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Everton's Age of Illumination



The nights are drawing in and the glow of the Goodison Park floodlights will have greeted you on your approach to the stadium. There is something magical about Goodison under lights - the illumination adds something intangible to the experience.

As documented in a recent EFC Heritage Society programme article, experiments in match illumination date back to Victorian times and Everton trialled Wells Lights at their former home Anfield in 1890. It would be another 60 years before the emerging technology became widely accepted. South Liverpool FC's Holly Park ground in Garston pioneered the use of permanent floodlights in a friendly against a touring Nigerian team and seven years later, Fratton Park hosted the first floodlit Football League fixture - giving impetus for other clubs to follow Portsmouth's lead.

Everton officials had visited Vicarage Road, the home of tonight's visitors, as part of the research process into floodlighting. Supported by John Moores, the Club ordered four pylons, each comprising 36 1,500-watt lamps, mounted 160 feet high. Delayed by a shortage of steel girders, they were first used on 9 October 1957 for a friendly against Liverpool, marking 75 years of the Liverpool County FA. A week later,



Floodlights at Goodison Park for the first time

the first competitive match under the lights took place when Arsenal were the visitors. Everton twice came from behind to level the score at 2-2. Watched by 52,000 supporters, it was a stirring game, described by *the Echo's* Leslie Edwards as a 'match with everything in technicolour'. Several months later, 20 lamps were added to each tower - doubling the luminance. It was trumpeted that the power used to illuminate a match equated to that consumed over six months in a typical house.

The steel sentinels stood watching over Goodison for a surprisingly short period of time. In 1970, lighting was placed along the rooflines of the new Goodison Road stand and the Bulls

Road stand. The £45,000 investment delivered state-of-the-art lighting, suited to the adoption of colour TV broadcasting as no longer would players have four shadows around them! The new lights were first used in an August 1970 fixture against Burnley. The players had a training session a few days before the match and some concerns were raised about the dazzling nature of the new equipment. In December 1989, a £70,000 upgrade to the system by Philips was celebrated by a friendly match against PSV Eindhoven and, five years ago, the lights were further bolstered in order to satisfy the requirements of broadcasters using HD technology.