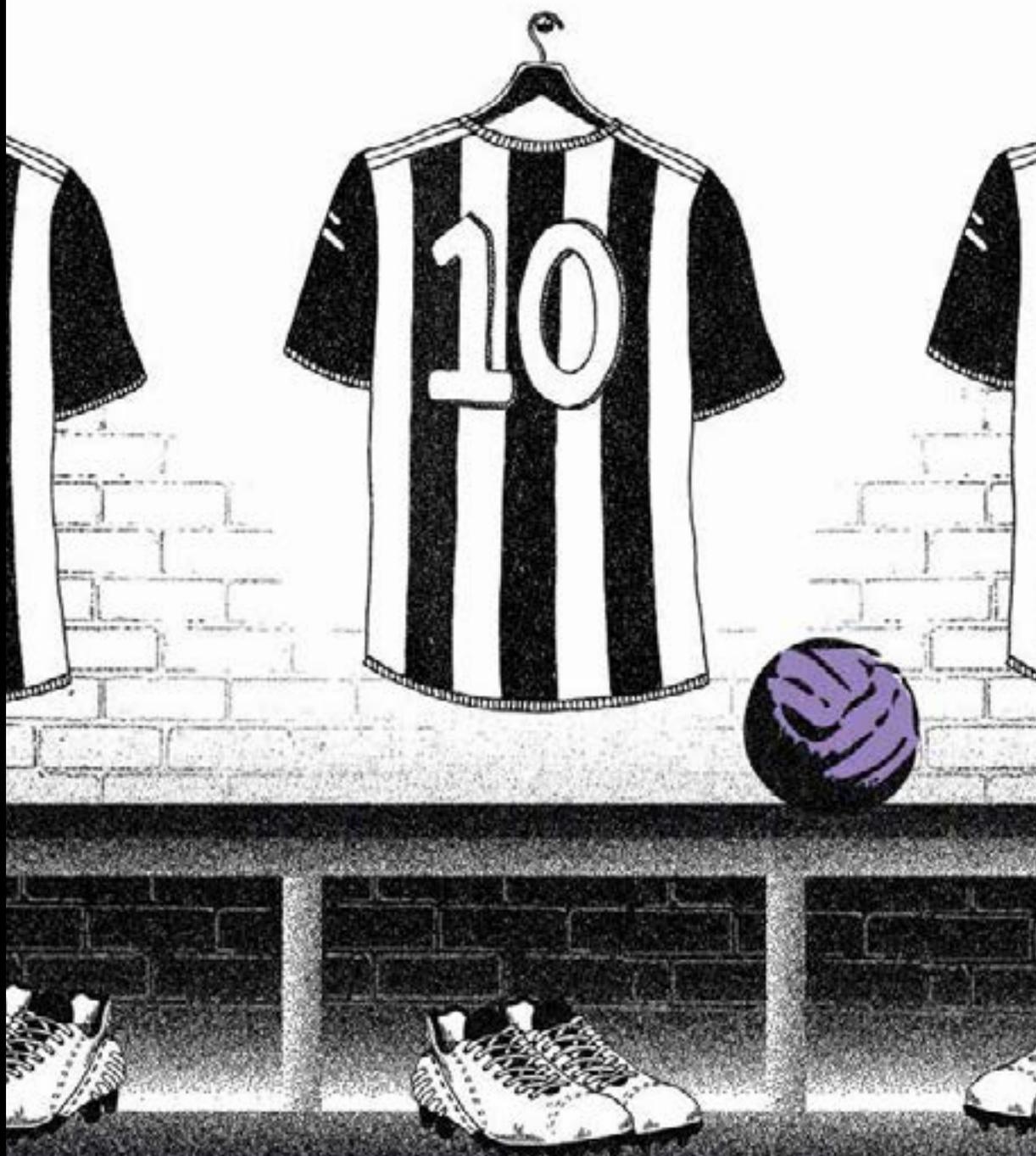


THE Blizzard

THE FOOTBALL QUARTERLY / ISSUE THIRTY-NINE



Below are extracts from each of the pieces featured.

↩ Patrick Keddie

The Stubborn City

Trabzonspor's ongoing battle for the Turkish title, on and off the pitch

"When Trabzonspor lose, everyone in the city is like the walking dead," Ahmet Firidin, a longstanding fan, told me as we sheltered from the swampy summer heat in the café he owns in the heart of Trabzon.

"Crowds in the city's cafés, restaurants, and shops thin out following a loss. People lose their appetite, all they want to eat is some dry simit. Others forgo public transport and take long, often steep walks home in the mountainous city."

