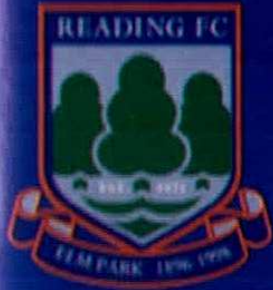


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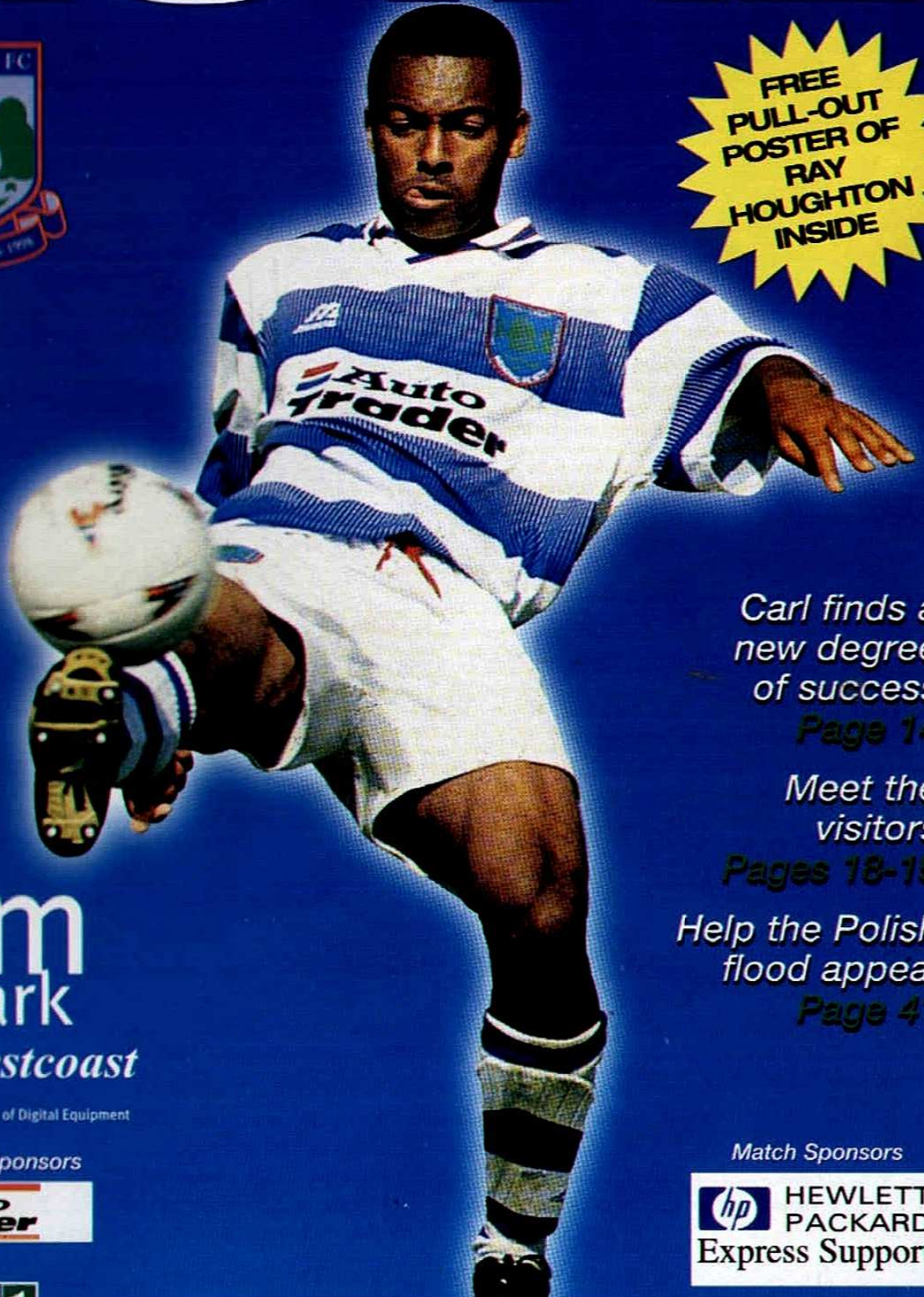
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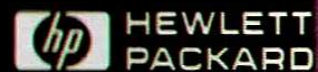
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WELCOME TO **ELM PARK**

A MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN JOHN MADEJSKI



Good afternoon and welcome to our first home League game of this historic season. The team made a good, solid start to the campaign at Bury last Saturday and those of you who travelled north for the match will no doubt have been enormously encouraged by what you saw.

That was followed by a tremendous performance against Swansea City on Tuesday night, which puts us in a very strong position in the tie overall, and, as we saw just two years ago, a good run in the Coca Cola Cup is an exciting prospect for us all.

We'll be looking to maintain that momentum this afternoon and, of course, there's nothing quite like a local derby for producing an added buzz both on and off the pitch.

Our four new signings are settling in well and providing a new dimension to the squad, and I'm sure you will agree there is an added strength and flair to the team this season.

We have spent a large sum of money this summer in order to build on the existing nucleus of the side and turn it into an outfit which is capable of challenging the very best in the First Division.

The decision in particular to break the club's transfer record to bring in Carl Asaba from Brentford is a demonstration of our ambition and our commitment to taking Reading Football Club into the Premiership.

Those recent transfer dealings, coupled with the move next year to our fantastic new stadium, are an investment in the club's future - an investment that will hopefully come to fruition very shortly.

But in order to progress our ambitions, we need your support. The club has always appreciated the dedication of its valued band of season ticket holders, and this year we have demonstrated that appreciation by introducing a new package of benefits, ranging from free admission to reserve games to discounts on season tickets for the first year at the new stadium.

So I would ask any 'occasional' supporters or first-time visitors to Elm Park to show your faith in the club and its future by buying a season ticket for this highly significant year.

Let's make this final season at Elm Park one to remember. If we all pull together and salute the flag, there is no limit to what we can achieve. Enjoy the game!

Cover photo: Neville Roach, by Action Images

The Reading Football Club plc
Elm Park, Norfolk Road,
Reading RG30 2EF



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The Royal

3

The Auto Trader Dictionary of Footballing Terms and Expressions

Free Kick: The kick you get when we come to you and photograph your car for free.

Home: (*Yours*) Where we come to photograph your car (or any other vehicle) for your photo ad.

Whistle: You whistle, we come running. (You could sell within 3 days of calling us!)

Away: (any distance) Where your buyer comes from.

Booking: Calling us to place an ad to sell your car. (0345 10 10 20)

Save: What you do with our 'money back' offer.

Score: (£20). A Photo-Ad costs you far less.

Over the moon: How you feel when your Photo ad gets you the legendary Auto Trader response.

Result: You sell your car.

Foul: We'll come out in any weather to get your photo-ad.

Wall: Hard things drivers avoid. Otherwise see Marking, Injury time, Stretched off.

Dummy: Careless Volvo driver. See above.

Offside: The side you get in to drive off in your new motor.

Boot: Something you put things in. Not to be confused.

Tackle: Alright you lot at the back!

Shoot: (*yourself*) for wasting time and/or money advertising anywhere else. Also Penalty Kick, (no) Defence and Sick as a Parrot.

Pass: Pass

Performance: Just one of 17 classifications in Auto Trader every week. Also Sports, Classic, Prestige.

Body Check: Part of the RAC inspection you can get discounts on. See also Box, Head, Wing.

Capacity: (*packed to*): 15,000 vehicles in every issue of Thames Valley Auto Trader.

Substitute: There isn't one. You won't find a choice like this anywhere.

Shoot out: ...to your newsagent every Thursday to get your copy.

The image shows the cover of the 'Thames Valley Auto Trader' magazine. At the top, the text 'Thames Valley' is written in a red banner. Below it, the title 'Auto Trader' is prominently displayed in large, bold, black letters. Underneath the title, it says 'AT NEWSAGENTS EVERY WEEK'. The main headline on the cover is 'Top Seller for Cars' in large, white, bold letters on a blue background. Below the headline, there is a photograph of a red hatchback car, likely a Volkswagen Golf Mk2. At the bottom of the cover, a blue banner reads 'Over 15,000 Cars Every Week'. The magazine cover is shown at a slight angle, giving it a three-dimensional appearance.

Kick-off: Start with Auto Trader for the car you want, or for the car you want to sell.

The heat and the pressure of last Saturday's opening game at Bury caught up with the lads on Tuesday night, and we suffered a bit of a backlash in the first half against Swansea, which meant our passing game wasn't as good as I was hoping for.

Fortunately there was a marked improvement in the second half. We raised our game, passed the ball around a lot better and, by the final whistle, I felt quite comfortable with the performance.

The win should prove enough to see us through to the next round, although I think we've got to set our standards by the second half performance and not the first.

There were also some extremely positive aspects to Tuesday night's game, and one of them was the form shown by James Lambert and young Neville Roach.

real bonus

James looks to be recapturing the sparkle that we all know he has. He's a flair player, which is why he's so popular with the crowd, and he is capable of producing the unexpected.

He's now working very hard as well, so we've got a player with bags of flair who you can also rely on to buckle down and work exceptionally hard throughout a game.

I was delighted with some of the things he did against Swansea, and it's a real bonus to have someone in the team who can alter the whole course of the game in an instant.

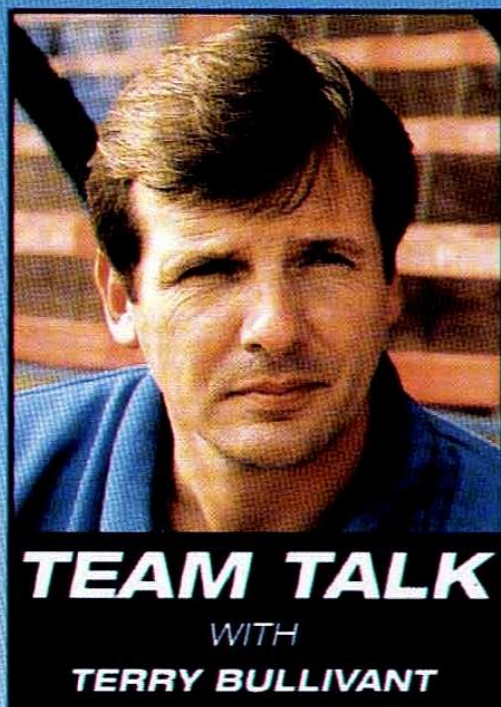
The form shown by Neville since I arrived at the club has been exceptional as well, and it speaks volumes for Steve Kean and

Kevin Dillon that he has progressed from the youth team to do so well in such a short space of time.

young talent

The two of them put in a lot of work, seven days a week, to bring on the young talent we have at the club and it must give them enormous satisfaction to see that work come to fruition so quickly.

