

Division One
WEST HAM UNITED
Brooking

Old Trafford (54,498)
3-1

6th January 1968
MANCHESTER UNITED
Charlton, Best, Aston

It was a day for celebrations at Old Trafford as United extended their unbeaten home record to 36 games and Bobby Charlton made his 400th League appearance for the club. West Ham, who arrived at Old Trafford full of confidence and on a three game winning run, played their part in a thoroughly entertaining afternoon.

Both sides had been forced to make team changes. John Fitzpatrick replaced Bill Foulkes, who had damaged knee ligaments in the victory at Molineux and was expected to be out for a few weeks, in United's back four. Kopel moved onto the bench. West Ham's young left winger John Sissons had flu and had not travelled north. He was replaced by Peter Brabrook, who had just recovered from injury and had missed their last four games.

Early miss

West Ham had a reputation for playing instinctive, attacking football that too often failed to produce an end result, which, combined with a too often fragile defence and ineffective midfield, produced an inconsistency that saw them lying 14th in the table. At Old Trafford that pattern looked likely to continue as Dear lost Sadler but then missed an early chance and the Hammers were then overrun by United's marauding attack. It took just twelve minutes for Charlton to mark his personal milestone with a goal. Aston, out on the left, played the ball through to him;

he evaded Cushley's tackle with consummate ease and then crashed the ball past Ferguson to give United the lead. The goal prompted a flurry of activity in and around the West Ham box as United's forwards sought to take advantage of their superiority, constantly spurred on by their mid-field pair, Charlton and Crerand, who worked tirelessly winning the ball and initiating attacks.

Nervous defence

West Ham somehow survived United's onslaught without conceding further and against the run of play equalised in the twenty second minute. Fitzpatrick failed to intercept a pass from Dear across United's box and Brooking, seizing his chance, fired past Stepney from twenty yards. Taking encouragement at the obvious discomfort of United's new central pairing in defence, Sadler and Fitzpatrick, West Ham began to regain some control. With Moore and Peters providing the stimulus, the Hammers attack prospered without converting any of the chances they created.

Five minutes after the restart the

ever willing Kidd broke up a West Ham attack. He found Crerand with a simple pass who in turn released Charlton down the left. Taking it past Bonds, Charlton crossed to the near post where Best beat both Cushley and Ferguson in the air to head United into the lead.

Sustained pressure

Back came the Hammers and Dunne, reacting more quickly than Brabrook, was forced to clear after Stepney had spilled a shot. But Sadler and Fitzpatrick looked much more comfortable in the second half, no doubt the result of Jimmy Murphy's half time team talk, and West Ham's chance had gone.

“United too good for spirited Hammers”

Their defence was now under almost constant pressure from the home side. George Best was unlucky not to score from at least one of two intricate runs, and Ferguson twice proved equal to hard drives from Bobby Charlton.

United were not to be denied, however, and ten minutes from time scored a well-deserved third. Kidd hit a deep, high cross from the right which found Aston at the far post. He hit the ball first time under Ferguson and into the net.

THE DAY'S OTHER RESULTS		
Coventry City <i>Gould</i> Att. 32,839	1-1	Arsenal <i>Graham</i>
Fulham Att. 24,419	0-5	Leeds United <i>Greenhoff 3, Jones 2</i>
Liverpool <i>Hunt 3, Strong</i> Att. 51,092	4-1	West Brom. A. <i>Brown (pen)</i>
Nott'm Forest Att. 39,581	0-3	Manchester City <i>Coleman (pen), Summerbee, Young</i>
Sheffield Wed. <i>Fantham</i> Att. 43,487	1-1	Sheffield Utd. <i>Hill</i>
Southampton <i>Davies 2, Channon</i> Att. 27,132	3-5	Chelsea <i>Boyle, Cooke, Baldwin, Osgood, Tambling</i>
Stoke City <i>Burrows 2</i> Att. 17,623	2-1	Newcastle Utd. <i>Davies</i>
Sunderland Att. 24,703	0-2	Leicester City <i>Large 2</i>
Tottenham H. <i>Played on March 30th 1968</i>	Post	Burnley
Wolves <i>Knowles</i> Att. 37,802	1-3	Everton <i>Royle 2, Trebilcock</i>

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 UNITED	25	15	7	3	50	28	37
2 Liverpool	25	13	8	4	39	19	34
3 Leeds United	25	14	5	6	41	21	33
4 Manchester City	25	14	4	7	55	31	32
5 Everton	25	12	4	9	37	25	28
6 West Bromwich A	24	11	5	8	46	36	27
7 Newcastle United	25	9	9	7	38	39	27
8 Arsenal	24	10	6	8	39	30	26
9 Tottenham Hotspur	24	10	6	8	37	39	26
10 Sheffield Wed.	24	9	7	8	36	34	25
11 Nott'm Forest	24	10	4	10	35	29	24
12 Burnley	24	9	6	9	41	45	24
13 Stoke City	25	9	5	11	33	40	23
14 Chelsea	24	6	10	8	36	53	22
15 West Ham United	25	8	4	13	47	50	20
16 Leicester City	24	6	8	10	37	43	20
17 Wolverhampton W	24	8	4	12	41	52	20
18 Southampton	24	7	5	12	41	52	19
19 Sheffield United	24	6	7	11	29	42	19
20 Sunderland	24	6	6	12	30	44	18
21 Fulham	23	6	4	13	32	49	16
22 Coventry City	25	3	10	12	30	49	16

West Ham United: Ferguson; Bonds, Lampard; Peters, Cushley, Moore; Dear, Boyce, Brooking, Hurst and Brabrook. Referee: K Howley (Billingham)

United (4-2-4): Stepney; Dunne, Sadler, Fitzpatrick, Burns; Crerand, Charlton; Best, Kidd, Law and Aston. (Unused substitute - Kopel).