

# SPOTLIGHT ON ARSENAL

ARSENAL, called by some "Lucky Arsenal," by others the "Bank of England" team, are the most hated, yet the most respected team in Britain. Most hated for their tremendous successes in the past 30 years. Every team is out to beat them. Yet they are the most respected because of the immense good they have done for the game.

For years now, every game has been a Cup-tie for Arsenal players. Every team they have met has pulled out that little extra against the champions. But that has not stopped their triumphant progress. In 28 years—actually, 20 playing seasons, because the second World War intervened—they brought off a series of performances unsurpassed in the game and unlikely to be equalled in the future.

During that time they won the League championship six times—a record equalled only by Aston Villa and Sunderland—equalled Huddersfield Town's record breaking feat of winning the title three years in succession, won the F.A. Cup three times, at Wembley, established crowd records at several League grounds, and at Arsenal Stadium.

In short, made themselves the outstanding team of the era.

And then last season they had the triumph of winning their seventh championship.

Success has brought fame and made them the wealthiest club in the land. They have made enormous profits since the war. But it was not always like that. Quite the reverse in fact.

Three times during their career, which began in 1886, Arsenal have nearly put up the shutters.

The first time was in 1891, when, after a successful period in local competitions, they took the plunge into professionalism, the first Southern club to do so, under the name Woolwich Arsenal.

They were boycotted by the rest of the Southern clubs for their bold venture. They could fix up only "friendlies" with Northern and Midland teams. When they tried to found a League of Southern teams, nobody took any notice of them.

In desperation, they applied, in 1893, for admission to the Football League. Luckily for them they got it.

It was a lucky break for a team that owed its beginning to men from Nottingham Forest, who had gone to work in Woolwich Arsenal.

They were the mainstays of the first amateur side. At one time, they persuaded Forest to let them have a set of red jerseys. That is how they came to get the present colours.

The second time Woolwich Arsenal escaped disaster was during the Boer War.

Most of their supporters were either soldiers, or arsenal workers, and had not the time for such things as football matches at the Manor Field—Arsenal's first League ground.

Only the generosity of a local business man saved the club from bankruptcy.

The third, and last, time was in 1908, when the late Sir Henry Norris and Mr. W. Hall, both Fulham directors, joined the Woolwich Arsenal board.

After five years' hard struggling for survival, they decided to transport the club from the Manor Field to the present palatial Highbury quarters.

From that day, in 1913, all financial difficulties have been smoothed away.



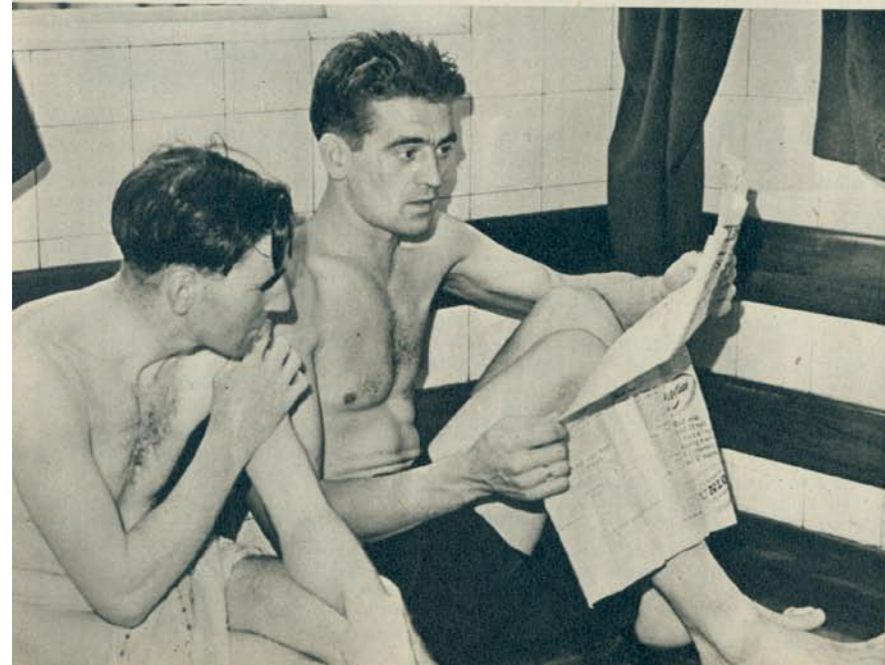
After a season at Highbury, Woolwich was dropped from the name. It became plain Arsenal. And they had the name of the underground railway station immediately outside the ground changed from Highbury to Arsenal.

