



JOHN LINDSAY'S UNLUCKY BREAK

By Rob Sawyer

A footballer's career can be halted by injury in the blink of an eye.

John Lindsay (also referred to as Jack, Jock, and even Johnny in newspaper articles) was a classy full-back who shared the same injury misfortune as Jack Coulter, Eddie Wainwright, Tommy Ring, John Connolly, John Barton and James McCarthy, among others.

Born on 8 August 1924 in East Dunbartonshire, the left-back joined Glasgow Rangers from Petershill at the end of the Second World War. At 5ft 8in and weighing about 11 stone, John was not the most physically imposing of defenders, but he possessed the steel to go with the silk of his cultured playing style.

In March 1951 Rangers accepted a £9,500 bid from Everton, who needed a replacement for National Service-bound George Rankin. John travelled south by train and met his new teammates at Manchester's Midland Hotel before heading to play in his first match, a 3-0 defeat in the Old Trafford mud. When interviewed post-match, the debutant stated: "English football is much faster and they do not hold the ball as they do in Scotland." Sadly, the new recruit arrived too late to help turn around the Blues' sorry season, which ended in relegation.

Living in club accommodation at Radnor Drive in Bootle, John held down the left-back position for virtually the entirety of three seasons in the Second Division. In the 1953/54 campaign he played a central role in the push for promotion - accepting the responsibility for penalty-kick duties twice in February, converting successfully on both occasions. Alas, on 10 April, with Everton in third position, he was taken off on a stretcher having suffered a compound fracture of his left leg, when making a last-ditch interception to prevent Stoke



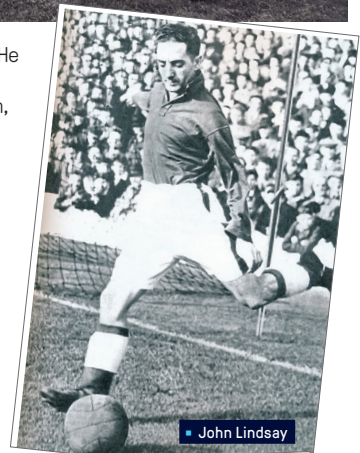
• Everton with John Lindsay (second from right, top row)

City scoring. It was a devastating injury. He was back kicking a ball in early 1955 and playing in friendly matches in pre-season, but discomfort lingered and he had lost some of his mobility.

John never achieved a Blues First-Team comeback and was loaned out to non-League Worcester City to regain his touch and match fitness. In June 1956 he left Everton, with John Willie Parker, for Bury in a £3,500 deal. A year later he joined South Liverpool - it was reported that at Holly Park he compensated for his loss of pace with great football intelligence.

Never a keen watcher of football, he lost touch with the sport after hanging up his boots, but would bump into the likes of Tommy Clinton, Alex Stevenson and Billy Cook near his home. John's sporting interest focused on badminton, which he'd enjoy playing with his family. After an unsuccessful attempt at running a chauffeur car business, he worked as a maintenance engineer at Walton Hospital.

John passed away on 25 November 1991, at the age of 66, after a battle with cancer.



• John Lindsay

