



# KEITH WEBBER – A TOFFEE AND A SEAGULL

By Rob Sawyer

Keith Webber grew up in rugby-loving south Wales, but it was football that he chose, idolising Trevor Ford and John Charles.

Spotted playing for Barry Town, he was invited for a trial at Everton by manager Johnny Carey and after a few matches, he signed professional forms in February 1960, having turned 17.

In October 1960, Webber caught the eye of the Toffees' full-back Alex Parker, who enthused in his *Liverpool Echo* column about the Welshman's four-goal salvo, including a 30-yard piledriver in an FA Youth Cup defeat of Burnley.

A month later Webber was called up to the First Team for a League Cup tie against Walsall at Goodison Park. He got off to a dream start, netting the Blues' equaliser with a sweetly-struck left-footed effort. The watching Horace Yates, of the *Daily Post*, tried to dampen expectations, however, stating: 'As the game unfolded it was increasingly apparent that for all his shooting ability, there is the inevitable rawness one can only expect. I am afraid it must be that he needs further time to develop before he can reasonably be expected to do himself justice.'



Keith Webber at Everton

Webber was given two further tastes of First-Team action that season, in a League Cup quarter-final defeat to Shrewsbury, and at centre-forward in a home league match against Chelsea. A natural athlete, he would frequently come first in Club time trials, but that was not enough to earn the Welshman a regular place under Harry Catterick.

Given a couple of starts early in the 1961/62 season, Webber couldn't add to his goal tally and finding himself down the pecking order, he moved to the south coast in April 1963 when Brighton & Hove Albion paid a £9,000 fee for his services.

Webber would later rue leaving Everton too soon as shortly after his departure, Alex Young and Roy Vernon

suffered injuries. During a 17-month stay at the Goldstone Ground, in which he played across the front line, the Welshman scored 15 goals in 38 appearances.

A return north followed, to play for Wrexham and then across the Pennines with Doncaster Rovers, under Lawrie McMenemy. A prolific spell at Chester, where he had made his home, was followed by a last hoorah in League football at Stockport County. Asked if he'd have changed anything, he replied: 'Not a thing. I guess it would work out just the same. I've been around, been paid to keep myself fit and play a game I love and met some great people. Why should I want to change any of that?'