important position, for the simple reason that the goalkeeper is the last member of the defence: also because there is no player more capable of winning or losing a match than the goalkeeper. On occasions when he is on the top of his form he may prove almost invincible; he will stop all manner of shots and do his side inestimable service; but on the other hand, when he is off-colour a single mistake may mean defeat for his side.

It is this variety which makes the post so interesting; at times it is pleasurable, at others disappointing. There is nothing more enjoyable than to have a lot to do in goal, to get warmed up to one's work, and to do it well; but there are times when, having little to do for the greater part of the game, the goalkeeper leans inert against the posts, or strides up and down between them, and then a sudden tax upon his energies often finds him stiff and cold, with no fire or vivacity in him, and often enough it is in this moment that the game may be lost. He must thus learn to take the rough

with the smooth ; if he loses one match, he may win the next ; for in a position where so much depends upon clearness of brain and quickness of eye there is, needless to say, scope for considerable inconsistency.

As, then, the goalkeeper is the last line of defence, he should be a safe man. Above everything else coolness is necessary. A man who gets flurried at critical moments—and the goalkeeper's moments are always critical—will give away many goals ; it is the cool and calculating player that fills the position best : cool, but by no means phlegmatic, for he must possess agility, plenty of pluck and dash, as well as a quick eye and safe judgment backed up by ready wits.

Though of course it will be an advantage to him to be able to kick with both feet, yet as a general rule he will use his hands, even if he does have time afterwards to kick the ball with his feet when once it is collected. He should not concede a corner except when there is no other way out of the difficulty, which will not be infrequent, but should rather make it his aim to get the ball away to the wings, and so relieve the pressure upon goal. It is advisable to use both hands, whenever it is possible, to stop the ball, though occasions will arise,

of course, when a dive and a one-handed save is absolutely necessary.

If there chance to be a free kick or a throw-in from touch near the goal, the goalkeeper must not be hampered by the backs, but allowed space and room so that he can follow the flight of the ball with his eyes. This is of the utmost importance, for if his freedom is restricted he will not be able to catch a fair sight of the ball, and where quickness is more or less vital he should be allowed to have an unimpeded view.

### PRACTICE

Fortunately, a goalkeeper can usually get as much practice as he wants. There are always, or nearly always, players ready to shoot at him for as long as he likes, and thus he gets used to stopping every variety of shot. And when practising he should always treat every shot exactly as he would in a match. For the more defensive part of goalkeeping plenty of practice is valuable and essential. It is quite a different thing to keep goal on a dry day and on a wet one, when the surface is greasy and foothold precarious. It is thus important to get preliminary practice before a match whenever it is possible,

and it is advisable in this to get thoroughly warmed up to one's work, as otherwise a goalkeeper often takes some little time to settle down, and so if he is not prepared, a sudden attack at the start may find him at fault.

### REQUIREMENTS

With regard to requirements wash-leather gloves are the best for dry and woollen gloves for wet weather. If wash-leather gloves are used on a wet day, they quickly become slimy, and it is next to impossible to hold the ball with them : woollen gloves absorb the moisture better. On a very wet day a fresh pair of woollen gloves at half-time is an advantage. The goalkeeper must see to it that he has plenty of sawdust in the goal mouth, and for a yard in front, if it is at all greasy. A secure foothold will mean much to him. Also he must wear a sufficient number of sweaters to keep himself warm, for if he is chilled through he will be useless. And here he must not go to the other extreme, for too many coverings may hamper the freedom of his movements.

*Kicking.*—In kicking off from the goal the object is to send the ball to an unmarked forward.

The forwards most frequently unmarked are the two insides, and therefore it is best to send it to one of them. But this is a matter which must be settled by circumstances. Many goalkeepers indulge in punting from the goal-kick: this is a matter of taste, but it is certainly safer in wet weather when the ball is at all slippery. Care must, however, be taken that the goalkeeper is not rushed by a forward stationed to prevent this sort of thing. It is undoubtedly of great advantage that a goalkeeper should be able to kick far and powerfully, for if he cannot—and there are many such kicks—it will mean that the work of the backs is so much heavier.

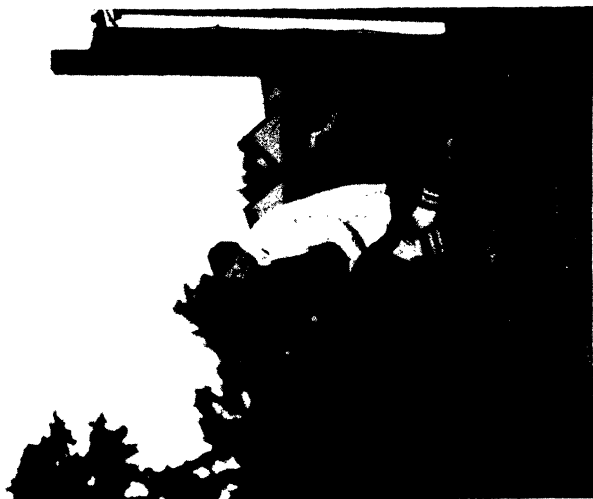
*Fisting.*—Fisting or punching has been reduced to a fine art among goalkeepers, some of whom can fist nearly as far as they can kick; but unless one is proficient in this department it should be used but sparingly, and more particularly so on a greasy day, when the ball has a tendency to go off at right angles to the direction required. It is only necessary when the ball has to be cleared rapidly and promptly owing to the rush of opposing forwards. The ball should be met with the upper part of the clenched fist and wrist, and the whole force and weight of the body should be behind



