

WHEN
ENGLAND
RULED THE **WORLD**

Four Years That Shaped
the Modern Game

STEVE MINGLE



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Introduction

England. The summer of 1966. The sixties might have been getting into their swing, but the optimistic mood hadn't spread to football. Attendances for the 1965/66 season had fallen again, with the league programme attracting the lowest aggregate of spectators since the war. In an era full of strikes and pay freezes, life was tough for the working man, with many concluding that even the relatively cheap admission prices would instead be better spent on beer and fags. At least these were sources of guaranteed pleasure: on the pitch, there had been a marked trend towards a more negative, unappealing style of football, with many teams, particularly away from home, setting up in an increasingly defensive formation and showing little inclination to entertain. There had also been sporadic instances of trouble on the terraces, a further deterrent to all but the most committed supporters.

Since the previous World Cup in Chile, English club football had been almost wholly dominated by the industrial North. Liverpool (twice), Manchester United and Everton had won the four division one titles, whilst Leeds United, emerging as a dark force under Don Revie, had finished second in the previous two seasons. The last two FA Cup finals had both seen Lancashire v Yorkshire shoot-outs. There was an abundance of talent to be found in teams elsewhere, but nowhere near enough consistency for any of them to mount a serious title challenge.

It seemed as though the best that London clubs could hope for was a decent cup run, and West Ham had shown what was possible by winning the cup in 1964 and following it up with another Wembley triumph, in the 1965 European Cup Winners' Cup Final. Spurs and Chelsea also had star names with obvious talent and potential, but the era had been one of the darkest in Arsenal's history. Under Billy Wright's stewardship, the Gunners had become well acquainted with the bottom half of the table, and the fans had voted with their feet in the face of football which was both unattractive and unsuccessful. Their May 1966 home game against Leeds attracted just 4,500 to Highbury. The North East was also a region in footballing decline, with none of its teams having had a sniff of a trophy throughout the decade. The Midlands had fared little better.

Although English clubs had tasted success in Europe, no English side had ever reached the final of the premier competition, the European Cup. Exits were often accompanied by tirades against the Machiavellian ways of the victors, with more than a few suggestions that some officials had been incentivised to favour the continentals. For all the flamboyant brilliance of the Real Madrid and Brazil sides of recent years, the average British fan still regarded many aspects of foreign football with deep suspicion, not necessarily the ideal mentality for hosting a successful international competition.

But of much greater concern as the tournament approached was the state of our own team, and optimism was thin on the ground. The increasingly pragmatic style favoured by Alf Ramsey had delivered a series of workmanlike but uninspiring performances, leaving observers to conclude that England would be overwhelmed should they meet the exotic Brazilians or the highly fancied West Germans, to name but two.

Eric Batty, eccentric contributor to *World Soccer* and *Soccer Star* magazines, was at the extreme end of the pessimists but there were few who argued with his core sentiment. 'One thing is absolutely sure: the first time England meet a talented, well-balanced team, they will go out.' But worse still, and Batty was

hardly unique amongst serious journalists, came the almost treacherous 'I do not want England to win!' His rationale was his 'certain knowledge that English football needs to be reformed and reorganised at almost every point, and to win the World Cup would set back these reforms.'

So whilst the tabloids were full of the jingoistic optimism that inevitably accompanied sporting events on home soil, there were plenty who had dismissed England's chances of serious progress and who felt it would be best for all concerned if we flopped dismally, took a long hard look at ourselves, and went back to the drawing board.

Some of this negativity emanated from the cool relationship between Ramsey and the press. Not naturally forthcoming and scarcely able to conceal his contempt for the Fleet Street pack and their lack of enthusiasm for his methods, Ramsey had exacerbated the position with his famous 'We will win the World Cup' quote shortly after his appointment in 1963. It wasn't made in a remotely boastful way, rather in defiance and irritation at journalists who even at the outset were doubting his and his team's credentials, but there were evidently more than a few in Fleet Street itching to throw the quote back in his face.

Of course, they never got the chance. England's triumph was met by incredulity by much of the press, many of whom had been forced to eat humble pie. And even the most positive reaction was often tempered by an element of disappointment at the team's style of play. For some, it still wasn't enough to have brought home football's greatest prize; what was needed was to have done it by playing a scintillating brand of football. There were acknowledgments aplenty for England's teamwork, effort, strength, fitness and courage, but through the superficial euphoria there was a clear sense of damning the team with faint praise. 'England's endeavour is enough' said one headline, with another broadsheet claiming that 'whatever the team may have lacked in skill it more than made up for it with the type of display that owed more to the British character than any special footballing prowess...' But at least we had played fair, and even

the broadsheets couldn't resist a little dig at those nasty foreign types. 'Forgotten were the snivelling South Americans and their niggling football...'

