



Everton

everton football club

# end of season review

2008/09 season





## August brought the start of the 2008/09 campaign - and two new additions to the Everton squad.

David Moyes made his first signing of the summer when Danish defender Lars Jacobsen arrived on a free transfer from relegated Bundesliga outfit Nuremberg.

He was followed into Goodison Park by Ecuadorian international Segundo Castillo, who joined on a season-long loan from Red Star Belgrade.

The month began with the conclusion of the pre-season tour of America - the Blues beat Colorado Rapids 2-1 - before a forgettable 1-1 draw with PSV Eindhoven at Goodison.

The friendly was significant however for a broken toe sustained by Steven Pienaar. It would deprive Everton of the South African's services until the end of September.

The first Premier League fixture of the new campaign brought Blackburn Rovers and their new manager, Paul Ince, to Merseyside.

Goals from Mikel Arteta and Yakubu had looked to have salvaged a draw after David Dunn and Roque Santa Cruz had twice put the visitors in front. But, with seconds remaining, Dutch international Andre Ooijer bundled in to inflict an agonising defeat on the Toffees.

Second-half efforts from Leon Osman and Yakubu made for the perfect response a week later as Moyes' men won 2-1 at Tony Mowbray's newly-promoted West Brom.

The month was to end with more Goodison gloom however - a 3-0 defeat to Portsmouth leaving supporters, players and manager all scratching their heads.

august &  
september

## The first day of September saw the close of the transfer window, meaning a busy time for Blues boss David Moyes.

In came French international forward Louis Saha from Manchester United and journeyman goalkeeper Carlo Nash from Wigan Athletic. Then, with minutes to spare ahead of the midnight deadline, came news of a Club-record transfer.

Marouane Fellaini, a 20-year-old, 6ft 4inch, Belgian midfielder had joined Everton from Standard Liege in a £15million deal - eclipsing the £11.25million Moyes had paid for Yakubu 12 months earlier.

It was the big-money capture the Goodison faithful had been hoping for and, thanks in part to his unmissable hairdo, he would quickly become a terrace hero.

The month's opening fixture meant another trip to a newly-promoted side, Stoke City. Yakubu continued his fine start to the season by netting for the third successive game, and the Blues appeared to be coasting when another Nigerian, Victor Anichebe - back from winning a silver medal at the Beijing Olympics - made it two shortly after the break.

Stoke hit back through Seyi Olofinjana and a Phil Jagielka own goal but, on his comeback from injury, Tim Cahill settled a thrilling encounter with 14 minutes remaining.

Two successive 2-2 draws followed as the Blues were held by Fellaini's former club, Standard Liege, in the first leg of the Uefa Cup first round and the third of the Premier League's newcomers, Hull City.

The failure to beat the Belgians was of particular frustration as two defensive errors, including a Joseph Yobo own goal, twice allowed the visitors to go ahead. Yakubu and newboy Segundo Castillo salvaged some hope for Moyes' men however.

An early goal from Martin Olsson then saw Everton dumped out of the Carling Cup at Blackburn, on a night when Moyes was left infuriated by his side's performance.

It was poor preparation for the visit of city rivals Liverpool and a second-half double from Fernando Torres meant the Blues ended the second month of the 2008/09 campaign without a home win to their name.

To make things worse Tim Cahill received a questionable red card for a foul on Xabi Alonso, earning himself a three-match ban.



### **October started miserably for the Blues as they crashed out of Europe with a 2-1 defeat to Standard Liege in Belgium.**

The Blues found themselves continuing their troubled start to the domestic season surrounded by media speculation over manager David Moyes and his contract at the Club.

A clash with Newcastle United saw the Blues throw away a 2-0 lead to draw 2-2, though it was enough to earn them their first home point of the league campaign.

Months of speculation were then ended as Moyes signed a new five-year deal - much to the delight of all Evertonians.

Coming off the back of the international break that saw Tim Cahill score for Australia and Marouane Fellaini in action for Belgium - the Blues' bid to climb the league table was halted by a 3-1 defeat to Arsenal at Emirates Stadium.

Seven days later, title holders Manchester United travel to Goodison Park for a lunchtime showdown. Summer-signing Fellaini grabbed his second goal for the Club with a header to snatch the Blues a deserved point against the champions.

