

LOU REED
FOSTER

Fear AND LOATHING

AT GOODISON PARK

EVERTON FC
UNDER
DAVID MOYES



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Power to the People's Club

'I AM from a city [Glasgow] that is not unlike Liverpool. I am joining the people's football club. The majority of people you meet on the street are Everton fans. It is a fantastic opportunity, something you dream about. I said, "yes" right away as it is such a big club.' (Beesley, *Liverpool Echo*, 2019.)

Little did anyone know at the time of the press conference from which the above quote is taken that a singular sentence within it would go on to form such a core aspect of Everton Football Club's culture and identity in the years to come. Just as Joe Royle's 'Dogs of War' had defined his mid-nineties stint in the Goodison Park dugout, and the 'School of Science' moniker seeped into the consciousness of fans who bore witness to the majestic Holy Trinity under Harry Catterick, David Moyes's 'People's Club' restored Everton's fractured identity.

Prior to David Moyes taking over as manager at Goodison Park, he orchestrated from the dugout of Deepdale. Preston North End were languishing in the bottom half of Division Two in January 1998 (which was, confusingly, the third tier of English football, and has since been rebranded as the equally bemusing League One). Avoiding relegation in his first campaign, Moyes guided his team to the Division Two play-offs in the 1998/99 season, bowing out to Gillingham in the semi-finals. The following year, Moyes led the Lilywhites to the Division Two title, securing the promotion to Division One that had so narrowly escaped their grasp 12 months

earlier. In his first season in the second tier, the youthful manager guided Preston to the Division One play-offs, losing 3-0 to Bolton Wanderers in the 2001 play-off final, painfully missing out on promotion to the Premier League.

The impressive start that David Moyes had made to his fledgling career in management caught the attention of Everton's board, who dispensed with the services of Walter Smith on 13 March 2002, following a 3-0 defeat to Middlesbrough in the sixth round of the FA Cup. With just one win in the previous 13 league games, the Blues' form had seen them sleepwalk into yet another relegation battle, with only goal difference separating 16th-placed Everton from the bottom three.

On 14 March 2002, Everton appointed Moyes as their new head coach, with the Scot having just 48 hours to prepare for his first game in charge against Fulham at Goodison Park.

The line-ups in front of 34,639 spectators were as follows:

Everton: Simonsen, Hibbert, Weir, Stubbs, Unsworth, Pistone, Carsley, Gravesen, Gemmill, Radzinski, Ferguson

Fulham: Van der Sar, Finnan, Melville, Goma, Brevett, Collins, Legwinski, Malbranque, Boa Morte, Marlet, Saha

It was almost as if Everton had received a jump-start, as David Unsworth's goal with just 27 seconds on the clock got the David Moyes era off to a flier. Goodison Park had not seen this Everton side score a goal for six weeks, but just 12 minutes into the game Duncan Ferguson would add a second, marking his return to the starting line-up with a goal after a seven-week lay-off. In a match where tensions threatened to boil over, referee Graham Barber brandished six yellow cards in the first half; two of them to Thomas Gravesen, who was dismissed after just 28 minutes.

As Fulham laid siege to Everton's goal after the break, Steed Malbranque's strike seven minutes into the second half ensured it would be a heart-stopping finale, but the Blues held on for a 2-1 win and the most precious of three points. 'What's my philosophy? Winning is important, but wanting

to win is more important,' said Moyes, after his Goodison Park baptism.

'If I can instil that into my players, we'll be successful. A lot of people in that stadium probably thought: "Who is David Moyes?" If the fans want a hero, I hope it's not the manager but the players. But after all that's happened it feels as if I've been here six months, let alone two days. That was a dream start.' (Fifield, *The Guardian*, 2002.)

Indeed, a 4-3 victory at Pride Park a week later continued the dream start for Moyes, as Everton picked up only their second away win of the campaign in the Premier League. A total of 13 points from the last nine games of the season ensured Everton finished the 2001/02 campaign in 15th, seven points clear of relegation. Brushes with the drop had become par for the course in recent seasons, and it was now David Moyes's responsibility to ensure Everton's yearly dances with death were a thing of the past. Yet, when Moyes referred to Everton as 'the People's Club', he tapped into a zeitgeist among the fanbase. Disregarded and disenfranchised, much like the L4 community surrounding Goodison Park, being a part of the People's Club began to restore Everton's battered pride. It was a moniker that for many was a true recognition and embodiment of Evertonians. An anti-corporate emblem that fans could relate to, one in a sport that was now increasingly marketed as a television programme, geared towards an audience seemingly more concerned with glory-hunting than local pride. Amidst it all, Everton FC were the People's Club.