



Spreading the Everton name...

By John Shearon

At the final whistle of this evening's game both sets of players will be looking forward to a well-earned rest over the coming months.

In late April 1909, this was not the case as Everton closed the season with a 4-2 win over Leicester Fosse to finish runners-up to champions Newcastle United.

The Toffees, along with Spurs, who likewise had finished runners-up but in the Second Division, had been invited to play a number of friendly matches in Argentina and Uruguay where the sport was still in its infancy.

This was not the first such tour. Southampton in 1904 and Nottingham Forest in 1905 had made earlier visits, but it would result in the first match between two professional teams in the Americas (until professionalism was first introduced to Argentina in 1931), and would leave a lasting impression in South America.

Everton left Lime Street on 13 May 1909, boarding the Argentine-bound R.M.S. Aruguay in Southampton the following day. Spurs literally missed the boat and had to catch up with the ship in the Solent by hiring a local tug. The voyage lasted 23 days, with stops in Portugal and Brazil on the way.

The tour itself started on the very day the ship docked in Buenos Aires. Both teams made their way to the Sociedad Sportiva Stadium, where a crowd of 8,000 witnessed a 2-2 draw. Over the next few weeks the tourists took on and beat a variety of local teams, leaving the most significant result for the re-match on 19 June when the Toffees ran out 4-0 winners, with centre-forward Bert Freeman, as he had done throughout the tour, showing his true class with a hat-trick.

Had the result been different the young Anglo-Chileans, who founded Everton FC in Valparaiso a few days later on 24 June, might have looked to Spurs for inspiration instead of the Toffees. Fortunately, the tour's legacy, apart from providing a fine demonstration of how the game should be played, led to a number of clubs in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay taking the name of Everton, a number of which are still in existence today.

The Chilean Everton, as is widely known, have been national champions on four occasions. In Argentina there are still clubs bearing the name of Everton in Santa Fe, La Plata and Cordoba while across the River Plate in Uruguay, Club Atletico Everton still flourishes – all playing in the amateur leagues.

The Everton team finally set off home on the R.M.S. Asturias on 25 June and arrived on 20 July. Club director, Mr E.A. Bainbridge, best summed up the trip as follows: "When a team has travelled 14,000 miles in 10 weeks to introduce and develop first-class football, and returns with a clean bill of health, and a clean slate, and at no cost, it has something to be proud of."

Perhaps we might see an Everton team make a similar trip in the near future to Chile to stage a re-match of the Brotherhood Cup, played at Goodison Park in August 2010 – stranger things have happened.



The Everton crests from around the world!