More considered reflection led to the general conclusion that England had been worthy winners, even if it couldn't be denied that plenty of things had gone their way. Apart from having had home advantage, they benefitted from a crucial, controversial and probably incorrect decision in the final, from a refereeing display which incensed their Argentinian opponents in the quarter-final and from being drawn in what was widely reckoned to be the weakest qualifying group. They were also able to play all their matches at Wembley via a FIFA-approved loophole which allowed them to switch venues for the semi-final from Goodison Park, a ground with which their Portuguese opponents had by then become very familiar.

In terms of tactics, the cliché most associated with Ramsey's team is 'wingless wonders'. But whilst it's true that his team in the knockout stages may not have contained orthodox wingers as we knew them, the team certainly didn't lack width. The spaces on the flanks made available by his preferred formation were exploited time and again by the runs of Peters and Ball in particular, with Cohen and Wilson also frequently moving forward to overlap. Four of England's goals from open play throughout the tournament came from crosses, most tellingly Hurst's header from Peters' cross in the quarter-final and his 'was it over the line?' goal from Ball's surge down the right and low cross. The difference was that these crosses were provided by players moving into open space, rather than from the conventional touchline huggers who offered little to the team effort away from their own strictly demarcated zone.

It can instead be argued that the most significant call made by Ramsey wasn't the lack of wingers; instead it was the omission of possibly the most gifted player at his disposal in favour of one with a far greater work ethic. Yes, Jimmy Greaves had initially been injured; yes, Geoff Hurst had immediately made an impact with his quarter-final winner, and it made it easier for Ramsey

to make what at the start of the tournament would have been a tumultuous decision. But Greaves' omission from the Final XI was still a hugely significant landmark, defining the shift in mentality from teams being selected as the best eleven players to the eleven players who would best fit into the system chosen by the manager.

An illustration of Ramsey's approach came when, after being selected for an important match, no-frills centre-half Jack Charlton reportedly asked, 'What am I doing here, Alf? I'm not the best centre-half in the country.' Ramsey responded: 'You're right, Jack, you're nowhere near the best centre-half. But you can do what I want you to do.' As did every one of England's players on that momentous July day.

But now, after recognising our achievement, however churlishly, it was time to look forward, and *The Guardian* set the tone. 'England, who gave the game to the world, are at last its champions and with it comes the challenge to set the lead.' So, month by month, at international, club, and individual level, how did we do?

1966/67:

United's Stepping Stone

AUGUST 1966

The nation's football fans had just two weeks to recover from the World Cup celebrations before the domestic programme got under way with the Charity Shield. The all-Merseyside affair took place at Anfield in front of a capacity 63,000 crowd, who were treated to the sight of the Jules Rimet trophy being paraded around the ground before the game began. Roger Hunt settled the issue with a fierce twenty-five-yarder, with champions Liverpool running out more comfortable winners than the 1-0 scoreline indicated. Reports on the match suggested that Everton needed strengthening in midfield if they were to become serious players again, and Harry Catterick evidently shared the sentiment; just two days later, they signed Alan Ball from Blackpool, reportedly from under Leeds United's noses, for a handsome £110,000. Even though the fee was a record between British clubs, there were few if any who queried whether Ball would deliver value for money. At just twenty-one, he had been

one of England's major successes of the tournament and was clearly destined for many more great things.

The real action began seven days later and hopes that the World Cup feelgood factor would bring the fans flocking back received a serious reality check. Overall attendances throughout the four divisions were down 70,000 on the previous year, producing the lowest opening-day aggregate since the war. There were mitigating features – it was a swelteringly hot day and the Oval Test match between England and Gary Sobers' West Indies was being televised live – but there were a number of disappointing turnouts, even at grounds where members of Ramsey's triumphant XI would be on display.

At Upton Park, the golden triumvirate of Moore, Hurst and Peters took the field alone to receive the thunderous applause of the crowd. Once the other nineteen players entered the arena, Chelsea rather spoiled the occasion by chalking up a 2-1 victory, due largely to the brilliance of Peter Bonetti in goal. 'We will not meet him every week,' observed Ron Greenwood with undeniable accuracy. Some were surprised that they had even met him at all, given Chelsea's signing of Alex Stepney during the summer, but it was a great start for Bonetti in his battle to retain his place in the side.

At Old Trafford, just 41,000 turned up to recognise World Cup winners Charlton and Stiles, but this wasn't the only thing on the pre-match agenda – Charlton had also been named as the previous season's Footballer Of The Year. United generously chose to mark his achievement by presenting him with a coffee table, a silver coffee set and a canteen of cutlery. The prospect of a few gentle afternoons on Nescafe and Battenburg *chez* Bob and Norma clearly inspired his team-mates, as with just twenty minutes on the clock they had romped into a 4-1 lead, en route to a 5-3 win. This early suggestion that both teams were rather stronger in attack than defence would prove to be well founded.

