



By Mike Royden

THREE REPLAYS AND AN EXPULSION

EVERTON'S EXPLOSIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE FA CUP

By Rob Sawyer

Tonight is the first FA Cup replay staged at Goodison since 2013 and a winner will be decided, with the Toffees or Eagles progressing to the next round. Back in the days of unlimited replays, there were some epic Cup encounters, including the three matches against Liverpool in 1991 and four matches against Sheffield Wednesday in 1988. However, nothing can surpass the drama of our very first entry into the grandest of club knockout competitions.

The FA Cup campaign of 1887/88 got under way in October, with Everton drawn away to Bolton Wanderers. Of the near-4,000 spectators, 700 were Evertonians, conveyed by a special rail excursion.

In the second half, tempers flared with some spectators joining players in a melee and the Trotters advanced to the next round thanks to a Roberts goal – or so they thought.

It emerged that Bob Struthers (pictured) was ineligible to play due to a registration technicality and an FA committee insisted on a replay, to take place at Everton's Anfield home. The Bolton team arrived by train, alighting at Sandhills, where a wagonette was in waiting to convey them to the ground for a 2.15pm kick-off. The match, watched by 7,000, ended in a 2-2 deadlock – a late Everton equaliser forcing 30 minutes of extra-time in rapidly fading light.

A fortnight later, it was back to Bolton's Pike's Lane ground for the second replay. George Farmer, who was Everton's first professional (along with George Dobson), put the Blues ahead in the second half, but Bolton's Brogan earned another draw, which meant yet



another replay back at Anfield a week later.

John Goudie and Robert Watson put the Toffees into a two-goal lead and although the Trotters pulled a goal back, Everton held firm for a 2-1 win – but there would be a further twist in the tale.

Shortly after the match, Bolton reported to the authorities that James Weir and Robert Smallie did not have the necessary qualifications to play for the Toffees and it was also alleged that a number of amateurs were, in fact, being paid. The appeal would be heard by the FA Council, but not before Everton played Preston North End on

26 November in the second round of the Cup. Preston won 6-0 but on 5 December the FA committee decreed that a number of Everton players were indeed de-facto professionals

(something Everton had denied) and the Club was expelled from the competition (even though we were already out!) and banned from all football for a month. The Football League didn't start until the following season, by the way. Bolton would play Preston (and lose 9-1), with Everton's defeat to the Lilywhites being expunged from the records.

