

SUPER COOPER AND GREAT SCOTT CLAIM THEIR SPOTS IN HISTORY

Words // Paul Owens

Ask any Blues of a certain vintage for their most abiding memory from an Everton v Ipswich Town fixture, and almost every response would be Kevin Sheedy's twice-taken free-kick in the FA Cup quarter-final tie at Goodison Park in 1985.

But how many supporters would be able to name the goalkeeper who was beaten by Sheedy's superb set-pieces from just outside the Park End penalty area that day?

The name on the tips of many supporters' tongues would be Paul Cooper who, five seasons earlier, posted the most extraordinary of penalty-saving records – saving eight of the 10 spot-kicks he faced during Ipswich's 1979/80 campaign, including two at home to Derby County.

At 5ft 11in, Cooper was no giant in goalkeeping terms and hardly filled the goal when standing on his line for spot-kicks. Furthermore, back then, keepers were not allowed to move their feet at all before a penalty was taken.

So, in a bid to distract his opponent, Cooper – positioned slightly off-centre and leaning to one side – would swing his arms with the hope being he could tempt the taker to aim for the side of the goal where there was a bigger gap.

His incredible record proves there was method in his madness – as Graeme Sharp found out in May 1983, when Cooper denied him from 12 yards in a 1-1 draw at Goodison Park.



Billy Scott: Replaced by namesake Walter



Maarten Stekelenburg saves a penalty from Kevin De Bruyne in 2016

Two Everton goalkeepers have saved a brace of penalties in one game: Tom Fern did so against Sunderland on Boxing Day in 1921 and Dutchman Maarten Stekelenburg kept out efforts from Manchester City duo Sergio Aguero and Kevin De Bruyne at the Etihad in October 2016.

However, towards the end of the 1908/09 campaign, Grimsby Town's Walter Scott had gone one better – making an impressive hat-trick of penalty saves against Burnley. His actions at Turf Moor made him the first goalkeeper in Football League history to make three penalty saves in one game.

And it wasn't a one-off. That season, Scott saved 14 of the 17 penalties he faced – a truly outstanding record, which brought him to the attention of Everton, who were looking for cover for first-choice keeper Billy Scott (no relation).

After Billy sustained a nasty hand injury in the Blues' FA Cup semi-final defeat to Barnsley, Everton's new goalkeeper came into the side for the final eight games of the 1909/10 campaign.

Early into that spell, the £750 signing repeated his penalty-saving heroics of the previous term – keeping out Henry Low's strike in a 1-0 victory over Sunderland at Roker Park. Spot on!