



The Unexpected Trip

'It's there ... England are one up, with seventeen minutes of the second half gone. This is just the preparation they wanted for the World Cup.'

The excited voice of the Sports Commentator reflected the delight of the English fans. One half of Wembley Stadium heaved with dancing, celebrating thousands, while beyond the halfway line to the far end a gloomy silence descended on the Scottish supporters who had just seen their team go a goal behind the 'auld enemy'.

A smile of relief covered the face of Sam Arnott, manager of the home side. Scotland had been settling better as the second half had progressed. They could have scored at any time, but England had beaten them to it. The match was important to both sides as a last outing

before the World Cup finals in Ecuatina, South America. Sam Arnott didn't want to lose this one.

Turning to a close-cropped, gum-chewing youngster on the substitutes bench the England manager said, 'Limber up, Terry, this is your big chance.'

Terry Lindley's eyes brightened. He was a promising young midfield player in the English Second Division who was already attracting the attention of top-class sides in England and Europe. He was anxious to convince Sam Arnott that he was good enough to be included in the World Cup squad.

The intended substitution was spotted by Bill Cheyne, Scotland's manager, who saw instantly the threat it posed to his team. They had already put a lot into the game and to be faced with a fresh pair of lungs at this stage might prove enough to tip the balance of the match against them. Cheyne turned to Kevin Smith to tell him he was going on, but it wasn't Smith his eye fell on. Instead he looked straight into the face of Doug Mackay, the young midfield star from Dalkirk Albion, who had shot to prominence as a match-winner in Albion's recent UEFA Cup triumph.

'Get stripped, son,' said the manager, 'keep a tight reign on Lindley – and tell

Rory Macalpine to push forward.' As the coach held the numbers aloft to attract the referee's attention, Bill Cheyne muttered impatiently to himself, 'I didn't plan to do that. Mackay's only here for a bit of experience.'

But it was done and Mike Crawford, the substituted player, came and sat down wearily beside him. 'That English team is strong, Boss,' panted Crawford. 'I'm glad they're not in our section this summer.'

'So what,' grunted the Manager, 'we've got Brazil the favourites, or had you forgotten?'

Doug Mackay certainly had forgotten about Brazil, and Ecuatina as well for that matter. Here was a moment for him to savour – his first international cap, and an appearance against England at Wembley. He soon found, however, that there was to be no time for day-dreaming. He had barely passed on the manager's instructions to Rory Macalpine, when he had to set off in hot pursuit of Terry Lindley. The English substitute was dribbling the ball into the Scottish penalty area, manoeuvring for a shot at goal, when a timely tackle by Doug knocked the ball away from him to a navy-shirted defender who cleared it into the English half of the field.

Wave after wave of English attacks broke on the ranks of the Scottish defence. Doug Mackay was more than holding his own against Terry Lindley and gradually became sufficiently adventurous to try linking up with his forwards in an attempt to grab the equaliser.

One major problem the Scots faced was the skill of the English defence in operating the offside trap, whereby the Scottish players were caught nearer to the English goal than England's defenders were when the ball came through to them. For most of the game, Scottish attacks had been breaking down on this skilfully worked device.

Doug knew the one sure way of springing this trap. It was for the player in possession to keep the ball and dribble it toward the opponent's goal. But that took a lot of confidence. After all, if you were caught in possession a counter attack could be set up, resulting in the loss of a goal. As Doug saw it, he had to try retaining the ball and running at the English defence. Scotland were a goal down and the offside trap was killing off every other initiative.

Scotland had a throw-in. Doug sprinted down the wing attracting the attention of Neil Young, who sent a prodigious throw-

in in his direction. Doug trapped the ball, taking the spin out of it. Then, as Driscoll the English left back tackled, the young Scot pushed the ball ahead, hurdled Driscoll's leg and ran determinedly for goal. The English team funnelled back quickly – but not quickly enough. Doug just kept on running, prodding the ball too far each time for a defender to get it. This was one thing the defence hadn't expected – a strong, confident run that left them stranded far from their own goal.

Now there was only keeper Phil Newman to beat. Looking up, Doug saw Phil advancing to meet him. Shifting his balance he hit the ball with the outside of his left foot. It rose over the keeper's head, but there was just enough spin on it to bring it down in time to slip under the crossbar into the net for the equaliser. Now, it was the turn of the Scottish fans to celebrate. Bill Cheyne was happy too, but still puzzled. He hadn't really intended to put Mackay on, yet he couldn't have made a better substitution. It wasn't just the goal that impressed the manager, but the insight that had led the boy to see this was the only way through the tightly marshalled English defence. Yes, the insight, and the confidence to take on that defence single-handed on his first

international appearance. It had almost been like David facing Goliath.

