

= William Sudell =

Major William Sudell ( 1851 ? 1911 ) was an English association football player and administrator , who was the first chairman of Preston North End . He joined the Preston Nelson sports club on 3 August 1867 , aged 16 . Initially a player of several sports , by his mid @-@ twenties he had become chairman of the club . In 1880 the club decided to play football exclusively , and from the following year Sudell managed the team .

To aid the performances of his team , Sudell recruited several Scottish players , giving them nominal jobs in the cotton mill he managed . After a dispute arising from payments to players resulted in Preston 's withdrawal from the 1884 FA Cup , Sudell became an outspoken proponent of professionalism . His actions resulted in the acceptance of professionalism by the Football Association ( FA ) , and led to Preston becoming the leading team of the early professional era . Under Sudell 's leadership , Preston North End became founder members of the Football League , and won a league and cup double , going unbeaten for the entire season .

Sudell 's career as a football administrator ended in disgrace , when in 1895 he was found guilty of fraudulently redirecting funds from the mill to the football club . Sudell was sentenced to three years ' imprisonment . Upon his release , he emigrated to South Africa , where he died in 1911 .

= = Football career = =

Born in Preston in 1850 , descended from an old Preston family that included a Preston Guild Mayor , Sudell joined the Preston Nelson sports club in August 1867 , aged 17 . During this period the club were recruiting many young sportsmen from the area to play new sports , in order to relieve financial pressures . Sudell proved adept at several sports including swimming , cycling , cricket and rugby . The club played its first game of association football in 1878 , against Eagley , with Sudell a member of the team . However , Sudell did not go on to play on a regular basis ; only two other football matches featuring him as a player are known .

Sudell became the chairman of the sports club , which by then was known as Preston North End , in 1874 or 1875 , while still in his mid @-@ twenties . In 1880 the club voted to play football exclusively , and the following year Sudell took responsibility for the management of the team . From 1883 the club fielded several Scottish players , after Sudell went on a recruitment expedition to Scotland . The club arranged jobs for the players , and supplemented their income with off @-@ balance sheet payments . At this time professionalism was not permitted , but such payments were common among Lancashire clubs .

After Preston won an FA Cup match against Upton Park in 1884 , the Londoners protested , seeking the result to be overturned due to professionalism in the Preston ranks . This sparked a series of events which threatened to split the FA . Under Sudell 's instruction , Preston withdrew from the competition . Fellow Lancashire clubs Burnley and Great Lever followed suit . The protest gathered momentum , to the point where more than 30 clubs , predominantly from the north , announced that they would set up a rival British Football Association if the FA did not permit professionalism . At the FA conference called to discuss the issue , Sudell was a member of the committee . He argued passionately for the acceptance of professionalism , but met opposition from southern @-@ based amateur clubs , who viewed sport solely as a pastime . Backed by figures such as the more moderate but influential William McGregor of Aston Villa , the advocates of professionalism won the day and secured its acceptance . However , each club was permitted to only pay players who had been born or who had lived within six miles of the home stadium for at least two years .

With professionalism legalised , Preston flourished . Keen to make use of tactics , Sudell was the first person to use a blackboard to dictate positions and strategy to his players . In 1887 , Preston recorded the biggest win in the history of the FA Cup , beating Hyde 26 ? 0 in the first round . The club progressed to the final having amassed a run of 42 consecutive wins in all competitions , but were beaten in the FA Cup Final by West Bromwich Albion .

During this time moves were afoot to prevent cancellation of matches by creating a new competition

with a " fixity of fixtures " . The brainchild of Aston Villa 's William McGregor , the competition became known as The Football League . Sudell himself suggested the name " Football League " , as an alternative to McGregor 's suggestion , " Association Football Union " . Plans to create the competition had been ongoing for a period of months without Preston 's involvement , but as the most skilful team McGregor was keen to interest them . Once involved , Sudell was eager for the embryonic League to assert primacy in relation to other competitions , joining with J. J. Bentley to propose that " The clubs forming the League shall support each other and bind themselves to carry out in the strictest sense the arrangements for matches between them , and not allow them to be cancelled on account of any cup competition or other matches " . Sudell was more financially minded than the egalitarian McGregor , and urged the League to dispense with proposals for equal sharing of gate money and residential requirements for players .

The League kicked off in September 1888 , with Preston one of the 12 founder members . North End proved superior to their opponents , winning the title with several matches to spare . This allowed the club to concentrate on the FA Cup , which they duly won by defeating Wolverhampton Wanderers . In completing the League and Cup double Preston remained unbeaten for the entire season . The team , nicknamed the Invincibles , contained ten Scots , tempted south by the money on offer as professionalism was still banned in Scotland . Wishing for a grander gesture to celebrate his team 's success than the League committee 's suggestion of a flag bearing the club 's name , Sudell convinced the League to spend 50 guineas on a trophy . However , despite being responsible for the creation of the trophy , Preston North End have not won it since .

For the first four years of the League 's existence , Sudell acted as honorary treasurer . In 1892 , with his health declining , Sudell relinquished his position , and was succeeded by Stoke 's Harry Lockett . He left Preston North End the following year . In 1894 the League gave him £ 50 for a testimonial .

= = Outside football = =

Sudell worked in a cotton mill , where thanks to his numeracy he quickly worked his way up the ranks ; eventually he became manager . His military title came from service in the local Volunteer Force rifle unit , a precursor of the Territorial Army . He was initially commissioned as quartermaster in the 11th Lancashire Rifle Volunteer Corps in August 1874 , he resigned that commission in February 1879 , to take a commission as lieutenant in the same unit . He was promoted captain on 23 June 1886 , and was granted the honorary rank of major on 19 October 1889 ; the unit had now become part of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment . He retired on 30 July 1892 , and was permitted to retain his rank , and continue wearing the battalion 's uniform .

= = = Embezzlement = = =

After his time as Preston chairman , in 1895 , Sudell was convicted of embezzling thousands of pounds from the cotton mill at which he worked , in order to fund players ' wages and expenses , though he did not gain personally . The fraud , totalling £ 5 @, @ 326 , resulted in a three @-@ year prison sentence . Upon his release , Sudell emigrated to South Africa . In Cape Town Sudell enjoyed a successful second career as a popular sports writer and footballing missionary . A member of the editorial staff of the South African News , he became one of the foremost sporting experts in the colony . < ref . David Hunt , History of Preston North End Football Club Sudell rebuilt his life . According to this account Sudell became a successful rugby journalist , dying from pneumonia on 5 August 1911 in Cape Town .