It was a result which was to begin a strong run in form for the Toffees, and they picked up three points from a mid-week trip to Bolton Wanderers on October 29. The victory again came courtesy of a header from the Belgian midfielder as he claimed the only goal of a scrappy affair.

### **On the first day of November Everton faced a visit from Fulham, with former Evertonian Andy Johnson arriving to a pleasant reception at Goodison Park.**

French International Louis Saha helped seal the Blues' first home win of the season with his first for the Club, which proved to be the only goal of the clash.

On the back of that win, the Blues travelled to Upton Park to take on West Ham as Marouane Fellaini stayed behind to serve a one-match suspension.

Joleon Lescott got his name on the scoresheet for the first time in the 2008/09 campaign with a late leveller before Saha turned the game on its head with two last-ditch strikes in a 3-1 win.

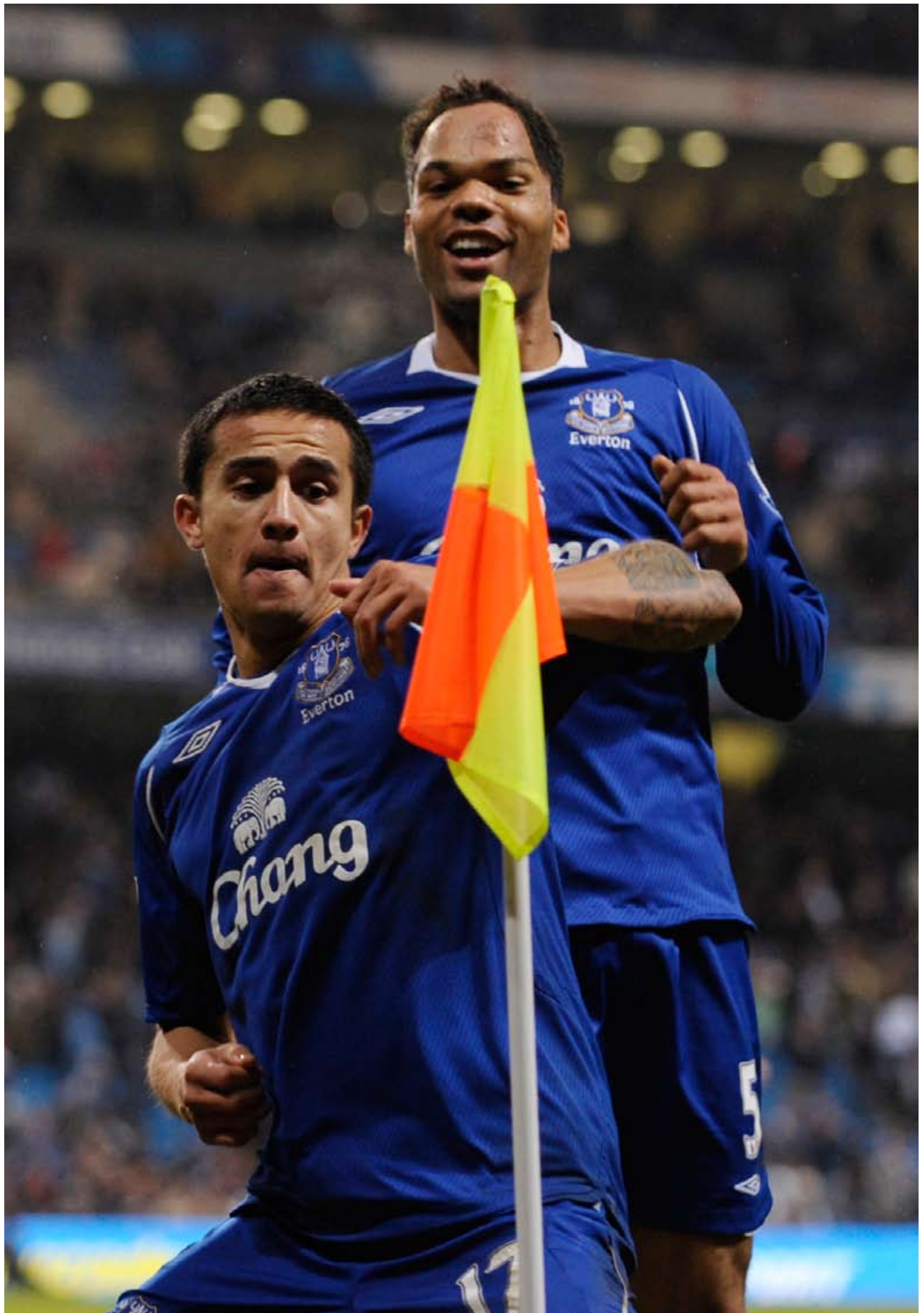
Middlesbrough paid a visit to Goodison Park half way through the month, only to end Everton's winning streak as they shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw. Yakubu's goal against his former club wasn't enough to shake off Gareth Southgate's side.

