

Blackburn Rovers Player Pen-Pictures From 1880's to 1990's

Rovers Players During the 1910's

WATTIE AITKENHEAD



Wattie was born in Maryhill, Glasgow in 1887 and joined the Rovers in 1906 from Partick Thistle. He was a versatile player who could play in more than one position e.g. wing-half or inside forward and was a creative player who made opportunities for other forwards or himself. In total he made 248 senior appearances for the club as an inside-left and left-half scoring 93 goals. Wattie was a member of the 1911/12 First Division Championship winning team scoring two goals in the match against West Bromwich Albion that clinched the title. He also played for Scotland and retired from football and the Rovers in 1918.

WALTER ANTHONY



Walter was born in Nottingham in 1879 and first played for Nottingham Forrest from 1904 then Brighton in 1905 before joining the Rovers in 1908 from Brighton and Hove Albion. He was a fast and tricky left-winger with a strong shot and was one of the quickest players on the team. In total he made 164 senior appearances for the club and scored 14 goals. Walter was a member of the first Division Championship winning side for the 1911/12 season. He left the club in 1914 to join Stalybridge Celtic after losing his place.

MO ATHERTON



Born in Ince, near Wigan in 1884. First played for the youth sides. Mo was recommended to the Rovers team by John Lewis arriving from Wigan Athletic. Arrived at Ewood as a young centre-half but his only senior game was a friendly against Wigan and then played in the reserves. On leaving the Rovers he played for and captained Eccles Borough and Great Harwood and a few games for Darwen. He returned to the Rovers and was made groundsman and assistant trainer under Bob Holmes. In 1914 Holmes resigned and Mo was made the club's trainer, a position he held for 19 years, leaving in 1933. He gained all the honours possible as trainer and went with the English team to Australia in 1925. As trainer he won 1913/14 First Division Championship and 1928 F.A. Cup. On leaving Rovers he became trainer at Grimshaw Four staying till the outbreak of WWII. By 1950/51 he used his masseur skills at the Rovers and had a private practice in Blackburn.

ALEX BELL



Born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1882 he joined the Rovers for £1,000 in 1913 from Manchester United, formerly Newton Heath which he joined in 1908 for £700. He was a veteran left-half back who had provided good service for Manchester United as a sound defender, helping them win two League Championships in 1908 and 1911 during his 278 league appearances for them and an F.A. Cup win in 1909. On signing for the Rovers, he knew he would only be an understudy for their dominant half-backs Walmsley, Smith and Bradshaw. As a result, he only made 12 senior appearances for the club covering for injuries before retiring in 1915. He had the ability to open up the game using long passes.

BILLY BRADSHW



Born in Padiham in 1884 he joined the Rovers in 1903 from Accrington Stanley, although previously played for Padiham in the Lancashire Combination. As part of a formidable half-back line, he made 457 senior appearances for the club scoring 51 goals and also played with elder brother. He was a member of the Rovers 1911/12 First Division Championship winning team. As a club penalty kick taker, he converted 23 of 25 spot kicks. He had very good positional play allowing him to intercept passes as he wasn't a good tackler. A strong player who was a good passer making his distribution of a high standard. Billy left the club in February 1920 to join Rochdale as player manager.

WILLIE CAMERON



Born in Mossend, Lanarkshire, Scotland in 1884 and joined the club in 1908 from Bolton Wanderers whom he joined in 1906. Before Bolton he played for Albion Rovers 1903/04, Renton 1903/04 and Glossop in 1904. A genuine utility player who could play in lots of positions, however never had long spells in the first team. As a versatile player he played half-back, centre-forward and winger, he made 82 senior appearances scoring 19 goals. His best season was 1909/10. William score 10 goals in 17 appearances. A member of Rovers 1911/12 Championship winning side. He left to join Bury in 1914 and later became their player manager. He was involved in the bribery scandal in 1923 and suspended till 1929.