The day's outstanding individual performance was Gordon Harris's hat-trick for Burnley against Sheffield United, in front

of a crowd of less than 18,000. Southampton's eagerly awaited top-flight debut brought disappointment when the fixtures computer put them up against partners in promotion Manchester City, but even so they would have expected rather more than 19,000 to turn out for such an historic occasion, particularly with expensive new signing Ron Davies on display. Those present at least witnessed the Saints' first ever top-flight goal, fittingly scored by Terry Paine, well on the way to becoming the club's record appearance holder.

Southampton had reacted to the tactical nuances of the World Cup by changing the way the team line-ups were presented in their programme. Manager Ted Bates said: 'We need to check all the propaganda about wingless wonders and the rest. We need to impress on supporters that modern techniques need not be dull or boring. And we need to educate people away from the idea of a goalkeeper, two full-backs, three half-backs and five forwards. That is in the past.' Gone was the 1-2-3-5 presentation of the two teams, replaced by a simple list of one to eleven, plus a substitute.

Other World Cup winners had mixed opening-day fortunes; at Craven Cottage, Alan Ball's debut goal delivered victory for Everton, enabling Ray Wilson to get one over his full-back partner George Cohen's Fulham, whilst Roger Hunt put one past Gordon Banks at Anfield to help Liverpool to a 3-2 win over Leicester. Jack Charlton was forced to sit out Leeds' visit to White Hart Lane, where he witnessed Jimmy Greaves seal Spurs' 3-1 victory.

Greaves was one of few Englishmen – other than certain po-faced journalists – for whom the World Cup Final had been a painful occasion, and many wondered whether his England career was now over. He would never acquire the work ethic so prized by Ramsey – and with his record at club and international level, why should he change? – so all he could do to get back in the side was use sheer weight of goals. Putting one past one of the division's meanest defences was a decent way to start. It was a happy debut for Spurs' new centre-half Mike England and this was also the match which delivered one of the decade's

most iconic sporting photographs, with Dave Mackay, biceps bulging like Desperate Dan, literally picking up Billy Bremner by his shirt front and leaving him in no doubt as to what a *real* hard man looked like.

Whilst opening-day live attendances may have disappointed, at least *Match Of The Day* posted record viewing figures, although this was primarily due to the switch to BBC One, opening the programme up to a significantly wider audience in a time slot which it would immediately make its own.

Launched in August 1964, *Match Of The Day* had previously been running for two seasons on BBC 2, a channel to which only a small proportion of the population had access. Viewing figures had gradually improved from the meagre 20,000 who tuned in to the first transmission, but had remained relatively modest. Some ITV regions had also showed highlights of games involving their local teams on Sunday afternoons, but coverage had been intermittent and by no means nationwide.

But the World Cup immediately changed everything. It had been covered to saturation point by television, with the BBC paying £300,000 to deliver a full fifty hours of coverage over the three weeks. ITV provided a further fifteen hours of live action, including the final itself – as with the FA Cup Final, they felt obliged to duplicate coverage even though their share of viewers was small, and surely smaller than would have been achieved if an alternative programme catering for those with little interest in football (plus the Scots) had been offered. England's success had ensured that overall viewing figures were spectacular, further illustrating to the TV companies the potential audience for televised football.

But even this feast of football for the public at large had been greeted with some negativity. The Football League, and many club directors, were concerned that the cultivation of an army of armchair viewers would increase the likelihood of even more televised football, which in turn would simply encourage people to tune into the highlights at home rather than going out to watch the real thing.

So, with the World Cup having broadened the potential audience for football, it was an opportunity for the BBC to build on the enhanced level of interest, and even to cultivate some of the female viewers who had found themselves engulfed by World Cup fever. Although that, according to some, would be as far as it would go. 'Football's new admirers amongst the female fraternity may still enjoy the occasional match on television, but just try to drag them along to your local ground in mid-December with snow on the ground and a bitter wind blowing...' was a typical sentiment. Some clubs were at least prepared to have a go – Brentford and Charlton Athletic offered half-price season tickets for women, with Coventry City offering instruction on the intricacies of the offside rule and other such complicated matters.

Highlights of the first midweek programme saw two goals from the languid and extravagantly talented Peter Osgood prove enough for Chelsea to see off Nottingham Forest, whilst a brace from Denis Law secured a win for United at Goodison Park. Their newly promoted neighbours also made headlines, beating Liverpool with a late goal from the highly promising twenty-year-old, Colin Bell. The press lauded City for a 'magnificent display of fast, attacking football' and noted that even the referee applauded them from the field.

The following Saturday saw the first league tables produced, and Burnley – a side which had punched well above its weight in the decade so far, with a title and four other top-four finishes – led the way, together with Arsenal. Both had begun with three straight wins, although the Highbury attendance of just 26,000 for the visit of Villa suggested that new manager Bertie Mee and coach Dave Sexton had work to do to win over the fans who had drifted away from Highbury following the mediocrity of recent seasons. Billy Wright's three-year tenure had been completely disastrous, both in terms of quality of football and attendances.

