

Players Parade at Goodison Park

Appearance record to end of 1969-70 season

Football League – Division 1

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By Alan Williams, Daily Express, in Everton Matchday Magazine

WEST BROMWICH ALBION

Alan Merrick

Local product ALAN MERRICK has been given Albion sound cover in all the back four positions, popping up in four different shirts this season. Made his debut in 1968 when he was also a member of the England Youth squad.

Alan Merrick's League career:

Albion Apps. 15 (3)

Asa Hartford

When Albion signed Hope, they not only gained one of the game's most accurate passers, they also took on a "volunteer" scout, for it was Bobby's father who recommended ASA HARTFORD to Hawthorns.

Asa, who also went to Bobby's old school, Clydebank High, has developed along the same lines, making his debut as a 17-year-old three years ago and winning several Under-23 caps.

Asa Hartford's League career:

Albion Apps. 59 (7) Goals 9

Bobby Hope

A measure of BOBBY HOPE's standing among the best creative inside forwards was a rejected six-figure offer from Arsenal early this season. He won Scottish schoolboy honours before joining Albion and became the club's youngest first-team player when making his debut at 16 years 7 month in 1960. Graduated to Under-23 international level in 1966-67, then joined full team on 1967 world tour and finally won his senior cap in Amsterdam in 1968.

Bobby Hope's League career:

Albion Apps. 292 Goals 31

Colin Suggett

Alan Ashman set a club record when he paid £100,000 for unsettled Sunderland striker COLIN SUGGETT in June, 1969.

Won six England school caps and played for Chesterle-Street in the Final of the English School Trophy. Colin reached the Sunderland team while still playing in the junior side which got to the 1967 FA Youth Cup Final.

Colin Suggett's League career:

Sunderland Apps. 83 (3) Goals 24
Albion Apps. 42 Goals 12

George McVitie

GEORGE McVITIE, a former schoolboy international from Carlisle, was often tracked by the scouts of the major clubs when at Carlisle United. Ashman was his manager in those days and didn't forget McVitie when he was appointed by Albion. Ashman went back to Carlisle with a £25,000 cheque last september to sign thi quick-moving right winger.

George McVitie's League career:

Carlisle Apps. 123 (3) Goals 21

Graham Lovett

It's not overstating the facts to call Albion midfielder GRAHAM LOVETT one of the bravest man in the game. He looked the brightest star produced by the City of Birmingham in years when he established at right half as a 17-year-old but a Motorway car crash at Christmas eve, 1968, left him with serious neck and spine injuries. He needed bone-grafting operations, but came back in time to play against us in the 1968 Cup Final. But only a year later he suffered in another car accident, breaking a thigh and arm. He managed to get back for two games last season and has completed his recovery this term.

Graham Lovett's League career: Albion Apps. 84 (6) Goals 7

Jeff Astle

The Midlands have long been split into two schools of thought about the comparative ability of Albion skipper JEFF ASTLE and his former Notts County teammate Tony Hatley. They were both groomed by “head-master” Tommy Lawton when he was manager of County and Hatley made the first move to the top division with Villa. It’s now history that his travels cost clubs over £400,000, but it was Tony’s first move that marked down Astle as a centre forward.

He took the No. 9 shirt on Hatley’s departure from Meadow Lane and Albion saw his potential when paying £25,000 in September, 1964. He was an instant success. Even with a cartilage operation to hamper him, he scored 24 goals in 34 games in 1965-66 and then had his best season with 35 League and Cup goals when scoring in each round of the 1968 FA Cup.

He won his first cap against Wales in May, 1969, and joined England on the 1969 South America tour and last year’s World Cup mission. He was appointed club skipper early this season.

Jeff Astle’s League career:

Notts County Apps. 96 Goals 31
Albion Apps. 208 (1) Goals 116

Jim Cumbes

When JIMMY CUMBES left Tranmere Rovers in a £35,000 transfer early last season, he was not only gambling his soccer career on success in the First Division, but he was also throwing away the chance of reaching the top as a fast bowler with Surrey.

With Albion, there was no time to merge the two sports. And, at first, the Mancunian must have wondered about the move as he lost his place to former regular John Osborne. He played only 15 League games last season and instead, of enjoying his summer with Surrey, he could snatch only a few games in the Birmingham League.

But this season has brought a chance of form and fortune ...and Albion have now agreed to let Jimmy play cricket for Lancashire this summer.

Jimmy Cumbes’s League career:

Tranmere Apps. 136
Albion Apps. 15

John Kaye

Experienced JOHN KAYE is the third member of Albion's defence who started out in the attack. Started with his local team, Goole Town, but was soon in the League with Scunthorpe, banging home the goals and tempting Albion to pay £45,000 in May, 1963.

Ankle trouble handicapped him at first, but in 1965-66 was voted Midland footballer of the Year. Capped twice by the Football League.

John Kaye's League career:

Scunthorpe Apps. 77 Goals 25
Albion Apps. 233 Goals 45

John Talbut

The arrival of Wile signalled a halt of the long First Division career of former Under-23 international skipper JOHN TALBUT, who had been holding the No.5 spot since his £32,000 transfer from Burnley in December, 1966.

Born in Oxford, but won schoolboy caps when living in North East. Joined Burnley on leaving school and succeeded Tommy Cummings at centre half.

Had a cartilage operation soon after joining Albion but was an ever-present in two seasons.

John Talbut's League career:

Burnley Apps. 138
Albion Apps. 126

John Wile

Albion's latest capture is £20,000 former Peterborough United centre half JOHN WILE, an ever-present in the Fourth Division last year who arrived at the Hawthorns in December. He was club skipper at Peterborough he re-established in League football after being released by his local club Sunderland.

John Wile's League career:

Peterborough Apps. 95 (1) Goals 5

Len Cantello

LEN CANTELLO found his way to Albion along the same path as Tony Brown – being signed from Manchester Boys just when it appeared he was booked to go to Manchester United. Won six schoolboy caps and made his League debut only six months after turning full professional in 1968. Recognised as a midfielder but has played at left back this season.

Len Cantello's League career:

Albion Apps. 17 (3)

Lyndon Hughes

The transfer of last year's Wembley skipper, Doug Fraser, to Nottingham Forest gave former schoolboy international LYNDON HUGHES more scope at right back. Yet the Smethwick youngster was an inside forward in his early days at the Hawthorns and won England Youth honours in midfield. He also made his League debut at inside right in October, 1968. Switched to full back last season, but has been troubled by injury this winter.

Lyndon Hughes League career:

Albion Apps. 25 (5)

Ray Wilson

RAY WILSON joined Albion as an amateur nearly eight years ago, and like Hughes, has made his way backwards to get a senior place. The Scotsman from Stirling made his debut as outside left in 1965, but didn't gain a regular spot until taken over at left back at start of the 1968-69 season.

A cartilage operation hindered him late last season but he has been capped by Scotland Under-23's in the last year.

Ray Wilson's League career:

Albion Apps. 58 (2) Goals 2

Tony Brown

Albion's Manchester scout pulled off a great stroke of business when he snatched TONY BROWN away from under the noses of United and City.

The former Youth international has been an outstanding marksman for Albion, either as a wing striker, when he scored 27 goals in 1965-66, as a midfielder going forward where he has claimed most of this season's 20 League goals. He is locked in a race with Martin Chivers to be top First Division scorer – and ironically, five of his goals has come against Chiver's Spurs team!

Tony earned a late call-up to the England squad for the trip to Malta.

Tony Brown's League career:

Albion Apps. 213 Goals 83