



By Paul McParlan

STEWART IMLACH: A TOP LEVEL WINGER

What connects the Tour de France, Nottingham Forest and Everton? The answer is the Imlach family.

Stewart Imlach played for Forest and was a coach for the Blues, while his son, Gary, is the main presenter of ITV's coverage of the iconic cycle race.

James John Stewart Imlach was born in Lossiemouth, Scotland, on 6 January 1932. He played for his local side in the Highland League before moving to England where he joined Bury and later Derby County. He signed for Nottingham Forest in 1955 and was admired by fans for his blistering pace. When Forest won the FA Cup in 1959, beating Luton Town at Wembley, his performance earned Imlach the *Daily Herald's* 'Man of the Match' trophy.

He was also the first Forest man to play for Scotland, including two appearances in the 1958 World Cup.

Imlach left the City Ground in 1960 and appeared for several clubs, the last being Crystal Palace before retiring in 1967. He then commenced his coaching career with Notts County.

In July 1969 he joined Harry Catterick's coaching staff at Everton, initially as the youth coach, working with A and B teams and, subsequently, the reserves.

A stickler for punctuality, Imlach would always check the times of players arriving for training on the daily attendance sheet at Bellefield. When he left Goodison, he kept the register which is probably the best collection of autographs of Everton players from the 1970s! During the 1971/72 season, Imlach was promoted to First-Team coach and started to keep detailed



Stewart Imlach

records of players' performances in matches, which he would use to improve his training routines.

When Billy Bingham arrived as manager in 1973, Imlach continued to work with the first team and the partnership initially worked well; Everton came close to winning the league in 1974/75 (Bingham had played against Imlach in that 1959 FA Cup final).

However, after a poor run of results, Bingham dispensed with his services in January 1976, the day before Imlach's 44th birthday, and replaced him with Steve Burtenshaw, who had previously been at Sheffield Wednesday.

Imlach later coached at Blackpool and

Bury and there was almost a sensational return to Nottingham Forest as part of Brian Clough's backroom staff, but Imlach rejected it after 'Cloughie' kept him waiting all day, whilst he went off to play squash!

Stewart Imlach died on 3 October 2001. He was an outstanding footballer and a talented coach whose legacy at Everton and Nottingham Forest lives on.

(His youngest son, Michael, played in the Everton youth side alongside Gary Stevens and Kevin Richardson in 1979 before moving to Peterborough United.)

Further reading: *My Father and Other Working-Class Football Heroes* by Gary Imlach