

Simon Inglis, *Soccer in the Dock: A History of British Football Scandals 1900 to 1965*. Willow Books, London, 1985. Illus. pp. x + 213. £9.95.

For sports fans the actual playing of games between various teams constitute only a part (albeit an important part) of their fascination for the particular sport that they follow. The extra sporting activities, or off-field incidents, associated with the administration and organisation of the sport are also of interest

to fans. *Soccer in the Dock* is a potpourri of scandals, shenanigans and hullabaloo which occurred in British soccer from 1900 to 1965. For Inglis the dock 'may be that of a court of law, it might be that of an FA or Football League commission of enquiry' (p.vii).

The incidents presented for examination are game-fixing (either for gambling reasons or to improve a club's standing in the competition); the payment of monies to players over the FA and Football League maxima; opposition to Plymouth Argyle's 1922 attempt to play the (amateur) Corinthians when they had a free Saturday; the sacking of an FA official for not allowing the referee to select the match ball in the 1933 Cup Final; the 1936 battle between the FL and pools promoters; the playing of football on holy days; and, the battle between rival factions in the early 1960s over whether or not a struggling Scottish club should be relocated.

While the account of the various incidents make for interesting reading, the book as a whole does not work very well. The major problem is the difference of degree in the various incidents examined. Such things as the sacking of an official who falls out with his peers, or whether or not to play a game against a distinguished amateur club on a free Saturday pale into insignificance when compared with game fixing which attacks the very integrity of the game. Possibly Inglis's object, in focusing on these 'scandals' was to provide his readers with a fuller and more comprehensive picture of British football than those accounts which concentrate on star players and the results of games and competitions. If this was the case, however, readers would be well advised to consult any one of a number of works which provide accounts of the social history of British football.

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