



The father of the England Schoolboy International Joe Spence junior, of Chesterfield and York City, **Joe Spence's** 613 League appearances will remain a record for any player between the wars.

Born in Throckley in 1898, Joe attended a Liverpool trial before war forced football's hibernation but nothing came of that; he returned from war service to

play for Scotswood, but his promise was recognised by Manchester United, who took him on in 1919. He still holds a high place in the Old Trafford roll of honour, standing as high as fifth in their list of all-time League scorers and setting an appearance record that was eventually overhauled by Bill Foulkes in the early '60s.

Joe started every game with the same plan, trying three things to test his opponent. Firstly, he would push the ball past his man and run, to test his speed. Next, he would slip the ball inside, to test his weaker foot and, finally, he would charge his opponent, to see how he took to the physical side of the game. Having tested him, he would then adopt the most suitable of those three means of beating him, and stick to that. This approach was continued throughout his career.

Joe left United at the age of 34 and had two years with Bradford City. Very much a veteran by the time he joined the Spireites, he was aged 36 years, 291 days on his debut and was 39 years, 75 days old on his last appearance. He used experience, ingenuity and neat footwork to do the work that his legs could no longer manage, and was a great influence in the development of Harry Clifton. Both from the North-east, but at opposite ends of their careers, Harry learned much from Joe. He was held in the highest esteem by the fans, who would put up the cry "Give it to Joe!" in times when little headway was being made against opposing defences.

Joe joined Chesterfield's coaching staff after his playing days were over: his work as coach and mentor to Harold Roberts helped that player recover from the time he spent in a POW camp in World War Two. He was employed at the Chesterfield Tube Works until retirement in 1965. A cousin to England's George Brown, Joe was himself capped twice for his country in 1926-7.

For Chesterfield: 57 League appearances, 10 goals.

Career: 613 league appearances, 195 goals.