

CLAPTON BRINGS PUNCH

HE PLAYED FOR ENGLAND

SEPT 1962

All Eyes On The Town's Signing From Arsenal

By CHILTERN

Although some of the attraction has been removed from the Town's home match with Leeds United this afternoon by the absence of John Charles, £53,000 signing from the Italian club, Juventus, there is consolation for the home fans in the first appearance of Danny Clapton, who was signed from Arsenal on Thursday.

Clapton, who has long been on the Town's wanted list, goes in at outside-right in place of Alan Clarke, who occupied the position in the last two matches, and his presence is expected to bring a much-needed increase of striking power to the attack.

Signing of Clapton was the culmination of a hectic week for Town officials, who had been hopeful of adding another new forward to their list in time for today's match.

However, Clapton is a thoroughly well-known and most experienced player who should give the confidence that has been lacking, particularly in front of goal, to the other members of the front line.

Charles is absent because of a leg injury sustained at Bury on Tuesday, when he had a most disappointing match, and I gather that, generally, he has not reached the form that was expected from him when he was brought back from Italy.

Inclusion of Clapton represents the Town's only forward change, but there are two alterations in defence, one enforced and one voluntary.

As was feared after last Saturday's match at Sunderland, in the second half of which he was badly impeded by a pulled muscle at the top of the groin, Ron Baynham has to stand down for the first time this season.

This brings in for a first appearance this campaign, former Arsenal goalkeeper Jim Standen, who had his first competitive game of football only last Saturday for the Reserves.

Standen's delayed start to the season was brought about, of course, by his cricketing commitments with Worcestershire, with whom he was allowed to finish the season.

Under treatment this week, Baynham has made steady progress and it was thought at one time that he might be fit, but the decision went against him yesterday morning.

A great pity this, because Baynham has been playing with all his old confidence and shrewdness of judgment, but Standen is an experienced hand who kept his rival out of the side for a long spell last season.

For the first time since March 17, when he was dropped after

the 2-1 home defeat by Norwich City, Ron Cope, former Manchester United centre-half, is recalled to the team in place of Terry Kelly.

This is a move with which Manager Bill Harvey has toyed before because he had the feeling that, with the centre-half position not being completely adequately filled by Kelly, Cope, of whom he has seen little in competitive football, should be given his chance.

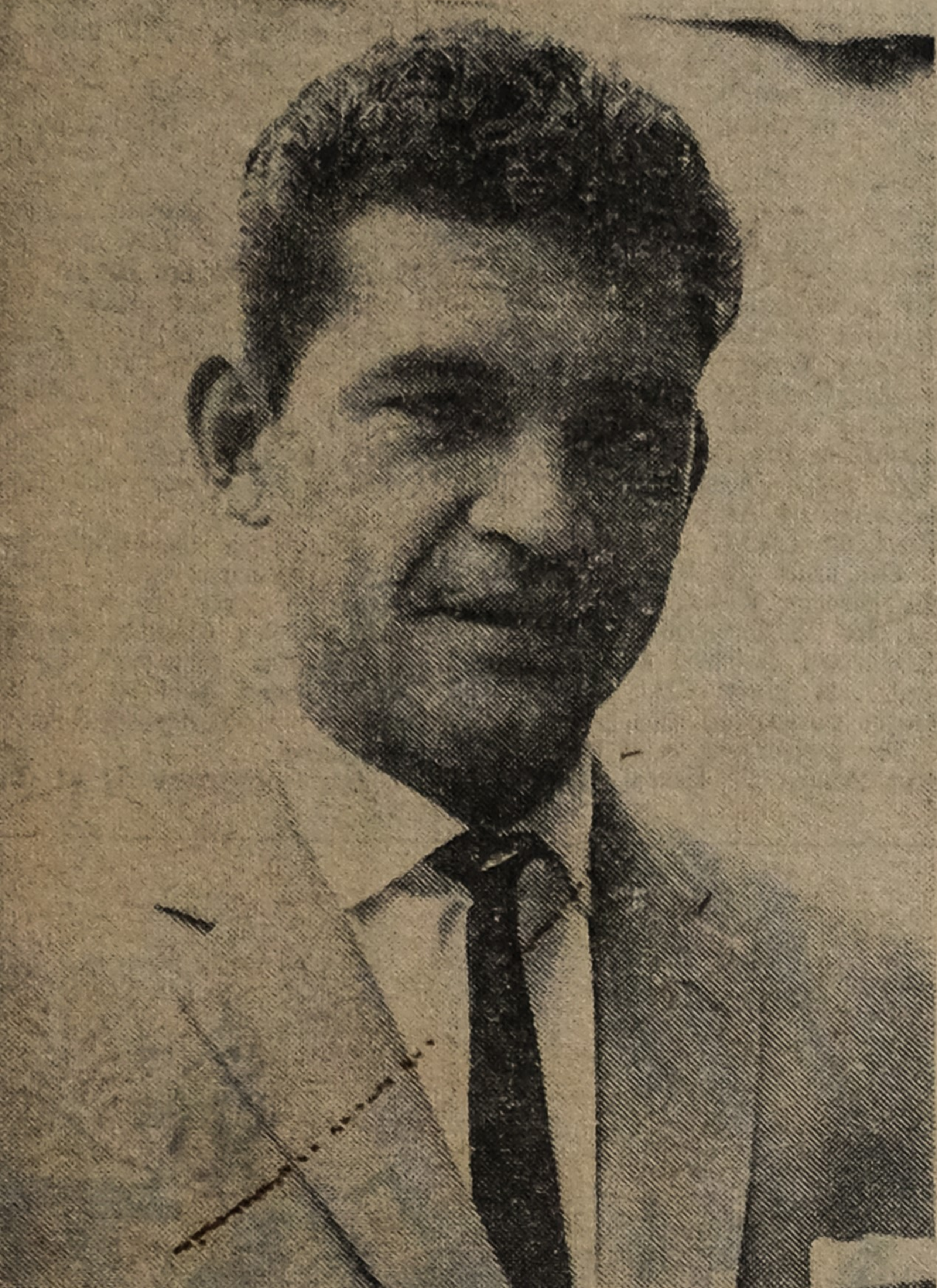
I understand that Cope was most impressive for the Reserves against Crystal Palace last Saturday, while Kelly has been giving the impression of struggling in the last few matches.