They were in the Second Division then. After the first World War, Arsenal were elected to the First Division when it was extended. They did not have to win promotion.

For six years they jogged along near the bottom, just avoiding relegation—until 1925, when the great Herbert Chapman, who had piloted Huddersfield to their wonderful achievements, was appointed manager.

That was the year when the offside law was changed. It was the turning point. Under Chapman's guidance, Arsenal outstripped all rivals.

New tactics, which revolutionised the game, and brought forth Herbert Roberts,



Jimmy Logie and Doug Lishman (left), read a report of their match. Above, George Swindin gives a big smile from the bath.



Skipper Joe Mercer slices the bacon in his grocer's shop at Hoylake.



Followed by Jim Logie Mercer leads out Arsenal.

Prince of "stopper" centre-halves, were introduced and paid handsome dividends.

Roberts was the king-pin around whom a great team was built. Arsenal spent money to get the best players available.

David Jack, Alex James, Joe Hulme, Tom Parker, Jimmy Dunne, and many others, were brought to Arsenal Stadium at a huge cost. No expense was spared to make them the supreme team.

It was a very expensive, but highly successful business. It brought the nickname "Bank of England" team to a side that years before had not known how to make ends meet.

The other League clubs could have no complaint. For it was Arsenal who proposed at a League meeting that transfer fees for players should be limited to £1,650. They turned down the proposal and Arsenal became the biggest spenders of their time.

A record £10,340 for David Jack, from Bolton Wanderers, another record £14,000 for Bryn Jones, Wolverhampton Wanderers, inside-left, and other big cheques for first-class players, kept Arsenal at the top of the tree.



It was said at one period that Arsenal's methods were negative and took the beauty out of the game. But they were eminently profitable.

Arsenal supplied the thrills, the excitement and the glamour that the public wanted—and flocked to see.

Arsenal's methods brought them many imitators, but few teams had players of the calibre of the inimitable Alex James, the ice-cool international Cliff Bastin, and the thunderbolt Ted Drake.

Certainly, no other team found such a "Rock of Gibraltar" defence as that put up by goalkeeper Frank Moss and full-backs George Male and Eddie Hapgood.

Even after the sudden death of the great Herbert Chapman, Arsenal, under the management of George Allison, continued to be the League's biggest attraction until the start of the second World War, when their stadium was closed down and they shared Tottenham Hotspur's ground at White Hart Lane.

There was a time after the war when Arsenal were on the verge of a depression.

At one time they were threatened with relegation.

But newcomers, like Joe Mercer, from Everton, and Ronnie Rooke, of Fulham, soon restored them to their old pre-eminence.

But now that Tom Whittaker—who has been with the club as player and trainer—is manager, Arsenal are no longer the top price experts.

Their biggest fee ever, £15,000, was paid for Alex Forbes, the Scottish international half-back, of Sheffield United. They refuse to be stampeded into the £30,000 class.

Arsenal's record since the war testifies to the soundness of their policy and the judgment of their officials.

They were League champions in 1948, F.A. Cup winners in 1950, and have built a reputation second to none on the Continent and in South America for their great displays of Soccer craft and sportsmanship.

Arsenal have done a lot for the good of the game and they are likely to go on doing it for many years to come.—C. B.

Joe Wade obliges with autographs for eager schoolboy fans.

