

By Albert Sewell

BETWEEN OURSELVES

Programme Editor

IF THE "Chelsea Giant" is filling (and I do mean filling) the No. 5 shirt again today, then we are not only present at one of the most attractive fixtures on the First Division card but also witnessing the heavyweight championship of the Football League. In the Blues corner, massive Micky Droy, aged 21, 6 ft. 4½ in., and 15 st. 6 lb., and in the Manchester City corner (or rather in their goal) gigantic Joe Corrigan, aged 23, 6 ft. 4½ in. and, at the last weigh-in, a full 15 st. Of all the 2,000+ professionals registered with the League's 92 clubs, these are the two biggest.

I know not to what Corrigan attributes his outsize proportions. Our own Micky Droy, whose boots (size 11) are the largest in the Chelsea kit-room and whose shorts are specially made to fit, puts his giant physique down to the job he did before he became a professional here in October 1970. He was then an amateur with Slough Town and says: "I think what really built up my frame was working in a meat market and humping great carcasses about."

Droy may well be the second largest player in Chelsea history, but it's unlikely that anyone will ever closely challenge for the title of Chelsea's "all-time greatest". When England International Bill ("Fatty") Foulke arrived from Sheffield United to become Chelsea's very first goalkeeper in 1905, he weighed 22 st. 3 lb. He was 6 ft. 2 in., took size 12 boots and size 24 collars . . . and when he left a year later for Bradford City, they had to open the Stamford Bridge gates even wider to let him out, because by then he had gone beyond 26 st.

Stories of Foulke became part of the Chelsea legend. In that first season Chelsea finished third in the Second Division, scoring 90 goals in 38 games and conceding 37. Among five teams they beat both home and away were Burton United, but it wouldn't have happened had not Foulke saved two penalties up at Burton. After that match the unfortunate spot-kicker was told by his angry captain: "You shot straight at him." Came the reply: "I *had* to . . . there's no room on either side."

At the time they signed Foulke, Chelsea were dressing the shop window to get themselves elected to the Football League. With "Little Willie" on the books, the window was full. Who but Foulke could possibly be Chelsea's first captain . . . and, just to emphasise his man-mountain proportions, who else but the club's tiniest player, a right-wing sparrow named Martin Moran, could follow directly behind him when Chelsea went on the field? The Stamford Bridge ball-boys who stood behind the goals were also selected for their size, or rather lack of it.

It all added to the image of Foulke, who had an appetite to match his physique. It was said that on one away trip he went down to dinner half an hour before the other Chelsea players. By the time they arrived he had cleared all 11 plates.

On another occasion, leaving the train in some up-country town he became separated from the rest of the players and had mislaid his ticket. When he told the collectors at the barrier that he was with the football team that had just gone through, they laughed at him. Surely, this fellow couldn't be a footballer? So our hero picked them up, one under each arm and carried them, struggling, to the station-master's office.

Foulke was 30 when he left Chelsea and only 40 when he died in 1916. He had finished his playing days with Bradford City, fell on hard times, and set up in the penalty-kick business on Blac'pool sands—a penny a shot and threepence back if you scored. While doing that he caught a chill, and sadly that was the end for Chelsea's largest-ever player and one of the game's great all-time characters.