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508

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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FOOTBALL LEAGUE

REVIEW



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PNT 51E

THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Viewpoint

Facts behind the Texaco Competition

By Alan Hardaker

THE INTRODUCTION of the Texaco International League Competition recently as a sponsored Competition has sparked off in the Press speculation as to the future policy of The Football League with regard to sponsorship.

Some time ago the Management Committee laid down as their policy that sponsorship was something which could benefit the game greatly, but it had to be rigidly controlled under four basic headings:

- The Sponsor was to get what he wanted from the exercise
- The Football League and the game was to benefit
- Spectators were to be provided with football entertainment which they wanted
- The administration of the game was not to be interfered with in any way.

Texaco have accepted these points and The League are satisfied that they have come into

this particular Competition in a partnership with The League which can only benefit the game.

Much has been said about the future of sponsorship in The League, but here again the Management Committee have laid down that any approaches for sponsorship—which must be increasingly limited—must be made by principals through my office to the Management Committee.

THE TEXACO COMPETITION will provide interest to a further six clubs in the First Division and in addition will certainly inject more interest into League football in Scotland and Ireland which can do nothing but good for the game.

Any suggestion that the new Competition congests the present League programme must be refuted, because it is six different Clubs from those who are playing in Europe, and it therefore spreads the interest in extra Competitions in a wider area of the country.

When The Football League Cup Competition was in its early days, and was not being received favourably by some sections of the Press, Mr. Harold Wilson, the then Prime Minister, gave a Press luncheon at 10 Downing Street, at which he stated that he could not understand why The League bothered with The League Cup Competition—they ought to have a British Isles Competition instead.

The Press at that time agreed with him, and now thanks to Texaco, we have a Competition embracing all The Leagues in the British Isles, in addition to a flourishing League Cup Competition.



Officials pictured in front of an enlarged photograph of the Texaco Cup. Left to right: League Secretary Alan Hardaker, President L. T. Shipman, T. Mumford (Texaco), Scottish League President J. R. Aitken, D. Bramwell (Texaco), E. T. Francis (League advisor).

COVER SHOT: Derby County captain Dave Mackay shows off the Watney Cup after County had beaten Manchester United in the Final.

25-CLUB PAIRING



The Football League's fixture computer has done London's First Division clubs no favour at all. In fact, ill planning is certain to cost them a great deal of hard cash and already the grumbles have started.—News Item.

The fixtures: unfair to London clubs?

A LONDON First Division programme editor sparked off this sort of criticism when he complained there were too many London Derby matches at the start of the season.

It's a pity he couldn't extend his vision beyond the parochial limits of the Metropolis. He would then have seen that the composition of Division One this season makes inevitable a glut of derby matches in all areas . . . and not just in London.

Look at the 22 clubs as they faced League officials when they set out to frame the 462 First Division games for this season.

FIVE are London clubs.

SIX are Lancashire clubs—two each from Manchester and Liverpool—and the others at

Blackpool and Burnley, within easy reach of both cities.

SIX are from the Midlands area. Albion and Wolves are adjacent to each other, as are Derby and Nottingham Forest, while Coventry and Stoke are just up the road from them all.

It may not be obvious in London, but all the clubs in Lancashire and all the clubs in the Midlands, regard matches against other clubs in their own region as Derby games, with big crowds certain whenever the matches are played.

It is obvious, therefore, that it was not bad planning which produced an early season rush of Derby games . . . but geographical necessity. If London clubs had been given an exemption from early meetings between each other then the other two regions would have been swamped.

Last season Liverpool and Everton and the Manchester clubs, for example, had early season Derby clashes . . . without a squeak of protest from London critics. Now look at some of the early fixtures to see whether London did get a raw deal from the fixture compilers:

On August 15 Burnley played Liverpool, Forest played Stoke. On Monday August 17, Blackpool were paired with Liverpool and West Ham met Arsenal. The next day Everton clashed with Burnley, Forest played Albion. On August 19 Wolves met Derby while on August 22 Derby were paired with Stoke, Manchester

A diagram from The Football League Book Number One (above) showing club 'pairings' . . . clubs who do not want their home fixtures to clash. On this occasion last season 25 clubs were involved in a 'no clashing' build up. Like to have made the fixtures for that particular day?

City and Burnley played each other. West Ham met Chelsea.

Already it is surely evident that London clubs were not the only ones who were asked to play close neighbours.