Just a week into the new season came the first observations of teams taking tactical note of England's methods, and Sheffield Wednesday were roundly criticised for their stifling display in

a goalless draw at Stamford Bridge. Their initial formation was a clear 4-3-3, although as the game progressed and a precious point became ever closer, this was transformed into 4-4-2 and ultimately 5-4-1. Chelsea didn't help themselves by lining up without an orthodox winger, and one reporter noted that 'the flanks at Stamford Bridge were open spaces ready for property development'. Events some forty years later show him to have been only a few yards wide of the mark.

Blackpool's home defeat to newly promoted Southampton, coupled with continuing disgruntlement at the sale of their prize asset, led to the season's first fan demonstration, with protesters gathering outside the ground after the game. Their plight paled in comparison to fourth-division Barnsley, who had also started the season with three straight defeats and were reportedly £43,000 in debt. This prompted a fifteen-year-old schoolboy to visit the club's offices and donate his week's spending money – a two-shilling piece – as a contribution to help his beloved club find a new striker. Rather than thanking the boy and declining his offer the money was gratefully accepted, with the club secretary expressing the wish that there were 20,000 more like him. Only in Yorkshire...

Match Of The Month

*27 August 1966, Division One: Leicester City 5
West Ham United 4*

Leicester's first home game of the season gave their fans the chance to recognise the contribution made by Gordon Banks to England's triumphant summer and, with the opposition boasting the scorers of all four final goals as well as the team captain, it seemed wholly appropriate that the four heroes should emerge from the tunnel alone to receive the rapturous applause of the crowd.

The match that followed fully lived up to the celebratory mood. Leicester stormed ahead, with Derek Dougan continuing his prolific start to the season, before Jackie Sinclair added a

second. The action intensified in the second half with five goals in a fifteen-minute spell, initiated by Peter Brabrook's strike. Sinclair immediately restored Leicester's two-goal lead, but Brabrook took only a few more minutes to reply once more. Two more goals within sixty seconds from Goodfellow and Hurst followed and the game was in the balance until Sinclair completed his hat-trick ten minutes from time.

Hurst's late goal was too late to give West Ham any realistic chance of completing a comeback, and West Ham's World Cup stars had returned from their Wembley euphoria to start their club campaign with three straight defeats. Manager Ron Greenwood was naturally unhappy, but wouldn't be changing his team's approach. 'Our job is to entertain and win points. At the moment, we are only doing half of it.'

Of all the teams in the top flight, West Ham were the least likely to be swayed by the success of 'method' football, and in consequence would endure plenty of humbling defeats to go with the stellar triumphs. Subsequent occasional attempts to change their DNA have generally failed.

Leicester: Banks, Rodrigues, Sjoberg, Cross, Norman, Roberts, Sinclair, Gibson, Goodfellow, Dougan, Gibson.

West Ham: Standen, Burnett, Moore, Charles, Bovington, Peters, Boyce, Brabrook, Hurst, Byrne, Sissons.

Player Of The Month

Alan Ball (Everton)

Ball's outstanding performances in the World Cup, coupled with his burning ambition, made it inevitable that he would move to a bigger club than Blackpool, and just seventeen days after running the Germans ragged at Wembley he signed for Everton for £110,000. At just twenty-one, this was a record transfer fee between British clubs. His impact was immediate as Everton, bidding to regain the title they won two years earlier, began the season in great style. Ball's debut at Craven Cottage saw him score the game's only goal, and he followed it up with an

outstanding if ultimately futile display at home to Manchester United, where Law's two goals took the spoils. After just two games, press reporters were marking Ball down as by far his new team's most influential player. 'Ball foraged, harassed and inspired...but he cannot be everywhere nor do everything on his own. Until his colleagues react with equal facility, Everton will suffer frustration...' Three days later, any such frustration was banished as Ball scored twice to condemn Liverpool to defeat in the Merseyside derby and establish himself in Everton folklore within a fortnight of his arrival.

Ball's season continued as it began, with an impressive eighteen goals supplementing his high-energy contribution to the team's efforts. By the time the Mexico World Cup came round, his status as one of the country's outstanding players had been firmly cemented, and received tangible reward with Everton's comprehensive championship win of 1969/70. Over the four seasons, he contributed sixty-eight goals for his club and his performances for England ensured his status as an untouchable member of Ramsey's first XI. He played in all four of England's games in Mexico, but his performances were hampered by the high altitude, and his impact on the tournament was less telling than many had hoped and expected.

A year later, Ball broke the British transfer record for the second time, when double winners Arsenal paid £220,000 for his services. Ball would continue to perform with impressive consistency for his new club, but found himself in an ageing team whose best days were behind them, and his five seasons at Highbury failed to deliver any silverware. Two spells at Southampton bookended a short stint back at Bloomfield Road, this time as player-manager, together with a foray into the North American Soccer League.