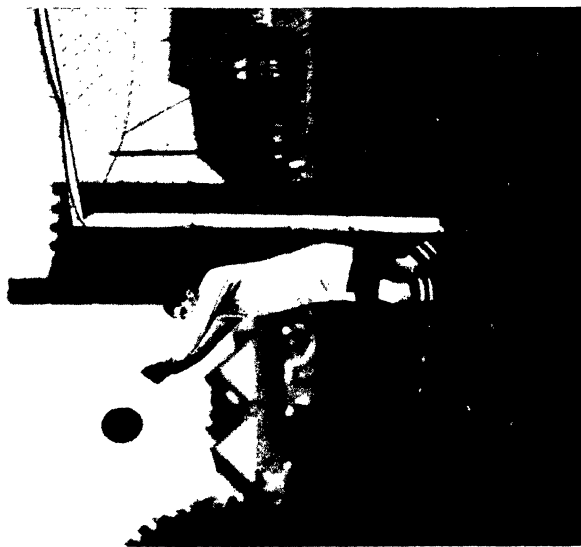
it. By this means it can be sent to a considerable distance. But it is perhaps in dealing with corners and long dropping shots that fisting is most useful. The ball can be met either with the two clenched fists placed together, or with one, and thus is pushed out of danger. A straight fast shot coming along breast high can often be sent out in this way nearly as hard as it came, when there is no time to catch the ball and throw it away.

*Throwing.*—Throwing instead of fisting is preferable whenever there is time, as it is safer and more accurate. The ball may often be thrown to one's own half standing clear of the knot of players surrounding the goal, or even be hurled as far as the half-way line ; time and circumstances will decide which is better.

*Anticipation.*—It is, however, in actual stoppage of shots that lies the goalkeeper's chief task. Success in this is mainly due to anticipation, a quality which is really spontaneous and scarcely controlled by any rules. When fit and on the top of his form a goalkeeper is sometimes almost impregnable ; he is in position before the shot comes and often saves what seem to be absolutely certain goals. His prescience is almost uncanny. If asked to explain this power of anticipation, he



CATCHING THE BALL PREPARATORY TO PUNTING



FISTING OUT



probably could not do so. But although this power is instinctive, there are a few observations which may be made and rules which may be laid down, though these are necessarily by no means infallible, and do not hold true on every conceivable occasion. A shot taken on the half-volley by the forward will tend to come high up to the goalkeeper. On the other hand, with a wet, greasy surface, for all shots, the ball tends to skid along the ground and keep low; a crouching attitude will enable the goalkeeper to deal more readily with the latter type of shot. When a forward has the ball under control and shoots with his right foot, the tendency is for the ball to come to the goalkeeper's right—except when the forward shoots with the outside of his right foot, a movement which is usually noticeable. In that case the ball tends to curl to the goalkeeper's left. In the same way a shot from the opposing right wing has a tendency to be hooked round into the corner to the goalkeeper's right, and *vice versa* when the ball is kicked with the left foot.

*Attitude.*—When a shot is expected the goalkeeper should have every sense on the alert. A crouching attitude will enable him to dive in either direction for the ball, while it does not preclude

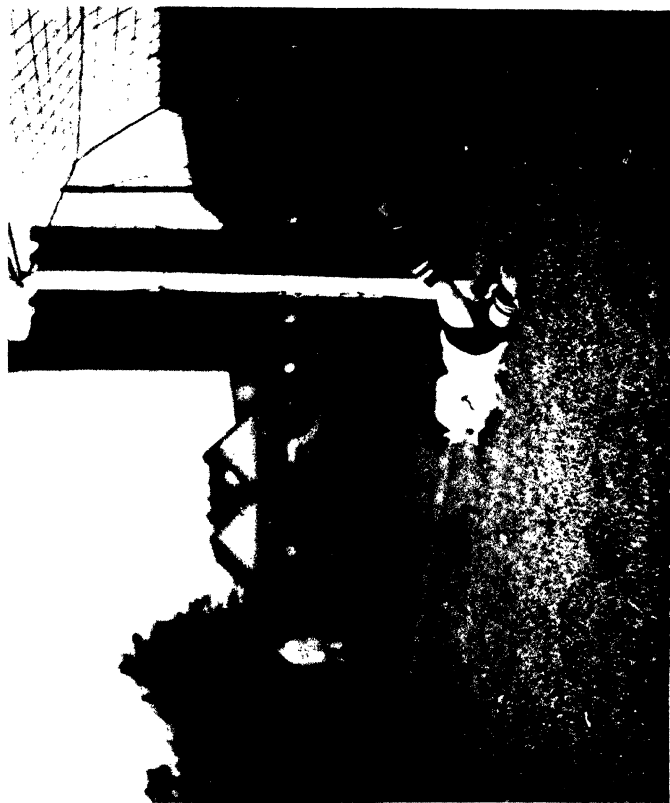
him from springing at high shots, but, on the contrary, enables him to spring all the higher. As has been noted already, this crouching attitude is especially advisable in wet weather.

*Position.*—As to position, the goalkeeper should stand in the centre of the goal for shots from his immediate front. If the shot be more oblique, he should move across the goal towards the direction from which the shot is coming ; for a man shooting from the right wing the goalkeeper should be about two-thirds across the goal towards the forward and a yard out from the goal-line. The whole of the goal will thus be covered. It is best to stand ready on one's toes for almost every shot, and always a yard or so outside the goal-line for fear he should carry through. Having attained this best position, if there is time to advance a yard or two towards the marksman, the goalkeeper will find it to his advantage to do so, for by this means he will cover more of the goal. But for a shot from the extreme wing—and this includes a corner-kick—the goalkeeper should be at the farther corner of the goal, since a shot is much more easily judged when one is running forward to meet it.