The inevitable clash of clubs from the same region went on, as it was bound to do with just three regions—London, Lancashire and the Midlands—claiming 17 of the 22 clubs.

It is equally frustrating for the provincial clubs to be faced with matches against nearby opposition in good weather periods . . . but the fixture list has to be framed to give the greatest good for the majority of clubs, and not with any sectional interest in mind.

There have been no official complaints to The League about the fixture list. Had there been, it is probable the critics would have been reminded to check the Boxing Day list.

In order to cut down holiday travelling to the minimum, and at the special request of clubs, League officials personally arranged the day's fixtures to include a maximum number of short journeys without wasting a maximum-interest day with a preponderance of Derby fixtures. This was given priority, and in order to do this an initial pattern of fixtures for the season was established . . . it is this pattern which is now under fire.

Be sure of one thing. Critics who flay the computer are out of line. It is The League staff who supply the mass of detail and statistics—all the computer does is to interpret more quickly. But there are many more problems than Derby clashes to assess when fixture-making is in the pipeline.

IT'S ALL IN THE LEAGUE BOOK . . .

WE WOULD quote the official Football League Book Number 1, now on sale everywhere at 21/- or post free from our offices, on the subject.

"There are obvious cases where clubs in the same areas, such as Manchester City and United, Spurs and Arsenal, must avoid clashing with each other for home games. In addition many other clubs, particularly those in the lower divisions, are anxious to avoid a clash with nearby First Division clubs for home games. This is called 'pairing' and produces chains of clubs. One of the longest last season involved 25 clubs who all wanted to miss each other at home on the same day".

To produce a fixture list which legislates for this problem of pairs, maintains home and away sequences, and compensates for special requests and dates from individual clubs, it is absolutely essential that an overall pattern is produced and adhered to.

This inevitably causes some anomalies, but these have to be accepted for the sake of the clubs as a whole. It is quite impossible to legislate for just one or any of the regional groups in the division . . . or any of the four divisions for that matter.

We said in The Football League Book: "Though it is not possible to give every club what it wants all the time, The Football League, by making use of the speed and accuracy of the computer, is now able to meet many more individual club requests than they have ever done, but it is The Football League who are responsible for the final lists, so it is pointless blaming Computer KDF 9 if you find something in the fixtures which is open to question.

"Before you criticise . . . think on this: if man and machine working together for over six months can't improve on the 1,000 impossible conundrums, which make up a season's League fixtures, what makes you think you could do any better?"

The man who wrote that was Mr. Douglas Flower, manager of the Planning Division of the firm whose computer The League uses. He concluded:

"As a computer scientist brought in to cut irritations and problems to the minimum, I will tell you frankly . . . IT IS JUST NOT POSSIBLE FOR ANY BETTER RESULTS FROM WHAT IS NOTHING BUT A GIGANTIC CROSS-WORD PUZZLE OF PROBLEMS".

Opinion

ONE OF the problems facing we chaps with pens in our hands is that much of our comment must be instant . . . we tend to forget today what we wrote yesterday.

Which is why I will spare the blushes of the very well known sportswriter who thundered last May:

"The Ford Sporting League is a giggle. They are offering incentives to good behaviour, and for goal-scoring. Do they honestly try to kid us it will make a ha'porth of difference to the attitudes of teams on the field? It's tommy-rot".

It made a sparkling column at the time . . . but good journalistic wine rarely matures with the passage of time. Look at the way things have really turned out.

Don Revie says of his high-flying Leeds United, who are also doing well in the Ford Sporting League: "Lots of ill-informed people have said our team is more vigorous than most. This Ford League can burst that bubble wide open, and earn us valuable extra income at the same time".

Liverpool's Bill Shankly observes: "This Ford League table for sportsmanship and goal-scoring is one nobody wants to be last in. It is no sort of recommendation".

It is plain to see that the only giggles are for the chap who condemned the Sporting League with the instant verdict: it's a giggle.