↩ Hassanin Mubarak

The Survivor

Six years after Sahid Abbas was sentenced to death he was jailed for World Cup failure

"When Iraq failed to reach the final phase of qualifying for the 1998 World Cup, Uday Hussein, the son of Saddam, had various players imprisoned and flogged. Remarkably, a member of that side was Sahib Abbas, a 27 year old who had been sentenced to death for his part in the 1991 uprisings in the south of the country."

↩ Jordan Florit

The Chaos and the Glory

How the shambolic preparations for the 2019 Gran Final summed up Venezuelan football

"Estudiantes de Mérida's preparation for the Liga FUTVE Gran Final can be viewed in three ways, such is the structure of the Venezuelan Primera División: they had half a season, they had a month, or they didn't really have any time to prepare at all.

“Their opponents, Caracas FC, on the other hand, had exactly two days. I could leave it there, and many critics of the league and federation would be content for me to do so, but that would miss out a backstory so enchantingly beautiful and so microcosmically distilled in its portrayal of Venezuelan football that it would be beyond an injustice.”

↩ **Josué Seixas**

The Making of Roberto Firmino

The Liverpool forward's earliest friends and coaches recall his development in Alagoas

“Roberto Firmino was just a young boy who used to play barefoot on the streets of Maceió, the capital of Alagoas state in Brazil. He smiled all the time, despite not having perfect teeth back then. You could call him ugly and he would laugh. Simple as that. Nobody could imagine that he would come to be regarded as one of Brazil's best players.”

↩ **John Harding**

Harry Leddy's War

The PFA, an enforced pay-cut and the early fight for players' rights

“In 1922, with the UK experiencing a severe economic downturn, and with football clubs facing acute financial stress, the Football League backed by the Football Association unilaterally cut the wages of professional footballers. Proposed by the League Management Committee on April 13 and ratified by the FA two weeks later, the maximum wage was reduced from £9 to £8 a week in the season and from £7 to £6 a week in the summer.

“The decision came as a bolt from the blue with hardly any detail provided and with no opportunity for the Players Union either to discuss the matter or to oppose it. The League had asked clubs in early April not to agree any terms with players before the new rates had been decided. Thus, players and clubs were faced with a fait accompli.”

↩ Peter Speetjens

O Diamante Negro

The extraordinary story of Leônidas, the man who invented the bicycle kick

“Nicknamed “the black diamond” and known as the inventor of the bicycle kick, Leônidas da Silva was Brazil’s first real superstar, Pelé before there was Pelé, and the best player at the 1938 World Cup in France where he supposedly produced the first overhead kick ever seen on European soil. The technique was born in Chile, but it was brought to the world by Leônidas.”

↩ David Kennedy

The Birth of a Club

John Houlding and committee-room wrangling that led to Liverpool’s split from Everton

“On 25 January 1892 – without the knowledge of the Everton committee – John Houlding moved to secure his investment in Everton FC by registering it as a business: the Everton Football Club and Athletic Grounds Company. The timing of this dramatic development coincided with what Houlding and his allies at the club saw as underhand methods by his enemies on the club committee to unseat him from Everton FC.”

↩ Michael Sheridan

A Day with the Red Shirts

How a chance encounter in Yangon led to an Asian Cup qualifier

“Unaware the 2016 Asian Cup was on, I had intended to spend the day sightseeing on Yangon’s circular railway line. However, when crowds of red shirted fans kept boarding the train, I decided to follow and see if I could get some tickets for the game. Everything about the match-day experience was so different to the football I normally attend in England, from the young monks dressed in robes to the incredible street food on offer outside the ground, and the diverse demographic of fans.”

↻ Adam Bushby

Truth to Power

Frits Barend and the battle to report on the junta at Argentina 78

"It's eerily quiet on a sunny Thursday afternoon in the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires. The square is decorated with lush trees and enclosed by grand buildings. It's hard for the eyes not to be drawn to a white obelisk, the Pirámide de Mayo, which stands proudly in the centre. The air is heavy, not just with the threat of something unspoken, but a stillness that seems out of place in a bustling capital."

↻ Will Magee

The End of Welfare

The struggle to keep alive the clubs founded by miners

"Maltby Main Football Club was founded in 1916. Within the first decade of its existence it survived a World War, a pit disaster in which the club's treasurer was killed and the mass starvation which followed the failed General Strike of 1926, after which Britain's miners were forced to accept a harsh reduction to their already meagre pay.