This afternoon sees my first home League game with the club, and it's our big local derby match as well, of course, so nobody is in any doubt about the importance of a good performance today.



"JAMES CAN ALTER THE WHOLE COURSE OF A GAME"

I see the supporters as very much a part of the team here at Elm Park and, believe me, there is nothing better than to hear the South Bank and the West Terrace singing in unison.

That sound lifts the players and it certainly lifts me, so I'd ask you all to get behind the team again this afternoon - as I know you do - and no doubt the players will respond with 100% commitment.



SWALES PROVES HIS POINT

Out of the picture for most of last season, Steve Swales made a superb return to League action at Gigg Lane last Saturday, hitting his first goal for the club in our 1-1 draw with Bury.



Unbeaten at home in 26 games and still riding the crest of a wave after their

promotion last May, the Shakers proved tricky opponents.

But after just 12 minutes of the new season a clever move started by Martyn Booty and James Lambert ended when Swales sidefooted Lee Hodges' cross past keeper Dean Kiely.

Bury, fielding former England midfielder Andy Gray, hit back and equalised through substitute Gordon Armstrong three minutes after the break, but the Royals held firm to collect a well-earned point.

Tuesday's Coca Cola Cup first round first leg clash with Swansea City saw another sterling performance from the team, again in extremely humid conditions.

City found themselves frustrated by a superb first half display from Steve Mautone, then James Lambert made the breakthrough after 58 minutes when he cut in from the right and unleashed a low shot which gave Swans keeper Roger Freestone no chance.

Substitute Neville Roach caused the visitors' defence no end of problems after replacing Lee Hodges on 66 minutes, and he had been on the pitch just ten minutes when he wriggled through their defence and hit a brilliant second for the Royals.

The away leg takes place on Tuesday, August 26 at Vetch Field. Tickets are available on the night and cost £7.50 and £4 for juniors and senior citizens.

BURGER KING SPONSORSHIP FOR ROYALINE

The Royaline information service will be sponsored



PARK LIFE

What's happening in and around ELM PARK



Royals Rendezvous. Pictured presenting the kit to youth team coach Steve Kean and youth

VICE PRESIDENTS HELP OUT

Elm Park's fantastic band of vice presidents have once again stepped in to support the club by providing three new sets of kit for the Royals' School of Excellence.

Last year they provided a bus to take the youth team to Bristol City for a Southern Junior Floodlit Cup match, and their latest generous donation was made at the VPs recent Annual General Meeting at the



Royals Rendezvous. Pictured presenting the kit to

development officer Kevin Dillon are Norman Tilbey and Ken Darvall (holding shirts), and many of our other VPs.

by Burger King throughout this final season at Elm Park, continuing a ten year association between the restaurant chain and Reading F.C.

Thanks to their valued support, Royaline will feature a regular competition throughout the season, offering callers the chance to win a signed matchday programme from the previous home game and a free Burger King meal for four.

Derek Coulson, group chief executive of Gowrings, which operates 21 local Burger King restaurants, said: "The football club is a major focal point of the local community and I am delighted that Burger King will be sponsoring Royaline during such an important season."

The new competition will begin this Monday, August 18, so get dialling and you could be a winner with the Royals!

The Royaline number is 0891 121000 and calls cost 50 pence per minute at all times.

GERRY BEDDING R.I.P.

The Royal is sad to report the recent death of 84 year old Gerry Bedding, a loyal supporter of the club for well over 60 years. A season ticket holder and regular traveller to away games until last year, Gerry was here at Elm Park on February 19, 1927 when the Royals' FA Cup fifth round tie against Brentford drew our record 33,042 crowd. He will be sadly missed by all his family and friends, and the sympathies of everyone at Elm Park go to all who knew him.

OLD BOYS RULE OK

Alan Sedunary, Elm Park's Master of the Obscure Fact, points out that the appointment of Terry Bullivant as manager keeps going an almost unbroken 20 year run of Reading players who go on to manage the club.

Apart from Ian Branfoot, every manager since 1977 has also played for the Royals - Jimmy Quinn, Mick Gooding and Mark McGhee are the most recent, of course, while Maurice Evans made over 400 appearances in a Reading shirt and Ian Porterfield played five games on loan.

But Alan adds: "Terry very nearly didn't qualify. Although he joined us on loan just 30 minutes before the 1984 transfer deadline, a niggling groin injury restricted him to just one reserve game in his two month spell at Elm Park."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Royals fan Spencer Reid, who is 24 today.

A STAR OF THE FUTURE?

Here's one of Reading's youngest fans, little Jack Gilman, who was born on April 28 this year and is pictured sporting his favourite playsuit, aged just seven weeks old.



His picture was sent all the way from Leigh in Lancashire by dad John, a long-distance Royal who was converted after seeing Michael Gilkes chip a superb winner against Preston North End on Boxing Day several years ago. As John says, "You're never too young to be a Royal!"

ROYAL WEDDING BELLS

Congratulations to Loyal Royals Richard Forte and Sarah Dolton, who are forgiven for missing this afternoon's big match because they are busy getting married!

Richard and Sarah are tying the knot at Saint Francis de Sales Church at Wash Common, Newbury - kick off 3 p.m., of course! - before flying off for a honeymoon in the Maldives. We wish them both much luck and happiness in the future.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Many happy returns to Michael Meaker, who'll be 26 on Monday, Darren Caskey, 23 on Thursday, Sal Bibbo, who celebrates his 23rd three days later, and Paul Holsgrove, who reaches the age of 28 on the 26th of this month.

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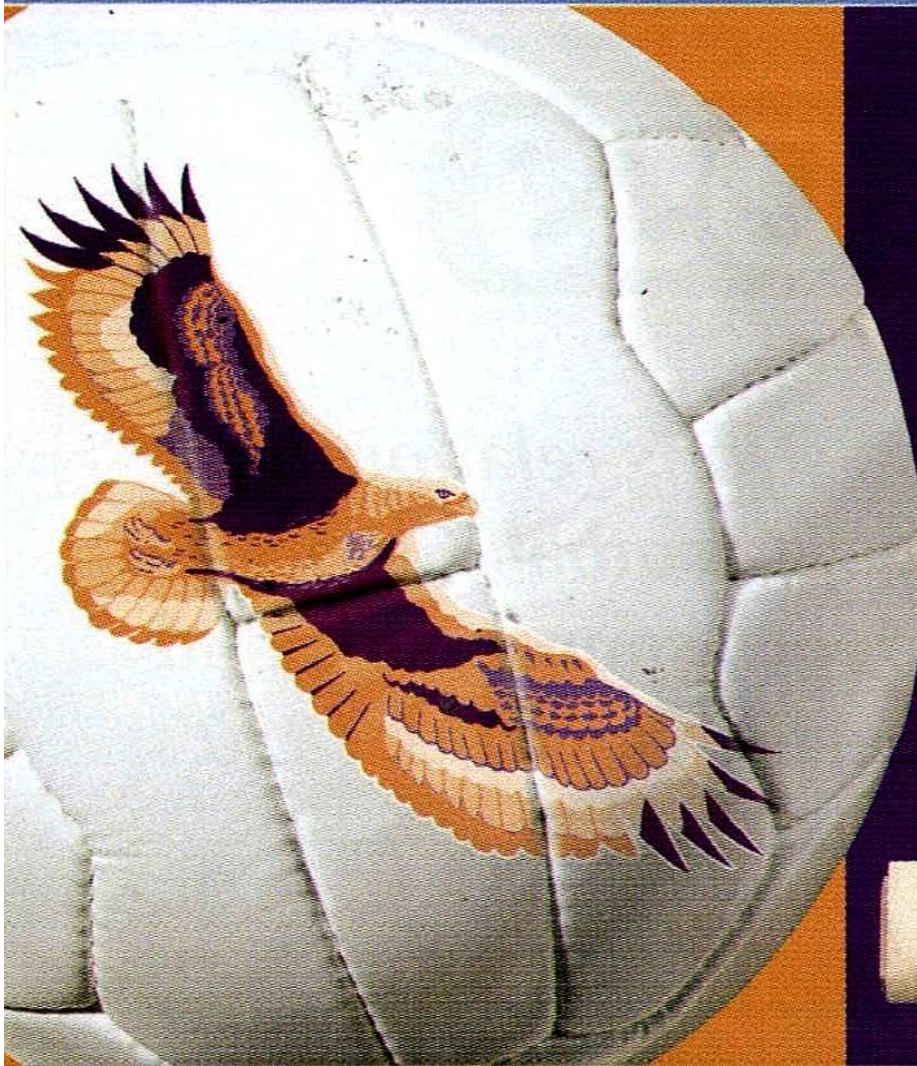
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HUNTER'S VIEW

Captain **BARRY HUNTER**
writes for The Royal

On the whole we've made a pretty good start to the season, and I don't think too many people will be complaining about a point at Bury and a win at home, with an all-important clean sheet as well.



I always look at things from the point of the defence, and it's fair to say that they get blamed 99% of the time for anything that goes wrong, so it's about time they got a bit of praise.

It's great to see Dariusz back and playing so well, but I know he would be the first to admit that you can only play like that if the guys on either side of you are solid as well, so there's credit due to all of them.

It was a great result at Bury last Saturday because they're a very difficult side to play against, and obviously they are still on a high after winning promotion last May.

The heat on the pitch must have been unbearable, but the lads did tremendously well to stay so solid at the back and I was absolutely delighted to see Swalesy get on the scoresheet.

He didn't get many first team games last season, but that's all in the past now. He worked exceptionally hard in pre-season and it's good to see that work rewarded with his first goal for the club.

credit due

It's always important to win your first home game of the season and we followed that result at Bury with a good, solid performance against Swansea which should see us safely through to the next round of the competition.

The fact that we kept a clean sheet on Tuesday night is almost as significant as the win itself, and it puts us in a very strong, confident mood going into this afternoon's game.

big game

The new lads are all settling in well, and obviously it was very important for them that we got a good start to the season. There's nothing worse than joining a new club only for them to lose their first few games!

As you all know our home form was pretty good last season, so if we can maintain that and pick up some important points away from Elm Park - like the one at Bury - then we'll be in a good position.

It's important for the lads that you supporters get behind them both home and away, and I know this is one game where you don't need any encouragement to make plenty of noise.

It's a big game for both clubs, and no doubt there'll be a great atmosphere - so let's hear it for a cracking game with plenty of excitement and a big win to get our home League programme off to a flying start.



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NEW STADIUM UPDATE



Just one word sums up progress at the Madejski Stadium site during the past few weeks - rubbish!

