

KICK-OFF!

Yes, it'll soon be here again. Up and down the country the crowds will be gathering - for football is the sport of Britain's millions - nearly two million spectators, half of them in organised supporters clubs - there's no doubt about their enthusiasm.

But let's get behind the game itself for a moment - starting with the place where modern big time soccer began. Here are Reg Lewis and Jimmy Legie. You think they spoil them here? Well, you must take care of your assets. It's the stars who bring the customers in - and football is big business.

In the football - like every business - some are rich and some - well, not so rich. Rotherham are in the second division - they've some fine players, but their strength is as a team - and, with the luck that's half the thrill of football, they might go that fraction better than last season and get into the first division. But (like a lot of other clubs) they're not very prosperous.

All that Rotherham can manage for a practice ground is this. But there are no half measures about their football. Many of their players are part-timers, like young Terry Farmer. He's a miner. And at Accrington, we find much the same. Darcy is a painter on weekdays, a player on Saturdays - and John Oldham works at plumbing, as well as play. Some of these clubs with financial worries just couldn't keep going without the money their supporters clubs provide. Mrs. Slater has been an Accrington supporter for twenty-seven years.

They don't only help with cash - they put in many hours of unpaid hard work. At Southend, this site for their new ground was bought mainly with money the supporters themselves provided, and their efforts gave manager Harry Warren just that bit extra to spend on staff and players of really top class - like trainer Wilf Copping - and forwards, McAlinden and Sibley.

But not all football has official fixture lists and not all players are registered; not all spectators pay gate-money. Where there are boys and a ball, there is football.

And where there's football, there is drama!