Nor should the correspondent from the Shropshire Star be too happy in retrospect about the piece he wrote for Shrewsbury Town's programme:

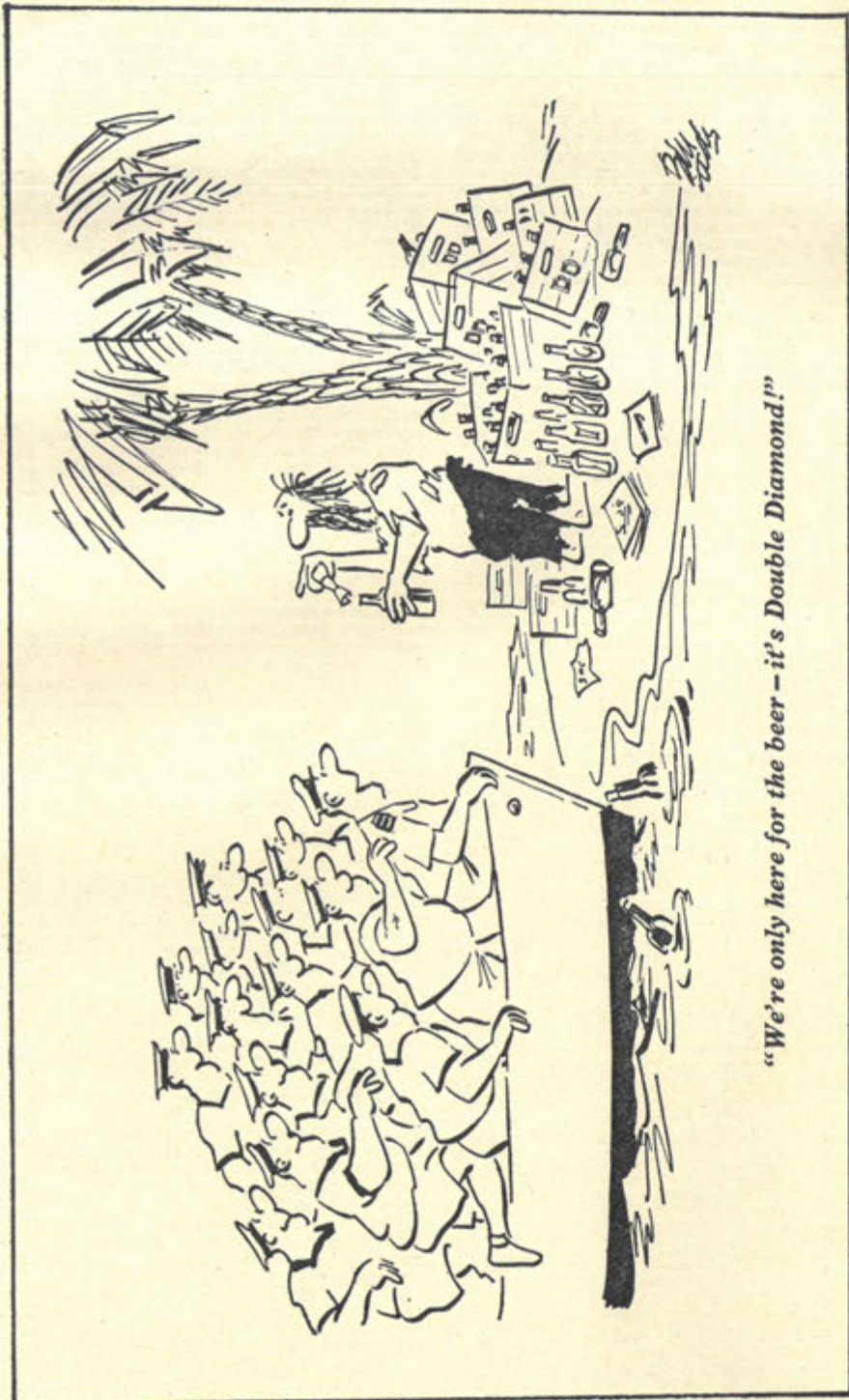
"I understand the players do not gain personally from the Ford Sporting League. In these days of incentives and bonuses they could rightly argue that they are entitled to a hand-out as well as the clubs".

In these days when 90 per cent of the total income from football goes back to the players in wages and bonuses, we are always being asked by the critics why something isn't also done to improve amenities and conditions on grounds for long-suffering fans.

The Ford Motor Company have stipulated that every penny of their £100,000 annual hand-out in prize money should be spent on improving conditions for the spectators.

It is meet and right that this should be so. The players, bless their hearts, appear to have acceded to the righteousness of this decision. So let's have no stirring-up at the back there.

Harry Brown



"We're only here for the beer - it's Double Diamond!"

Programme Review

On sale with the early morning milk

SELL THEM in the town or city shops. That is the latest trend in match-day magazine and club programme sales.

Leicester City and Sheffield United are two of the latest clubs to put their productions into the hands of local newsmen on Friday afternoons. Coventry City, and others, have been blazing this trail for some time.

