



By Richie Gillham

A BLUE, A HAMMER . . . AND A SPARTAN!

What has Shrewsbury Town's former Everton defender **Matthew Pennington** got in common with a left-half called **Joe Blythe**, who was born in Berwick-upon-Tweed in 1881?

Answer - they are the only Everton players to have scored their one and only goal for the Club in a Merseyside derby!

Blythe started his football career at non-league Delaval Villa and was spotted by the famous Blyth Spartans before moving to Jarrow where, in 1898, he was scouted and signed by Everton.

A left-half, Blythe made his Toffees debut in February 1899 in a 4-2 win against Bolton Wanderers at Burnden Park. He made eight appearances that season and became a regular in 1899/90, scoring his only Everton goal in a 3-1 victory against Liverpool at Goodison Park in January 1900. (Pennington netted his at Anfield in April 2017.)

Blythe spent the next two seasons on the fringes, playing six times as Everton finished runners-up to Sunderland in the First Division in 1901/02.

Having made 35 appearances, he joined West Ham United, then of the Southern League, in 1902. He made his debut against Reading on 6 September and missed only one match that season. The following year, after 23 league appearances, Blythe joined local rivals Millwall, with whom he won a London Challenge Cup winners' medal in 1909.

He played more than 300 games for the Lions before finishing his career with Watford between 1911 and 1913...becoming the very first Hornets player to be sent off in a game!



Joe Blythe

Before the outbreak of the First World War, Blythe returned to Blyth Spartans as player/coach. He was not the only ex-Blue to have held this role over the decades. John Connolly and, later, Jim Pearson also assumed the managerial reigns at Spartans.

In fact, there have been many player links between Everton and Blyth Spartans. Bill Easton, an inside right, and Tom Wilkinson, an inside-left or centre-forward, both came to Merseyside in March 1927. Wilkinson played in the reserves while Easton made 15 Senior Team appearances before moving to Swansea Town. George Cook, meanwhile, made eight Blues appearances after signing from Blyth in 1930/31.

Goalkeeper Frank King found himself understudying the great Ted Sagar after joining from Blyth in 1933. He played 14 games, keeping eight clean sheets, after making his debut as a 17-year-old.

John Watson and Thomas 'Gordon' Watson joined Everton together in the early 1930s. John made the first of his 31 appearances in 1932 while Gordon became a Club stalwart after making his debut in 1936. Other players to represent both clubs were Ted Common, Tom Robson and Albert Juliusen.



Matthew Pennington