The Blues continued to add to their encouraging away form as they travelled to White Hart Lane on the final day of the month to take on a rejuvenated Tottenham Hotspur side. It would be a good journey back thanks to an own goal from defender Vedran Corluka.

As the season began to pick up for the Blues, the team finished the month seventh in the Premier League table.

**october &  
november**







### **December began with Everton coming to terms with a double striker blow that followed the win at Spurs.**

Yakubu was ruled out for the season following the trip to White Hart Lane, while Louis Saha would also be absent until the New Year.

So when Aston Villa came to Goodison, Victor Anichebe was the only fit frontman. Despite that, Everton were unlucky to take nothing from the game following Ashley Young's late effort - especially as Joleon Lescott had levelled the scores just seconds before.

That disappointment was put to bed six days later when another late show saw Tim Cahill nod in the winner at Manchester City.

Everton had no fit strikers from the City game onwards after Anichebe suffered a back problem - but that didn't hinder the Toffees.

They were unlucky not to defeat Chelsea at Goodison after the Londoners had John Terry sent off in the first half for a foul on Leon Osman.

It ended goalless and Osman missed the Boxing Day game at Middlesbrough as a consequence of the England captain's challenge. That handed a chance to 18-year-old Dan Gosling and he impressed in a 1-0 win. Again makeshift striker Cahill was on the scoresheet.

The year came to a conclusion with the visit of Sunderland to Goodison. It didn't quite match the heady heights of the previous year's 7-1 hammering, but Everton did impress.

Two stikes from Mikel Arteta meant the Toffees were flying, before Gosling entered the fray and promptly netted on his Goodison debut with a classy close-range effort.

### **The first game in January was the beginning of Everton's road to Wembley.**

The clash with Macclesfield Town could easily have proved a banana skin - but a touch of class from Leon Osman and a late Tim Howard save secured a safe passage to the fourth round.

The dust had barely settled on that tie when Everton and Liverpool were the first two teams out of the hat in the fourth round draw.

It meant the rivals would face off twice in six days, with a league meeting first on the agenda.

Before that, Everton dispatched Hull 2-0 thanks to a Marouane Fellaini header and a wonderful Mikel Arteta free-kick.

The first game at Anfield saw Tim Cahill equalise a Steven Gerrard strike for a share of the points, while the FA Cup clash later that same week saw the opposite. Joleon Lescott nodded Everton ahead before Gerrard ensured a Goodison Park replay.

A big month for Everton was completed with games against Arsenal and Manchester United. The Toffees lead the Gunners through another Cahill strike before Robin van Persie's late, late equaliser. At Old Trafford, a solitary Cristiano Ronaldo penalty was enough to halt the Blues' nine game unbeaten run.

**december  
& january**



**February began in fabulous fashion. It was a night to remember for every Evertonian – even more so for Dan Gosling.**

The teenager entered the game as a substitute and with three minutes of extra time remaining, steered a deft match-winning effort past Pepe Reina. It made him an instant hero and a future Goal of the Season winner.

The feel-good factor continued into a 3-0 thrashing of Bolton, with new loan signing Jo bagging a brace. Aston Villa were then dispatched 3-1 in the fifth round of the Cup – a game notable for Jack Rodwell's first Everton goal.

Tim Cahill and Mikel Arteta were the other goalscorers but there was soon to be bad news for the mercurial Spaniard.

In the next game, away at Newcastle, he went down injured after four minutes and was subsequently ruled out for the entire season.

