

LEIGH RICHMOND ROOSE: PRINCE OF GOALKEEPERS

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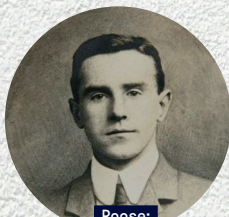
There are many fans around today who still have clear memories of that modern king of goalkeepers, Neville Southall, but sadly nobody alive in 2025 will have witnessed another charismatic Welsh international custodian, Leigh Richmond Roose.

Born on 27 November 1877 in the village of Holt, on the border between England and Wales, his chosen career was medicine, which would eventually see him move to King's College Hospital in London to continue his training, while also turning out for London Welsh as an amateur goalkeeper.

Earning his first Wales cap in 1900, Roose gained fame at Stoke City. Fans flocked to see this showman who played to the crowd, often chatting and telling jokes during the game, signing autographs and performing acrobatics on the bar. He was frequently seen out in London, dressed in dapper suits with a girl on his arm, and, along with cricketer Jack Hobbs, was regarded as the most famous sportsman of his day, and certainly the most eligible bachelor.

Roose arrived at Everton on 15 November 1904, as a replacement for the injured Bill Scott, and held his place until the end of the season. Everton were potentially heading for a League and FA Cup double, but by April their charge was derailed. Knocked out of the Cup by Aston Villa in a semi-final replay, the Blues' league hopes were ended by fixture congestion, losing two of their three Easter games.

Roose confronted the Everton manager/secretary Will Cuff about the schedule and was promptly dropped for the final game of the season against Nottingham Forest, only to be reinstated for a Club



Roose:
Famously dapper



The greatest showman:
Leigh Richmond Roose

tour of Austria after writing a letter of apology. All seemed smoothed over, and Cuff included Roose in the retained list for the 1905/06 season.

Yet just days later, Roose jumped at the chance to return to Stoke City after being tapped up. This wasn't divulged to Everton, whose officials pursued him throughout the summer, all to no avail. Eventually, on 17 August, Roose sent the Everton Board a brief letter of resignation and two weeks later he made his second 'debut' for Stoke.

He went on to enjoy a successful stint at Sunderland, plus a brief spell with today's visitors when they were known as Woolwich Arsenal.

The Leigh Roose story doesn't end there, though... far from it.

The 'Prince of Goalkeepers' is featured in a fascinating new documentary on his life produced by the Heritage Society

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