GEORGE CHAPMAN



Born in Broxham, Scotland in 1886 he first joined Heart of Midlothian then Raith Rovers in 1907 and then joined the Rovers in 1908. As a centre-half he moved to centre-forward at the Rovers where he had more success. He had sprinting skills, so he was fast paced and a strong shot but not brilliant ball control. He made 152 senior appearances for the club over two periods with Rovers scoring 42 goals. A member of the club's 1911/12 Championship winning team. He first left the club in 1910 to join Glasgow Rangers returning in 1911 and eventually leaving in 1919 to join Accrington Stanley.

JOE CLENNELL



Born in New Silksworth in 1889 he joined the Rovers in 1911 from Blackpool who he had joined in 1910 where he had only made 32 league starts. The club signed him for £900 in April 1911 as a young inside-left forward learning his trade. A hard running skilful forward who moved into the First Team after their Championship winning season 1911/12. He quickly established himself as Rovers forward making 26 appearances for the Rovers and scoring 12 goals but lost his place so moved to Everton in 1914 for £1,500 and won the First Division Championship with them. Joe later joined Cardiff City for £3,500, then Stoke City, Bristol Rovers, Rochdale and Bury Town. He later became Accrington Stanley coach in 1934.

PERCY DAWSON



Born in Cullercoats, Newcastle in 1890 he first joined North Shields then Heart of Midlothian in 1911 and then joined the Rovers in 1914 for a fee of £2,500. The centre-forward made his debut against Tottenham Hotspur and was regarded as one of the best centre-forwards of the day. A player who possessed a fine turn off speed, clever on the ball and a fine shot. His addition to the Rovers forward line along with Shea and Simpson including others means the club have paid over £7,000! In total he made 155 senior appearances for the club scoring 73 goals before leaving in 1923 to join Preston Colliery. A Scottish international he later joined Barrow in 1924. His career was interrupted by the First World War and when he returned in 1919 was playing in a very different team than the one he had left, and his aging physique meant he couldn't replicate earlier successes but his experience allowed him to score 40 goals.

FRED DUCKWORTH



Born in Blackburn he first joined teams from Bastwell, St. Stephens, Furthergate and Blackburn Trinity, all local Blackburn teams before joining Blackburn YMCA and then the Rovers in 1910 as a left full-back. A small player who was nevertheless powerful and a good tackler and coped under pressure. He had to wait nine years for his first Football League match. From an early age he developed at the club, provided excellent cover, and obtained International Honours with England with two caps. In total he made 123 senior appearances for the Rovers and left the club to retire in 1922.

ERNEST HAWKSWORTH



Ernest was born in Rochdale in 1894 and first joined Rochdale F.C. in 1912/13 as an amateur then joined the Rovers in 1919 for £500. Whilst at Rochdale he served in the First World War in the Royal Scots Brigade and was wounded twice before returning to Rochdale in 1919. As an inside-forward he played alongside Percy Dawson for the Rovers in a successful forward line and was a neat, tidy player who was the clubs leading goal scorer at the end of the 1919/20 season with 17 goals. Ernest was released by the Rovers in 1925 and joined New Brighton.

JOE HODKINSON



Joe was born in Lancaster in 1889 and first played for Lancaster Town and Glossop North End who he joined in 1909 then joined the Rovers in 1913. He was a talented, speedy orthodox outside-left who cost the rovers £1,000. As a player he could cross the ball accurately and had the ability to beat defenders. Joe gained three England caps in the 1913/14 season and was part of the Rovers team that won the first division in 1913/14. In total he Made 255 senior appearances for the Rovers scoring 20 goals and left in 1923 to join Lancaster Town and retired in 1925.

BILLY MEREDITH



Born in Wales he became a miner and joined Manchester city in 1894 travelling from his work in Wales. During 25 years as a player he never missed a match through injury. He played many times for Wales and was called the flying Welshman as he was a winger. He made his last Ewood league appearance in October 1921

ALF ROBINSON



Born in Manchester he joined the Rovers in 1911 from Gainsborough Trinity who he had joined in 1908, as a goalkeeper. A daring active goalkeeper who was not afraid to dive at attacker's feet. He started as reserve goalkeeper but soon made the First team in 1911/12 season. He was a member of Rovers Championship winning teams in 1911/12 and 1913/14. In total he made 170 senior appearances for the club before he left to join Darwen in 1923.