Everton also lost Victor Anichebe for the season in that game – a goalless draw – following a savage tackle from Kevin Nolan that saw the Toon midfielder sent from the field.

Arteta's absence was a blow but Everton rallied and beat West Brom at Goodison the following weekend, rounding the month off with a 2-0 win over the Baggies courtesy of goals from Cahill and Louis Saha.

**A cold Wednesday evening clash at Blackburn was the first game in March and an uninspiring goalless draw was the result.**

Next though, Cup fever was back as sixth round opponents Middlesbrough arrived at Goodison Park.

It started badly as Everton struggled and David Wheater put Boro ahead. But a tongue-lashing at half time from Moyes and Steve Round galvanised the Toffees and Marouane Fellaini and Louis Saha weighed in with headers to send Everton to Wembley for a semi-final date with Manchester United.

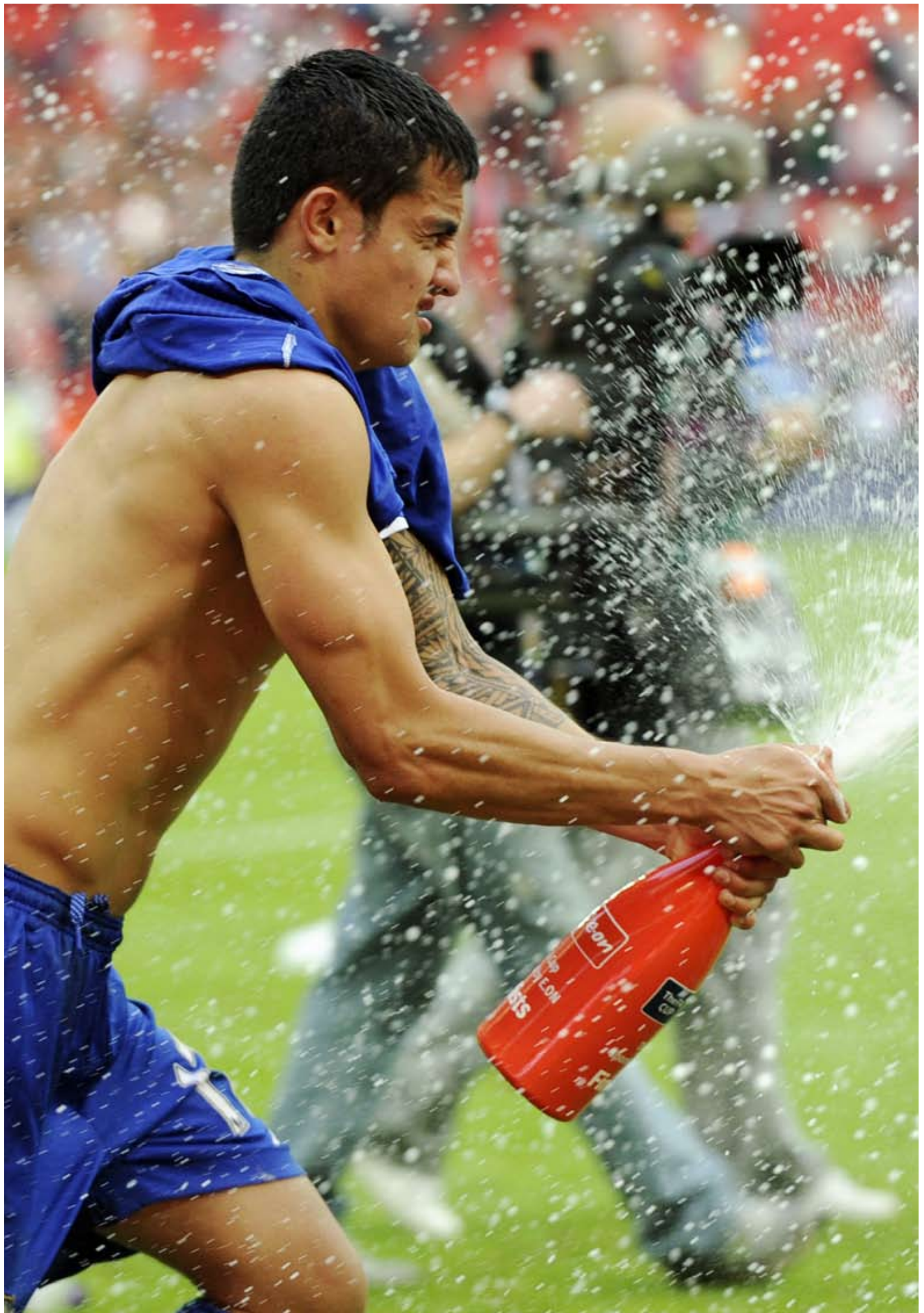
Stoke were also sent packing at Goodison with Fellaini, Jo and Joleon Lescott on the scoresheet in a 3-1 victory. The Blues were now hot on the heels of Aston Villa, the Midlanders who sat fifth in the Premier League.