Since preparation work began at Smallmead, workers have shifted a staggering 130,000 cubic metres of old household waste in order to landscape the 66 acre site, ready for stadium construction to begin.



These pictures from Bob Lowery of Cloud 9 Photography show how work at the new stadium site is progressing.

Rubbish at the former landfill site has been buried underground for around 20 years and sinks to a depth of more than 12 metres in some places - but it won't be necessary to undergo the enormous task of removing it before work can progress.

Instead the waste will be capped with two layers of clay, sandwiching a gas blanket, which will seal it underground and ensure the area is protected.

Piling - the early stages of the stadium foundation work - will begin shortly and sink deep into the waste material, while a two metre layer of topsoil will cover the clay capping across the site.

* If there are any particular aspects of the new stadium that you would like to know more about, send your questions to Helen Peterson here at Elm Park and the club will endeavour to answer them on this page.





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FAN FARE

Gary Purser's news - and some personal views - from the Supporters' Club

We are gathered here today to witness the last ever League derby between Reading and Swindon at Elm Park. The very fact that we are playing this match this afternoon is just one more example of how little or no consideration is taken of football supporters.

Our two nearest First Division rivals are Swindon and Oxford United, we also have local games against the likes of QPR, Portsmouth and Charlton, and all those games are scheduled to take place on Saturdays.

Then you look down the fixture list and see that we have long hauls to Stockport and Bradford, and to Sunderland's new 'Stadium of Light' (what sort of name is that??) - and they are all on Tuesday nights!! Very nice, I can't wait. We should clearly play those northern games on Saturdays to give supporters the opportunity to travel with taking time off work.

And while I'm on the subject, get local derby games back where they belong - on Boxing Day and Easter Monday, NOT the first home game of the season.

JOIN OUR CLUB

As I reminded you in Tuesday night's programme, Supporters' Club memberships are now due for renewal. The extremely reasonable £5 cost entitles you to matchday admission at the Rendezvous and travel on the Supporters' Club coaches to away games, plus discounts with several local companies.

These include Woodley Sports, Caversham Tile Centre, AJ Decorators (Tilehurst), Completely Carpets Ltd (Caversham), Amber Training (Driving School), Durham Plumbing & Heating (Bracknell & Wokingham), Grey's Hairdressing (Bracknell), D&G Cycle Centre (Caversham), Rabbit's Vehicle Hire (Caversham), URO Garage Services (Reading) and Auto Direct Insurance Services.

NORTH HANTS UPDATE

All members wishing to take part in this season's Score Forecast Competition should give their £1 entry fee and first set of predictions to Danny Hedges, who can be found on the door of the Rendezvous.

Anyone wishing to enter the Points & Position Competition should contact Paul Evans on Basingstoke (01256) 356373. Again entry is just £1.

The next North Hants Branch skittles evening takes place on Friday, September 12 at the Bramley Inn. The price is £6, and a £2 deposit is due to Danny by today - see him at the Rendezvous for further details.

UNITED IN INDIFFERENCE

As usual at the start of a season, we are seeing a rush of pundits and so-called experts predicting who will take the honours next May and - surprise, surprise - most of them have tipped Manchester United to win everything from the Premiership to the Boat Race (at least that would mean Oxford didn't win!).

Personally, I think Arsenal will win the Championship, but if we are really honest, who cares? (Except our tannoy announcer!)

AWAY WE GO!

Next Saturday we travel to Birmingham City in the League, and tickets are available on the day at £11 with no concessions. The following Tuesday sees the Coca Cola return leg at Swansea's Vetch Field. Again, entry is on the night at a cost of £7.50 or £4 for concessions.

The Supporters' Club will be running coaches to both these games. To secure your place see either Denny or Chris in the Rendezvous before or after today's game, or call Denny on Reading 585566. Don't forget that in order to travel on our coaches you MUST be a member of the Supporters' Club.

the Elm Park experience...

The channel that runs along the back of the South Bank, only four feet wide. At half-time full of familiar faces, jostling bodies - "Awright?", "Awright?" - as the crowd change places, seek 'relief' or burgers. Always dark, cramped and usually puddled, even on the sunniest days! (Roger Tifford)....enjoy it while you can.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

If Brentford hadn't faced Dulwich Hamlet in a pre-season friendly three years ago, Carl Asaba might have been making his name as an investment analyst in the City rather than as the Royals' new record signing.

Because Carl was two years into a degree course in Money, Banking & Finance at Middlesex University and playing the occasional game for Dulwich when he was spotted by Brentford boss Dave Webb in the Bees' 5-0 win.

"Just two weeks later I signed a two year contract," says 24 year old Carl. "It was a difficult decision to leave University when I still had two years of the course left, but it had always been my ambition to be a professional footballer and I may never have been given the opportunity again.

"My course was deferred and I could go back and finish it, but unfortunately neither studying nor playing football is something you can do without 100% commitment."

Carl's route to stardom from lowly Dulwich Hamlet echoes that of a certain Ian Wright - his hero as a youngster growing up in south London - although it was only a stroke of bad luck that prevented him from hitting the headlines sooner.

He explains: "I represented Merton and Surrey schoolboys and earned a trial with the England schoolboys squad. I was all ready to go - I even had my train ticket - when I picked up an injury, and I didn't get the chance again."

During his first two years at Griffin Park Carl found himself in and out of the side, and in early 1995 he spent a period on loan at Colchester United, playing alongside new Royals team mate Martin Williams, who was himself on loan from Luton Town.

But last season his career really took off and he hit 24 goals in 57 games, including a seven minute hatrick, although his personal success was tempered by Brentford's defeat at the hands of

Crewe Alexandra in the Second Division Playoff Final at Wembley.

"We were flying earlier in the season, nine or ten points clear, and we only needed 21 points from Christmas to ensure promotion. But suddenly the bubble burst and, out of a possible 50 points, we got just eight.

"I was moved out of position into midfield, which I found quite hard to cope with, and we really struggled. Instead of winning automatic promotion, we found ourselves in the playoffs.

"Wembley was a great experience, although we never really got going and, to be honest, we were lucky to only lose by one goal. I almost scored in the first minute, but it all went downhill from there.

"That defeat really knocked the wind out of me. I had a ticket to watch Crystal Palace in the First Division Final against Sheffield United the following day, but I just couldn't face it. At least the experience means that, next time I play at Wembley, I won't be so daunted by the occasion."

Carl still lives with his mum in south London, while long-term girlfriend Michelle is studying Art & Education, coincidentally at Middlesex University. "We were

at college together, then she went to Middlesex just as I was leaving to join Brentford," he laughs.

The 6'2" targetman now plans to move closer to Reading. "This is a brilliant move for me," he says. "The gaffer has been fantastic and I'm very flattered by his belief in me and the amount of money the club were prepared to spend."

His form last season prompted rumours that a handful of Premiership clubs were trailing Carl, and he jokes, "According to the newspapers, I joined Leeds about 50 times!

"In truth, it was no more than rumours and I'm delighted to have joined Reading. The ambition and enthusiasm here is great and, although it's a very strong Division this year, I'm confident it will be a good season for us."



READING F.C. 1896-1998



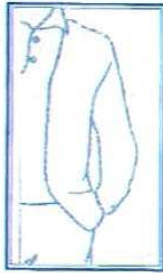
CARL ASABA

Picture: Andy Evans, Reading Chronicle



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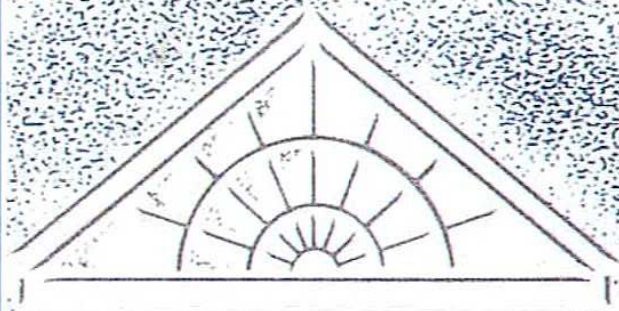
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ROYALS

IN THE COMMUNITY

With Football & Community Development Officer **CHRIS WHALLEY**



Welcome to our first home League match of the season, and what a good one to start with. We are keeping very busy on the home front with lots of youngsters taking part in our Summer Soccer Roadshow activities.

If you haven't managed to join in yet, don't despair - next week we join forces with Newbury District Council for a four day soccer school for eight to 14 year olds at Henwick Worthy Sports Ground at Thatcham. The course includes a goalkeepers' section, and you can enrol by calling Alison Goodhall (Newbury Leisure Services) on 01635 519345.

Activities are running throughout the holidays, so give me a call at the office for more details.

WHAT'S ON AND WHERE

Mon Aug 18 - Royals Club Day, Elm Park
 Tues Aug 19 - Fri Aug 22 - Thatcham Soccer School, Henwick Worthy.
 Tues Aug 26 - Thur Aug 28 - Theale Soccer Scorcher, Theale Green Recreation Centre
 Wed Aug 27 - Fri Aug 29 - Cantley Soccer School II, Wokingham



Kevin Stepney and his Bracknell Town lads were our guests for the pre-season game against Chelsea, and they have sent us this picture - together with a thank you letter - to show you what a great time they had. Many thanks to them and do come back soon!

BIRTHDAY BOY

Michael Singleton is our special Match Day Club guest this afternoon as a slightly belated present for his seventh birthday last Tuesday. Michael is a pupil at St Andrew's School in Pangbourne and we're told he's a 'mad keen football fan' whose favourite players



include Stuart Lovell, Eric Cantona and Peter Schmeichel. He's joined by pals Freddie Campbell, Jamie Miller, Harry Desmond, Joshua Webb and Andrew Pearson this afternoon - we hope they all have a smashing day.

ON THE ROAD

We will be running a coach to St Andrews to see the Royals take on Birmingham City next Saturday, August 23. Places are available to current Junior Royals members and their families at discounted prices, and don't forget the cost includes a ticket to the game AND pre-match activities.

You can book your seat by contacting our travel and family co-ordinators, Chris Best and Richard Wickson, on 560898, or drop in to the community office on a matchday.



NEW SIGNING

Former Royals YTS goalkeeper Steve Staples has officially joined us as a part-time Football in the Community Officer after completing his NVQ Level 2 (coaching adults & children). Steve will be a great asset to the scheme and we are delighted to have him on board.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Many happy returns to the following Junior Royals who are celebrating this week and next: James Darvall (8), Simon Goswell (13), Joe White (9), Matthew Grant (10), Nicholas Moore (10), Ben Chaffey (14), David Speare (10) and Jamie Butler (9).

HOW TO REACH US

You can reach us by calling the community office on 0118 956 0898, or on our mobile number 0468 295381. Also, don't forget to keep up with all our activities by reading this page in the matchday programme, or our weekly column in the Reading Weekend Post.

