

No.28 Frank Noel George

Noel George was an outfield player who was successfully converted to goalkeeping. During the First World War, whilst serving in the Royal Artillery Second Command in Greece, Noel helped his unit as an emergency goalkeeper. He performed so well that he retained his position and in April 1919 represented a Salonika Select XI against an Italian XI at Aldershot.

Following his demob in July 1919, he signed for Hednesford Town to make his debut, 1 November 1920, in a 0-0 draw against Darlaston.

There were three former and five future Football League players in the Hednesford team that season. Noel was the first of the youngsters to go when he transferred to Second Division Wolves. He made his debut for them in a 1-1 draw away at Nottingham Forest, 5 February 1921, replacing Hednesford bound, and current Welsh International, Teddy Peers.

During the next three months, Noel played in six FA Cup games, including the final at Stamford Bridge against Tottenham Hotspur; former Hednesford man Arthur Potts was also a member of the Wolves team. They lost the match, but Noel played brilliantly, establishing himself in their team as an ever-present in the following season.

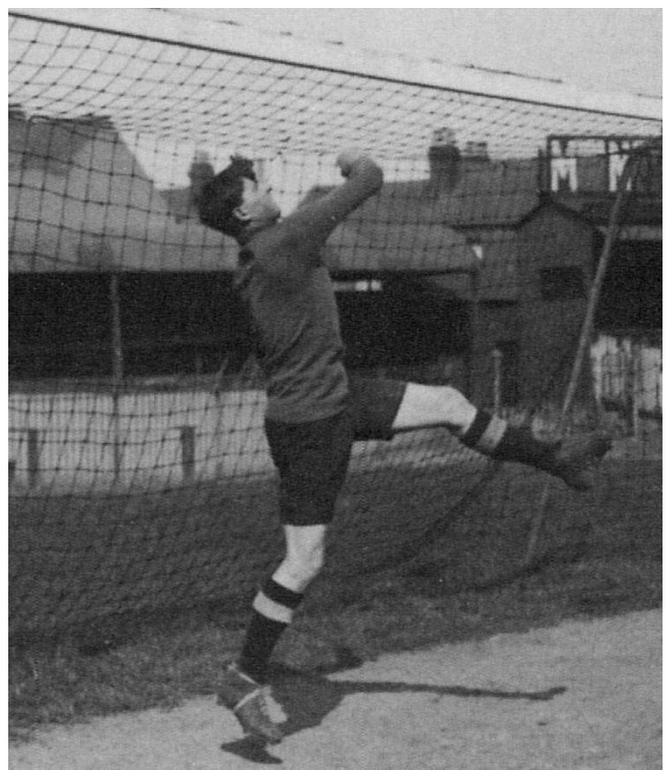
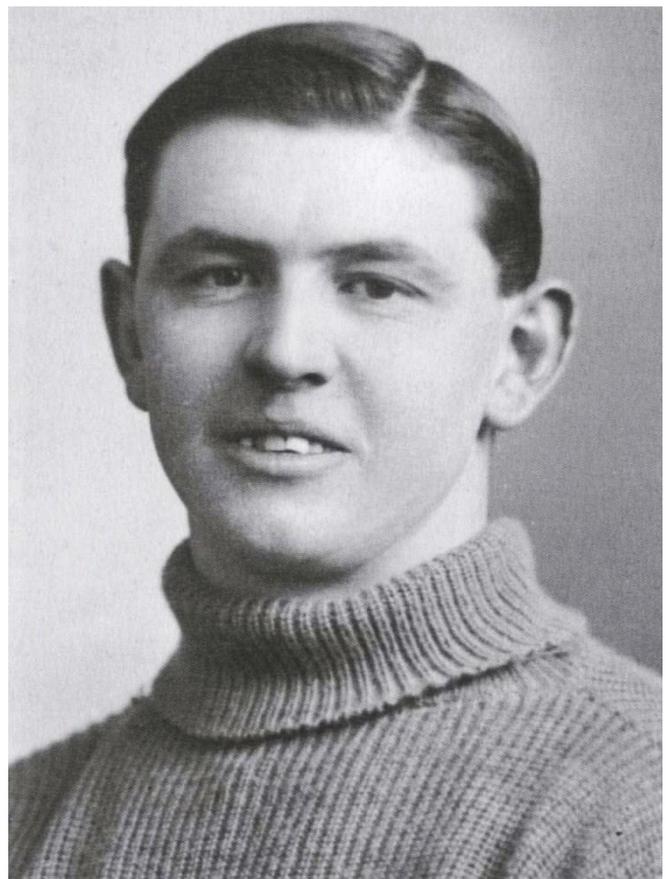
An injury at the beginning of 1922-23 kept him out of the side for four months and by the time he returned the Wanderers were heading for relegation to Division Three (North).

By now former 'Pitmen': full back Harold Shaw and winger Jack Harrington had joined him at Molineux and Wolves bounced back immediately in 1924-25 as Noel conceded only 31 times in 42 games, including 23 clean sheets.

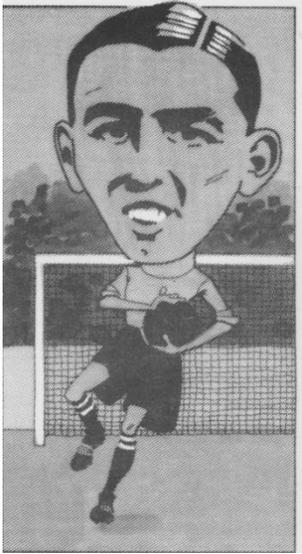
He continued to produce quality performances over the next two seasons, being an ever-present for the third time in 1924-25, putting him in line for an England call-up – but it never came.

However, rheumatoid arthritis and injuries were becoming a problem and he complained of feeling unwell with head and neck pains. Noel was taken ill during the defeat at Bristol City, 13 November 1927, admitted to Wolverhampton hospital and diagnosed with a terminal illness. Noel got progressively worse during the next two years and, having been born in Lichfield, 26 December 1897, he passed away in his sleep in Lichfield Infirmary, 16 October 1929.

Frank Noel George was not the tallest of goalkeepers but was cool, confident, reliable, agile, a safe handler of the ball and as bold as they come. He had played 242 senior games in his seven competitive seasons at Molineux.



Practice makes perfect.



From a set of 24 by Dave Shaw



Noel stands proudly at the back. Arthur Potts sits second right.