"As well as the usual hazards of football in the first half of the 20th century – "vigorous tactics" as contemporary match reports put it, inadequate medical care and marshy playing surfaces – Maltby's players were invariably mineworkers and would often go straight from pithead to pitch."

↻ Michael Cole

Football v the Far Right

How football has become a battleground in Georgia's culture wars

"Guram Kashia seems to epitomise everything a national sporting hero should be. A fierce competitor on the field, and a family man off it, Kashia's career took him first to the Netherlands and then to the US, yet he has always remained proud of his Georgian roots."

↔ **Tony Richardson**

Workers Rights

The story of Nepalese labourers building Qatar's World Cup stadiums

"Football is the icebreaker. It always is. Within seconds of sitting down in departures my neighbour and I have exchanged the basics; who we love, who we hate.

"My new friend is Sagar and he is having an eventful weekend. He retired as an amateur goalkeeper yesterday, passing on treasured gloves to his younger brother. He's never heard of Ted Sagar, the Everton goalkeeping legend. In any case, Nepal's Sagar is an avowed Red. He opens his jacket to show me a new Liverpool shirt. He has a dream of standing on the Kop."

↔ **Chris Lepkowski**

The Crash

The tragedy that costs Tom Silk his life, West Brom and a visionary director

"22 September 1980. It was a Monday. Graham Silk had just taken a call from his mother Ruth, who paused her wedding anniversary celebrations in France. Like any good mother she was checking up on her sons back home in the UK.

"Ruth and Tom Silk would be flying back to the UK on their private jet on Wednesday morning. They would be arriving in plenty of time to make the trip from the West Midlands to Merseyside for West Bromwich Albion's match at Everton. Tom would be taking his usual position in the director's box, alongside the Albion chairman Bert Millichip."

↻ Luke McLaughlin

After Clough

How Frank Clark took Nottingham Forest to third in the league in 1994-95

"How do you go about replacing a legend? It seems a very difficult question, but the answer turns out to be simple: you don't even try. When Frank Clark took on the formidable challenge of succeeding Brian Clough as Nottingham Forest manager in the summer of 1993, he was following a unique and irreplaceable figure.

"Forest had been relegated from the top flight for the first time since 1977. While Clough possessed myriad celebrated qualities, modesty was not among them. Clark, on the other hand, has never shown much of an appetite for self-promotion. Perhaps that is one of the reasons his achievement of reviving the club in the mid-1990s has been under-valued."

↻ Ben Welch

Those that Can, Scan

What do we mean when we speak of the "football brain"? Is there a sporting intelligence?

"Paul Gascoigne charges towards the Dutch box, chasing an overhit pass from Steve McManaman. Aaron Winter looks to have intercepted the ball, but Gascoigne's elbows propel him past the would-be tackler and into a one-v-one with Danny Blind. While everyone is watching the ball, Teddy Sheringham quickly scans the field of play. He's spotted something. Gascoigne flicks a pass into Sheringham's feet as he breaches the 18-yard box.

"The Tottenham forward opens his body up, pulling his right foot back as he prepares to unleash a first-time finish. But he doesn't. It's a ruse and everyone falls for it. Johan de Kock loses his footing. The goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar is out of position. Rather than shoot, Sheringham cushions a pass into the path of his strike partner Alan Shearer who lashes the ball home to make it 3-0."

↩ Michael Yokhin

Netherlands 1 Russia 3 (aet)

Euro 2008 quarter-final, St Jakob-Park, Basel, 21 June 2008

“They hugged each other after the final whistle. They felt awkward. The two Dutch coaches looked at the stands of St Jakob Park which were almost exclusively filled with fans in orange shirts. Those supporters had been extremely optimistic just two hours previously, and Marco van Basten couldn’t avoid the feeling that he had let them down. His personal dream was over. His job was left unfinished. Guus Hiddink had instigated his downfall and deep inside the veteran shared the disappointment of his countrymen. And yet, he was proud too, because he was the worthy winner.”

↩ Alex Hess

Eight Bells

The story of English football told through eight iconic items of managerial fashion

“In November 1914, as professional football controversially continued despite the outbreak of the Great War, discussions between the FA and the British War Office resulted in the establishment of the “Footballers’ Battalion” with the hope of proving that professional footballers were prepared to “do their bit”. The first man to enlist was Frank Buckley, a journeyman centre-half. Buckley quickly ascended to the rank of Major and led his men into battle at Delville Wood during the 1916 Somme offensive.”



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