See you soon,
Chris Whalley



WELCOME TO SWINDON TOWN



SWINDON
TOWN
F.C.

Welcome to the players, officials and supporters of Swindon Town for today's local derby clash. The visitors finished one place behind Reading in Division One last season and have strengthened their squad with the addition of Alan McDonald, Philip Cuervo and Chris Hay.

THE MANAGER



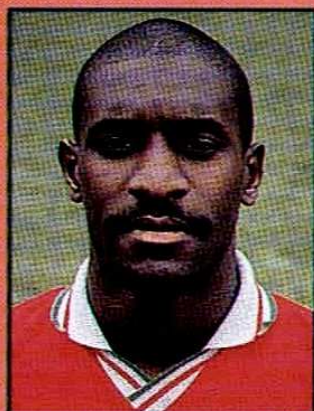
STEVE McMAHON.

As a player McMahon collected almost all the honours available for club and country. Began his career at Everton and scored 11 goals in 100 League games before a £175,000 move took him to Aston Villa.

Kenny Dalglish then signed him for Liverpool, where he collected several League and Cup winners' medals and also won 17 full England caps. McMahon joined Manchester City for £900,000 at Christmas 1991 and continued to play at the highest level until taking over as Swindon manager in November 1994.

In his first full season in charge at the County Ground McMahon led Town to the Second Division Championship and made 21 appearances despite a series of injuries.

STAR PLAYER



WAYNE ALLISON.

Known as 'The Chief', Allison has been Swindon's top scorer for the past two seasons. A big, strong targetman with an exceptional workrate, he served his apprenticeship with Halifax Town before making a £250,000 move to Watford in July 1989.

He made just six appearances at Vicarage Road and only really established himself after Bristol City paid £300,000 for his services a year later. Allison played over 200 games for the Ashton Gate side

then joined Town for £475,000 two summers ago. Now aged 28, he hit 20 goals in Swindon's Second Division Championship season - his first year at the County Ground - and found the net 13 times in 1996-97.

Keeper **Fraser Digby** is Town's longest serving player and has recently been rewarded with a match against Manchester United as part of his testimonial season. Last season's Player of the Year and a former apprentice at Old Trafford, Digby joined Swindon for a bargain £32,500 in September 1986 and has now made over 500 appearances for the club.

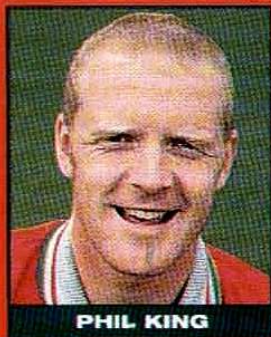
He faces strong opposition for the number one jersey from former Australian Under 21 international **Frank Talia**, who joined Town from Blackburn Rovers in 1995 and recently signed a new three year deal, while 19 year old ex-YTS keeper **Steve Mildenhall** came off the bench to make an appearance as an outfield player last season.

Cultured defender **Ian Culverhouse** spent nine successful seasons at Norwich City before joining Town in December 1994 for a tribunal set fee of £250,000. Tough-tackling full back **Gary Elkins** played for Fulham as a youngster then made more than 100 appearances for Wimbledon during six years at the club. Cost Town £100,000 in September last year.

Bootle-born **Mark Seagraves** was installed as club captain last season and played a leading role in the heart of the defence before injury brought a premature end to his season. A former Liverpool apprentice and England youth international, he made his League debut for Norwich and also played for Manchester City and Bolton Wanderers before a £100,000 move took him to the County Ground in June 1995.

Versatile defender **Mark Robinson** began his career at West Brom and Barnsley, then Newcastle United paid £450,000 for his services in March 1993. After losing his place in the team through injury he moved to the County Ground for a then club record fee of £600,000.

THE TEAM



PHIL KING

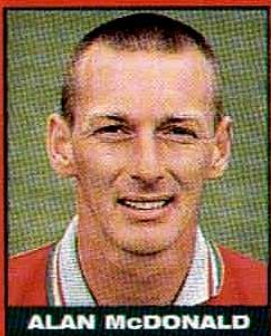
Jason Drysdale is another former Newcastle player who has been plagued by injury since his £340,000 transfer in March 1995, while 29 year

old **Phil King** is enjoying his second spell at the County Ground after injury ruined his chances at first Sheffield Wednesday and then Aston Villa.

Younger brother of former Town favourite Shaun, 23 year old **Craig Taylor** cost £25,000 from Dorchester Town last April and is tipped as a big star of the future, and another promising youngster is Welsh Under 18 skipper **Michael Pattimore**, who signed a professional contract this summer.

Former French Under 18 and Under 21

international **Frederic Darras** made no less than 19 European Cup appearances during 11 years with Auxerre, and joined Town on a free transfer from French club Bastia at the beginning of last season. New signing **Alan McDonald** is an uncompromising defender with a wealth of experience.



ALAN McDONALD

With 53 Northern Ireland caps to his name, he left Queens Park Rangers this summer after 16 years at Loftus Road.

Midfielder **Wayne O'Sullivan** joined Swindon as a trainee and made his first team debut during 1994-95, but he struggled to command a regular first team place last season. Similarly former Wycombe Wanderers star **Ty Gooden** played just a handful of games during 1996-97 after being hit by a series of injuries.



SCOTT LEITCH

Darren Bullock was a latecomer to the professional game, joining Huddersfield Town from Nuneaton Borough as a 24 year old, but he developed quickly and cost Town £400,000 from the Terriers in February this year. **Scott Leitch** moved



Back row, left to right: Wayne Allison, Mark Seagraves, Fraser Digby, Steve Mildenhall, Frank Talia, Steve Finney, Kevin Watson.

Third row: Alan McDonald, Mark Walters, Craig Taylor, Gary Elkins, Mark Robinson, Scott Leitch, Ian Culverhouse, Frederic Darras, Alex Finlayson.

Second row: Lee Collins, Peter Holcroft, Phil King, Darren Bullock, Wayne O'Sullivan, Ty Gooden, Steve Cowe.

Front row: Jason Drysdale, Jonathan Trigg (physio), Ross MacLaren (reserve team coach), Steve McMahon (manager), Mike Walsh (first team coach), Les O'Neill (chief scout), Alex Smith.

south in summer 1996 following spells at Motherwell, Dunfermline and Hearts, while 21 year olds **Peter Holcroft** and **Alex Smith** are both former Evertonians who are looking to establish themselves in the first team this year.

Talented winger **Mark Walters** enjoyed many successful years at Aston Villa, Rangers and Liverpool before joining Swindon on a free transfer last summer, but the 33 year old has struggled with a serious knee injury for some time. Midfield man Lee Collins is also looking to regain his place after missing the majority of last season through injury.

Gifted Frenchman **Philip Cuervo** is another of McMahon's summer signings, having arrived on a free transfer from St Etienne following an impressive trial period at the County Ground. Completing Town's midfield line-up is former Spurs youngster **Kevin Watson**, who made 18 League starts last year in his first season at the club.

Striker **Steve Cowe** is a pacy, skilful player who joined Swindon from Aston Villa and hit the target seven times last season.

Unlucky **Steve Finney** has been dogged by injury since he made a terrific start at the club following a summer 1995 move from Manchester City, while Edinburgh-born **Alex Finlayson** is a prolific goalscorer at youth and reserve level who has signed his first professional contract during the close season.

Swindon's strike force will be strengthened, however, by the arrival just two weeks ago of 22 year old Glaswegian **Chris Hay**. Town believe the £330,000 price will prove a bargain for the pacy young forward who has made more than 20 appearances for Celtic.

SWINDON TOWN



Nationwide League Division One
Results 1996-97

Date	Opponents	Result
Aug 17	Norwich City	0-2
Aug 20	WOLVES (CCC1-1)	2-0
Aug 24	PORT VALE	1-1
Aug 28	OLDHAM ATHLETIC	3-0
Aug 31	Southend Utd	3-1
Sep 4	Wolves (CCC1-2)	0-1
Sep 7	Grimsby Town	1-2
Sep 11	PORTSMOUTH	0-1
Sep 14	TRANMERE ROVERS	2-1
Sep 18	Q P RANGERS (CCC2-1)	1-2
Sep 21	Queens Park Rangers	1-1
Sep 25	Q P Rangers (CCC2-2)	3-1
Sep 27	WOLVES	1-2
Oct 2	Bradford City	1-2
Oct 12	OXFORD UTD	1-0
Oct 16	HUDDERSFIELD TOWN	6-0
Oct 19	Crystal Palace	2-1
Oct 23	Man Utd (CCC3)	1-2
Oct 26	Reading	0-2
Oct 30	WEST BROM	2-3
Nov 2	MAN CITY	2-0
Nov 16	BARNSELY	3-0
Nov 19	Ipswich Town	2-3
Nov 23	Birmingham City	0-1
Nov 26	Sheff Utd	0-2
Nov 30	READING	3-1
Dec 7	Charlton Athletic	0-2
Dec 14	Stoke City	0-2
Dec 22	BOLTON W.	2-2
Dec 26	Portsmouth	1-0
Jan 5	Everton (FAC3)	0-3
Jan 11	Tranmere Rovers	1-2
Jan 18	BRADFORD CITY	1-1
Jan 25	GRIMSBY TOWN	3-3
Jan 29	Wolves	0-1
Feb 1	SHEFF UTD	2-1
Feb 5	Q P RANGERS	1-1
Feb 8	West Bromwich Albion	2-1
Feb 22	Man City	0-3
Feb 26	BIRMINGHAM CITY	3-1
Mar 1	CHARLTON ATHLETIC	1-0
Mar 4	Barnsley	1-1
Mar 8	Bolton Wanderers	0-7
Mar 15	STOKE CITY	1-0
Mar 22	Port Vale	0-1
Mar 29	NORWICH CITY	0-3
Mar 31	Oldham Athletic	1-5
Apr 5	SOUTHEND UTD	0-0
Apr 12	IPSWICH TOWN	0-4
Apr 19	Oxford United	0-2
Apr 26	CRYSTAL PALACE	0-2
May 4	Huddersfield Town	0-0

FACTS & FIGURES

TOWN TOP SCORERS 1996-97

Wayne Allison	13
Peter Thorne	10
Kevin Horlock	8
Mark Walkters	8
Steve Cowe	7
Steve Finney	2

LAST FIVE ELM PARK MEETINGS

26.10.96	Reading 2	Town 0	Div 1
01.04.95	Reading 3	Town 0	Div 1
26.12.87	Reading 0	Town 1	Div 2
29.10.83	Reading 2	Town 2	Div 4
20.02.82	Reading 1	Town 1	Div 3



Action from Reading's 2-0 win against Swindon at Elm Park last season.