GOOD CHANCE FOR COPE

It could not really be said that he has been playing badly, but he has been far from in complete command of the middle and has rarely been a dominating factor.

Whether Cope can achieve this remains to be seen, but he is presented with an excellent chance of regaining the regular place for which he seemed destined when he joined the club from Manchester United in exchange for a £10,000 fee at the beginning of last season.

If Cope can play up to the (Please turn to back page)



Danny Clapton, Luton Town's new winger, played for England in 1959 against Wales.

ALL EYES ARE ON CLAPTON TODAY

(Continued from front page)

reputation he gained when he was at Old Trafford, then there could be a welcome tightening up in the middle of the Town defence.

But the main problem, of course, is to step up the scoring power of the front line, which has managed only two goals, both scored by Gordon Turner, in the last five matches.

That Turner has been on the mark in each of the last two games is, to say the least, encouraging, because before that happened it seemed that he had lost his goal touch completely.

OPPORTUNITY FOR INSIDE MEN

With Clapton providing the thrust down the right wing, and Harry Walden, judging by his last Saturday's display, having taken kindly to the outside-left berth, the inside-forward trio should not lack for opportunities in front of goal.

However, Tommy McKechnie still needs to sharpen up his reactions, judging by his Sunderland showing, and I am by no means happy about the continued run of Jim Fleming at inside-right.

For one thing, his distribution of the ball is not accurate enough and he lacks the thrust that the Town so badly need at inside-forward.

As things stand at the moment, it is absolutely essential that the Town pick up both points today, otherwise it is going to be a long, hard pull in order to avoid the threat of relegation, which is the nightmare of all struggling Second Division clubs.

They should succeed because I cannot think that the inclusion of so many teenagers, highly promising though they might be, is going to help the balance of the Leeds team and they may be caught short of experience.

COLLINS IS THE DANGER

Where they will not be lacking, though, is at inside-forward, because I have a considerable amount of respect for the ball-playing efficiency of Bobby Collins, but there seems to be a certain amount of doubt about the final composition of the front line.

Yesterday, Manager Don Revie

named six forwards from whom he will make his final choice, and a Leeds official told me that he thought that the doubt affected the right wing.

In his opinion, Bill Bremner would be either at outside or inside-right, leaving Noel Peyton or Jim Storrle for the position that is left.

Yet, in the Town's official programme today, it will be noted that Rodney Johnson, regarded as the automatic stand-in for John Charles, is missing from the line-up and that Storrle is included at centre-forward.

Just what the final line-up will be, we are not likely to know until just before the start, but, whatever it is, with Collins doing the prompting, it is likely to be formidable.

GETTING POINTS IF NOT GOALS

However, the return of Charles has not stepped up the Leeds scoring power as much as they had hoped. In nine matches, they have found the net only 13 times.

Yet, from five away games, they have collected five points, which is an impressive record, even though they have scored only six goals in the process.

With any luck at all, the Town will house their biggest gate of the season and that will not be difficult because their top crowd so far is only 8,664.

LUTON TOWN: Standen; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Cope, Pacey; Clapton, Fleming, Turner, McKechnie, Walden.

LEEDS UNITED: Sprake; Reaney, Mason; Addy, Charlton, Hunter; forwards from Peyton, Bremner, Storrle, Johnson, Collins, Johannesson.

Referee: R. Spittle, Yarmouth.