

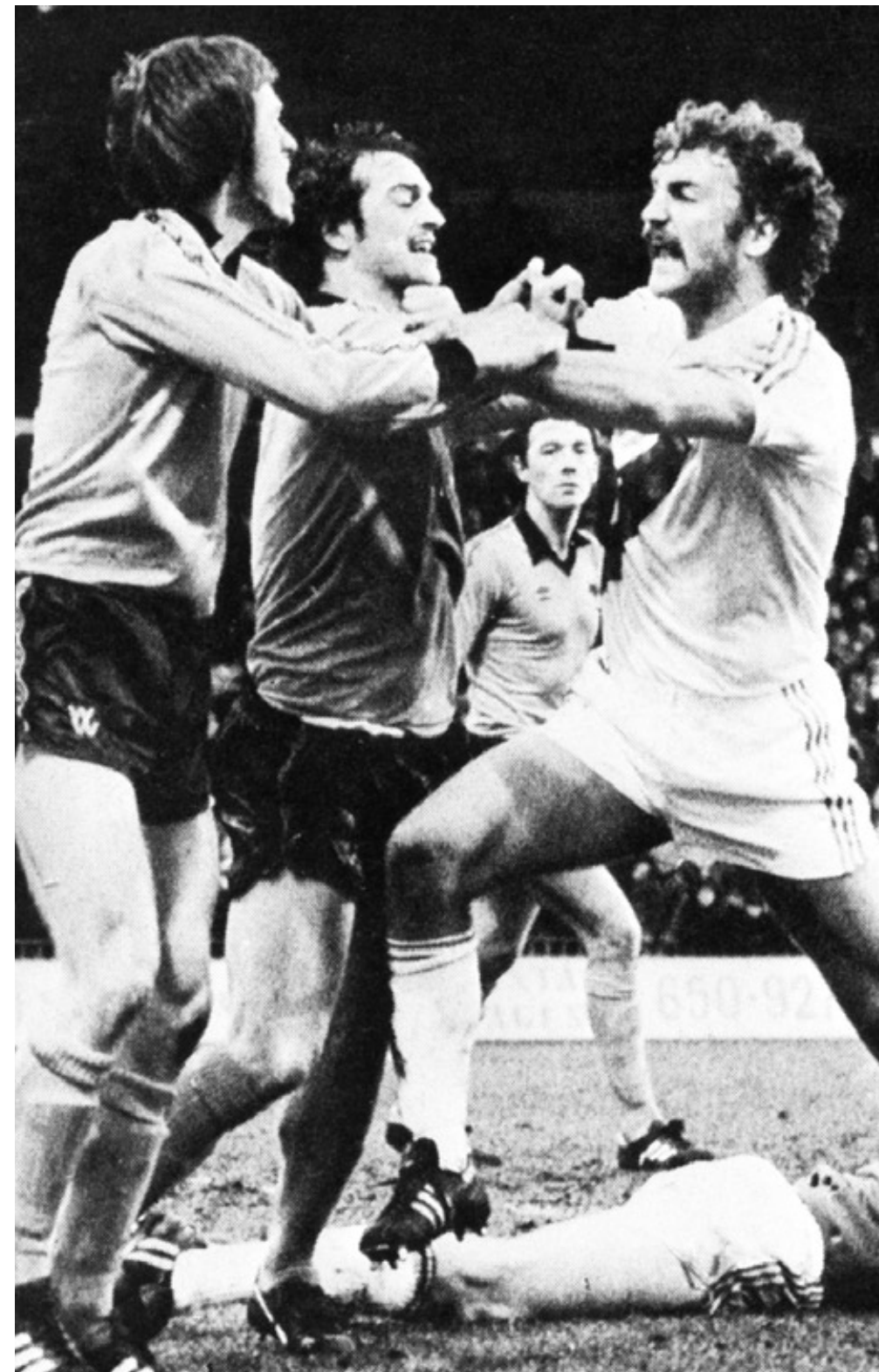
The first thing I knew that things were about to change again at Palace was when we were playing up at Sunderland in early October, 1980. After we'd finished our hotel meal on the Friday night Venners came over and said, "Come and have a beer with me"... so I got my pint and we sat in the corner. He asked me how I thought the lads would feel if he left. Terry said he knew the Chairman had already spoken to Everton's Howard Kendall about coming to Palace. We hadn't had the best of starts to the second season in the top flight and went on to say that he didn't need that kind of treatment from people who didn't know what they were talking about. I never felt the need to question anything Terry said to me. Terry obviously decided that he didn't need the grief from the Chairman and went to Queens Park Rangers instead.

I don't think Kenny Sansom's departure was the only reason for that struggling start, there was a multitude of things including injuries. It was a difficult season as it was, then, after just a few games, the manager leaves taking his assistant. Then a few of the players followed Terry to Loftus Road and it just snow-balled from there. We never really recovered to be honest.

Ernie Walley stepped in and did well for ten or so games, then Malcolm came back which was just a joke. He just didn't know what he was doing and didn't seem up for it. Maybe the chairman felt comfortable having mucked up with Terry or maybe he was having difficulty finding a manager and used Mal as a stop gap – either way it was a bad move. Malcolm was a daunting figure for some of the youngsters the second time round and I think he expected too much from some of them. The rest of that campaign went very quickly in my mind and to be honest, it's a season I would rather forget for more than one reason.

From the players' point of view the arrival of Ron Noades wasn't a problem, but he made cuts right away. We even had to start paying 5p for a cup of tea at the training ground... boy did the players moan when that started! When I look back at what Ron walked into and what the club was like when he left, he probably did the right thing, but when you're a player in your mid-twenties you're not interested in people making cuts. It's not until years later that you realise that if he hadn't done what he did, then the club may have been in really big trouble.

Ron appointed Dario Gradi as the next manager and I remember getting a phone call the day before from one of the Directors asking, "Would you give the new boss a chance?" as if I was some kind of ogre who was going to eat him up! Dario Gradi arrived at the Mitcham Training Ground the next day and said that he wanted everybody to sit down and have a chat before we got changed. I simply couldn't believe what his first words were. He said, "You're not my team. I'm only building to get out



Jim Cannon squares up to the Wolves defenders while the goalie is out for the count