Pictures: Philip Tull, Evening Post





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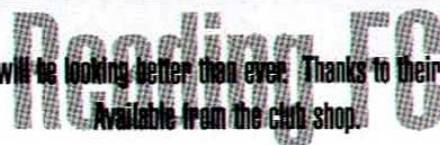
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PAST TIMES

Magic memories from **ALAN SEDUNARY**

THE GREAT GAME. None of us who were present for the great fightback against Plymouth 12 years ago will ever forget that game, but it wasn't the first time we had come back from three goals down.

On August 29, 1953 Elm Park was awash with torrential rain for the game against Coventry. The visitors adapted to the watery conditions first and that, plus more than their fair share of luck, saw them storm (pun intended!) into a three goal lead in just 18 minutes.

It was the third goal that turned the game Reading's way - it was a complete fluke, a long punt upfield that skidded into Billy Hall's net. The Royals fans were so indignant at this outrageous piece of luck that they began to really get behind their struggling team. Just as with Plymouth, the result was spectacular.

Wally Hinshelwood quickly pulled a goal back, and before half-time Peter Simpson had skipped, or rather splashed, his way past three Coventry defenders to make it 3-2. There was only going to be one winner now, and after the break Hinshelwood put us on level terms before completing his hatrick to give us a sensational 4-3 victory. Remarkably, on the same day Reading 'A' fought back from three down at half-time to win 7-4 against the mighty East Cowes Victoria!

MAGIC MOMENTS. 22 years ago today the strangest goal ever seen at Elm Park was scored - or was it? After just ten minutes of the opening game of the 1975-76 season, Reading were awarded a free kick 30 yards outside Rochdale's penalty area and Tommy Youlden's shot thundered into the side netting. The fans applauded politely, manager Charlie Hurley was heard to shout "Good try" and the two teams prepared for the obvious goal kick.

'Obvious', that is, to everyone except referee Walter Harvey and his referee's assistant - sorry, linesman - who both thought the ball had gone in the net and gave a goal. Despite protests from Rochdale keeper Mike Poole and his team mates, plus hoots of derision from both sets of fans, an embarrassed Reading were given the goal. That season we went on to win our first promotion in 50 years - all on the back of 'the goal that never was'.

ELM PARK HEROES. Frank Richardson once scored 139 goals in a schoolboy season, but it was his 12 goals in 13 games at the end of our 1925-26 Division Three South Championship season that began his

elevation to hero status at Elm Park.

After spells with Plymouth, Stoke and West Ham, Frank joined Swindon in 1924. The following season he had hit 28 goals by February 1926 when Reading paid a big fee to bring him to Elm Park as a replacement for the injured Hugh Davey.

He was an immediate success and those 12 goals were vital to our promotion. Although only 5'9" he continued to score regularly in the higher division, ending up with 44 goals in only 92 games before he returned to Swindon in 1930. Frank never moved from Reading and lived the rest of his life in the Oxford Road area. Shortly before his death, he presented the Division Three Championship trophy to our victorious 1985-86 team on the last day of the season, receiving a rapturous reception from the large crowd, even though few of them would have ever seen him play.

RECORD BREAKING ROYALS. Our search for obscure records brings us to former Elm Park favourite Lawrie Sanchez. On August 14, 1982, long before Lawrie found fame with Wimbledon, he was gaining a less welcome record. Twenty one minutes into our League Group Trophy game against Oxford he made a flying save from a Kevin Brock shot - which would have been fine had he been the keeper! As it was a penalty was awarded and Lawrie became the first League player to be dismissed for the newly-introduced 'professional foul'. Despite that, the Royals won the game 2-1 thanks to goals from Stuart Beavon and Brian Bason, proving what we have always known - you don't need a full team to beat Oxford!

The professional foul is still a controversial and confusing subject today, but the Evening Post was more than confused when it began the piece on Sanchez's dismissal by stating "Football stands on an unexploded land mine" - surely land mines explode as soon as you stand on them anyway!

AND FINALLY... Reading and Swindon must have set some sort of record when we met here on February 20, 1982. The game ended a 1-1 draw, with both goals being own goals scored by the keepers. First Colin Court, making his only League appearance for Reading, did the honours for Swindon, then the vastly experienced Jimmy Allen returned the compliment in surely the only League game in which both keepers have scored. Watch our for more goalscoring goalie records in the Bradford programme.





Ray Houghton tries to disentangle himself from Jason Price as Jonathan Coates keep a close eye on proceedings

Pictures: Andy Evans, Reading Chronicle

ROYAL REPLAY



Goalscorer James Lambert shrugs off City defender Keith Walker



**READING 2
SWANSEA CITY 0**



Tuesday, 12th August 1997

Attendance: 4,829

READING: Steve Mautone, Martyn Booty, Steve Swales, Dariusz Wciowczyk, Keith McPherson, Linvoy Primus, Andy Bernal, Ray Houghton (Paul Holsgrove, 79), Carl Asaba, Lee Hodges (Neville Roach, 68), James Lambert.

SWANSEA CITY: Roger Freestone, Jason Price, Joao Moreira, Keith Walker, Christian Edwards, Jonathan Coates, Damien Lacey, David O'Gorman (Richard Appleby, 49), Tony Bird, Kwame Ampadu, David Puttnam (Gary Jones, 77).



Steve Swales prepares to send another telling cross past Jason Price



**Action from the
Coca Cola Cup
first round, first leg**



James Lambert finds the easiest way to pass the Swansea defence is to jump over them



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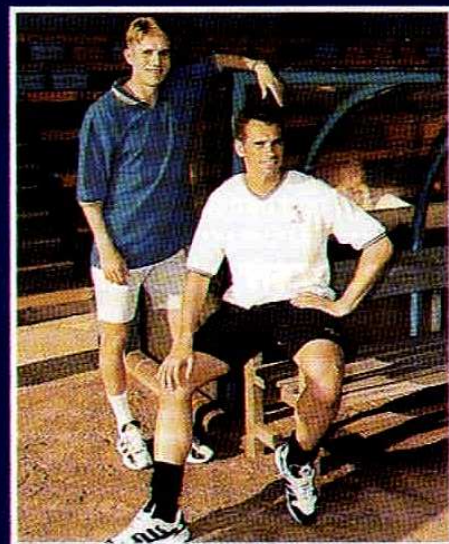
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MARKETING &



DARIUSZ FACES THE MUSIC

One of the highlights of the Royals' first two games of the season has been the superb form of Dariusz Wdowczyk, back to full fitness after missing most of last season with Achilles tendon trouble.

Dariusz produced a brilliant display as the Royals beat Swansea City in the first leg of our Coca Cola Cup tie on Tuesday night, and he was rewarded with the man of the match vote from our co-sponsors for the evening, Minolta and Aztech MicroCentres.

Coca Cola are kindly providing smart compact disc players for the man of the match winners this season,

and Dariusz is pictured here receiving his award from Aztech MicroCentres managing director Steve Wilkinson and Jim Mills, Reading branch manager of Minolta.

SUPPORTER DAVID HAS A BALL

The matchball at the Swansea game in midweek was kindly sponsored by David Jewell of Systel UK Ltd, suppliers of photographic processing equipment.

Longtime Royals supporter David no doubt enjoyed the team's winning performance, and after the game he joined chairman John Madejski in the sponsors' lounge to collect a souvenir of the evening.



JOIN THE ROLL OF HONOUR

To commemorate the final season at Elm Park, the club is producing a souvenir book packed with fascinating and nostalgic photographs tracing the history of the Royals.

Compiled by club historian David Downs, the book will feature a supporters' Roll of Honour, and there's still time to get your name included in this prestigious publication.

Entry in the Roll of Honour costs just £5 per name, but you'll need to hurry because the August 29 deadline is fast approaching. Call in to the main club office or telephone 0118 950 7878 for an application form if you would like to be included.

ANDY FIZZES IN COCA COLA CUP

Andy Bernal has started the new season in fine form,

and his sterling display in midfield against Swansea earned him the man of the match award from Elm Park's executive boxholders. Andy joined Steve Bradley, Customer Support Director at



Hewlett Packard, after the game to pick up a bottle of something slightly stronger than Coca Cola!

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COMMERCIAL NEWS



ANOTHER WINNER WITH THE ROYALS

Another Royals supporter found himself going home with more than a victory to celebrate when he scooped the prize in our fabulous half-time Golden Gamble draw.

Mr Hutley from Maidenhead was the lucky holder of Tuesday night's winning ticket, and he collected a bumper cheque for £685 from Archie Lovell and Golden Gamble girl Rachel Lewendon.

Remember to buy your Golden Gamble ticket this afternoon - it costs just £1 and the winner can collect their money immediately after the half-time draw is made.

Tickets are on sale around the ground before kick-off, and don't forget - if you're not in it, you can't win it!

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We have several opportunities remaining for supporters to add a personal touch to their season by sponsoring their favourite player or an item of his kit.

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We've chosen six top matches where Passport holders can get £1 off - just by producing their card.

The games are:

Oxford United	Saturday, September 13
Sheffield United	Tuesday, November 4
Charlton Athletic	Saturday, December 6
Birmingham City	Saturday, January 31
Manchester City	Tuesday, February 24
Stoke City	Saturday, April 4



Action from last season's clash with Stoke City. Get £1 off admission to this year's match with a Passport to Leisure. Picture: Philip Tull, Evening Post

You can get £1 off seats (normal price £12 or £13) if you call in to the Elm Park box office with your Passport **at least a week prior to the game.** Alternatively, you can get £1 off terrace admission on the day (normal price £9 adults, £6 concessions) through turnstiles 11-13 on the West Terrace (Wantage Road entrance). Look out for the special signs on matchdays.

But that's not all you can get from your Passport to Leisure. Anyone living in the borough of Reading can join the scheme - it's free and gives you substantial savings at Reading Council's sport and leisure facilities, as well as lots of special offers at events, shows and shops around the town.

So why not get your Passport to Leisure soon and make the most of big savings. Just pick up a form from the Civic Centre or any Reading Sport and Leisure Centre, or telephone the Passport Hotline on 939 0386 and we'll send you one.

There will be plenty of Passport special offers throughout the season - on everything from basketball to ballet. Look out in the Bradford City programme for how you can even get money off surfing the net!

GETTING TO TOWN

There are some great off-peak savings available at Reading Borough Council's town centre car parks throughout the summer.

So why not take advantage of them to go shopping, visit the museum or see a film?