Is it worth it? Leicester secretary John Smith reports: "Ours is a magazine like any other on sale in shops. It is our link with our public, and it makes sense to get as wide a sale as possible".

But does it work? "It does. We have put on an average of two or three thousand more copies per issue".

Sheffield United commercial manager Harold Rumsey, who now has an early Saturday morning delivery round to newsagents, told us: "We deliver from four o'clock on Fridays and it has boosted our sales—and, we hope, interest in the club". He does a 6 a.m. round every Saturday morning, topping up supplies. "It is worth losing a bit of beauty sleep", he says. "I call it the milk round".

We hear that several other clubs are contemplating putting their magazine-programmes into the shops.

Meanwhile clubs like Manchester United and Liverpool sell supplies strictly inside the ground only. They say: "We believe the right place to sell our programmes is inside our ground. Our sellers do not even go outside the walls".

MODEST BUT CONCISE: THAT'S CAMBRIDGE UNITED

THE MOST sought-after programme of the season is the modest, but concise publication issued by League newcomers Cambridge United.

United's programme for their first-ever League match against Lincoln on August 15, when the gate was 6,000, has proved such a collector's item that only a handful remain of 5,000 printed. "And we are receiving daily inquiries for copies",



reports United secretary Phil Baker, who is mainly responsible for the material inside the programme.

Cambridge showed some of the enterprise which carried them into The League, by producing a special 2/- first issue and estimated, correctly, that it would have a special collectors' value.

The United programme has undergone considerable change this season from the one issued in their Southern League days.

Last season they carried 12 pages at 6d. under a plain black and white cover. The new-look design boasts 16 pages, uses an amber tint on the cover, and as background for the teams page, and sells at 1/-, including *Football League Review*.

Already the new programme has made a favourable impression with the United supporters. It is a well balanced, value-for-money presentation, despite the increased cost which was inevitable.

"We would have been forced to have increased the charge even if we hadn't been elected to The League: A sixpenny programme is simply not a financial possibility any more".

Features in the Cambridge programme include a special Supporters' Club page providing 'What's On' details, a comprehensive look at the opposition team and players, a pen portrait of the match referee and a 'From the Secretary' column.

If there is one criticism to be made it is that United's programme lacks the gossipy, off-beat items now so much a feature in so many programmes, but is, nevertheless, a creditable effort to match the club's rise in stature.

Printed by Foister and Jagg Ltd., of Abbey Walk, Cambridge, the programme is available on annual subscription, or through the post on a match to match basis. All enquiries should be addressed to: Cambridge United, Abbey Stadium, 534 Newmarket Road, Cambridge.

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WANDERERS F.C.**

DIVISION ONE 1970-71

Back row, left to right: DEREK DOUGAN HUGH CURRAN JOHN OLDFIELD PHIL PARKES
JOHN HOLSGROVE JOHN RICHARDS

Middle row, left to right: MIKE BAILEY DAVE WAGSTAFFE LES WILSON BERTIE LUTTON
JOHN McALLE PAUL WALKER BOBBY GOULD MIKE O'GRADY
SAMMY CHUNG (Coach)

Front row, left to right: DANNY HEGAN KEN HIBBITT JIM McCALLIOG DAVE WOODFIELD
DEREK PARKIN FRANCIS MUNRO GERRY TAYLOR

Picture by Peter Robinson

GROUND CALL

READING F.C.
ELM PARK
NORFOLK ROAD
READING



Ground capacity: Now set at 30,000 after ground improvements.

Record attendance: 33,042 v Brentford, F.A. Cup 1927.

Prices for League matches: Ground 6/-, 7/-; Stands 8/-, 9/-, 10/-. Advance tickets bookable 14 days before a game.

Elm Park has seating for 3,178 spectators and new tip-up seats have recently been installed. The ground is well served by refreshment bars and a Supporters' Club, situated next to the ground provides social facilities after a match and throughout the week. Two programme shops are situated on the ground under the West Terrace and at the Norfolk Road end and these are open on match days. Recent improvements to the ground include the reconstruction of offices and modernisation of dressing rooms.

How to get there: Special Corporation buses run from Reading town centre to Elm Park and from Northumberland Avenue. There are also ordinary services from various parts of the town which stop near the ground. Car parking facilities are available for 200 cars in Kent Road, adjoining the ground and there is a multi-storey car park in the town centre.