Finally in March, the Blues travelled to Portsmouth. But despite a dream start thanks to Leighton Baines' sublime free kick – his first goal for Everton – defeat followed. Giant striker Peter Crouch struck twice for Pompey, securing a win that triggered his side's relegation escape act.

The game was also Lars Jacobsen's first for Everton.

**february  
& march**







**What a month April was - it contained pretty much everything! First, Everton dispatched Wigan in fine style, recording their biggest win of the season in the process.**

David Moyes' side produced a fine display of attacking football, simply outplaying the haplessatics in a 4-0 triumph. Leon Osman, Marouane Fellaini and Jo (twice) were the goalscoring beneficiaries of Everton's dominance.

There was plenty more attacking verve on display at Villa Park next time out, but not just from Everton. A thoroughly entertaining game ended 3-3 with Fellaini, Tim Cahill and Steven Pienaar's stunner propelling the Toffees.

But even that drama wasn't a patch on what was to come at Wembley in the FA Cup semi-final. Manchester United may have fielded a weakened side but it was still dripping with international talent.

The 0-0 scoreline remained after both 90 and 120 minutes of an evenly matched affair. Penalties, in front of the United fans, were a lottery.

And it looked bleak when Cahill blasted the first effort of the shoot-out way over. But back-to-back saves from Tim Howard denied Dimitar Berbatov and Rio Ferdinand to give Everton the ascendancy. Leighton Baines, Phil Neville and the returning James Vaughan all converted, leaving Phil Jagielka to send Everton to the final.

Cue carnage at Wembley in the Everton end - and on the pitch!

Fittingly, Cup final opponents Chelsea were next up in the league and the Blues gave a strong performance in a 0-0 draw at Stamford Bridge.

There was heartbreak for Phil Jagielka as he suffered damaged cruciate ligaments in a 2-1 home reverse to Manchester City.

The injury would rule him out of the FA Cup showpiece, the defender later admitting he was left in tears.

**Everton put the disappointment of losing Phil Jagielka behind them to beat Sunderland 2-0 at the Stadium of Light at the start of May, with Steven Pienaar and Marouane Fellaini on target.**

Next was a goalless draw with Tottenham at Goodison Park. The result was significant as the shutout enabled Tim Howard to break a record for the number of clean sheets kept by an Everton goalkeeper in a Premier League season.

Another home game followed, and West Ham were beaten 3-1 for the second time in the season. After falling behind, Everton rallied and Louis Saha (twice) and Joseph Yobo's only goal of the season saw them overcome the ten-man Hammers.

The win put David Moyes' side above Aston Villa and into fifth place, meaning the position was Everton's to lose ahead of the final game of the season at Fulham.

It was a ground at which the Toffees hadn't won since 1966 - but that jinx was ended thanks to two excellent Leon Osman strikes. Fifth place was confirmed, as was a return to Europe, and the FA Cup final beckoned.

Everton were underdogs but a quiet confidence surrounded the players ahead of the Wembley clash with Chelsea.

And they got the dream start in the final itself. Saha sent statisticians scuttling for their record books when he rifled in a brilliant volley after just 25 seconds - the goal was the fastest ever at a Wembley cup final.

But Chelsea's class showed and they equalised through Didier Drogba in the first half before Frank Lampard won it in the second.

april  
& may

A photograph of several Everton football club players in their blue and white kit celebrating on the pitch. The players are in the foreground, with their arms raised and some embracing. The background shows a large, blurred crowd of spectators in a stadium at night, with some lights visible.

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