

Centenary Profile 3

Record Servant

"has the approved coolness, insouciance, and resource which are the hall-mark of the heaven-sent 'keeper'"

Association Football & The Men Who Made It, 1906

GOALKEEPERS WERE A DIFFERENT BREED IN EDWARDIAN years, far removed from the super-fit and athletic figures of the modern age. Jimmy Lawrence played the game for most of his career in an era when keepers were unprotected by referees and forwards were able to barge them in mid-air without ceremony over the goal-line. And most of them did. As a consequence goalkeeping tactics were not quite as we know them now. 'Keepers learnt to punch the ball in a crowded goalmouth rather than catch it, and if they did gather the ball, quickly got rid of it for fear of an uncompromising charge.

The now familiar green 'keeper's shirt had not taken to the field and Jimmy Lawrence for most of his record service with the Magpies, wore a black'n'white striped jersey like the rest of his colleagues. Up to 1912 he could handle the ball anywhere on the pitch and also, did not have to stand still on his line when facing a penalty kick. Yes it was a different game.

To compare Jimmy Lawrence with recent guardians of United's goal is futile. He was never as fit or agile as the modern footballer, but one fact remains indisputable - a total of 505 senior games over an 18 year period. No other individual in one hundred years has come close to surpassing his record turn-out for United.

A Scot, he was born in Glasgow in 1885 and kept goal for Partick Athletic and Glasgow Perthshire, two strong Clyde teams. He occasionally assisted Hibernians too, as a replacement for Harry Rennie, when the Scottish international and, at the time, Britain's finest goalkeeper, was unavailable for action. Lawrence learnt much from his senior colleague at Easter Road and United took notice of the 5'10" 'keeper on one of their many journeys north. They brought him back to Tyneside in July 1904.

He succeeded the experienced Matt Kingsley and Charlie Watts in the Geordies' goal when given a chance at the beginning of the 1904/05 season. He replaced the injured Watts on the first day of October against Manchester City and never had to stand aside for any cause other than injury, and they were few and far between over the next 14 league campaigns.

Consistency was Lawrence's great asset. He wasn't the flashy type, but a steady last line of defence. Jimmy studied the game long and hard, and worked out goalkeeping positions from every conceivable angle. The valued early text, *Association Football & The Men Who Made It*, noted Lawrence having, "the approved coolness, insouciance, and resource which are the hall-mark of the heaven-sent 'keeper". Yet the Scot could make mistakes like every other player - even the greats. And being a goalkeeper they were costly. Twice in FA Cup finals Jimmy was at fault having cruel luck. Firstly against Wolves in 1908, he fumbled a shot for the opening goal, then in 1911 against Bradford City misjudged a bouncing ball and conceded one



LAWRENCE'S PLAYING RECORD

	League		FA Cup		Total	
	App	Gls	App	Gls	App	Gls
1904-05	29	0	8	0	37	0
1905-06	33	0	8	0	41	0
1906-07	33	0	1	0	34	0
1907-08	38	0	6	0	44	0
1908-09	38	0	7	0	45	0
1909-10	34	0	8	0	42	0
1910-11	36	0	8	0	44	0
1911-12	27	0	0	0	27	0
1912-13	34	0	8	0	42	0
1913-14	21	0	0	0	21	0
1914-15	31	0	5	0	36	0
1919-20	20	0	1	0	21	0
1920-21	42	0	4	0	46	0
1921-22	16	0	0	0	16	0
1918-19 (War Time)						9 0
						432 0 64 0 505 0

Jimmy Lawrence

Two, but his stay at Horsley Hill didn't last long, resigning less than a year later. In 1923 he moved up a grade to take control of Preston North End and was instrumental in bringing the legendary Alex James to England. Again though he didn't remain long, moving from Deepdale within a couple of years with relegation from the First Division hanging over his head.

Lawrence was one of several eminent home stars of the period who helped develop football on the Continent. In August 1925 he joined German outfit, Karlsruhe as manager and led them to the League Championship at a time when there was an all amateur set-up in that country. After a spell of several years on the Continent, Lawrence returned to Scotland joining the Stranraer club. He became a director, and later Chairman, of the Stair Park side and was associated with them until his demise at a relatively early age in November 1934.

It is unlikely that Jimmy Lawrence's appearance record for Newcastle United will be passed and he will remain at the forefront of the club's history.



of the softest - and as it turned out - winning goals in the history of the competition. However, along with Colin Veitch and Jock Rutherford, Lawrence appeared in all of United's Edwardian Cup finals and Championship sides.