Ball turned to management after his playing career was over, but with generally disastrous results. For supporters of the clubs concerned – particularly Manchester City – this has cast a shadow over his name and reputation, but his impact on the game as a player, both for club and country, was immense

and he was without question one of the most influential and memorable footballers of the late 1960s and early 1970s. His sheer enthusiasm for the game made him stand out as much as his ginger hair and white boots, and he was much loved not only by supporters of the teams he played for, but also the football public at large.

SEPTEMBER 1966

By the first weekend of September, the celebratory mood surrounding English football had given way to a dose of reality, as the weekend's matches throughout the divisions were tarnished by violence on and off the pitch.

At Burnley, a brutal clash between Burnley and Leeds – a fixture with plenty of previous – was dubbed the 'Battle of Turf Moor', but the five bookings on the pitch were overshadowed by the behaviour off it, as the referee threatened to abandon the match when Burnley fans continued to hurl missiles at Gary Sprake and his fellow defenders. At West Ham, a Liverpool supporter threw a bottle on to the pitch, which smashed close to Jim Standen, the West Ham keeper. There were scuffles reported at lower-league grounds as well, with an inescapable sense that the football hooligan movement, already seen to a limited but increasing extent in previous seasons, was now gathering scale and momentum. But why was it happening?

Reports tended to link the trouble on the terraces to player behaviour on the pitch, in turn leading for calls for stricter refereeing and more stringent punishments for offenders. But whilst there was evidence that on-field flashpoints were mirrored or reacted to by spectators, it was only part of the story. Away fans were arriving early and setting themselves up with the intention of 'taking' the home end, and with no scope for segregation within grounds and all but a handful of games being pay at the gate for standing spectators, police and stewards could do little to prevent the inevitable premeditated trouble.

On a particularly bleak Saturday, the press wasted little time in bemoaning the lack of goals and entertainment, noting that

eight of the day's top-flight games had ended in stalemate, seven of them 1-1. The conclusion that cautious defensive football was taking ever more of a grip was easily reached, and with a catalogue of violent incidents both on and off the pitch, it was a chance to put some of the little Englanders in their place. There was an almost smug 'told you so...' tone about some of the reporting, with *The Times* in particular quick to put the boot in. 'The pious mouthings about the Argentines and Rattin at Wembley five weeks ago now find their true perspective.'

Attendances remained disappointing, the reports of trouble on the terraces deterring some of those – especially women – whose interest in football had been stimulated by the World Cup and who were curious as to what the live football experience was like. But another factor was the difficult economic climate, with the country in the middle of a six-month pay freeze. Coventry, with its thousands of car workers, had been particularly affected by the tough conditions and their team's manager, Jimmy Hill, understood that what was offered on the pitch needed to be attractive in order for people to feel it was worth parting with what little spare cash they had. Hill also recognised the role of football as a means of escapism. 'We have got to provide the sort of football that will make people forget that they are broke.'

Back on the pitch, the first Manchester derby for three years saw United secure a relatively untroubled victory, albeit by the only goal. Their new goalkeeper, Alex Stepney, signed for a record £55,000 after just one league game and three months at Chelsea, had few chances to display his credentials but at least could look forward to the regular first-team football denied him by Peter Bonetti's excellent start to the season.

Arsenal and Bertie Mee's unbeaten start came to a shuddering halt at the home of their bitterest rivals, with Jimmy Greaves continuing to exorcise the memory of his World Cup disappointment by bagging two goals. The following week saw Greaves at it again, as he netted a late winner to seal Spurs' come-from-behind win against Manchester United, prompting a pitch invasion at the end of the game. United were always a big

scalp, especially for Spurs, who had been involved in several epic encounters with them in recent years. When Spurs next went to Burnley and secured a point in a 2-2 draw, Greaves scored one and made one, and his prolific form led to plenty of speculation that his England career might still have legs. But having achieved ultimate success with his total work ethic, could Ramsey be persuaded to once again embrace Greaves' ethereal qualities?

For now, though, Ramsey's concern was the selection of his Football League XI, traditionally made up of fringe players together with under-23 regulars reckoned to have the potential to make the full squad. Amongst the latter group on this occasion were Tommy Smith of Liverpool, Mike Summerbee of Manchester City and Peter Osgood of Chelsea. Still just nineteen years old, Osgood had produced a string of outstanding performances in his debut season prior to the World Cup, causing the London press to petition for his inclusion in the tournament squad. Whilst Ramsey had predictably ignored such appeals, he could hardly fail to notice Osgood's continuing excellence at the start of the new season and a breakthrough into the senior ranks seemed imminent.

