

■ Everton v Crystal Palace at Goodison Park in August 1969, as construction work goes on in the Main Stand



# THE GOODISON ROAD STAND

By Joe Brennan

The construction of Everton's current Main Stand between 1969 and 1971 marked a significant milestone in the history of Goodison Park.

Work began less than half an hour after the final whistle of the home game against Arsenal in April 1969, when ground staff began to immediately remove seats at the north end of the stand. The construction was built to replace the iconic Leitch-designed stand which had become, in some people's eyes, outdated and insufficient to meet the growing demands of the Club and its supporters. Costed at £500,000, the project bill eventually rose closer to the £1m mark.

The new, 400-foot long stand was a bold architectural statement, designed to be a landmark structure on Goodison Road. The modern concrete structure incorporated £50,000 worth of new floodlights and was one of the largest stands in England at that time. The

construction project was a major undertaking, requiring careful planning and execution by McAlpine. The 60-year-old structure was demolished in stages to allow for the construction of the new one. The process was a complex and challenging one, but the phased approach allowed Everton to continue playing home matches at Goodison Park during the construction period.

The completion of the stand in 1971 transformed Goodison Park into a more modern and functional stadium. The interior was designed with the comfort and convenience of supporters at the forefront of thinking. It boosted the seating capacity of the ground from 18,000 to 25,000 people, with 3,700 in the top balcony. The second tier provided 6,750 seats, which was double the number in the previous stand. The specially-designed sloping roof gave plenty of cover with fans having greater legroom as well as the luxury of air vents pumping hot air towards seats on cold matchdays. The stand also provided

space in the Enclosure (now the family area) for close to 7,000 fans who preferred to stand. It also included an indoor training area for the team.

The stand generated additional matchday income and commercial opportunities. It featured more spacious areas, modern seating and a shop. The 300 and 500 clubs offered luxury for supporters with top-class dining and seats near the Directors' Box. Another major feature of the ground was the installation of three escalators to take fans to the top tier. Executive boxes were added in 1981 at a cost of £150,000.

Although it is now showing its age, with many pillars that cause obstructed views, the towering Main Stand has remained a dominant feature of Goodison Park for more than 50 years. It has witnessed countless memorable moments in Everton's history, from title-winning seasons to thrilling cup victories and European nights as well as being the place where Club legends Dixie Dean and Harry Catterick passed away.