*Shots.*—Next, as to the different kinds of shots

and the methods of dealing with them. Shots may be divided into two main divisions, those that come along the ground and those in the air—the high shots. The straight ground shot must be fielded, and then the ball must be punted away, after dodging any forward who attempts to charge down the goalkeeper. It is a good plan to drop upon one knee to this type of shot for the sake of safety ; for with a greasy surface and a slimy ball the shot is not to be despised, although it is straight. If the goalkeeper does not kneel, the feet should be together behind the ball. The golden rule in stopping all shots is of course, if possible, to catch the ball with both hands, with the body behind the ball. The goalkeeper must take care, in dodging a forward, that he does not take more than two steps with the ball in his hands. For a ground shot to one side it is often necessary to fall over to field the ball, but a quick recovery must be made and care taken not to push the ball out to an opposing forward. A ground shot in the corner should, if possible, be turned round the post, and a corner must be conceded. This is one of the hardest shots to stop, for one frequently has to fall at full length, and even then it is not always possible to touch the ball even with the tips of one's gloves. It is

this hurling of oneself into the corner of the goal that is most difficult to teach to the embryo goalkeeper, as it entails a certain amount of bruises, particularly when the ground is at all hard. It is better to practise it when the surface is soft. And it is in wet weather, fortunately for his limbs, that a goalkeeper has most ground shots to deal with. When there is no bounce in the ball, and it comes skidding along the greasy surface, it is best to fall over frequently and get as much of the body as possible behind the ball. This is always a safe plan. On dry days it is possible to use other tactics, namely, a quick rush and a two-handed pick-up; but this is risky—one needs to be extraordinarily quick upon one's feet—as the shot may have to be taken with the hands alone, simply because there has not been time to get into position, and so the body and feet are not behind the ball. Occasionally he will have to make a dive and a one-handed pick-up—*e.g.*, when a crossing shot comes from the centre to the corner of the goal. This is dangerous, but sometimes necessary. A low cross shot coming from one of the wings will be stopped by the goalkeeper running in the direction of the shot across the goal to meet it.



TURNING GROUND SHOT 'ROUND THE POST





For high shots, if their direction has not been anticipated, the only thing to do is to spring at them and attempt to push them over the bar. It is surprising what little effort is required to send the ball over; only a touch is necessary if given at the right moment, and one hand is enough if the ball cannot be reached by two. This applies to all shots, whether they be dropping ones or rising ones, that, unless deflected from their course, would pass just under the bar. If the goalkeeper is in doubt as to whether the ball is going over or under, he must adopt the safe course and help it over the bar. Some of these balls he will be able to get both hands to; those which come rather to one side or the other can best be reached by one hand, if they can be reached at all. What is needed is a quick side jump and a lift over. Other shots in the air—that is to say, those well within his reach—the goalkeeper should catch and throw out or punt, if there is time. If he is pressed for time, and the forwards are almost upon him, he should fist or punch out, either with one hand or two.

A goalkeeper should be chary of leaving his charge. If he runs out at the wrong time and fumbles the ball when away from goal, it usually

results in a goal being scored against him. It is possible to do much valuable work in assisting the backs, but no risks should be taken unless he has a complete understanding with the defenders in front of him. It is far the safest plan to come out of goal only when absolutely necessary. And it is necessary to come out for two reasons only: If a centre or corner kick is going to an opposing forward who seems unhampered by a back or half, then the goalkeeper should come out, and come out as quickly as possible too, without the slightest hesitation. If there is a back in attendance, marking the forward, it is advisable to stay in goal unless called for by the back. It is especially in corners that this holds good. The position of the keeper will be at the end of the goal that is farthest from the ball, and he will, of course, be facing the man who is taking the kick. Now if the ball seems to be going to an opponent in such a way that that opponent will be able to get a clear shot at goal, then it is best for the goalkeeper to rush out and punch it away, or at all events do his best in that direction. But if the ball is going to one of his own players, then it is just as well to stay in goal and let him deal with it himself. Needless to say, corners are an

anxious time for the goalkeeper. He gets all kinds of balls to stop, and scarcely one of these comes to him honestly and at all in a decent manner, for very often his sight is impeded and he cannot get a good view of the ball. Also, the ball comes from a very short distance away, and so leaves him all the less time to get at it or judge its flight.

The second occasion on which the goalkeeper should come out of goal is when a forward has got through the backs and is making for goal, unhampered, with the ball at his feet. On such an occasion as this the one thing not to do is to stand still. There is little or no chance of stopping the shot in this way, and running out at the man as he shoots serves the double purpose of covering more of the goal and of putting the forward off his shot. The goalkeeper should run out, if possible, at a time when the forward has lost control of the ball, if only for a moment. His object is to get as near to the ball as possible before the shot. By anticipation sometimes the goalkeeper can take the ball off the forward's toe ; if he is too late for this, all he can do is to fall on the ball and so smother the shot, or else place himself in its course towards the goal.

And when the opposing forwards are nearing his goal, and particularly when the inside forwards are in possession, the goalkeeper must always be on the look-out lest they use the "through" pass. He should dash out and kick it or throw it away if he has the faintest chance of reaching it before the forward for whose benefit it was given, and often enough when he has no chance at all, for exactly the same reasons as those given in the last paragraph.

Then the goalkeeper must always be ready to take a pass, sent back to him by one of his backs or halves. He must continually and all the time expect one of these when the play is near his own goal. When he has a good understanding with his backs, he will easily be able to recognize the circumstances under which his backs are likely to make use of him in this way. And frequently it is best to run out to meet these passes and not wait for them to come to the goal mouth.

And after tricking one forward the goalkeeper should not be so much carried away by his success as to attempt to trick another unless, of course, another is upon him at once. It is absolutely futile and a waste of time to move down the field trying to trick forward after forward, bouncing the

ball in between whiles. That way disaster lies. As a matter of fact, the new rule will prevent any tendency to this. The goalkeeper must get rid of the ball as soon as he can, before the enemy's defence has time to get into position.