Osgood took a back seat at Villa Park, where a remarkable performance from Bobby Tambling saw him bag five goals in Chelsea's 6-2 victory, yet even that wasn't the day's highest-scoring fixture. At Goodison Park, a Ball-inspired Everton squeezed past West Brom in a nine-goal thriller. The lines about the dominance of defensive tactics, so prevalent in press comment in the season's opening weeks, were quietly put to one side as the day's eleven division one fixtures produced no fewer than forty-four goals.

The Football League XI duly took on the Irish League at Plymouth in front of over 35,000 fans, and a strong side – featuring the back four plus Martin Peters and Geoff Hurst of the World Cup Final team – strolled to a 12-0 win in the most pointless of pointless fixtures. Johnny Byrne scored four times, whilst John Connelly set up six goals as well as scoring a couple himself. Irish goalkeeper Albert Finney said: 'Let me get back to

my power station where I work as a steeplejack. I'll be safer 200 feet above ground than I was against these English forwards...'

The Steel City was relishing having both their teams in the top flight, and the season's first derby produced a thrilling 2-2 draw in front of 43,000 fans. United's scorers were Alan Woodward and centre-forward Mick Jones, whilst Jim McCalliog helped to inspire Wednesday's revival. Meanwhile, Burnley's title pretensions were cast into serious question at Old Trafford, where they were on the wrong end of a 4-1 hammering.

Moving along impressively were Leicester City, unbeaten since the opening day of the season and far too good for an Aston Villa side looking set for a relegation struggle. Leicester's 5-0 win included a hat-trick from former Villa striker Derek Dougan, one of the game's genuine mavericks, but one whose ability usually allowed him to get away with some of his eccentric behaviour.

By the end of the month, Chelsea remained unbeaten and stood at the top of the table. This was good news in every way for the Chelsea squad, who received a well-publicised bonus of £55 a man for every week that their team sat on top of the pile. Tommy Docherty had taken up the Ramsey template, telling anyone who would listen that there was no place for wingers in the modern game. His team's playing style was observed as 'high mobility, overlapping with no orthodox wingers,' with Osgood feted as an original, creative artist.

Another original creative artist was making waves in the depths of division three, where Queens Park Rangers looked as though they would be taking the division by storm. Their 7-1 win at Mansfield included a hat-trick from Rodney Marsh, taking his goal tally for the season up to fourteen, clearly suggesting a career destined for a much higher level than this.

Match Of The Month

17 September, 1966, Division One: Burnley 2 Tottenham 2

Spurs, with five wins in their first seven games, arrived at Turf Moor to face a Burnley side that remained unbeaten, even

though their previous five games had been drawn. With Spurs struggling to shed their soft-touch travellers' tag and Burnley's crowd making up for in hostility what it lacked in numbers, a home win looked the most likely outcome.

Jimmy Greaves had other ideas. Having come back from his World Cup disappointment in stirring style, most recently with his late winner against Manchester United the previous week, Greaves was at his mesmerising best. Just before the half-hour, he slalomed past three Burnley defenders before dinking the ball across for Frank Saul to head Spurs into the lead.

Burnley had plenty of attacking invention of their own, with Willie Morgan regularly getting the better of Cyril Knowles and Ralph Coates furthering his reputation as an energetic, inventive player of real promise. They had already hit the bar before Morgan crossed for Andy Lochhead to force home an equaliser. Two more goals were shared before half-time, a typically clinical finish from Greaves followed quickly by an equally typical Lochhead header, glanced in at the near post from a corner.

The crowd gave both teams a standing ovation as they left the field at half-time, and although the second half failed to deliver more goals, there was plenty of stylish football to enjoy. Spurs followed up with three straight wins, taking them temporarily to the top of the table; for Burnley, the next game saw them hammered at Old Trafford, but they went on to win seven of their next eight before their season fell away sharply.

Burnley: Blacklaw, Angus, Elder, O'Neil, Miller, Todd, Morgan, Lochhead, Irvine, Harris, Coates.

Tottenham: Jennings, Kinnear, Knowles, Mullery, England, Mackay, Robertson, Greaves, Gilzean, Venables, Saul.

Player Of The Month

Bobby Tambling (Chelsea)

Bobby Tambling made his debut for Chelsea as a seventeen-year-old in 1959, and by the start of the 1966/67 season was homing in on the record as their all-time leading goalscorer. He made

significant progress towards this target in September, opening the month with a goal in the 3-0 win at the Dell and tucking away another in a 6-2 hammering of Charlton in the League Cup. The month ended with Chelsea top of the league courtesy of a 3-1 win over Arsenal, with Tambling scoring twice, the second and clinching goal quite superb as he spun off Ian Ure on to Osgood's raking pass, used his pace to hold off two other defenders and smashed the ball high into the net. But his month will be recalled primarily for just one match, away at Villa Park.