Analysis

Tale of a goalkeeper's shirt

(OR IS IT JUST TRIFLING NONSENSE?)



ENGLAND GOALKEEPER Gordon Banks has been reported to The Football League—for wearing a shirt which doesn't conform to the Regulations.

That was the story which hit the headlines... and provoked a great deal of wisecracking from the critics.

"It would be laughable if it weren't so trite", said a Sunday newspaper. "Trifling nonsense involving a player who is regarded as a model professional", said a national daily, very tartly indeed.

Laughable? Trifling? On the face of it, perhaps. But let us put the other side of the story to you.

Leicester City and England starlet Peter Shilton with his goalkeeper's jersey, complete with buttons, which was banned by The League last year. Now Gordon Banks has had a new design banned, too.

This is what The League Regulations say: "The goalkeeper shall play in Scarlet, Royal Blue, Royal Green or White shirt..."

The League Handbook goes to the trouble of printing the exact colours in order that there shall be no mistake. Now if an instruction is in the book it is incumbent on referees to report any breach of that Regulation, and it is also incumbent on League officials—and the League Management Committee—to act on the report.

The Regulations are not dreamed up by some faceless official in some dark office... but are framed by the clubs at The League's annual meetings. **They can be changed by a two-thirds majority of the clubs themselves.**

Until they are changed, they have to be observed... for the simple reason that if a blind eye is turned to the apparently trivial... what might happen to some of the much more serious issues raised in the 75 Regulations?

Many people who have never bothered to read the bible of the professional game condemn them as an "anachronism" in the seventies, and yet they are aware that The Football League is regarded throughout the world as the example upon which all other league competitions are modelled. A strict adherence to Regulation is a principal reason for this strength.

If the Regulation is wrong, open to ridicule, an anachronism... then change it. But is it wrong in this instance?

If the Regulation was relaxed is it not possible that goalkeepers might appear on the field in all sorts of garish combinations, colours and designs? **It is more than possible.**

Banks himself explains: "The jersey has a black collar and black lines on the cuffs. This is an attractive jersey which can be buttoned at the neck in cold weather and left open in the heat".

The England and Stoke City goalkeeper, who was to sponsor the jersey for a commercial firm, obviously wonders what the fuss is all about.

Well, what about the buttons at the neck? Is it not feasible that in a mid-air collision with another player the button *might* lacerate the opponent's skin or seriously injure his eye? The possibility is always there. Can it be ignored? This is why the Regulation insisting on plain jerseys (with no buttons or other protrusions) was put there in the first place.

Is it an anachronism? Should it be changed? Is it a "laughable" rule, a "trifling" rule? You make your own mind up about that.

But unless and until it is changed by the clubs, it stays in the book... **AND AS LONG AS IT STAYS IT HAS TO BE OBEYED. THAT IS WHAT ADMINISTRATION IS ALL ABOUT.**

Postbag

Write to: Postbag, Football League Review, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs.

I AM TIRED of reading about how English teams should 'go Brazilian' in an effort to score more goals. If England had won the World Cup in Mexico, I am sure Brazil would not have adopted our more physical and negative approach to the game. It would not work over there just as artificial Brazilian tactics will not work in this country.

Maybe we are too self conscious; we want to dismiss our style as boring and unentertaining after failing to retain the World Cup. Yet our football is still the best and most successful anywhere. Brazil can produce Pele and company, but where are their Evertons, Leedses and Chelseas? Brazilian club soccer begins and ends with Santos.

C. Brinton, 73 Grange Road, Harwich, Essex.

I AM LOOKING for a pen pal in the 15 year old age group who like me, supports Leeds United. I also watch Huddersfield Town and Bradford City.

D. Greenwood, 36 Foston Lane, Fagley, Bradford 2.

CONGRATULATIONS on producing Soccer Who's Who, an excellent publication for everyone interested in the game. I have been trying, unsuccessfully, to obtain a copy of a book published some time ago entitled *Aston Villa—the history of a great club*. I see from Who's Who that this is out of print. It is possible though that someone, somewhere, has a copy for which they have no further use. I would like to purchase an original edition and will gladly pay the publication price for a copy in mint condition.

G. E. Steeples, 6 Gurney Avenue, Sunny Hill, Derby DE3 7GR.

FAN CLUB for Alan Starling of Luton Town. Details are available from: Miss F. Mallett, 6 Priory Gardens, Luton, Beds. Please enclose sae.

