

By Rob Sawyer

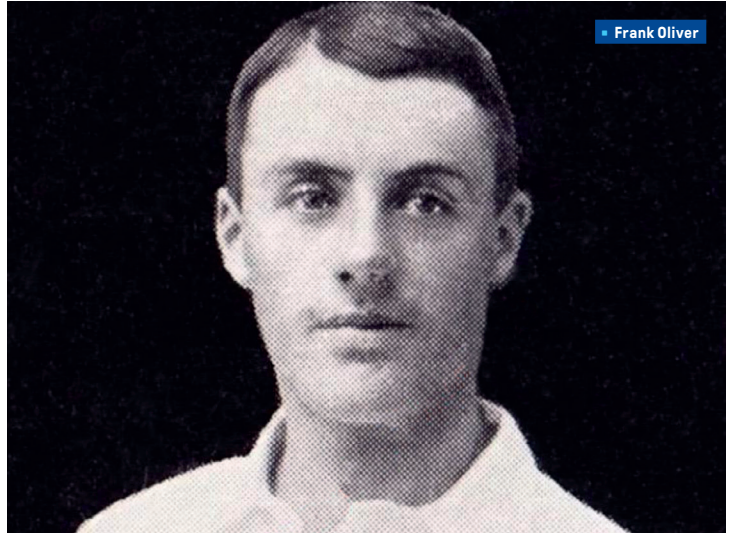
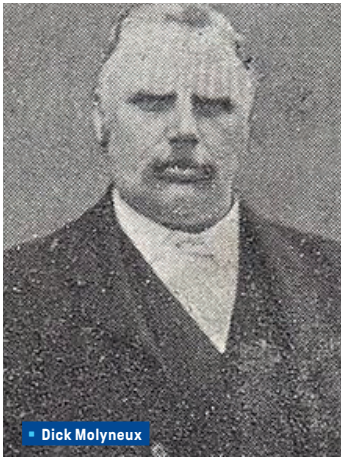
# FRANK OLIVER AND HIS DEBUT HAT-TRICK

Only three players have experienced the exhilaration of a hat-trick on an Everton debut. Tony Cottee knocked three past Newcastle United in August 1988 and Fred Pickering did the same to Nottingham Forest in 1964. And so did Frank Oliver in 1905.

Born in 1884, Oliver hailed from Southampton and at 19 he became attached to his hometown club, featuring in the reserve side. In 1904 he joined Brentford, then in the Southern League, and after just one season he was recommended to Everton – perhaps by Dick Molyneux, the former Toffees secretary who was then overseeing the Bees.

After impressing in Everton practice and reserve games, Oliver got a First-Team chance when Sandy Young was ruled out through illness on 14 October 1905 against Notts County.

The Blues won 6-2 with Oliver claiming three of the goals past the legendary goalkeeper Albert Iremonger, who is still County's all-time record appearance maker, and played county cricket for Nottinghamshire.



Walter Abbott, Harold Hardman and Jimmy Settle scored the other goals.

Unsurprisingly, Oliver retained his place in the team for the next match, away at Stoke City, scoring again in a 2-2 draw, again past a goalkeeper of distinction – Leigh Roose, who had joined Stoke from Everton.

However, he could not add to his tally in two further outings and was dropped. Then, as Christmas 1905 approached, he went AWOL, as logged in the Club's board minutes: *'The Secretary reported that F. Oliver had left his lodgings on Friday last and that his whereabouts had not been ascertained.'*

Contact was eventually re-established, and after tendering a transfer request, Oliver agreed to return to Merseyside in February, albeit without giving a full explanation for his absence to the Club's directors. He was recalled soon afterwards for an FA Cup tie with Bradford City but, perhaps still

experiencing homesickness, he failed to do himself justice in a 1-0 victory. Everton, of course, would win the Cup for the very first time in May, but Oliver did not pull on an Everton First-Team jersey again.

When Clapton Orient (now Leyton Orient) of the Second Division made a bid of £25 for his services in the summer of 1906, the Toffees were happy to accept.

Oliver spent three seasons at the east London club, making 40 appearances and scoring 12 goals. In the summer of 1909, he signed for Southport Central and in 1912 it was reported that he had rejoined Clapton Orient, but made only one appearance for the first team. In the following spring he joined Oswestry United.

In later life he lived with his family in Morden, south London, working as a general labourer. Frank Oliver, Football League debut hat-trick scorer, passed away in 1968.