A game chosen for the *Match Of The Day* cameras, Kenneth Wolstenholme and some five million viewers saw Tambling break the scoring record for the programme by netting five times in Chelsea's 6-2 win. With their skilful, slick passing Chelsea continually broke away to cut through Villa's defence and Tambling repeatedly found himself on the end of scoring chances. The pick of his goals was the second, latching on to Osgood's clever pass and cutting in from the left to bury a drive past Withers. He had completed his hat-trick by half-time and added another two in the second half as Chelsea coasted their way to an emphatic win. Tambling continued in prolific vein over the next few months, with his final goal of the season, albeit a consolation, coming in the FA Cup Final against Spurs.

Tambling would indeed go on to break Chelsea's scoring record and by the time he moved on to Crystal Palace in 1970 – squeezed out of regular first-team action by the emergence of Ian Hutchinson – he had netted 202 times for the Blues. His record would stand for over forty years until Frank Lampard overtook it, although Tambling's club record of league goals, 164, is still intact.

Tambling's England career was brief. He earned his first cap in November 1962 and scored his only international goal in Alf Ramsey's first game, a 5-2 defeat to France in 1963. His third and final cap came in England's final warm-up game for the 1966 World Cup, at home to Yugoslavia, raising hopes that he might sneak into the final twenty-two, but ultimately he failed to make the cut. A true Chelsea legend, Tambling was voted into the

club's all-time best XI in a poll carried out in 2005 to mark the club's centenary.

OCTOBER 1966

England's first full international since the World Cup Final saw them face Ireland in Belfast in the home internationals. This match doubled as a qualifying game for the 1968 European Nations Cup and saw Ramsey select the same XI which had written itself into history just over two months earlier. A routine 2-0 win was greeted with lukewarm press reaction, with journalists continuing their theme of demanding victory with style and flair. A merger of the Brazil '58 team with the Magnificent Magyars of '53 might just have satisfied a press who found it difficult to accept that Ramsey was getting the best from the tools at his disposal. Anyone who had spent the month of July living in a cave would have been hard pushed to believe that the team being written about had just been crowned champions of the world.

With all the home nations in action, as well as Eire, there were only four first division games, as clubs with two or more players selected for national squads could apply to the FA to have their match postponed. Alf selected twenty-two players for his squad, which was bad news financially for clubs forced to postpone games from Saturday to typically less well-attended midweek dates. It was a damning indictment of Arsenal's current status that theirs was one of the few games to be played. Worse still, they fell to a 3-2 home defeat to West Brom, in a match which saw Bob McNab make his Arsenal debut.

In the remaining fixtures, much the most remarkable result was lowly Blackpool's 6-0 rout of Newcastle. After starting the season looking like relegation certainties, Blackpool had suddenly come to vivid life, with this win following an equally remarkable triumph at White Hart Lane. A flash in the pan or proof that there really was life after Alan Ball?

The next full league programme saw an extraordinary fifty goals in the day's top-flight fixtures, with no fewer than

seven matches seeing at least one team score four goals. If this was defensive football, please could we have more of it? After cementing their position at the summit with a crushing 4-1 win at Maine Road, Chelsea next travelled to Blackpool for a League Cup tie. Midway through the first half, a crunching tackle between two nineteen-year-olds – Emlyn Hughes and Peter Osgood – left the latter lying on the turf with a badly broken leg.

There was no suggestion of any malicious intent on Hughes' part, but there was consternation from Osgood's team-mates at the fact that his opponent had walked away with not a backward glance nor any sense of concern for the stricken player. Hughes' own career would soon assume an upward trajectory, although based on the memoirs of many of his contemporaries – not least his future team-mates at Anfield – he was a less than universally popular figure. Many years later, Osgood would give his own perspective: 'I bear no grudge against Hughes. My leg got better – he's still got that silly fucking voice...'

In the Football League Cup, there was a highly anticipated tie between the two highest scoring teams in the whole of the league – QPR and Leicester City. A crowd of over 20,000 produced record gate receipts at Loftus Road and a thrilling comeback saw Rangers recover from conceding two goals to Derek Dougan, ultimately prevailing 4-2. With their opponents standing sixth in the first division table, it was a famous victory for Alec Stock's team – and there would soon be more to come.

Another ambitious third division club was Oldham Athletic. Under the chairmanship of a young Ken Bates, they had spent a tidy sum in assembling a team fit to challenge for promotion to the next tier. Bates had been unapologetically forthright about how the funds would need to be recouped – the locals would need to stump up higher admission charges – but the team's success on the pitch meant that plenty of them were willing to do so, with crowds in excess of 10,000 regularly passing through the Boundary Park turnstiles.

One of Bates' innovations was to give away a free programme on admittance to the ground. The programme itself – *The*

Boundary Bulletin – was way ahead of anything produced at most other Football League clubs, packed with information, features and pictures. It was more magazine than programme and also served as a vehicle for the already less than shy and retiring chairman to give both barrels to those foolish enough to provoke him. In the programme for the visit of Torquay United, he flayed the visitors for refusing to accommodate his request for an evening kick-off. Bates no doubt permitted himself a quietly satisfied smile in the boardroom after the game as the Latics battered their Devonian visitors 5-0.