Finally, although the goalkeeper has duties apart from the rest of his side, he should work together with them. It is absolutely essential that he should be in complete understanding and harmony with his backs, in order to know when they want assistance from him. It is a good rule to get the back when hard pressed to shout "goal" if he wants the goalkeeper to come out. Whenever the goalkeeper decides to do so on his own responsibility, when he wants the back to leave the ball and take the man (as, for instance, when the ball is kicked beyond the backs) there should be no doubt as to his intentions, and he should always shout clearly in order to make them known. It is this harmony between the different members of the defence that prevents the blunders that so frequently occur—blunders that could easily be avoided by a little care and forethought.

It is easy to criticize the goalkeeper. He is the last defender, and whatever mistakes have

been made among the halves or backs, he is always the player who lets the ball through. But though he fills a position which is often irksome and disappointing, the reward comes when he has played a good game and saved his side from defeat. His mistakes are always noticeable, but it is true also that his good services seldom go unrecognized.

## CHAPTER XI

### AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS

**I**T is not proposed in this chapter to settle the points at issue between the A.F.A. and the F.A., nor even to offer an opinion upon the situation ; nor, again, is there any pretence of deciding here that much-vexed question, whether the amateurs are better than the professionals, or the professionals than the amateurs. The object of these brief notes is to point out where the professionals do have an advantage over the amateurs and what the amateurs can teach the professionals.

In the first place it must be remembered that each professional is a picked man, selected for his prowess at the game out of a far larger number of candidates than the amateurs have at their disposal. Moreover football is his profession ; he makes his living by the game, and as a general



rule the man whose very bread depends upon his profession will bring it to a higher level than he who merely engages in that profession for pleasure; at all events, such a man should take more pains about it in order to make his living than the amateur.

And this, again, leads up to another point. The professional takes pains: in fact, he is compelled to; he has to train so much or so many times every week that his engagement lasts, and the managers of his club see to it that he does not fail. Also as a general rule his hours are more regular than those of the average amateur; he is up early and in bed at a reasonable time, instead of being up late and in bed late as is often the case with the leisured amateur. Also he is probably more temperate with regard to tobacco: the average professional smokes a pipe, if he smokes at all, while the amateur as often as not smokes numbers of cigarettes, which do far more harm to the wind than pipe-smoking. Thus the professional is almost always in the pink of condition and in perfect training, not necessarily because he likes it, but simply because if he is not he gets dismissed from his club, and he cannot afford that. The amateur, on the contrary, is rarely

in so fit a state of training: it is doubtful if the majority ever train at all, or if they do, at all seriously, except perhaps before a big and important match. Possibly the amateur has no time for special training, especially if he is in business, but even so he can keep himself in better training than he generally is, and time after time matches have been lost simply because one team is in better condition than another. This also is the reason why schools play so well against club teams.

Then, again, taken man for man, the average professional is far superior to the average amateur in build, physique, and pure strength. His muscles are hardened and developed by outdoor work, or at all events by manual work, for he generally is drawn from the labouring classes, and whatever else he lacks, the honest British working-man is well off for pure strength; he generally has a chest like a barrel and the thighs of a giant. Moreover, as the professional referees do not allow heavy body-charging, the professional player is very powerful with his legs, for he often depends upon a sturdy "jab" at the ball to carry an opponent off his feet and place himself in possession of the ball. It is, indeed, a very effective method, and has been brought to perfection.

Also, taken all through the season, the professional clubs play very much the same team, and the benefit of this is obvious: the players get accustomed to each other's play, and know exactly what their *confrères* will do. They have, in fact, a perfect understanding, and once a team has that, then it has taken one long stride towards being a good team. Curiously enough, this understanding is not gained by practising much together, for they have no mid-week games between themselves, and only one or two at the beginning of the season; their practice consists chiefly of shooting. It is simply matches that give them this wonderful harmony. The professional teams have also another advantage. If by any chance one of the regular team does have to drop out through accident or for some other reason, the club will be sure to have another man very nearly as good to take his place, for the big clubs and the rich clubs can afford to keep in their reserve many a man whom other and poorer clubs would be only too glad to get for their first team. And thus the professional teams are not liable to such fluctuations in the standard of the players as the amateur. Now the majority of amateur teams have considerable difficulty in

turning out the same team twice running. The men cannot get off, for business reasons, quite often, with such unfailing regularity. And the result is that a reserve has to be played. Now the amateur clubs may perhaps have as big or bigger reserve to fall back upon than the professional, but, unfortunately, this reserve does not consist of picked men, but merely of men of ordinary ability, or ability below the standard perhaps. The result of this is that the team does not get that understanding and sympathy between the players on the field which is so big a factor for success, simply because they do not play together with unfailing regularity; and, again, if one or two men fail, as fail they do, to turn out, the man in reserve will not be nearly so good as the one originally chosen. This last is not, perhaps, true of the Corinthians or Casuals, but it is of most amateur clubs. And the final result is that the amateur teams, even though they include "Blues" and internationals at times, almost always appear to be, and are, a scratch side, in which there is little unison or real "soccer" understanding.

We will not here detail individual points of professional excellence in actual play, *e.g.*, their superb headwork, their magnificent passing, and

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their vast superiority in combined half-back play. All these points seem to be adverse to the amateur, but he too has some advantages on his side. In the first place, the amateur, as a general rule, sticks to one club; he plays for it year in, year out, and the result is that he gets an affection for it, and will therefore play all the more keenly when its reputation is at stake. And this will induce him to think less of his own individual good. He will be willing to fight to his last gasp, and be more ready to undergo greater risk of bodily hurt than the average professional. And the latter, perhaps, has reason on his side, for when he has to win his daily bread by his play, he may be quite right to keep himself as free from harm as he can, or at all events to avoid risks which would endanger his position. The professional, too, is always liable to change his club: in fact, he may do so two or three times in a season, simply because the club he is with cannot afford to keep him. And so he cannot be expected to get more than a passing affection for the club he is with temporarily: and this makes a difference, for though he will still play his best, yet he does lack something which will enable him to do that extra bit of work or that

desperate piece of hardihood which sometimes makes all the difference between victory and a defeat.