PARKING DEALS

Chatham Street - £1 for as long as you like after 1 p.m., Monday-Saturday

Queens Road - £1 for as long as you like after 2 p.m., Monday-Wednesday

Broad Street Mall - £1.50 for as long as you like after 2 p.m., Monday-Wednesday

OR YOU CAN PARK & RIDE:

If you live on the east of town, park at the Showcase Cinema in Winnersh and catch the Fastrack bus service straight into Reading town centre. It costs just £1 return off-peak and £1.50 for four people travelling together. It's easy then to get a Reading Bus to Elm Park!

From the west of Reading you can park at the Battle Hospital Park & Ride (signposted from Oxford Road and Portman Road), just a few hundred yards from the ground.



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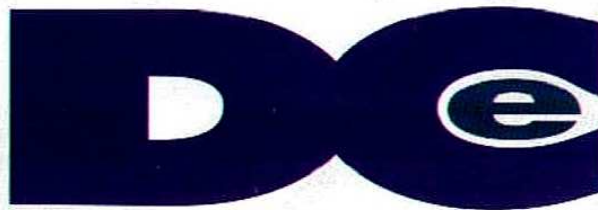


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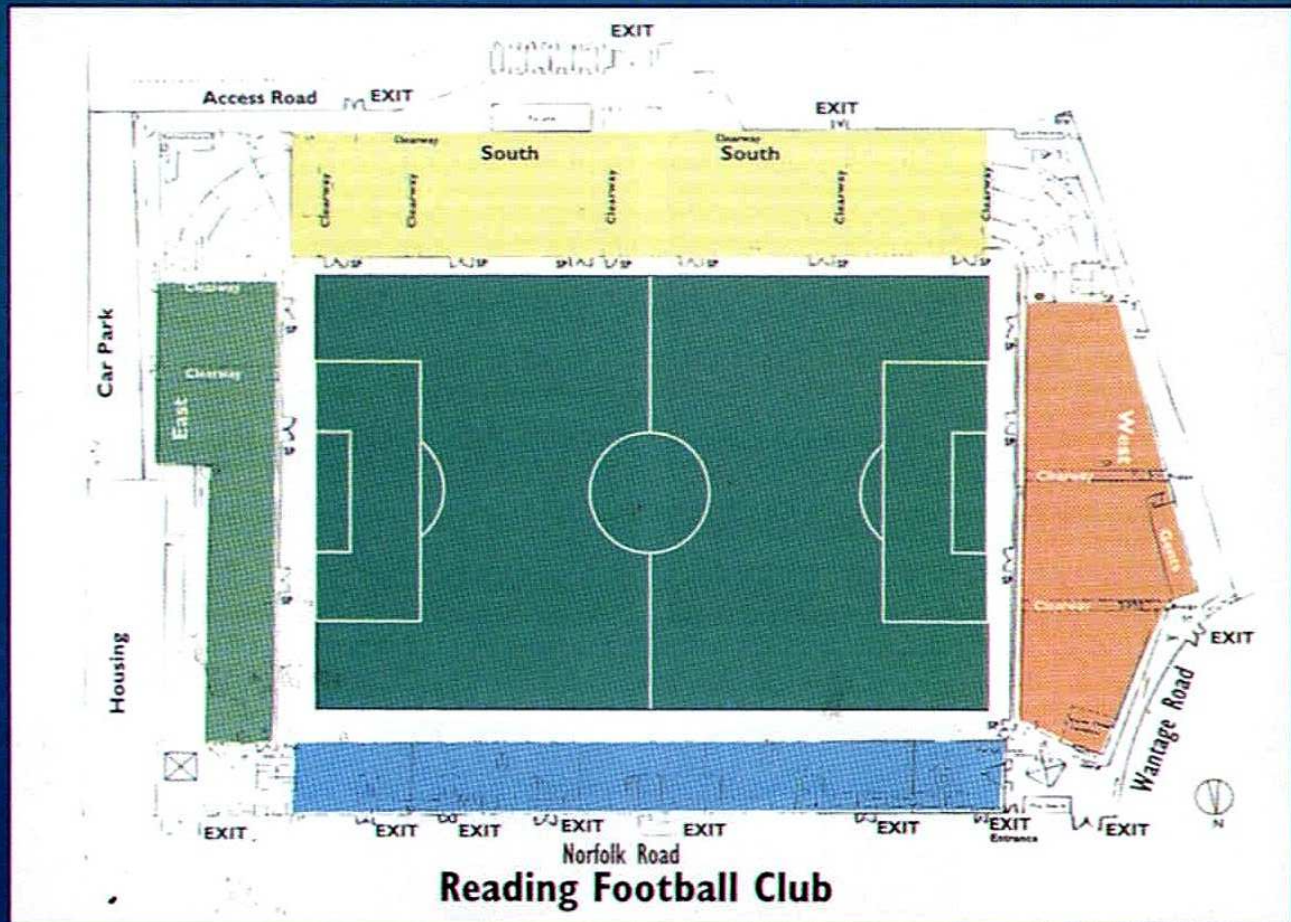
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Graphic Service

For Further Information Contact David Cox
Phone (01635) 528228 Fax (01635) 528049

ELM PARK SAFETY

At the start of a new season we would like to remind all supporters of the safety procedure at Elm Park, so please take a few minutes to study this page.

All exit points are clearly marked on the plan - please ensure you know which exit is closest to you.



In the event of an emergency you will hear a loud hooter - which is tested before each game - followed by an announcement giving clear instructions. Please listen carefully and co-operate fully with police and stewards to ensure any emergency can be dealt with swiftly.

We would also like to remind all supporters that any encroachment on the pitch is strictly forbidden and is viewed extremely seriously. We have all worked hard to build Elm Park's excellent reputation and anyone who attempts to harm that will be severely dealt with and may be banned from the ground.

Please remember that a **NO SMOKING** ban is in force in all seated areas of the ground. For reasons of safety and crowd control smokers are not permitted to leave the North Stand during the interval and return for the second half. We regret that anyone who does this will **NOT** be re-admitted to the ground.

THE YOUNG ROYALS

With youth team coach Steve Kean



STEVE KEAN

During the summer we've seen 15 youngsters join the club as first year trainees, taking their first steps to hopefully highly successful careers at Elm Park.

At this early stage of the season, I thought I'd take the opportunity to introduce you to some of the new lads, as well as some of our second year trainees who now have a year's work behind them and, in some cases, are already appearing regularly for the reserves.



JAMIE ASHDOWN

Keeper Jamie Ashdown is a first year here, although he actually made his South East Counties debut last season and also appeared once for the reserves, aged just 15 at the time.

He's been doing plenty of work with Steve

Mautone, Sal and Nicky, and he's responding exceptionally well, so we've got very high hopes for him in the future.

Steve Arkins is a 16 year old lad from Dublin, who's represented the Republic of Ireland at Under 15 level. He's a big, strong striker who is doing very well in the youth team and already has a few reserve games under his belt.

Those of you who came to the first team's pre-season friendly against Bournemouth will have seen young midfielder Max Rooke come on as a second half sub and do very well indeed. Max is in his second year now and he's played several reserve games already, so I expect you'll be seeing a lot more of him in the future.

Another second year who's made his mark in the reserves is local lad Matt Bicknell, who can play either at left back or in the centre of defence. Matt had a few things to work on

over the summer and he's come back looking a lot sharper, so I'm really pleased with him.



PHILIP HADLAND

First year Philip Hadland is definitely one to watch. Still only 16, he's an old-fashioned outside right who's come down from Warrington in Cheshire to join us, and I'm expecting big things of him because he's got something special.

Local lad Neville Stamp is another first year that I'm expecting to do well. He plays at left back and, not only has he already appeared in the reserves, he has also trained with the first team a couple of times and done exceptionally well.

Joining our first year intake is an American lad, AJ Fichena, who is one of the best youngsters in his home state of Florida. He's a midfielder who is still only 15, but he's been looking really good in training and, technically, he is a very capable player indeed.



ROSS HARRISON

Finally, centre forward Ross Harrison, who's a second year now, has also got a few reserve games under his belt recently and has done very well.

So we've got some great young players with lots of potential, and I've got high hopes

for the new season. There are some strong sides in the South East Counties Division Two, particularly Luton and Crystal Palace, but with a bit of luck there's no reason why we can't finish towards the top of the table.

And if any supporters are free on Saturday mornings, check out our fixture list and, if we're at home, come along to Cantley Park in Wokingham and support the young lads. They'll appreciate it and you'll see some great football.



ROYAL ACTION

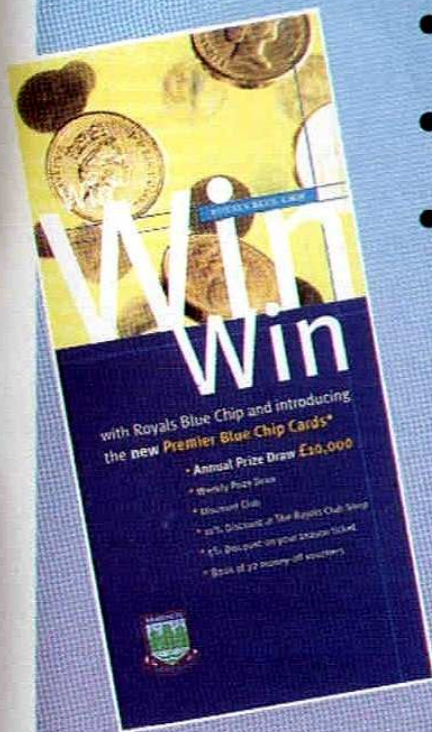
SPECIAL

New signing Carl Asaba keeps Jason Price at bay on his Elm Park debut.

