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Everton FC Heritage Society

Everton in the Texaco Cup

EVERTON have competed in a wide array of weird and wonderful cup competitions in our 142 years.

From the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital Cup to the Screen Sport Super Cup, the Zenith Data Systems Cup to the Empire Exhibition Trophy. But perhaps the shortest-lived involvement was in the Texaco Cup - an Anglo-Scottish cup competition which saw Everton make their debut on 18 September 1973 - and exit for the first and last time just over a fortnight later.

There were high hopes for the competition when it was launched in 1970, not least as a result of £100,000 worth of sponsorship from oil giants Texaco. Teams who had just missed out on European competition in England were invited to take part, against teams from Scotland and Ireland - but after only three years Irish teams were forced to step down as a result of the growing conflict in Northern Ireland.

In the summer of 1973 Everton decided they were ready to take part in a competition described as a 'money-spinner'. Teams were handed £1,000 just for taking part - at a time when even top players earned around £130 a week - £1,500 for reaching the second round, £2,500 for getting to the semi-finals, while the winners banked an extra £4,500.

Everton made all the right noises ahead of the home tie against Hearts. The programme cover featured the words: 'A good run in the Texaco Cup can only bring all-round benefits for Everton - Billy Bingham'. While in the Liverpool Echo, the Everton manager said: 'A three-goal advantage would be just right for us'.

A hint of complacency, perhaps?

Hearts won 1-0 at Goodison Park in front of 12,563 fans on a miserable rain-soaked evening.

New recruit Dave Clements, signed from Sheffield Wednesday for £80,000, played in the second leg at Tynecastle 15 days later but a goalless draw ensured Everton were out. Bingham had changed his tune significantly. The following night's Echo reported him as saying: 'It was a useful exercise, but I'm glad it is over now and we have come out of it without any further injuries'.



The competition continued until 1975, when Texaco ended its sponsorship and the tournament continued as the Anglo-Scottish Cup until 1981 when Chesterfield overcame Notts County in the last final. Everton never competed in it again.

Incidentally, in the next round of the 1973/74 Texaco Cup, Everton's conquerors Hearts were emphatically sent packing by Burnley. The Clarets won 5-0 at Turf Moor and 3-0 in Edinburgh and went all the way to the final where they lost to Newcastle United.