Even as Bill Cheyne was wrestling with these thoughts, Scotland were on the attack again. Doug had linked up with Peter Macdougall on the left wing and was running on to a pass from Pete near the right corner of the English penalty area. Tom Rockhurst, England's captain and central defender hurried to close him down. Running over the ball, Doug made as if to back-heel it to Pete. Rockhurst slowed down and prepared to intercept the pass back. Quick as a flash, Doug moved his foot over the ball and drew it forward. As he sprinted into the box, Rockhurst and his whole defence were caught off balance. Once again, only goalkeeper Newman stood between Scotland and a goal. Phil Newman was crafty and experienced. Coming out quickly he narrowed the angle on goal. Doug must shoot quickly or the chance would be gone. Looking up he clipped the ball smartly off his left foot on to his right. The effect was twofold. In the first place the ball which seemed to be going to the keeper's left suddenly swerved to his right, and secondly, the speed of the movement from one foot to the other added power to the shot. Newman could only look on helplessly as the ball

rocketed into the net through the narrow gap between his own right hand and the post.

Scotland were now in the driving seat and the crowd knew it. They only needed to keep possession of the ball until the end of the game to win. The English players had other ideas, however. They had fought hard from the kickoff, too hard to take nothing from the match. Roger Dudley, their skilful midfield player, withstood two strong tackles to force his way into the Scottish penalty area before fighting a good cross for Terry Lindley to head into the net and give England a well-deserved equaliser.

As the teams trooped off the field Sam Arnott sportingly shook hands with Bill Cheyne. 'So that's the Dalkirk boy,' he said. 'Very impressive. You'll be taking him to Ecuatina of course.' Bill Cheyne was caught off guard. He hadn't thought for a moment of including Doug in his World Cup plans. Yet it was the obvious thing to do. Sam Arnott would have done so had the lad been born on the other side of the border.

At that very moment the two men were asked to give a brief television interview. Sam Arnott was given an unreasonably hostile reception. He had planned carefully for the game and his

team had played according to plan. To some people, however, anything less than victory is unacceptable. Bill Cheyne was almost forced to state that Doug Mackay would be in the Scottish Squad for Ecuatina, the interviewer being impatient with the manager's repeated answer, 'We will see.'

In the Scottish dressing room morale was great. The team could hardly have had a better send-off to the World Cup than a game like this. It was to Ecuatina the conversation had turned again and again, and especially to the game against Brazil which was regarded as the toughest match the Scots had to play.

One person who kept fairly quiet through all the talk was Doug. He had shared a hotel room with another young player, Alec Ferrier, who had remained on the substitutes' bench for the whole match. The two lads had struck up a friendship.

Alec was particularly impressed by Doug's Christian faith. It wasn't just that Doug believed in God, but that his belief so obviously influenced even the way he played football. Few other young players would have had the confidence to take on an international defence as he had done. Doug radiated confidence, and yet he was modest. Alec noted that

he had very little to say about himself, although everyone knew he had turned the game when Scotland had looked beaten.

'You must have a good chance of going to Ecuatina now,' said Alec. 'Are you looking forward to it?'

'I haven't even thought of it,' replied Doug. 'My plans were to have a hill-walking holiday in the Highlands. In any case I'm sure Mr. Cheyne has picked his squad by now. After all some of the best players were intentionally left out of the Wembley match to keep them injury-free for the World Cup.'

Later that evening, however, the Scottish manager took the young Dalkirk Albion player aside and told him, 'I thought you played very well today, and I know you've had a good season with your club. Although I had almost finalised my plans for Ecuatina, I still have a place for an extra midfield player. I'm putting you in the squad. We meet in Glasgow next Thursday and fly out to South America on Friday.'

Doug was surprised, but delighted. He had been thrilled to be chosen for Wembley, but this was far better. Even to be a spectator at the World Cup was tremendous, but to have the chance of playing – well, that was really special.



Offside in Ecuatina

'I'm very grateful, Mr. Cheyne,' said Doug. 'There's only one thing. I don't play football on Sunday, because it's the Lord's day.'

Bill Cheyne could hardly believe his ears. He was all set to argue when he remembered that, apart from their first match, Scotland were not scheduled to play any other game on a Sunday.

'That's all right, son. We'll respect your views on that subject. Mind you it might be a problem if we reach the final, because it's scheduled for a Sunday.'

There was a twinkle in Bill's eye that said it all – not even the manager believed Scotland would make it. That made Doug sad, for he was sure that Scotland's problem would be lack of confidence rather than lack of class.