Picture: Andy Evans, Reading Chronicle

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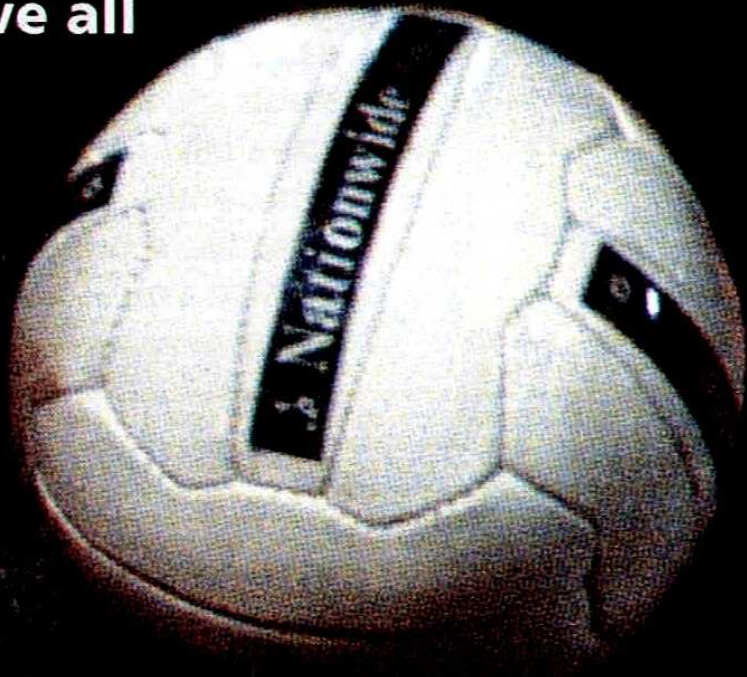
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B - David Jewell

16.08.97 v Swindon Town - M - Hewlett Packard Express Support
B - Razzmatazz

30.08.97 v Bradford City - M - Bermic Cheese
B -

02.09.97 v Queens Park Rangers - M - Business Moves
B - Motorists Discount Centre

13.09.97 v Oxford United - M - Hewlett Packard
B - Tilehurst Car Sales

04.10.97 v Sunderland - M - Lamport Gilbert
B - Ward Consultancy

11.10.97 v Crewe Alexandra - M -
B -

24.10.97 v Nottingham Forest - M - C. E. Heath
B - Thames Valley Cleaning

04.11.97 v Sheffield United - M -
B -

08.11.97 v Stockport County - M -
B -

22.11.97 v Ipswich Town - M -
B - MDR Football Coaching

06.12.97 v Charlton Athletic - M -
B - Peter Mullin

20.12.97 v Wolverhampton Wanderers - M - Haslams
B - Mrs C

26.12.97 v West Bromwich Albion - M -
B - Solo Office & Secretarial

10.01.98 v Bury - M -
B -

31.01.98 v Birmingham City - M - Burn Stewart
B - Simpson Springs & Pressings

07.02.98 v Tranmere Rovers - M -
B -

21.02.98 v Portsmouth - M -
B - Topmix

24.02.98 v Manchester City - M - Hall & Clarke
B - Mizuno

07.03.98 v Port Vale - M -
B -

21.03.98 v Huddersfield Town - M -
B - J.P. Moran

04.04.98 v Stoke City - M -
B -

13.04.98 v Middlesbrough - M - 2-TEN FM
B - Thames Valley Cleaning

03.05.98 v Norwich City - M -
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KEY - M = Matchday Sponsor
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Leave the M6 motorway at junction 6 and take the A38 (M) (Aston Expressway). Leave at second exit then take first exit at roundabout along the Dartmouth Middleway. After 1 1/4 miles turn left into St Andrew's Street.

There is parking next to the ground. Nearest railways station: Birmingham New Street and Birmingham Moor Street are both 20 minutes walk away.

Away supporters are allocated seats in the Railway End Stand, and tickets are available on the day at £11 with no concessions.

Vetch Field, SWANSEA

Exit M4 motorway at junction 42 and follow Swansea (A483) signs. After four miles follow signs for City Centre West. After 1/2 mile turn right (opposite County Hall) into West Way. At first set of traffic lights, turn left into Glamorgan Street from Vetch Field.

The Kingsway and Clarence Terrace car parks are within 200 yards of the ground, and there is also street parking nearby. Nearest railway station: Swansea High Street (1 mile).

Tickets for the covered West Terrace are available on the night at £7.50 and £4 for under 16s and senior citizens.

WANT TO WORK FOR THE ROYALS?

The club's promotions department is seeking an enthusiastic and reliable sales representative to work from 9-1 and 4-8 p.m.

We are also looking for a part-time computer and administration worker, and collectors with their own transport who are willing to work at least two or three evenings a week.

Applicants for any of these positions should contact promotions manager Dawn Denton on 0118 946 4008.

TOWN CENTRE TICKETS

South Bank tickets are now available in advance from newsagents Town News in Union Street, Reading (otherwise known as Smelly Alley). Tickets can be purchased up until 4 p.m. on the day prior to a home match.

HELP THE POLISH FLOOD APPEAL

Funds are desperately needed to help victims of the recent floods in southern Poland, many of whom have lost their homes, possessions and livelihoods.

Volunteer collectors will be circulating at Elm Park this afternoon, and we would ask you to show your usual generosity by contributing to this extremely worthy cause.

Alternatively, supporters can make a contribution to the fund by sending a cheque to The Polish Flood Appeal, Polish Benevolent Fund, 81 London Road, Reading, or by payment into the following Barclays Bank Account: The Polish Flood Appeal; Account Number - 30385980; Bank Sort Code - 20-71-03. All donations - large or small - will be most gratefully received.

TODAY'S REFEREE

The man in charge this afternoon is referee Andy D'Urso, a bank manager from Billericay in Essex who's married with a young son and daughter.

Mr D'Urso began refereeing in 1979 and was appointed to the national linesmen's list in 1990 and the referees' list four years later. He was the reserve official at last season's play-off semi-finals, and in his spare time he enjoys travel and all sports, particularly football, golf and squash.

TODAY'S MASCOTS

Performing mascots duties this afternoon as a belated present for his seventh birthday is Junior Royal Daniel Thorne, who has recently moved from Reading to Gosport in Hampshire.

Daniel still comes back to watch the Royals and play for Shinfield Rangers under eights, and he says he is looking forward to watching Reading beat his new local team, Portsmouth!

Joining Daniel this afternoon is young Daisy Archer who, when she's not watching the Royals, keeps herself busy playing tennis, attending Girls' Brigade and collecting anything to do with the Spice Girls.





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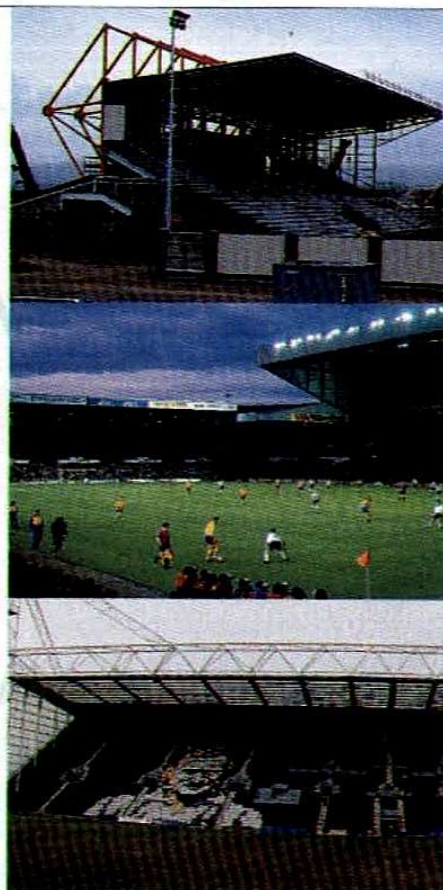
Thanks to the Government and to the Football Association, the FA Premier League and the English Sports Council, a major new funding package to secure the future of the Trust has been put in place.

These funds will be in addition to income derived from the football pools companies Littlewoods, Vernons and Zetters, and will enable the Trust to complete its Taylor task, carry on its essential safety work and continue to grant aid football at every level. The Government's commitment to the Trust has the support of everyone who cares about our national game.



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NATIONWIDE

While the Royals were cruising to a 2-0 win over Swansea on Tuesday night, other First Division teams were finding the going somewhat tougher in the first round of the Coca Cola Cup.

Newly-promoted Stockport County suffered a crushing 4-2 defeat at Third Division Mansfield Town, Port Vale lost 2-1 at home to Second Division York City and Portsmouth and West Brom could only manage draws against Third Division Peterborough and Cambridge respectively.

But the worst blushes must belong to Frank Clark's Manchester City - third favourites at 7-1 for the First Division title this season - who were beaten at Blackpool courtesy of Andy Preece's goal 17 minutes from time.

The highest scoreline of the first round came at Doncaster Rovers' Belle Vue Ground, where First Division newcomers Nottingham Forest put eight past the hapless home side.

But spare a thought for Rovers boss and former Elm Park favourite Kerry Dixon - he may be the man who'll be forced to take the backlash of that defeat, but it's club owner Ken Richardson who insists on picking the team!

And it can't have helped his morale when, the morning after their 0-8 nightmare, a national newspaper described his first management job as "crumbling into chaos and humiliation", adding that "the sack would undoubtedly come as a merciful release". Now Kerry, doesn't that make you feel better?

Middlesbrough fans quickly consoled themselves following the departure of Brazilian starlet Juninho by propelling Paul Merson to instant hero status following his much-publicised move from Arsenal.

But it seems all is not well at the Riverside Stadium. Not only has Merson's former Highbury team mate David Platt rejected a bid by Boro boss Bryan Robson to take him to the north east, but Italian Fabrizio Ravanelli - the darling of the fans last season - has fallen out of favour as well.

Rumoured to want away from Boro during the summer, Ravanelli was booed throughout his side's 2-1 win over Charlton last Saturday, despite hitting an injury time winner, and he hasn't exactly endeared himself to Robson by starting a training ground punch-up with team mate Curtis Fleming.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE														HOME LEAGUE ATTENDANCES	
FINAL TABLE 1996-97															
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Average	Highest	
Bolton Wdrs	46	18	4	1	60	20	10	3	40	39	98	15,619	21,880 v Charlton Athletic		
Barnsley	46	14	4	5	43	19	8	10	5	33	36	80	11,406	18,605 v Bradford City	
Wolves	46	10	5	8	37	24	12	5	6	37	27	76	24,764	27,408 v Stoke City	
Ipswich Town	46	3	7	3	44	23	7	9	24	27	74	12,024	22,397 v Norwich City		
Sheffield United	46	13	5	5	46	23	7	8	8	29	29	73	16,675	25,596 v Stoke City	
Crystal Palace*	46	0	7	6	39	22	9	7	7	39	26	71	15,336	20,655 v Wolves	
Portsmouth	46	2	4	7	32	24	8	4	11	27	29	68	8,853	12,841 v Manchester City	
Port Vale	46	9	9	5	36	28	8	7	8	22	27	67	7,410	14,936 v Stoke City	
QPR	46	10	5	8	33	25	8	7	8	31	35	66	12,371	17,376 v Wolves	
Birmingham City	46	11	7	5	30	18	6	8	9	22	30	66	17,775	25,157 v Bradford City	
Tranmere Rvrs	46	10	9	4	42	27	7	5	11	21	29	65	8,170	14,309 v Bolton Wdrs	
Stoke City	46	15	3	5	34	22	3	7	13	7	35	64	12,679	22,500 v WBA	
Norwich City	46	9	10	4	28	18	8	2	13	35	50	63	14,797	22,056 v Ipswich Town	
Manchester City	46	12	4	7	34	25	5	6	12	25	35	61	26,744	30,729 v Oldham Athletic	
Charlton Athletic	46	11	8	4	36	28	5	3	15	16	38	59	11,017	21,116 v Manchester City	
WBA	46	7	9	3	37	33	7	8	8	31	39	57	15,123	20,711 v Wolves	
Oxford United	46	14	3	6	44	26	2	6	15	20	42	57	7,608	9,223 v READING	
READING	46	13	7	3	37	24	2	5	18	21	43	57	9,153	14,853 v Wolves	
Swindon Town	46	11	6	6	36	27	4	3	16	16	44	54	9,271	14,374 v Manchester City	
Huddersfield Twn	46	10	7	6	28	20	3	8	12	20	41	54	12,175	18,358 v Manchester City	
Bradford City	46	10	5	8	29	32	2	7	14	18	40	48	12,925	17,609 v Manchester City	
Grimsby Town	46	7	7	9	31	34	4	6	13	29	47	46	5,640	8,732 v Manchester City	
Oldham Athletic	46	6	8	9	30	30	4	5	14	21	36	43	7,057	12,992 v Manchester City	
Southend United	46	7	9	7	32	32	1	6	16	10	54	39	5,251	8,707 v Manchester City	

