

THE WANDS' FIRST EVER SUBSTITUTE

Why did Keith Peacock entitle his autobiography 'No Substitute'?

Keith made history on 21 August 1965 when he became the first ever substitute player to take part in a Football League match. Charlton Athletic were away to Bolton Wanderers and their manager Bob Stokoe had to summon Keith from the bench when goalkeeper Mike Rose was injured after just 13 minutes. John Hewie went in goal and Charlton lost 4-2.

The innovation of one substitute player was restricted to the Football League at first. My scrapbook for the 1966-67 season contains a short report of a Southern League match on the opening day when Cambridge United drew 2-2 with Guildford City. The report mentions that the home side's Wesley Maughan "became one of the first substitutes in Non-League football". Maughan later played for Bexley United.

Cray Wanderers were members of the Greater London League in 1965-66 and the Metropolitan League in 1966-67 but substitute players weren't allowed at this level until 1967-68.

So, who was the first ever player to be a substitute for Cray Wanderers after the new rule came in?

To answer this question I think we must turn back the clock forty years to 3 September 1966 when Cray travelled to play Harlow Town in the F A Cup 1st qualifying round.

Because it was the F A Cup, the substitute rule applied. I can imagine the Wands' kit-man being confronted with an unfamiliar task—to supply an extra shirt with the number 12 sewn on! And the Wands' reserve team manager was obliged to give up one of the players who he had selected to play against Rolenmill (who were they?) in a London Intermediate Cup tie!

The young reserve player **Derek Ingram** made the journey to Essex with the first team. And during a very dull 0-0 draw it was he who became the first-ever substitute player to be used by Cray Wanderers. Shortly before the interval he replaced full back Alan Howe who had sustained a knee injury.

Cray reserves beat Rolenmill 1-0 with a goal by Gus Constable. It was Constable who stepped in to Alan Howe's position for the replay versus Harlow Town which the Wands won comfortably by 3-1 at Grassmeade. By the following Saturday the Wands had found another left back to stand in for the injured Howe—one Mick Miller (was he as fast as a greyhound?).

In 2006 Harlow Town left the Sports Centre, their home since 1960, for a new ground at Barrows Farm. Whilst completing this move, they left behind a little piece of Cray Wanderers FC history—the day when Derek Ingram stepped on to the turf at the Sports Centre stadium and became the Wands' first ever official substitute player!

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