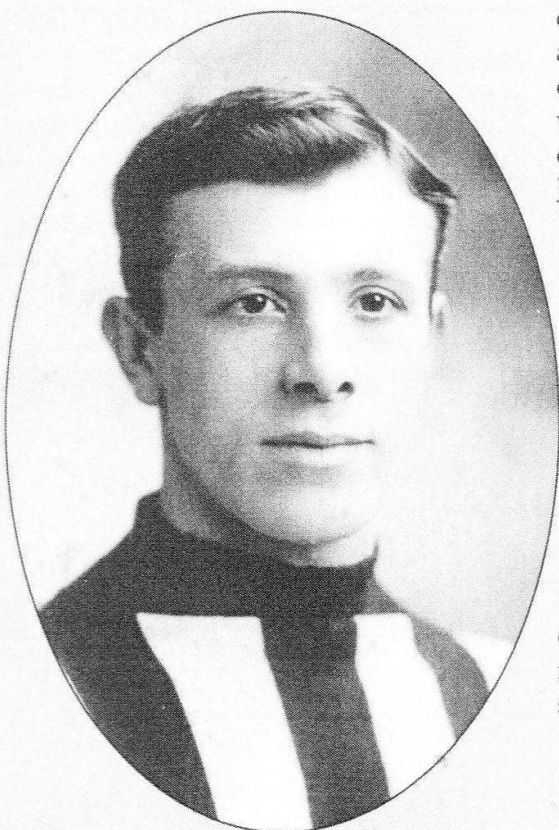
In 1911 Lawrence also achieved the ambition of every Scot, selection for his country in the top billing fixture against England. After several years of being tipped for a cap, he replaced his great contemporary, John Brownlie, at Goodison Park and took part in Scotland's 1-1 draw. His United colleague Sandy Higgins netted the goal to give the Scots a point in the Home International Championship. Also in the side was Andy Aitken.

Jimmy Hay was captain, with Wilf Low alongside him, two other tremendous United competitors.

During his time at St James Park, Lawrence held a reputation of being a prize joker - the life and soul of the dressing-room many said. He was gifted with a keen sense of humour and Jimmy was both a raconteur and mimic of considerable ability. Jokes flowed in a rich Scots dialect without effort and there wasn't a more popular figure in the camp. Colin Veitch said of him, "he was a social asset of the very best type". His wider support among professionals later earned him the Chairmanship of the Players Union in 1921.

When aged 37, Jimmy gave way to Bill Bradley in the Magpies' goal. He departed in May 1922 being appointed South Shields manager. Shields were then a Football League side, in Division





LAWRENCE, James

Role: Goalkeeper 1904-1922

5' 10"

b. Glasgow, 16th February 1885

d. Scotland, November 1934

CAREER: Partick Athletic/Glasgow Perthshire (Hibernian on loan)/UNITED July 1904/South Shields manager May 1922 to Jan 1923/Preston North End manager Feb 1923/Karlsruhe(Germany) trainer Aug 1925/Stranraer director, becoming chairman 1933 to demise.

Debut v Manchester City (h) 1/10/04

In 14 seasons as first choice goalkeeper, the durable and consistent Jimmy Lawrence amassed a record 496 senior outings for United. An intellectual dressing-room joker, Lawrence was at the very heart of United's great Edwardian line-up along with Veitch and McWilliam. In the style of the day, Jimmy rarely caught the ball but fisted away clearances and was always liable to make a stunning save, yet also a costly error - two of which

occurred in FA Cup finals. Always attempting to raise spirits, he was cool, confident and extremely popular, both with Tyneside's supporters and his colleagues. A keen politician of the game, Jimmy was a leading figure in the Players' Union at a time when the organisation was struggling to take-off. On the Management Committee for several years, the Scot was appointed chairman in 1921-22 and was an outspoken voice against the establishment in the FA and Football League headquarters. Lawrence was a household name during the years up to World War One, taking part in every one of the Magpies' three successful championship sides and five cup runs to the final. Moving to the continent, Jimmy led Karlsruhe to the regional division title during his first season in Germany.

Appearances:

FL: 432 apps. 0 gls.

FAC: 64 apps. 0 gls.

War: 9 apps. 0 gls.

Others: 2 apps. 0 gls.

Total: 507 apps. 0 gls.

Honours:

1 Scot cap 1911/

Scot trial app. 1911-12/

FL champs 1905, 1907, 1909/

FAC winner 1910/

FAC finalist 1905, 1906, 1908, 1911.