DAVID ROLLO



Born in Belfast in 1891 he became a plater in the Belfast shipyard. He first played for the Mountpottinger Junior club in Belfast as a utility player. David was signed by Irish club Linfield and played outside/inside-right. However, he proved to be one of their best signings

and converted to the half-back positions. He signed for the Rovers at the age of 27 in 1919 for £2,000 and eventually became a right full-back covering for Bob Crompton's retirement, although as an Irish International with seven caps he played most games as right-half. He also played outside-right for the Rovers on occasions. He had 16 international caps for Ireland from 1912-1927 for both Northern Ireland and Ireland. A speedy defender who was well known for lengthy clearances. A classy player with a good temperament. In total he made 228 senior appearances before leaving in 1927 to join Port Vale.

DANNY SHEA



Born in Wapping, London in 1888 he joined the Rovers from West Ham United in 1913 when the club broke the British transfer record paying £2000 for him. He had scored 111 goals in 179 southern League games for West Ham as a talented inside-right forward. Lawrence Cotton, the club chairman and his directors saw him as a good investment and hoped he would tie up well with Simpson on the right wing and Percy Dawson up front. In total he made 108 senior appearances scoring 69 goals. He was a member of the Rovers 1913/14 Championship winning team scoring 28 goals. a very talented inside-right before the WWI disrupted his career. He was also an English International with two caps but left the club to return to West Ham United in 1920 for £100 then went on to play for Coventry in 1923 and Fulham in 1926.

JOCKY SIMPSON



Born in Pendleton, Manchester in 1885. He joined the Rovers in 1911 from the Scottish side Falkirk for £1,800. Lawrence Cotton's decision to sign him broke the British transfer record paying £1,800. Jockey had been the driver of a horse drawn omnibus. Simpson was a flying outside-right who was famed for pushing the ball past the full-back and then sprinting past him and making an accurate cross. A direct winger who could use either foot, and apart from

crosses had a good eye for scoring goals. In total he made 169 senior appearances for the club scoring 22 goals. An English International 1911-1914. His debut game was against Sheffield United and his last against Middlesbrough 24 April 1915. After the First World War he had a serious ankle injury but before he retired the club had a benefit match for him on 1st of May 1920 attended by 10,000 spectators and raised £1,100. He intended to use the money to open a newsagent and tobacconists' business in Falkirk where he lived. Jocky retired in 1921.

PERCY SMITH



Born in Burbage Spring, Leicestershire 1880, and first joined Preston North End in 1902 and then the Rovers in 1910. At that time he was 30 and regarded as coming to the end of his career. Unusually he was signed to cover forward positions having led the line at Deepdale for many years before drifting into back positions. Preston's veteran centre-forward having scored 90 goals for them in 239 appearances. A big bustling player with plenty of energy who dominated the air making him a solid and reliable defender. Although it took time, he eventually took up a regular position at centre-half back. In total he made 234 senior appearances for the Rovers scoring 13 goals. A member of the Rovers Championship side in 1911/12 and 1913/14. He left the Rovers to join Fleetwood in 1920 as player-coach. Later in 1925 he managed Nelson, in 1927 managed Bury, Tottenham in 1930, Notts. County in 1935 and finally managed Bristol Rovers from 1936. A good tactician.

ALBERT WALMSLEY



Born in Blackburn in 1885. He played for many Junior sides in Blackburn including St. Peter's before he was snapped up by Darwen and then joined the Rovers in 1904. A very keen player who first played in the Rovers Reserves then in the first team played with Billy Bradshaw. He

was a very hard worker and a consistent player at right-half back and proved a real asset to the Rovers. He was at the top of his game when the First World War halted the league and played 35 wartime games including a few games with Burnley and served in the war in France till he was injured. He played in an International Trial match at Tottenham. As a right-half defender he made 334 senior appearances for Rovers scoring six goals. A member of the 1911/12 and 1913/14 Championships winning sides. He left the club in 1920 to join Stockport County.