Bates was clearly not a man to be cowed by reputations, as he showed when Burnley's Bob Lord – a bombastic FA bigwig – dared to opine on Oldham's transfer dealings in a less than complimentary fashion. The following week's *Boundary Bulletin* featured a two-page centre spread listing a series of quotes made by Lord over the years, ridiculing his opinions and predictions. It amounted to an extraordinary tirade by Bates, a taste of much more to come as his career assumed a higher profile over the next forty years.

At Maine Road, successive batterings at the hands of Chelsea and West Ham had led City's brash young coach, Malcolm Allison, to conclude that healthy diets alone would be no guarantee of top-flight success, or even survival. The team wasn't short of quality, but was proving too easy to play against. Against his naturally attacking instincts, he persuaded boss Joe Mercer to adopt more cautious tactics. However, rather than adopting the Ramsey template, he instead again turned to Italy for inspiration and introduced a sweeper into his team formation. Tony Book, the team captain plucked from obscurity with non-league Bath, took up the role.

The immediate aftermath of Osgood's injury saw Chelsea give up their unbeaten record in a home defeat to Burnley, and shortly afterwards Docherty called for reinforcements with the signing of Tony Hateley from Aston Villa for £100,000. Villa had previously turned down bids from both Arsenal and Liverpool for the striker, as they held out for their six-figure valuation.

Hateley made his debut at home to Spurs, but it was the man he had replaced in the starting eleven who would make the headlines.

The use of substitutes was now into its second season, although they were only allowed in cases where the referee was satisfied that a player was unable to continue. The very concept of making a substitution for purely tactical reasons wasn't just against the rules but regarded as underhand, almost as cheating. Once a manager had selected his side, he had made his bed and would have to lie on it – why should he get another bite of the cherry if things weren't going as planned?

Tommy Baldwin had been relegated to the bench by Hateley's inclusion, but came out at the start of the second half to replace Peter Houseman. Baldwin duly scored twice in Chelsea's 3-0 win, but a 'Tottenham official' later queried the substitution with the Football League. It was becoming increasingly evident that the 'halfway house' of substitutions only for injury was impractical; how could referees judge whether a player was fit to continue or not? So either allow them for any reason or don't have them at all.

There were advocates of both options, with many still of the view that injuries were just part of the game and that we should go back to the good old days. Those days where games were ruined as a spectacle when a team was reduced to ten men through no fault of their own. Those days when injured players would often struggle on, damaging themselves still further and making their subsequent recovery period even longer. The reluctance of many in the game, particularly its administrators, to embrace change – even when patently for the good – remained deep-rooted.

Houseman, perhaps diplomatically, was left out of Chelsea's next game, at Fulham, which produced Hateley's first contributions of note, his two goals including what it was hoped would become a trademark towering header. Another striker becoming increasingly renowned for aerial feats was Southampton's Ron Davies, who continued his remarkable

scoring streak by netting for the ninth consecutive league game. This one was the most important and eye-catching of the lot, securing a shock win for Southampton at Elland Road.

The next striker to move for big money was Ron's unrelated namesake Wyn Davies, signed from Bolton by a desperately struggling Newcastle side. His debut could hardly have gone worse, with Sunderland cruising to a 3-0 win at St James' Park. Things got a little better in their next home game as a poor Manchester City side were beaten 2-0, but a crowd of only 16,000 rattling around the famous old ground showed how disillusioned the Tyneside public had become. So recently regarded as England's hotbed of football, the North East may have given birth to two of the more notable stars of Ramsey's team, but not one of the side – or even the full twenty-two-man squad – played for any of the local clubs. Roker and Ayresome Parks had been used as World Cup venues, hosting the North Koreans, but the turnouts had been much the lowest of the four groups as the tournament almost seemed to pass the region by.

The dark spectre of hooliganism again raised its head. Manchester United fans at the City Ground disgraced themselves, their moods not helped by their team finding itself 4-0 down after an hour, with Chris Crowe netting a hat-trick. Reports of trouble at other grounds went as far down as Southern League Wealdstone, and clubs started to take measures to at least control the epidemic. West Ham responded to trouble at the Liverpool game by banning bottles from the ground and Millwall increased their prices for juveniles. Chelsea would soon follow suit, the increases closing the door to many working-class youngsters whose interest in football had been stimulated by the World Cup. At Turf Moor, where visiting goalkeepers had routinely been pelted by missiles, Burnley fenced off the areas immediately behind the goals.

Down in the fourth division, Barnsley were still deeply in debt and struggling. Having failed to accumulate sufficient contributions from local schoolboys' pocket money, they now