

ABOUT OUR VISITORS

ALTHOUGH they have not been quite as consistent as usual so far this season, Blackburn Rovers are still a formidable side. They have plenty of experience in their ranks, and an outstanding player this season has been our former winger, Mike Harrison, who has been a regular member of the Rovers' senior side since leaving us two years ago.

A notable departure from the Blackburn staff since they last visited us was that of England centre-forward Fred Pickering, whom they transferred to Everton in March.

Byrom Switched

To take his place they signed George Jones from Bury, but so far Jones has not produced his best form and recently has been out of the side. His place at centre-forward has gone to John Byrom, normally an inside-forward, who has been shaping well.

John Bray, a regular at right-back for most of last season, has been absent recently, through injury, but Rovers have been fortunate in having a player of the calibre of Walter Joyce to fill the gap. Joyce was another of the club's signings last season, joining them from Burnley.

Rovers' regular goalkeeper, Fred Else, came into prominence with Preston North End, from whom he joined Blackburn in the summer of 1961. He has made nearly 350 League appearances for his two clubs, earning a well-deserved reputation as one of the best uncapped goalkeepers in the game.

In Else's absence last week Bobby Jones made a rare first-team appearance, his previous outing in the First Division

having been in November 1962. A native of Liverpool, he was formerly with Chester and Southport. Rovers signed him six years ago.

A product of Blackburn's ground staff, Keith Newton has played chiefly at left-back in recent seasons, though he has now settled down at right-back. An England Under-23 International, he has been a consistent player in the Rovers' rearguard for a considerable time.

Joyce hails from Oldham, and made a name for his versatility while with Burnley. He has also occupied several positions with Blackburn, whom he joined in February. Joyce has worked up a sound understanding with Newton, and their partnership has been one reason for the team's improvement in the past few weeks.

Capped by England on 35 occasions, and a former captain of his country, Ronnie Clayton is now within sight of his 450th League game for Blackburn, with whom he has played since leaving school. He missed the two opening games this season through injury, and Blackburn lost them both. Since his return, they have suffered only two further defeats in eight matches.

Newcomer at Centre-half

An injury to Welsh International Mike England gave 21-years-old Dick Mulvaney his first League game last Saturday, and he played promisingly in the 3-1 victory over Leicester City. Born at Peterlee in Durham, Mulvaney is a well-built six-footer who earned his promotion with excellent reserve displays.

Eire International Mick McGrath gets through his work with the minimum of showmanship, yet is no less efficient for that. A product of Home Farm, the Dublin junior club, he has been with the Rovers for ten years, and at the start of this season had made 237 League appearances.

The resignation of Accrington Stanley from the Football League two years ago proved a blessing in disguise for Mike Ferguson. He was signed by Blackburn, and after playing at inside-forward was successfully switched to the right-wing.

The second Eire International in Blackburn's team is Andy McEvoy.