

INTRODUCTION

The thirteenth edition of *Rothmans Football Yearbook* includes the results of all World Cup final tournament matches played, including the full list of teams and goalscorers. FIFA were unable to supply a complete list of all qualifying competition line-ups because they intend to include them in their own publication at a later date, but we have been able to feature all European and South American details as well as examples of other teams who reached the finals.

In addition, there is full coverage of domestic football with line-ups, goalscorers and attendances of matches played in the Football League and Scottish League, as well as the League Cup, FA Cup, Scottish League Cup and Scottish Cup. Transfers affecting players being signed by Football League clubs are given, together with any transfer fee noted at the time. As there is no official figure for such moves, the fees quoted are estimated, and with the addition of levies, including VAT, they are merely a guide to the value of the players in question.

This year's edition also marks the return of the former style of Diary which appeared in earlier issues of *Rothmans Football Yearbook*.

The Editor would like to thank Norman Barrett, Lionel Francis and Alan Elliott respectively for their assistance in the compilation of the Diary, Non-League Football and the Scottish season; also the invaluable assistance rendered in the completion of the book by Christine Forrest and Graeme Wright.

The Editor would also like to pay tribute to the various organisations who have helped to make this edition complete, especially Mrs Sandra Whiteside of the Football League, Mike McNamara of the Football Association, and the secretaries of all the Football League and Scottish League clubs for their kind cooperation. The ready availability of Football League secretary Graham Kelly and his staff to answer queries was as usual most appreciated. Thanks are also due to Jim Farry, the Scottish League secretary, and his staff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editor would like to express his appreciation of the following individuals and organisations for their cooperation: Glynis Firth, Mike Foster, Chris J. Whalley, Debbie Singleton (all from the Football League); Adrian Titcombe (The Football Association); The Scottish Football Association, The Welsh Football Association, Tom Cairns of The Scottish League, the secretaries of all Football League and Scottish League clubs, Alan Dick, Malcolm Brodie, A. Rice (The English Schools FA), W. P. Goss (AFA), Maurice Golesworthy, Ken Goldman, Peter Dunk, Karen Spink, Christine Phillips, Elaine Morgen and Glenda Rollin.

EDITORIAL

The professional game may be on the gallows with a noose of insolvency around its neck, but it has cried wolf so often to threats of financial ruin that its critics remain unimpressed. It was ironic, then, that it should be Wolves who came closest to extinction at the end of the 1981-82 season.

However, the affairs at Molineux brought a disturbing development with them. In putting the club in the hands of an Official Receiver, it would seem to have initiated a kind of Russian roulette. It is hoped that by sifting through the diary of events of last season, and their revelations of fiscal failure with Bristol City, Hull City and Oxford United among the more serious candidates for bankruptcy, other clubs will not imagine that a saviour can always be found somewhere.

If and when the financial aspect is put right, an equally important move must be made to redefine the word success. It must be taken completely out of the context of the game being 'all about winning' and the obsession with matches being simply won, drawn and slaughtered. Winners provide losers, and there will always be more losers than winners. The short-sighted and narrow attitude towards success in what is a professional entertainment has already led to a type of football which has no obviously universal appeal to the uncommitted as a spectacle, based as it is on the concept that victory, whatever the manner of it, is the only answer.

The Football League's new system of three points for a win did produce an improvement in goalscoring, but by a margin too small to make any definite conclusions. Indeed, the First Division provided fewer goals than in 1980-81. But it did nothing in the continuing recession to attract more spectators to the stands and terraces. In fact, there was another chilling drop in support for the game, with overall attendances falling to a new low post-war level of just over 20 million. Manchester United had the highest attendance average at 44,570. Tottenham Hotspur came next with 35,099, followed by Liverpool on 35,060 and Manchester City with 34,063. But half of the rest of the teams in Division One recorded less than 20,000 on average, Notts County being the poorest supported with 11,627. Oddly enough, because of Sheffield United's incredible 14,891 average in the Fourth Division, this division actually showed an increase of attendances on the previous term. And there were only two clubs with less than 2000 on average: Rochdale on 1837 and Tranmere Rovers with 1735.

It is a sobering thought, when taking note of an article previously produced by the author, to read: 'Down and down go the soccer gates in Britain. The game is fast running into a cul-de-sac of decreasing receipts and increasing costs . . . attendances will improve only when the standard of play goes up.' That was written in November 1964.

To put attendances in some kind of perspective, here are some illuminating figures:

Season	Attendances	Average
1906-07	10,929,000	14,380
1937-38	28,132,933	15,225
1958-59	33,610,985	16,573
1963-64	28,535,022	14,075
1981-82	20,006,961	9865

Though the table deliberately omits the artificial boom days of the 1940s when more than a million people watched League football each weekend, in 1981-82 attendance was less than half that figure.

Every professional sport needs live spectators to support it. Sponsorship will lessen the burden of costs, but unless the intention is to drive a wedge between winning and losing teams, thereby consigning unsuccessful clubs to be watched by mere handfuls of people, the product has to be improved.

The World Cup in Spain provided just two teams whose approach had to be admired - Brazil and France. They alone played with a carefree fluency which caught the imagination of everyone sitting in his TV armchair. Alas, they were not destined to reach the final. Instead it was Italy who won. The home of *catenaccio* proved supreme, thanks to the Italians' expertise of converting virtually every goal chance.

This, of course, remains the dilemma: attractive football which will not necessarily produce results or safety first? What is certain is that the game will have greater overall appeal the first way rather than the second. But if professional football is to thrive, let alone survive, it will have to change its attitude.

JACK ROLLIN