



# WHEN NON-LEAGUE ALTY DREW AT GOODISON.

By Darren Griffiths

Of all the teams who have spent their entire history outside of the Football League, none has caused more FA Cup giant-killings than Altrincham.

To date they have knocked SEVENTEEN League opponents out of the competition and that figure could well have been one higher and included Everton.

It was the first weekend in January 1975 when the Northern Premier League part-timers came to Goodison for an FA Cup third-round tie.

Billy Bingham's Blues were a point off the top of the First Division table but just before Christmas they'd suffered a now infamous home defeat against Carlisle United and then lost at Wolves on Boxing Day. A subsequent 1-1 draw at home to Middlesbrough added up to a festive wobble but surely the visit of Altrincham would get them back on track...

Not so.

The men from Greater Manchester knew that their best chance of getting an unlikely result would be to 'unsettle' their professional opponents, and they did so quite successfully.

Bingham drafted in Ken McNaught for his senior debut at centre-half and the young Scot hit the crossbar after just 10 minutes with Gary Jones striking the post not long after.

But in the 36th minute, Altrincham took the lead.

John Hughes had joined The Robins

John Connolly surrounded by Altrincham defenders in the third round tie



from Bangor City the previous summer and brought with him one of the best goalscoring records in non-league football. Indeed, Hughes would have joined the professional ranks had he not preferred to concentrate on the family car rental business in Anglesey.

Graham Heathcote, an Alty legend who would play in excess of 500 games for the club, played a perfect pass through to Hughes and he showed commendable composure to slide the ball past Dai Davies.

Everton were stunned and four minutes later, Gary Jones lost his temper after another heavy challenge, swung a punch at Ian Morris – which connected – and was sent off.

It got worse before half-time.

John Davison, a former Burnley youth player who was studying at Liverpool University at the time, delivered what

was described as a 'vicious looking tackle' that left John Connolly with a broken leg in two places.

Connolly was stretchered off, did not play again that season, and some Blues still believe his absence cost Everton the title.

The 10 men persevered and with just over 20 minutes remaining, David Irving was tripped inside the box and Dave Clements converted the resultant penalty to square the score.

It finished 1-1 and Everton won the replay 2-0 at Old Trafford, thanks to goals from Bob Latchford and Mike Lyons.

At the end of the season, Everton finished fourth in the First Division behind Derby County, Liverpool and Ipswich Town, while Altrincham finished third in the NPL behind Wigan Athletic and Runcorn.

