

## The Tour

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On arriving back at Gatwick Airport on June 3rd, the Committee, Staff and Players of the Wanderers expressed their satisfaction on a highly successful tour. Winning both matches and being well received by our opponents and the Greek people in general all helped to make an enjoyable eight days.

The party was due to leave Gatwick on Friday, May 26th at 11.00 p.m. We boarded the aircraft on time but unfortunately were still sitting there at 12.30 a.m. The stewardesses who were entertaining the players (or vice-versa, I'm not sure!) informed us that there was aileron trouble which was proving difficult to locate. Apart from the frustration of just sitting there, John Maskell seemed most put out. Unfortunately, John was rather ill during a tour flight to Jersey a couple of seasons ago on an aircraft which was reputed to have been flown by Jack Smethurst in World War I. We eventually took off at 12.50 a.m. and after a pleasantly uneventful flight arrived in Athens 3½ hours later.

The tour matches were arranged for us through the Greek F.A. by Billy Bingham their National Coach. Both matches were against the Greek Under 20's prior to their Mini-World Cup series in Rumania. Billy soon realised that we were not there for merely a holiday when we asked him to provide us with training facilities on the evening of our arrival. The players were quickly indoctrinated to conditions ahead by working for an hour in a temperature of 86 degrees.

On Monday we travelled to Aik for our first match and on arrival were greeted by enough police or "militia" to cope with a Rangers v. Celtic clash! Fortunately, they were not needed in an all-seated stadium complete with fabulous playing surface as only about 2,000 people attended the game. The match itself was good without reaching our own high standard and we won with a single goal late in the first half by Terry Reardon who, along with fellow club players Ray Eaton and Keith Mead, guested for us to make up the playing squad to 17. Much of the two following rest days were spent on Astir beach where there are bars and eating facilities and a fair number of good looking girls from most other European countries. Incidentally, our hotel manager and his brother were former crack Greek Internationals which added to a footballing atmosphere in the hotel.

Our second game played on Parathanicos Stadium was, to coin a pun, played as a "warm-up" prior to a full Under-23 International against Czechoslovakia. The temperature at 3.00 p.m. (kick-off time) was 86° with an initial 8,000 spectators that had swelled to 30,000 plus, long before our 90 minutes had ended. It was a particularly good game from our point of view winning as we did 3-1; goalscorers Terry Reardon, Mick Holifield and Keith Searle. Outstanding features of the game were a brilliant goal by Mick Holifield and some really first class saves by John Maskell who received a terrific ovation from the crowd behind his goal on the resumption of the second half. At full time both sides acknowledged the crowd on all four sides in true European fashion, an apt finalé to a most enjoyable tour.

JOHN E. REARDON.