Another point—and this is a most important one—is that the amateurs play, as a general rule, with more brains. One does not in this cast any reflection upon the professionals, but it is a fact. The amateur is always trying to devise some fresh scheme, some new combination, or some change of tactics with which to overthrow his opponents. In fact, he approaches the game from a more brainy point of view. He is not always content to go the same old way, to carry on the same stereotyped movements and stratagems, to stay in a rut. But, on the contrary, he makes use of his brains on the field and off it as well. One might almost say that there is no single stratagem, device, or point in tactics which did not originate with the amateurs. And the professionals have taken each up in turn. And invariably they have bettered their instruction. For if the amateurs have invented any new tactics, it is the professionals who have brought them to perfection, and so given them their true value. The amateur has pointed out the way, but the professional has taken it and gone farther

along it, too, than his demonstrator. They are, of course, able to do this because their men play so regularly together, and the amateur, frequently enough, has not the time to put the finishing touches to what he has begun: he has made discoveries, but others have found out their full value. But these discoveries are not exhausted, and there is still scope for new expedients and fresh stratagems.

One has often been told that the professionals play better because large crowds watch their performances, that they are cheered on by their own supporters when at home and inspirited by the cries for the other team when away. There would seem to be no truth in this; at least, no one who has played in a big match admits it, for as a general rule the player's mind is too intent on the game to take heed to the crowd, and he does not feel its presence except in a subconscious way. Professional clubs do have one other advantage, though. Whenever they are short of a man to fill any particular position, such as goalkeeper or centre half or the like, they can always get one, for they deliberately search for one among those playing all over the country and thus are able to get what they want. This same power does not

lie with the amateurs and they do not follow this plan of gaining recruits at all.

Then, again, one frequently hears the complaint that good players are not so common as they used to be, and that none of our modern "stars" can come up to those of older days. There may be some truth in this, but we should be sorry to believe it. The explanation probably lies in the fact that there are many times as many clubs as there used to be, and the result is that the good players are divided more evenly among them and so are not so evident. Some years ago, when there were fewer clubs, each club would perhaps have three or four of these "stars" (Wolverhampton once had as many as eight Internationals in one team), and these by playing together would, of course, produce a combination that was marvellous. Nowadays a club only has one or two of these brilliant players, and therefore the brilliance is not concentrated, but diffused, and therefore not so noticeable.

On the whole, then, though we would not say that the amateur is better than the professional or the professional than the amateur (compare number of amateurs playing in professional football), yet perhaps as a general rule the pro-



fessional teams are superior to the amateur teams. If one watches amateur games and professional games at all, one notices an immense difference in one point apart from the players themselves—that is, the refereeing. In the professional game the referee blows his whistle continually; in fact, its shrill tones are rarely silent. The amateur referee, on the other hand, goes to the other extreme. He rarely blows at all, except perhaps at the start, finish, and half-time and whenever a goal is scored or a corner taken. Both would seem to be in error. The amateur holds that amateurs are incapable of “fouling” or taking an unfair advantage of each other, and therefore he takes no notice of obvious “trips” and other misdemeanours, thinking that gentlemen are incapable of doing any such things. This is all very well as an ideal. But unfortunately, like other ideals, it is rarely realized. There is a certain amount of “foul” play in amateur games—very little, one is glad to say, but still instances do occur. Now, the referee is not doing his duty in the right spirit of the game if he does not take cognisance of these and exact their penalty. He can generally tell if it be intentional or not, and if it is then he should award the penalty and not

pass it over simply because it is amateurs and "gentlemen" who are playing. A team has no right to reap the advantage of such an act, nor is it right that its opponents should be at a disadvantage because of it. The ignoring of such conduct will not stop it, for some men—more is the pity!—take advantage of it. If, however, they are penalised and thus openly censured, they may cease. But still, such men are rare, and it is fouls caused by the annoyance of the moment that are most common, and there is no reason why these should not meet with their just reward.

This description of the amateur referee is not flattering ; we do not deny for a moment that there are many very excellent individuals to whom this does not apply. Here we merely note general tendencies, and what we have written does, we fear, apply to the majority.

The professional referee often goes to the other extreme. He not only blows for real fouls, but also for heavy charging, or what he calls heavy charging, for often enough the charge is nothing of the kind. We have even seen a referee give a free kick simply because one defender "kept off" an opposing forward to allow his back to get in a clean kick. In fact, the referee seems

to take every conceivable opportunity of making himself heard. This also is not in accordance with the spirit of the game. It stops the game and breaks up its open and continuous character, and besides that is quite unfair. It is annoying both to the players themselves and to the spectators; and though, perhaps the spectators' point of view has little to do with it (for football in its essence is not intended to be a theatrical performance), yet it must be considered from the standpoint of the player. If a man is penalised time and again when nothing is further from his mind than fouling, he will naturally get annoyed, and perhaps may be goaded into such a state of mind that he does not care whether he fouls or not, if the penalty is to be same.

Somewhere between these two lies the ideal referee. He must play his part in accordance with the real spirit of the game, and not with any garbled notion that either amateur or professional may have of it. And though the amateur in this respect at least approaches more near to the ideal than the other, yet even in his present stage he is not perfect.

## CHAPTER XII

### SCHOOL FOOTBALL

PERHAPS it might be rather out of place here to discuss the value of football as a moral and physical training for boys at school, for that must be settled by educationalists and professors of physical culture. It is merely for us to offer a few remarks upon the game as it is now played in the schools, and upon the general relation between school football and that of the amateur clubs. It is needless to point out that all amateur clubs rely upon the schools for the bulk of their recruits, and so the whole future of the game, as far as the amateurs are concerned, rests with the schools. Taken for granted that players can be made and do not have to be born to the game, the standard of the football of the future depends upon the training given at schools; for, as a general rule, that

absolute control of the ball and instinct for the game, both of which are so important, can be attained best when young. In fact, such enthusiasm for the game should be instilled at school that the player on leaving will not be lured away from it by the attractions of any other game—*e.g.*, hockey. There is no doubt that hockey is becoming a serious rival to Association football. Often, of course, on leaving school a man is forced to play it, for the simple reason that no football team of his calibre exists within easy distance. Others, again, say—and, this seems trivial and shallow—that there is a greater social side to hockey, and that a nicer type of man plays it—that, in fact, leagues and professionalism are changing football from a game into a trade. Arguments such as these do not seem to have an atom of truth in them, and no one who is really a football enthusiast will be influenced by them in the least. And even if there were some slight substratum of truth—not that we admit it for a moment—in these arguments, it remains for the schools to effect a change. If this “nicer type” of man on leaving school remains loyal to the game, there will never be any danger of anyone being decoyed from it by social considerations.

It cannot but be admitted that, as it is, the standard of school football is really good. Almost every day during the football season one reads in the papers how some school or other has beaten, or put up a good fight against, a club team, not merely a scratch team with a few good men in it, but a really good club side with a full team in the field. For instance, take the Casuals' Christmas tour in 1911. It is true that they beat the three schools they played, Malvern, Shrewsbury, and Repton, but only by very narrow margins and with a team composed entirely of well-known club players and "blues" from the two Universities. Then, again, quite a large proportion of men straight from school get into the 'Varsity teams in their first year, to the exclusion of seniors who have been playing for a year or more in really good class football. There must be some reason for this, and these reasons if discovered and applied to club football would improve the standard of play out of all recognition.

There are several reasons given for the high standard of play in the schools. Some say that there is a greater choice of players. That does not seem to be entirely satisfactory. It is true that a school of any reasonable size should be able

to place a really well-balanced team into the field, and that goes far toward success. But the choice in a school is far more limited than perhaps is imagined, for out of a school of about five hundred boys, only about fifty are able to play the game in any sense of the word at all, and again of that fifty perhaps only twenty-five have sufficient weight, pace, or cleverness to make them worthy of consideration for a first team. And most clubs have as many members as that, one would imagine, to choose from. And again, this argument may be refuted by the fluctuations in the standard of play in individual schools, which can only be accounted for by the fluctuation of the ability of the boys, and not by that of numbers. Then careful coaching both of the individual boys and of the team as a whole might be advanced as another reason. This is an extremely probable one, as the standard of scientific play in schools is generally very high, and when clubs beat the schools it is probably through superior weight and not on account of superiority of tactics. Actual coaching in schools is an important point and will be dealt with at greater length. Another reason may be the "fitness" of the boys and their continual practice together. Both of these are

probable factors, though, as far as practice goes, it must be remembered that the professional teams find that one practice a week, and that not a regular game, is sufficient to keep the team together. It is also probable that the average school captain has a far greater hold upon his team than the leader of a club team, and this undoubtedly has considerable influence upon the play of its members. Perhaps, also, the boy at school is far more enthusiastic about the game than older men who have developed other interests in addition.

In this chapter a more useful purpose will be served by criticism and suggestion than by compliment, and, good as is the standard of school football at present, there is absolutely no reason why it should not be improved yet more. This would doubtless be the case if all schools adopted the best in the methods of practice, coaching, and play of other schools.

It is supposed that all schools have a games-master, or at all events a man who can coach the boys in their games: and many schools have more than one. And with regard to coaching, though something may be said of the subject-matter (indeed, it may be gathered from the rest of the book), yet the method is a



very important point, and it is chiefly that of which we are going to speak. There are three methods of coaching, all of which may be used as they supplement each other. General lectures or talks may be given, and it is an advantage here to draw diagrams of various movements and theoretical positions upon a blackboard or upon paper. Also hints may be thrown out upon the field of play by the coach acting as referee or playing himself in the practice games. The third method, which is insufficient by itself, as perhaps also is the first, consists of taking the first two teams to see good matches, professional or otherwise, in the district. This is a method which is very rarely used, and yet it might be employed with great success. Of course if there are no good teams in the neighbourhood it is impossible to do this. By watching games, say between two first-class professional teams, it is possible to see theories previously discussed actually carried out; and more than this, the boys will see various movements fail and also why they fail, and it is highly probable that more will be learnt from mistakes than from a movement neatly and effectively executed. But it must be remembered that such matches are to

be regarded more perhaps as an illustration of what has been taught than as a spectacle alone, and this need not detract from the interest or enjoyment. Perhaps before elaborating the other two methods it would be as well to remark here that what has just been said and what will be said in the next few pages applies chiefly to the first and second teams of a school. The coaching of the smaller boys will be dealt with later.

There is no doubt that much can be learnt from lectures upon the game. It is absurd to think that the members of school elevens have thought out the whole theory of the game for themselves, and one or two lectures at the beginning of term, with diagrams showing various attacking and defensive movements, or pointing out the duties of the various members of the team in certain usual or unusual circumstances, may turn a moderate team into a good one, or a good one into one that is first-class. It ought, at all events, to have the effect of making the eleven members into a team and not into a side of eleven individuals; and this point should be emphasized in the first place, and the last, and all through.

