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## REVIEW OF THE SEASON 1969-70

It was a memorable season. Even if, in the interests of Sir Alf Ramsey and his World Cup squad, it was cut to a record shortening.

Well, when last did we know the First Division champions, *and* have the Cup Final by April 11th! True, a drawn Cup Final between Chelsea and Leeds United, to provide the first replay at that stage for fifty years, complicated matters.

The second game, at Old Trafford, Manchester, also went into extra time, before Webb, a product of the age where every full back is expected to be a goal-scoring sprinter, settled matters and gave Chelsea their first ever F.A. Cup.

To say that Leeds United were unlucky in their efforts to clock up the fabulous treble of League, F.A. Cup and European Cup, was to understate the case. But, whatever the records show, they had a fantastic season. I suppose the only tangible rewards were that Manager, Don Revie, and captain, Billy Bremner, received the highest class awards.

For the rest it was sympathy, and a summer in which to lick their wounds and provide more planning for the restless brain of the greatest manager of the decade, Don Revie. What an extraordinary run the club have had under him. In 1967-68 they won both the Football League and Fairs Cups; the following season were League champions. And last season they were beaten finalists in the F.A. Cup; semi-finalists in the European Cup and runners-up to Everton in Division One.

Mind you, over at Maine Road, they are quite proud of Manchester City's recent record:

- 1965-66, Champions, Division Two
- 1967-68, Champions, Division One
- 1968-69, F.A. Cup Winners
- 1969-70, Winners of Football League and Cup Winners Cups

Which, it may be argued, puts Manchester City into the class of the trophy-collecting Arsenal side of the 'thirties.

The present-day Arsenal team suffers badly by comparison to that great combination, formed by Herbert Chapman, and nurtured by George Allison. Yet, they did win something last season, triumphing in two vastly exciting legs of the Fairs Cup against Anderlecht, the crack Belgian side.

In Brussels, Arsenal, three down, looked unlikely to make up that deficit a week later at Highbury, until the young substitute, Kennedy, sent on for the equally youthful Charlie George, pulled a goal back. How valuable that effort was to prove. In the return Arsenal had the 51,612 crowd on their feet as first Kelly reduced the aggregate total. Then Radford brought the scores level, finally for Jon Sammels to tip them ahead.

Everton's performance in winning the League title was, unfortunately, overshadowed by the Leeds' efforts. Yet it was a first class, and eminently worthy performance. Not long before Christmas Everton led the table by

eight points. Only to be passed by Leeds. However, Ball, Labone and Co. regained the initiative and sailed home nine points clear of Leeds.

Chelsea, who pipped Derby County for third place, would have qualified for the Fairs Cup if they had not won the F.A. Cup.

Mention of the Leeds saga inevitably brings us to Celtic and Jock Stein, both of whom finished just short of an astonishing season. Celtic started by winning the Scottish League Cup, then took the major league title in their stride. They unexpectedly faltered in the Final of the Scottish Cup, Aberdeen bringing off a highly satisfactory win. But among the loyalists this was taken as a mere break in the surge to fill up the boardroom at Celtic Park with all the trophies available. After blighting the hopes of Leeds in the semi-final of the European Cup, Celtic had no answer to the purpose and power of the Dutch champions, Feyenoord. So Celtic had to settle for two titles and an M.B.E. for their manager.

The season was made even more memorable when Tottenham and West Ham got together to settle the first-ever £200,000 transfer deal involving British players. Martin Peters crossed from East to North London for the larger proportion of the fee, Jimmy Greaves—himself not so long ago having figured in two six-figure deals—being thrown in as 'make-weight'. Jimmy, not required by Ramsey for the World Cup squad, gained compensation by driving a Ford Escort at breakneck speed between Wembley and the Azteca Stadium, Mexico City. He would probably try a wry grin if anybody told him his sixth place in the Daily Mirror World Cup Rally was better than England's overall eighth place in the soccer festival!

England's pattern of preparing for the defence of their World Cup was plain to see from the first game in the new season. As is now the established custom, with the Home International Tournament crammed into eight days in April, foreign opposition occupied matters until the soccer 'fratricide' started. In the nine games only three goals were given away, but in the first seven, only nine goals were scored. Not until the slight spree in South America, when six were netted against Colombia and Ecuador, did England really realise they had any forwards! Including substitutes, upon whom he was to call regularly during the Cup itself, Ramsey tested out 26 players. Finally, after naming the 28 he was to take to Mexico (McNab came in for Reaney, out with a broken leg, after Madeley had turned down the trip) Ramsey settled for this 22 to defend the little gold pot:

Banks (Stoke C.), Bonetti (Chelsea), Stepney (Manchester U.), Newton (Blackburn R.), Cooper (Leeds U.), Wright (Everton), Hughes (Liverpool), Mullery (Tottenham H.), J. Charlton (Manchester U.), Moore (West Ham U.), Labone (Everton), Stiles (Manchester U.), Hunter (Leeds U.), Lee (Manchester C.), Bell (Manchester C.), R. Charlton (Manchester U.), Hurst (West Ham U.), Peters (Tottenham H.), Ball (Everton), Astle (W.B.A.), Osgood (Chelsea), Allan Clarke (Leeds U.).

Elsewhere in the book you will find details of the unsuccessful saga.

Back to the League. The slight downward trend of the Football League gates, which caused a drop in the figures at the end of 1968-69 season, was checked, and the official figures released by the Football League showed a rise. The total was 29,600,972, as against the previous season's total of 29,521,555. Altogether it was a satisfactory picture.

In addition to the increase in League watching, the Football League Cup set a new record (up from 2,064,647 to 2,299,819) while many hundreds of thousands watched the games between English and Continental teams in the various European competitions. There were also huge regular followings for ITV's 'On the Ball' and The Big Match, and BBC's 'Match of Day'.

Once again Manchester United topped the million through their turn-

stiles at Old Trafford, and so did the champions, Everton, for the first time in seven years.

Incidentally, nearly 180,000 people watched the two European Cup semi-finals between Celtic and Leeds United, 134,000 of them at Hampden Park.

Now the Football League fans will, in many cases, have to pay more to stand on the terraces this winter. At the Football League Annual General Meeting it was decided to stabilise the minimum admission charge at all Football League grounds at six shillings. Conversely, quite a number of clubs have reduced the charges for stand season tickets.

From the excitement and glamour of trophy-winning to the teams at the other end of the scale. Spare a thought for some of the famous names of the past who have hit a bad patch—Sheffield Wednesday and Sunderland relegated from Division One to Two; Preston North End and Aston Villa go down to Division Three, both for the first time. And famous Bradford Park Avenue voted out of Division Four because of the insistent demands of Cambridge United for recognition.

Villa have of course dropped from Division One to Division Three in rapid succession. After the vast amount of money spent on rebuilding the club, success in the future will be all the sweeter. But whatever Villa's lapses and their appalling playing record, they have never lost support. Their average gates of 27,345 were not only higher than the previous season, but were also the best recorded in Division Two!

The 'miracle' story of Division One was that of Crystal Palace, playing their first season in Division One. With their programme of 42 games gone, after they had hovered on or near the bottom all season, Palace awaited their fate. Sheffield Wednesday only had to defeat Manchester City at home in order to stay up, and send Palace down. But they lost 2-1, and the champagne flowed at Selhurst Park. Now with the two Chelsea strikers, Bobby Tambling and Alan Birchenall in the line, a less nerve-racking season is expected.

Back, after fourteen years in Division Two, go Huddersfield Town, who led most of the way. Blackpool, captained by that very likeable ex-England player Jimmy Armfield, held on to regain the place they lost only three seasons previously. At one time it looked as if Swindon Town would pop into second place, but in the end they failed by three points. Still, they gained compensation by winning the Anglo-Italian Competition instituted at the end of the season. After many unruly scenes during the home and away games in England and Italy, the final itself in Naples was abandoned ten minutes from time, when the local 'sportsmen' decided that their team, three down, no longer had any chance of winning.

For most of the time it was a foregone conclusion that Orient and Luton Town would gain promotion from Division Three, and so it proved. They are both expected to play with credit in the higher division. If the move to get three-up and three-down between these two divisions had been achieved at the League Annual General Meeting, Bristol Rovers would have accompanied them. But they must still wait on.

Fulham came with a late run and must stand a great chance in this season's promotion race, in which they will have new opponents in Chesterfield, Wrexham, Swansea City and Port Vale, who gained promotion from Division Four.

P.S. You can't keep the little fellow out of the news! Apart from the fact that he was the only man to be sent off during the Home International Tournament, George Best clocked up the best individual scoring feat. Resuming after serving a month's suspension, Best scored six goals for Manchester United in an F.A. cup-tie at Northampton.