* Promoted via the play-offs





ROYAL STATISTICS 1997/98

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE



READING APPEARANCES AND GOALSCORERS

Up to and including 12.08.97

Lge	1997-98			Player	Career Apps	Goals
	FA	CCLC	Goals			
1	0	1	0	CARL ASABA D.O.B /Previous Club 28.01.73 Brentford	2	0
1	0	1	0	ANDY BERNAL 16.05.66 Sydney Olympic	125 (1)	2
0	0	0	0	SAL BIBBO 24.08.74 Sheffield Utd	6	0
0	0	0	0	PAUL BODIN 13.09.64 Swindon	38	1
1	0	1	0	MARTYN BOOTY 30.05.71 Crewe Alexandra	37	1
0	0	0	0	DARREN CASKEY 21.08.74 Tottenham Hotspur	44 (9)	3
0	0	0	0	ANDY FREEMAN 08.09.77 YTS	0 (1)	0
0	0	0	0	BYRON GLASGOW 18.02.79 YTS	2 (3)	0
0	0	0	0	NICKY HAMMOND 07.09.67 Plymouth Argyle	7	0
1	0	1	0	LEE HODGES 04.09.73 Barnet.	2	0
0 (1)	0	0 (1)	0	PAUL HOLSGROVE 28.08.69 Millwall.	75 (10)	7
1	0	1	0	RAY HOUGHTON 09.01.62 C. Palace.	2	0
0	0	0	0	BARRY HUNTER 18.11.68 Wrexham	26 (1)	2
1	0	1	1	JAMES LAMBERT 14.09.73 School	53 (51)	16
0	0	0	0	STUART LOVELL 09.01.72 YTS	188 (51)	66
1	0	1	0	STEVE MAUTONE 10.08.70 West Ham	17	0
1	0	1	0	KEITH McPHERSON 11.09.63 Northampton	255 (7)	8
1	0	1	0	LINVOY PRIMUS 14.09.73 Barnet	2	0
0	0	0	0	MICHAEL MEAKER 18.08.71 QPR	30 (16)	1
0	0	0	0	TREVOR MORLEY 20.03.61 West Ham	57 (4)	29
0	0	0	0	PHIL PARKINSON 01.12.67 Bury	178 (22)	9
0 (1)	0	0 (1)	1	NEVILLE ROACH 29.09.78 YTS	2 (3)	2
0	0	0	0	BEN SMITH 23.11.78 YTS	0 (1)	0
1	0	1	1	STEVE SWALES 26.12.73 Scarborough	10 (6)	1
0	0	0	0	MICHAEL THORP 05.12.75 YTS	5	0
1	0	1	0	DARIUSZ WDOWCZYK 25.09.62 Celtic	86 (2)	0
0	0	0	0	MARTIN WILLIAMS 12.07.73 Luton Town	36 (12)	4

Date	Opponents	Res	Pos	Att
Sat Aug 9	Bury	1-1	-	5,065
Tue Aug 12	SWANSEA CITY (CCC 1-1)	2-0	-	4,829
Sat Aug 16	SWINDON TOWN	:		
Sat Aug 23	Birmingham City	:		
Tue Aug 26	Swansea City (CCC 1-2)	:		
Sat Aug 30	BRADFORD CITY	:		
Tue Sep 2	QUEENS PARK RANGERS	:		
Sat Sep 6	West Bromwich Albion	:		
Sat Sep 13	*OXFORD UNITED	:		
Sat Sep 20	Tranmere Rovers	:		
Sat Sep 27	Portsmouth	:		
Sat Oct 4	SUNDERLAND	:		
Sat Oct 11	CREWE ALEXANDRA	:		
Sat Oct 18	Manchester City	:		
Wed Oct 22	Norwich City	:		
Fri Oct 24	NOTTINGHAM FOREST	:		
Sat Nov 1	Port Vale	:		
Tue Nov 4	*SHEFFIELD UNITED	:		
Sat Nov 8	STOCKPORT COUNTY	:		
Sat Nov 15	Huddersfield Town	:		
Sat Nov 22	IPSWICH TOWN	:		
Sat Nov 29	Stoke City	:		
Sat Dec 6	*CHARLTON ATHLETIC	:		
Sat Dec 13	Middlesbrough	:		
Sat Dec 20	WOLVERHAMPTON W.	:		
Fri Dec 26	WEST BROMWICH (K.o.12 Noon)	:		
Sun Dec 28	Queens Park Rangers	:		
Sat Jan 3	F.A. CUP 3rd ROUND	:		
Sat Jan 10	BURY	:		
Sat Jan 17	Swindon Town	:		
Sat Jan 24	F.A. CUP 4th ROUND	:		
Tue Jan 27	Bradford City	:		
Sat Jan 31	*BIRMINGHAM CITY	:		
Sat Feb 7	TRANMERE ROVERS	:		
Sat Feb 14	Oxford United	:		
Tue Feb 17	Sunderland	:		
Sat Feb 21	PORTSMOUTH	:		
Tue Feb 24	*MANCHESTER CITY	:		
Sat Feb 28	Crewe Alexandra	:		
Tue Mar 3	Stockport County	:		
Sat Mar 7	PORT VALE	:		
Sat Mar 14	Sheffield United	:		
Sat Mar 21	HUDDERSFIELD TOWN	:		
Sat Mar 28	Ipswich Town	:		
Sat Apr 4	*STOKE CITY	:		
Sat Apr 11	Charlton Athletic	:		
Mon Apr 13	MIDDLESBROUGH	:		
Sat Apr 18	Wolverhampton W.	:		
Sat Apr 25	Nottingham Forest	:		
Sun May 3	NORWICH CITY	:		
Sat May 16	F.A. CUP FINAL	:		

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SEASON

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Mautone	Booty	SWALES	Wdowczyk	McPherson	Primus	Bernal	Houghton	Asaba	Hodges	Lambert	Roach (10)	Holsgrove (11)	Meaker
Mautone	Booty	Swales	Wdowczyk	McPherson	Primus	Bernal	Houghton	Asaba	Hodges	LAMBERT	ROACH (10)	Holsgrove (8)	Meaker

KEY TO SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS GOALSCORERS (CAPITALS) PENALTY (P) ★OG
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TRIBUTE TO **ELM PARK**

Elm Park regular
MARK CHAPMAN
looks back on the
year he became a
Loyal Royal.



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I wasn't always a Royals fan, I must admit. Brought up in Halifax, I was more a rugby league man, and it wasn't until I moved to Reading in the summer of 1993 that my footballing fate was sealed.

Living close to Elm Park, I couldn't help but notice when the season started - the streams of supporters hurrying past my house in blue and white hooped shirts, the glow of the floodlights that signified an evening match and the inimitable noise that told me Reading had scored.

It wasn't long before I was tempted to go to a game, and on Wednesday, September 1 I came to Elm Park for the first time to see Reading play Barnet. The Royals thrashed them 4-1, with goals from Mick Gooding, Phil Parkinson, Jimmy Quinn and Michael Gilkes, and I was hooked.

I was overwhelmed by the atmosphere, the friendliness of the supporters, the flair and determination shown by the team and - strangely, at the time - the sense of outrage I felt when Barnet's Kelly Haag launched himself at Tom Jones, breaking his leg.

From that night on, I went to every home game that season, becoming increasingly caught up in the rituals that surrounded each match, the camaraderie on the South Bank and the escalating joy I felt after each win.

Great moments stand out in my mind from that season - Quinny's last minute winner against Plymouth, Archie's double as we beat championship rivals Stockport and the brilliant display against Bristol Rovers which had even Rovers boss John Ward applauding by the end of our 2-0 win.

By the time we faced Brighton on April

30, we knew the Second Division Championship was in sight (even though nobody dared say it!). And I will never forget the euphoria of the crowd when Quinny scored on 90 minutes to seal a 2-0 win AND the title.

If ever I have wanted to bottle a moment and keep it for posterity, it was that one. I've bought a season ticket every year since then, and I will at the new stadium as well, but I can't imagine ever feeling the same affection for our new ground that I do about this old place.

Even though I've only been coming here a few years, Elm Park holds a host of memories for me. I'll miss its character and its comfortable familiarity, and, above all, I'll never forget the year I became a Royal.

* Send us your memories of Elm Park for use on this page - it could be your first match, your best or even your worst. If you have a story or tribute you'd like us to include, please keep it to around 500 words in length and send it to programme editor Helen Peterson here at Elm Park. The club reserves the right to edit, correct or amend any contribution.



Celebrations at the end of the 1993-94 Championship season.

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TEAMS



Reading

Versus

Swindon Town

Steve Mautone

1

Fraser Digby

Martyn Booty

2

Frederic Darras

Steve Swales

3

Jason Drysdale

Dariusz Wdowczyk

4

Scott Leitch

Keith McPherson

5

Mark Seagraves

Linvoy Primus

6

Alan McDonald

Andy Bernal

7

Mark Robinson

Paul Holsgrove

8

Philippe Cuervo

Carl Asaba

9

Chris Hay

Lee Hodges

10

Wayne Allison

James Lambert

11

Ty Gooden

12

13

14

TODAY'S OFFICIALS

 Referee: Andy D'Urso (Billericay, Essex)

 Assistants: E.W. Green |  W.M. Jordan

Reserve Official: J. Paterson

MATCHBALL SPONSOR



NEXT MATCH AT ELM PARK

Southern Junior Floodlit Cup

NORTHAMPTON TOWN

Tuesday, August 19, 1997

Kick off 7.30 p.m.



SECOND MATCH AT ELM PARK

Nationwide League Division One

BRADFORD CITY

Saturday, August 30, 1997

Kick off 3.00 p.m.



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