Lectures, however, are apt to be forgotten in the excitement of a game and should be supplemented by hints on the field of play. This is an important point, and one that cannot be considered too carefully. In the first place one must decide whether such hints can be thrown out best by the coach while refereeing or while playing himself; he will of course do the one or the other, for one cannot suppose that he will merely stand on the touch-line and give directions from there. It may be said that, if he does not play but merely referees, there will be room on the field for two full teams composed of boys alone, and that thus no one will be robbed of a game, but it seems to us that such an argument is utterly worthless. There is no doubt that it is very much better for the coach to play himself in the practice games, for then not only will he be able to give hints, but he will also be able to show in practice what he has taught elsewhere, and thus the boys will see how the thing is done as it should be done. The coach need not necessarily talk all the time: a hint here and there and a word of applause for a good attempt, will do far more good than any sarcastic comment. These hints, too, should be

directed to players who are making errors in tactics or getting wrong in their principles, and not to those who miskick or pass inaccurately, unless perhaps it is a back who miskicks systematically, and even then the remedy is perfectly easy, *i.e.*, to try another boy in that position. A reproof to a boy who has chanced to pass inaccurately is quite useless, for he always knows it himself, and it merely galls him to have attention drawn to it. And after all, by the time a boy is playing in the first or second team he should have learnt to pass decently, and if he has not, he has no right to play there. If, on the other hand, his theory is wrong, then a word of advice will be useful. Of course these hints may be given by the coach acting as referee, but perhaps they will not have the same weight, for not only does the coach when playing himself show how it is to be done, but the boys see how a good player makes use of their mistakes. It improves the better players of the school team to play against some one better than themselves, while it helps the weaker and develops them to be backed up by and receive passes from a player who is stronger than themselves, for the coach will be able to make openings which the boys could not for themselves. Also, all will be able

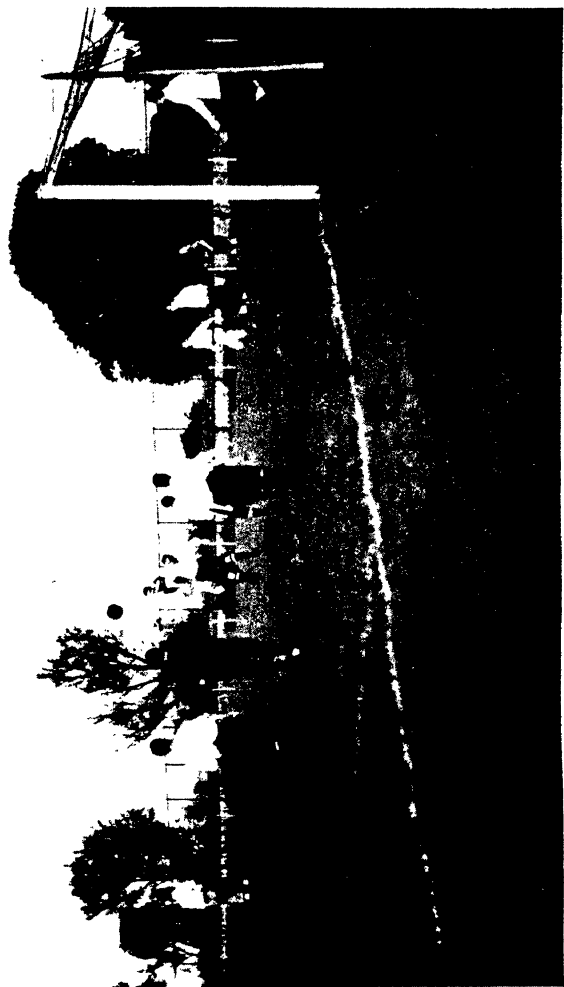
to see the exceptions when the rules laid down by the lecture must be broken. Then again, the coach can give instruction to individual boys and show them particular tricks which are suitable in particular positions.

Whether masters should play in matches is a moot point. It is true that better clubs can be played if they do, and to a certain extent it is good for boys to play against a combination far stronger than themselves, as they learn movements which they would not have done otherwise. But the drawbacks are many. The masters, as a rule, take the most important positions—*e.g.*, centre-half or centre-forward—and thus the school team may lack boys to play in those positions if no one of them is to be trained up to occupy the post. And then again, the boys learn to play up to the masters and have confidence in them, so the result is that the masters become the main-spring of the mechanism; and so when the team comes to play school matches, in which the masters cannot play, they are at a loss, for inferior players will fill the positions occupied by the masters before, and the whole team is thrown out of gear. After all, it is a good thing for a team to be left to its own resources in all matches, even if

it is beaten. Besides, all club matches are really practice games to teach the boys how to play together and play as a team so that the team may be a team when it comes to playing the big school matches of the season. However, masters do not play very much in matches except, perhaps, in the smaller schools, so that the mistake, if mistake it be, is not so very common.

Closely connected with the subject of coaching is that of practice. In professional clubs there is only one practice a week, a shooting practice: in schools there is usually a regular game almost every afternoon of the term, varied now and then by a little shooting practice for members of the teams; in addition to this there is generally a ball being kicked about during all hours out of school. These two systems are diametrically opposed, and yet both have excellent results. There must be some explanation of this, and we must try to find it. The reason given by professionals for their scanty practice is that the play in matches is so vigorous that it takes about three days to recover from the effects of a match. Personally, however, we are inclined to doubt whether a professional league game is more vigorous in proportion than a keenly contested inter-school match. Then

again, one might say that the professionals, being past masters in the art, do not require so much practice. This is perhaps possible, but even professional teams can still learn, and probably would, through practice. The real reason, doubtless, is that the managers of the club are not inclined to run the risk of having a man damaged in a mere practice game ; also these practice games have been known to introduce dissension amongst the players themselves. Another possible reason is that boys at school are at an age when they are physically more fit, and therefore more able to practise regularly than professionals, who are older. We doubt, as a matter of fact, whether there is much to choose between the "fitness" of school teams and the professional clubs. But in all probability the boys' enthusiasm for the game is not so easily blunted as that of older players ; besides, the professional teams have a much longer season, and therefore they cannot risk the possibility of the men becoming stale. On the whole, the standard of school football is, in proportion to the talent and opportunities at hand, so very much higher than that of professional football that, for boys, we are inclined to favour the usual system of regular daily practice. It is, how-



HEADING FROM IN FRONT OF GOAL





ever, advisable to allow the teams a complete rest occasionally. A free day before an important school match is of infinite value.

