

From the Archives – 19 August 2021

ANDY DUCAT AT ROEHAMPTON CLUB 1931- FAMOUS CRICKETER AND FOOTBALLER



The following article came about from a conversation with an Arsenal supporter in the office at Roehampton Club and the co-incidence of one of their most famous players who also happened to be an international cricketer appearing in social media to mark the anniversary of his passing.

He was well known to the Club for coaching local schoolboys during the Easter Holidays and appears in a photograph dated 1931 in our *Centenary Book* by Elizabeth Hennessey. A separate photograph of his coaching at Roehampton Club appears in the *Bystander* magazine.

Ducat was born in Brixton, London but brought up in Southend. He grew up playing cricket and football becoming one of only a few players to represent his country in both sports. Cricket writer at the time, David Foot said his name was

pronounced 'Dewkitt' by the family and 'Duckett' on the football terraces of Arsenal, Aston Villa and Fulham. His football career began with non-league Southend United before joining Woolwich Arsenal in 1905 where he achieved the recent distinction of being recognised as one of their most famous top fifty players of all time.

In one of his first matches at Arsenal in February 1908, he attracted the attention of one of the sports journalists at the time referring to his burgeoning talents as follows; 'It is seldom that a footballer receives official recognition so early in his career as Andy Ducat, Woolwich Arsenal's right half-back. Three months ago, Ducat was practically unknown in big football; today he is right in the forefront of English halves, and he has already played for the South against the

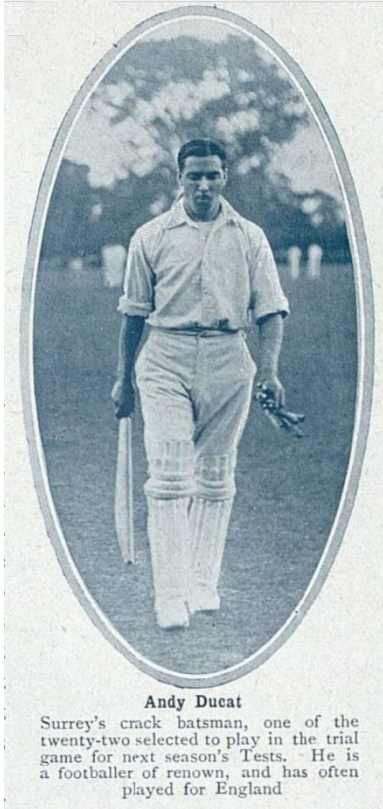


North. He has fully merited such an honour – an honour that is almost unique in the circumstances – for he is a very fine player, strong, thoughtful, and clever alike in attack and defence'.

In another newspaper article in the *Athletic World, Cycling and Football Chat* edited by JJ Bentley, Ducat was described as having every attribute towards making a great player. He has youth and physique on his side, is a non-smoker and teetotaler and above all is imbued with a keen desire to reach the top of the tree. The game has a fascination for him, and he never demurs at being called upon to fill any position. Moreover, his quiet gentlemanly demeanour makes him popular with officials, players, and spectators alike. Taken together, Andy is one of the best types of professional footballer. His footballing skills led to his inclusion in the England team playing matches against Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

Out For a Duc(k)at!
Andy Ducat, the famous Surrey cricket professional, teaching the young idea at Roehampton how to "stir their stumps"

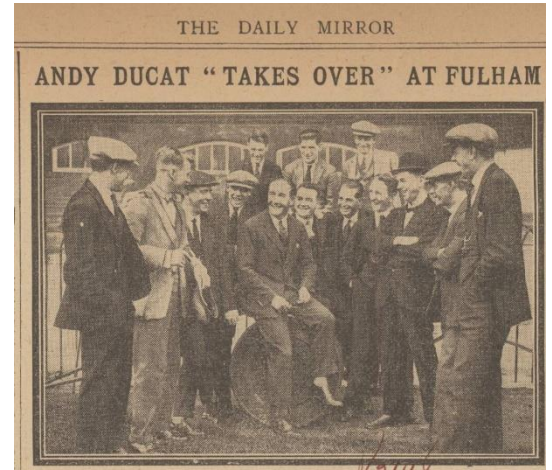
Ducat was a Southend man proving extremely popular locally both as a cricketer and a footballer; indeed, when Surrey, for which county Ducat is qualified, were



Andy Ducat
Surrey's crack batsman, one of the twenty-two selected to play in the trial game for next season's Tests. He is a footballer of renown, and has often played for England

playing Essex last summer, his townspeople sent a petition to the Surrey authorities asking that they would include Ducat in the team. His early cricketing skills were also highlighted in 1909 in the South London

Press as follows. 'Andy Ducat, the Woolwich Arsenal footballer, has certainly been displaying excellent batting ability for Surrey and he is now a fixture in the first eleven. Ducat is a bat who is bound to improve because he takes pains in all he sets himself to accomplish. He has batted very consistently and well deserves the position he has won. His two best strokes are his cutting and swinging leg hits. There is a good deal of hope for Surrey in the near future with such a plethora of young talent at command, but it will have to be wisely handled'.



Ducat went on to reach the peak of his cricketing career when he was chosen for England in the third test match against Australia at Leeds in 1921. Up to the end of his first-class career in 1931, he hit 52 hundreds with a highest score of 306 not out for Surrey against Oxford University at the Oval in 1919. As a regular member of the Surrey team from 1908 he scored more than 13,000 runs. He was also selected for an England cap against Australia in the third test at Headingley in the same year that he ended his first-class career. Reaching such a prominent level of skill in two such demanding sports was not without its pitfalls.

He broke his leg playing football against Manchester City in September 1912 and broke his arm in the cricket nets at the Oval where he played for Surrey. He sadly passed away at the age of 56 years because of a heart attack playing cricket and remains to this day as the only person to have died at a cricket match at Lords. His friend and playing partner in the Surrey team, Jack Hobbs was quoted at the time of his passing with the following words 'If one could forget the blow to his wife and family, it would be easy to say what a glorious way for such a fine cricketer and man to die'.

Andy Ducat in the Tatler 1922



Andy Ducat 1912



DUCAT—WHO HAS ON OTHER FIELDS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF.