

By Paul McParlan

MICKY LILL

THE EXTROVERT ENTERTAINER

Micky Lill was a dashing, skilful winger who made an immediate, if not lasting, impact in a footballing career that never quite reached the heights for which it seemed destined. Nevertheless, he was a firm fans' favourite at both Goodison Park and Molineux... and his style off the pitch also impressed his teammates.

Born in Romford, Essex, on 3 August 1936, he played in an England youth team alongside Bobby Charlton. Wolverhampton Wanderers signed him from West Ham United in 1954 but due to his National Service obligations, he had to wait more than two years to make his debut, scoring in the first minute against Preston North End at Deepdale in December 1957. Micky won the League title with Wolves the following season, scoring 12 goals in 18 games but never quite established himself as a regular in the team. When Johnny Carey offered him a role in his new-look Everton side in February 1960, he seized the opportunity believing that "a change may advance my career." A fee of £25,000 secured his services.

In his first game at Goodison Park he scored in a 4-0 victory, also against Preston North End, who must have been sick of the sight of him! His eye for fashion was a hot topic in the Everton camp with Brian Labone recalling: "He had a very sharp dress sense" adding: "He turned up for training the way most of us would turn up for a wedding."

The 1960/61 season looked set to be his best yet. He bagged two goals in a crushing 4-0 defeat of Manchester United at Goodison and in September netted five in seven games as

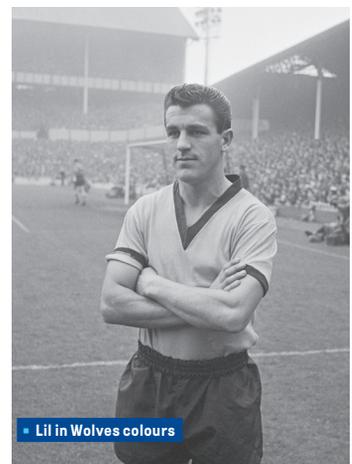


Micky Lill in Blue

Everton established themselves as title contenders. Unfortunately, a cartilage injury ended this run, and a leg infection delayed his comeback further with the Club sending him to a sanatorium in Harrogate to cure the problem.

Micky made his comeback in August 1961, but he was lacking his trademark pace and confidence and after losing his place to Billy Bingham, he moved to promotion-challenging Plymouth Argyle in February 1962 for a knock-down fee of £11,400, reflecting fears that he had become too injury prone. Micky later played for Portsmouth before emigrating to South Africa, where he died in 2004. On a visit to the UK in 1991, he did pop back to Bellefield and met up with Jimmy Gabriel.

Micky Lill was an extrovert who exuded style both on and off the pitch. Perhaps



Lil in Wolves colours

Brian Labone was correct in his assessment when he said: "He wasn't helped by the injuries, but he did have talent."