

THE COLOURFUL LIFE OF JOCK DODDS

Ephraim 'Jock' Dodds' considerable achievements on the football field have sometimes been overshadowed by his newsworthy exploits off it.

Born in Scotland, his family relocated to north east England after the death of his father. It was there that classmates, with little originality, rechristened Ephraim as 'Jock'.

His football career began at Huddersfield Town and Lincoln City but it was at Sheffield United in the mid-1930s that this bulky, but deceptively agile, centre-forward found his footballing feet. A tally of 128 goals in 203 games was a phenomenal strike rate for the Blades and he reached the 1936 FA Cup final with them, losing narrowly to Arsenal.

In an age of austerity, the flamboyant Dodds stood out by using his new-found wealth to dress snappily and acquire a Cadillac car. Like future Everton striker Roy Vernon, he also had a deep love of greyhound racing – getting into a few scrapes as an owner along the way.

A move to Blackpool followed in 1939, but his playing career was interrupted by the war. While serving as an RAF physical training instructor he would represent Scotland in eight wartime internationals but, perhaps due to being based in England, he never received the same recognition in peacetime.

Post-war, after what he considered to be a derisory pay offer from Blackpool, he negotiated his own exit to Shamrock Rovers in August 1946. Three months later, Everton, desperate for a prolific scorer after the departure of Tommy Lawton, came calling. Negotiations were complicated as Blackpool still held the



Scott's registration, but the Blues got their man for £7,750. Dodds would commute to Goodison from the Fylde coast, where he ran a guesthouse.

Although past his physical peak, and playing in a struggling Everton side, Dodds did deliver goals – 37 in 58 appearances. However, two years after his arrival at Goodison he elected to move back to Lincoln City.

With his playing days numbered, Dodds was supplementing his income through business interests which included a Blackpool rock enterprise. Simultaneously, he became engaged as an agent for the Millionaires club of Bogota – approaching a number of British players with the promise of riches and sunshine, should they relocate to Colombia. Neil Franklin

and Everton's Billy Higgins were among the stars taking the leap into the unknown. For his troubles, Dodds was banned from any further involvement in English football.

He would go into further enterprises on the Fylde coast. He dabbled in the importation of 'one-armed bandit' fruit machines from the USA, nightclubs and the import of foodstuffs. The latter landed him in the dock (and prison) when he was found guilty of importing powdered milk well past its sell-by date.

In later life, the once strapping striker became a devotee of health foods and exercise and was often seen out and about in Blackpool in his tracksuit. One of the game's greatest characters, Ephraim Dodds passed away in 2007, aged 91.