Kop Korner

Celtic's is the best kop in Britain

THE LOUDEST and most fanatical Kop in Britain lies north of the Border—at Celtic's Parkhead ground. At least, that is what one Englishman claims.

Writes Barry Mortimer, 41 Flats Lane, Barwick-in-Elmet, Leeds: "We English fans can argue for as long as we like, but it is obvious to all but the really biased that Celtic's Kopites can knock spots off their rivals in England."

Not content with firing a new shot in the old England-Scotland rivalry, Barry has come up with what he considers are the top ten Kops in England. "They are not in any particular order and are not necessarily the loudest," he points out, but adds: "For all round fervour and support, they stand streets ahead of the rest."

According to Barry, the Kop Top Ten reads:

- Liverpool's Spion Kop
- Manchester United's Stretford End
- Leeds United's Gelder End
- Wolves' North Bank
- Everton's Gwladys Street End
- Chelsea's Shed
- Arsenal's North Bank
- Nottingham Forest's Trent End
- Aston Villa's Holte End
- Rotherham United's Tivoli End.

You probably don't agree with Barry's choice, depending on which Kop you stand. If you have any thoughts on the best Kops in England, taking into account all round support and numbers, let us know. Send your comments to: Kop Korner, Football League Review, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs.

Behind the facts

PROMOTION-BIDDING Cardiff City and Portsmouth clearly have taken heart from the recent return to Division One after a long absence of Derby County (out for 16 seasons) and Huddersfield Town (for 14).

	53/54	54/55	55/56	56/57	57/58	58/59	59/60	60/61	61/62
Derby	↑ 18	22			16	7	18	12	16
Stoke	↑ 11	5	13	5	11	5	17	18	8
Birmingham	7	1							
Leicester	1		5	1					
Brentford	21								
Leeds	10	4	2					14	19
Blackburn	3	6	4	4	2				
Grimby				16	13	21			
Preston									10
Sheffield U.				7	6	3	4	2	
Sheffield W.			1			1			
Everton	2								
Huddersfield				12	9	14	6	20	7
Fulham	8	14	9	11	5	2			
Middlesbro'	12	14	6	7	13	5	5	12	
Liverpool	11	3	3	4	4	3	3	1	
Charlton				3	8	7	10	15	
Cardiff				15	9	2			
Sunderland					15	16	6	3	
Portsmouth						20	21		
Aston Villa							1		
Luton	6	2					13	13	
Newcastle								11	
Orient				15	12	17	10	19	2
Ipswich	21			8	16	11	1		

† Relegated previous season.

Middlesbrough, relegated 16 years ago with Liverpool, have still more reason to yearn to see the end of a long hard road.

How long does it take to get back to the First Division? On an average, four seasons, despite seven postwar instances of promotion at the first attempt and four at the second. The accompanying tables show Division Two positions over the past 17 seasons of clubs relegated or promoted:—

	62/63	63/64	64/65	65/66	66/67	67/68	68/69	69/70
Derby	18	13	9	8	17	18	1	
Stoke	1							
Birmingham				11	10	4	7	18
Leicester								3
Leeds	5	1						
Grimby	19	21						
Preston	16	3	12	17	13	20	14	22
Sheffield U.							9	6
Manchester U.		6	11	1				
Huddersfield	6	12	8	4	6	14	6	1
Fulham							22	
Middlesbro'	4	10	17	21		6	4	4
Charlton	20	4	13	16	19	15	3	20
Cardiff	↑ 10	15	13	20	20	13	5	7
Sunderland	3	2						
Portsmouth	17	9	20	12	14	5	16	17
Aston Villa							16	21
Luton	22							
Newcastle	7	8	1					
Chelsea	↑ 2							
Orient		16	19	22				
Bolton		3	9	9	12	17	16	
Ipswich		5	15	5	1			
Wolves			6	2				
Northampton	11	2		21				
Blackpool						3	8	2
Q.P.R.							2	9

Walter Pilkington

FOOTBALL MANAGER OF THE MONTH — AUGUST 1970: DON REVIE, LEEDS UNITED F.C.

The advertisement shows five anthropomorphic bottles of Bell's Scotch Whisky standing on a football pitch. One bottle is in the center, flanked by two others. Two more bottles are on the right. A soccer ball is on the ground near the center bottle. The text "THE WINNING BLEND" is written in a large, stylized font across the bottom of the scene. Below the image, the text reads "BELL'S THE SCOTCH OF THE YEAR AND EVERY YEAR SINCE 1825".

