

Where it All Began: The Rivalry Between Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs

Liverpool and Everton FC are both top-flight teams who are rarely absent from any major UK or European championship. Their fans are famous for being the friendliest opposing supporters in the game and both clubs bring in endless streams of visitors to watch home and away games at Anfield and Goodison Park.

So let us take a look at where it all began, the friendly rivalry of Liverpool and Everton.

Who was here first?

Everton were among the first 12 founding clubs of the very first football league established in 1888. Being the only football club in the city, Everton's success drew in huge crowds and the noise that emanated from the small pitch on Stanley Park, became too much for local residents on match days.

As a result, the club moved to Anfield in 1884 and won the first home game there with a whopping 5-0 nil defeat against Earlestown.

Historically Everton football club was Liverpool's very first football club and their home pitch was Anfield stadium.

Two clubs one city

Plenty of cities have two football clubs that exercise bitter rivalries towards one another.

Our close neighbours Manchester have two teams whose rivalry often descends into chaos and anarchy; United and City. Overseas Milan's competing teams A.C and Inter Milan even share a stadium, but their ongoing rivalry runs deep and can be traced back to the class separation of the bourgeoisie and blue-collar worker. Scotland's Celtic and Rangers rivalry can be traced back into the far reaches of the Scottish history books and has a deep seeded religious basis.

Liverpool welcomed its second city team in 1892 after Everton football club became tired of John Houlding's increasingly unfair financial demands. First asking for higher interest rates on the loan he'd provided the club and later for trying to make huge profits from the club at their expense. Board members came together and decided that Houlding's demands were becoming a real problem also, Houlding was a firm Conservative Party member and had other business dealings. As well as his interests in Everton football club he also owned a successful brewery. At the time the Liberal Party had strong connections with the National Temperance Federation and many of the Everton board members were supporters of the Liberal Party, Houlding was a Conservative Party supporter.

Thanks to these opposing political loyalties and Houlding's unreasonable financial demands, plus his future plans for the club, Everton's board members decided to leave Anfield and set up camp at Goodison Park a mere 400 metres away from Anfield. Houlding retaliated and formed his own football club at Anfield; Liverpool.

Too close for comfort?

Literally, a 400-metre park is all that separates Everton's Goodison Park and Liverpool's Anfield stadiums. Unlike other major city clubs no physical, religious or social divide can be attributed to the source of Liverpool teams ongoing rivalry. In fact, thanks to the close proximity of the stadium's fans of the clubs seem to have a more amicable relationship with one another. Reds and blues can often live under the same roof, fathers and sons can support Liverpool or Everton and relationships remain close and jovial, except on derby days.

One of the only recorded accounts of animosity between fans of Everton and Liverpool can be traced back to the Heysel Stadium disaster. The tragic events that unfolded at the 1985 European cup final resulted in 39 deaths and over 600 injuries when a wall collapsed on the Juventus crowd after Liverpool fans surged into the neutral area through a barrier fence. UEFA responded by banning all English teams from competing in any European competitions, a ban which lasted five seasons for all teams but Liverpool who were excluded until the following year. Everton and many other English club fans blamed Liverpool supporters for the ban and in Liverpool, tensions between the teams were strained as Everton supporters felt Liverpool fans had represented the cities residents as hooligans on the world stage.

It wasn't until another tragedy occurred that the Liverpool teams reunited. The Hillsborough disaster brought Everton and Liverpool fans together in support of such a tragic loss of life. Touching displays of unity after the Hillsborough disaster included the fans intertwining blue and red scarves strung together across Stanley Park joining the two stadiums together. The fans continue to show a joint support of those lives lost and the families that were effected today.

The worlds first football quarter in Liverpool

As longstanding as this rivalry is, Liverpool will always be known as the home of the "friendly derby". Liverpool football fans attitude towards each other provides a great example to the rest of the footballing world and we are looking forward to becoming the founding city of the worlds first football quarter.