The arrangement of the sides for a practice game is important. The most usual plan is for the first eleven forwards, supported by the second eleven backs, to play the second eleven forwards in front of the first eleven backs. This is a very excellent scheme, for each set of forwards and backs is opposed to players of its own calibre : but, excellent as it is, yet it must be remembered that it is equally important for the forwards and halves to understand each other's play. Therefore, before the first match of the season, it is an advantage for the first eleven to play a team composed of the pick of the second eleven, supported by the coach and other good players who may be able to take part. By this means the team is enabled to get together. The coach, as has been suggested, should always play in these trial games. It is a good thing if he plays in different positions on different days. Thus, when playing centre forward, he may be the means of getting the line to play as a line, and when playing in the half-back line, he can make new openings for the forwards, and perhaps set them going well at the beginning of the season.

Nor should he disdain to play full-back, for by this means he can show each back in turn how to treat each situation as it arises.

For practice a game is undoubtedly best, as that keeps up the enthusiasm and interest in the game, which is one of the great secrets of school football. But this ought on occasion to be varied by systematic shooting practice for the elevens. These practices ought to be very carefully watched, as they are apt to become a farce if no trouble is spent over them. The backs should stand behind the goal and take each ball as it comes. Those shooting should never on any account stop the ball with their hands; they must take each ball however it comes to them. They must learn to shoot with either foot from any angle, whether the ball is on the ground or in the air. The practice gained by shooting with a ball carefully placed and absolutely still is of no use at all. This shooting practice should also be practice for trapping and stopping the ball with one's body. It is also advisable to practise "corners," with the forwards and backs arranged in the goal-mouth just as would be the case in a game. Another change which can be made from a game is for the forwards and halves to spend a quarter of an hour or so running up and

down the field passing, partly in order to give and partly to take the passes while going at full speed. Also a forward may learn how to control the ball simply from dribbling up the field by himself.

One must admit, however, that there is always in the background that phantom—staleness and loss of form—which is the result of too many practices. But regular daily practice may be held up to half-term without any fear of it: after that practice need not be so frequent, and house matches will bring variety.

A word must now be said as to the arrangement of the team. In the large public school, where there is as a rule a number of good players to pick from for each place, and a good coach to advise the captain how to make up his team, few mistakes are made. Each man is generally playing in his natural position and the team is generally well balanced. In the case of the small school where the choice is limited, there is one mistake which is frequently made. Sometimes nearly a whole team leave, and the best player in the school is turned into a back. This is extraordinarily bad policy, as back is a comparatively easy position to play in and not in any way one of the most important. If this best

player must be moved from his natural position, let him go centre half or centre forward, where he will be able to regulate the game as much as possible. Most players can be turned into backs and fairly good backs too with a little coaching and practice, but only a very few can play centre half, and fewer still centre forward with any success whatever their practice and whatever their coaching. However, if changes are to be made, the value of having a good man in either of these positions will be realized.

As to style, since the rest of this book deals almost exclusively with it, not much need be said here. As a rule the school teams, being in such excellent training, play the more open game in the hopes of the other side tiring, though there is no reason why, with clever insides, they should not play the short passing game. However, no general rule can be laid down as to style for a school, it chiefly depends upon the coach and his material.

The coaching of the smaller boys of the school is quite as important as that of the first two teams, though this is a fact that seems seldom to be realized. Of course it is a different kind of teaching that they need, and very careful teaching too. In the first case the question arises whether the coach should play with them. There seems no

reason why he should not, so long as he can bring his play down to their comprehension. For if a coach has the knack of bringing his football down to the level of the boys he is playing with, he will improve their play and increase their interest in the game.

In teaching small boys it is foolish to teach them to pass too much. That is an art they can easily learn later, and the use of which, at their age, they cannot fully understand. Besides which all passing and all football is based upon the power of controlling the ball, and that power can only be acquired by unlimited practice when young. Of course in large public schools, where boys are received from preparatory schools, the training has been given already, and is not so important, but still it must not be neglected, or they will lose what skill they have. But in the case of schools where this is not the case no pains ought to be spared on the smaller boys, even at the expense of the first two teams, as in later years the result will be worth while in the improvement of the first two teams. As a method of general training there is an excellent system in vogue, we believe, at Charterhouse: a ball is given to about twenty boys, who play as individuals, with no regular game or side, each

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trying to keep the ball to himself as long as possible. Boys learn in this way more than in any other to control the ball, and also to tackle neatly and quickly. Of course, in addition to this general kick-about, boys have games arranged for them where they learn the general theory of the game.

Finally, a word must be said about the relation of schools with amateur clubs and the 'Varsities. There are many pessimists who nowadays go about saying that 'Varsity football is degenerating. If this is the case, it is the fault of the schools, and not of the 'Varsities. But possibly the reason is that the standard of football in the smaller schools has almost reached that of the large public schools, and as these latter send most of their men into business, and not to the 'Varsities, the standard of club football has improved at the expense of the 'Varsities! Another important question is, Do men lose their skill after they leave school? The answer is yes and no. Often they have had too great a reputation as they have only played among poor players. Often they have reached their limit while at school, and, not improving afterwards, are regarded as having deteriorated. Often, however, they actually do "go off," and we must look for the reason. It may be they were brought on too

rapidly at school by over-coaching and over-training, and, leaving school, feel the loss of these and "go off." On the other hand, it may be merely that they are living less regular lives, and therefore are in worse training, or perhaps they develop some fault, as men have been known to do in golf, and fail to get rid of it for lack of coaching. If this is the case the sooner coaching and regular practice is taken up by amateur clubs the better for the game in general.



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