



By Rob Sawyer

BARRY REES – THE WELSHMAN WHO REPRESENTED EVERTON AND BRIGHTON

Barry Rees turned out for both this evening's teams and his story is a tragic one of a blossoming life cut short...

The Rhyl-born teenager joined the Toffees in 1959, signing full-time professional forms in the autumn of 1961.

Clubmate Colin Harvey believes that, ultimately, Barry would have been best suited to a wing-half role where he could use his formidable engine to get up and down the pitch to great effect.

Along with Harvey and Roy Parnell, Barry – a Welsh Schoolboys international – was shortlisted to make his Everton debut in the European Cup in 1963 against Inter Milan in the San Siro stadium.

Ultimately, Harry Catterick plumped for Harvey but Barry was handed his senior bow a month later, replacing Alex Young at centre-forward against West Ham at Upton Park.

A debut goal was not enough to prevent a 4-2 defeat. He was on the scoresheet again in February 1964, when recalled to the side for a routine home win over Birmingham City and was in the group selected to tour Australia in the summer. The utility man made a good impression – grabbing a hat-trick against a Queensland XI.

Back on home soil, Barry was consigned to reserve team duties until November 1964, when he was drafted in for the out-of-form Alex Parker against Leeds United. Injured in the match that has entered folklore as 'The Battle of Goodison', Barry found



Barry Rees, second left, with Everton teammates Roy Parnell, Colin Harvey and Jimmy Hill at Manchester Airport before the Blues' European Cup match with Inter Milan

himself out of First-Team favour when fit again. Everton were prepared to part company when an offer of £8,000, plus add-on clauses, was tendered by Brighton & Hove Albion in January 1965.

Although reluctant to uproot himself from North Wales and Merseyside, Barry headed south to meet Seagulls manager Archie Macaulay and duly signed on the dotted line. A fairly quiet young man off the pitch, he made an immediate impact on it. In his 12 appearances as a wing-half, it was abundantly clear that Brighton had signed a player with potential to develop into a mainstay of the team and a possible full international.

Barry turned 21 a month after his move south and would use his freshly-purchased Mini to make the long journey back to visit family when opportunities arose. He was driving north through the early hours of 27 March 1965 to celebrate his uncle's large win on the football pools when a collision with a lorry on the A5 near Nuneaton tragically proved fatal. It was a heart-breaking, premature end to a life that had so much promise.

Brighton boss Macaulay wept openly when he heard the devastating news. Seagulls fans mourned their loss and were left wondering just how good Barry Rees could have been...