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Review Diary

Well, it's one way to go to a match . . .

IT IS the referee's job to carry the match ball on to the pitch before a League game, but they hit on a new way at Ipswich the other day. The ball was dropped . . . from 7,000 feet.

It was delivered, right on to the Portman Road centre spot, by four Red Devils parachutists, who provided a display of precision jumping before a recent home game. They descended from 7,000 feet, and landed inside the centre circle.

One of the parachutists carried the match ball tucked inside his clothing. Despite fears that the ball might explode because of air pressure on the way down, everything went smoothly.

Ipswich secretary Walter Gray told us: "Our chairman saw the parachutists jumping at a local agricultural display and invited them along before one of our home games. They jumped from 7,000 feet right into the ground and were so accurate they all landed inside the centre circle. One of them almost touched the centre spot. It was a great thrill for everybody".

WELL, IT'S ONE WAY OF GOING TO A FOOTBALL MATCH . . .

NOW THE MOAT COMES TO ENGLISH FOOTBALL

BRAZILIAN TACTICS have come to England . . . at Leeds Road, home of Huddersfield Town.

But it has nothing to do with Pele, Tostao and Company . . . these are Brazilian tactics to increase spectator safety.

Huddersfield have built a Moat behind one of the goals—separating the players from the spectators. It is only a 'mini'-Moat . . . but it's the first in Britain.



Unlike South American grounds, where the Moat preserves the peace, and protects players from fanatical fans, Huddersfield's is a safety zone for the Kopites who pack into the Cowshed End of the Leeds Road ground.

It acts as an escape area into which spectators can spill forward if a sudden crush develops in the Cowshed. It also prevents youngsters running on to the pitch, as the wall of the Moat is too high for young fans to climb.

BUILT DURING the summer, the wall is also too high for youngsters to see over, so Huddersfield moved the first line of crush barriers a few yards back leaving a clearway.

Huddersfield did not have to wait long to see the advantages of the Moat. In their first match of the season, Town scored in the closing minutes of their game with Blackpool and the crowd in the Cowshed surged forward causing a considerable crush at the front where spectators were able to duck under the barriers and move into the Moat.

"It probably helped to prevent a few minor injuries", says Huddersfield secre-

tary Bill Brook. "It certainly showed the benefit of having an escape area."

The Moat reduces the capacity of the ground, but Huddersfield believe this is worth it in the interest of safety. "There is always a danger of a crash barrier breaking when you have a capacity crowd pushing forward. The Moat provides elbow room for fans who are being crushed at the front."

TOWN ARE considering building another escape zone at the opposite end of the ground and Bill Brook sees the day when mini-Moats will surround most League grounds—as safety precautions. "Clubs planning major ground developments would do well to consider the idea. You cut down the capacity, that's true, but the safety advantages outweigh this. It could become a major feature on grounds in the future."

Regular patrons of the Cowshed at Huddersfield also see the benefit of the Moat. One of the more senior members explained to us: "One or two of the youngsters were critical when they first saw the Moat. They liked to stand right behind the goal, but with the big crowds we're getting these days, there is now somewhere to go for people who may be getting crushed down at the front."

FULL MARKS TO TOWN FOR SOME REFRESHING NEW THINKING IN THE SPHERE OF CROWD SAFETY.

LEAGUE CLUBS OPERATE A MID-WINTER BREAK

THOSE WHO advocate a mid-season break in The League programme during the months when pitches are at their heaviest, will be closely following the progress of a new competition formed by League clubs in the Midlands.

The Midland Youth League is restricted to players under 18 years of age and will provide regular competitive games for the juniors of 12 League clubs.

Many clubs face a problem of giving all their juniors regular matches, and those like Northampton Town with nine apprentices, 20 associate schoolboys and 28 amateurs on their books, but no reserve side, feel the problem more than most.

Secretary of the new League is Northampton's Jim Andrews who explains:

"This League caters specifically for the young players. We hope to stage several of the games at the County Ground, and under floodlights to help add to their experience."

Why the break in December and January? "These are the months when conditions are usually at their worst and when the weather is invariably bad". A mid-season break in The Football League has long been talked about by the would-be reformists. Now those 12 clubs in the Midlands will provide a first-hand pointer to its value.



Huddersfield Town secretary Bill Brook leans over the wall and looks at the mini-Moat separating supporters from the pitch.

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