



Words // Rob Sawyer



FROM GOODISON TO ROME AND LIVERPOOL'S DOCKS

When tasked with writing a historical article that mentioned today's opponents and our new stadium's iconic location at the heart of Liverpool's docklands, Tommy White's name sprung readily to mind.

Born in Salford in 1908 and raised in Southport, Tommy joined Everton as a young and promising inside-forward in 1927. He made a scoring debut for the first team in October of that year, when selected at centre-forward in place of Bill 'Dixie' Dean.

Tommy's versatility would be demonstrated many times over the years, being deployed in five positions across the half-back and forward lines.

An able deputy when the talismanic Dean was injured, Tommy came into his own as a centre-half when Charlie Gee was injured in 1932. In that position he would earn an FA Cup winner's medal in 1933 and later that spring, his impressive club form earned a call-up to represent England at the Stadio Nazionale del PNF in Rome.

AS Roma were represented in the Italian team by Raffaele Constantino. Cliff Bastin equalised for England after Giovanni Ferrari had given the hosts an early lead and the match ended 1-1. This stadium would host three games during the 1934 World Cup and, between 1940 and 1953, was home to today's opponents.

Tommy was a reserve for two England matches in the following autumn but was not called on to play.

Overwhelmed by the honour of wearing the England shirt, even if just once, he treasured his cap for the rest of his life.

Further injuries to Dean saw Tommy revert to being the fulcrum of the Blues' attack and he achieved a one-in-two strike ratio in the 1934/35 campaign. A knee injury in the summer of 1936 heralded the end of his career. After short spells at Northampton Town and New Brighton FC he hung up his boots in 1939.

At the outbreak of war, Tommy was employed as a dockworker – living in an Everton-owned house at 13 Goodison Avenue. He remained there with his wife Edith until the early 1960s.

Tommy was reunited with his former teammates including Dixie Dean, Jock Thomson and Billy Cook at the 1966 Cup Final and was photographed at the post-match banquet.

A little over a year later he was working in a gang loading the M.V. Liss at Langton Dock – 2km north of the present-day location of Hill Dickinson Stadium – when he slipped on a patch of oil on the deck and fell backwards. He ignored the pain in his chest and head and completed his shift. Once home he was confined to bed and some days later was admitted to Walton Hospital. He passed away there on 13 August due to a cardiac failure brought on by pleurisy resulting from a fractured rib. He rests in peace in Anfield Cemetery and the White family remain avowed Evertonians.