



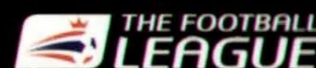
OFFICIAL MATCHDAY PROGRAMME £5

# MILLWALL <sup>V</sup> SWINDON TOWN

SATURDAY 29 MAY 2010 WEMBLEY STADIUM, KICK-OFF 3PM



## 2010 PLAY-OFF FINAL





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#### THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

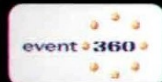
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# ORDER OF EVENTS

- 1.00pm TURNSTILES OPEN**
- 1.40pm THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE COMMUNITY CUP**  
South Fallsworth Primary (representing Oldham Athletic)  
v  
Gateway School (representing Wycombe Wanderers)
- 2.10pm PLAYERS WARM-UP**
- 2.25pm ARMED FORCES LAP OF HONOUR**
- 2.50pm TEAMS ENTER THE STADIUM**  
Presentation of teams and match officials to:  
**Nick Robinson** (Brand Director, Sparkling, Coca-Cola Great Britain & Ireland)  
**Greg Clarke** (Chairman, The Football League)
- THE NATIONAL ANTHEM**  
led by Katherine Sayles
- 3.00pm KICK-OFF**
- 3.45pm HALF-TIME**
- 4.00pm SECOND HALF**
- 4.45pm END OF MATCH \***



Presentation of the trophy and medals by:  
Nick Robinson (Brand Director, Sparkling, Coca-Cola Great Britain & Ireland)

\*In the event of the scores remaining level after 90 minutes, half an hour of extra-time will be played. Should the score remain level at the end of extra-time, the winner will be decided by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark at an end of the stadium to be determined by the referee.



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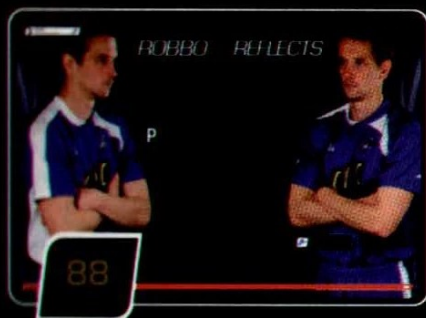


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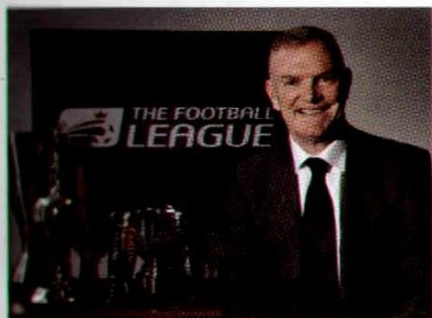
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**72 Clubs. The Coca-Cola Football League.**





**GREG CLARKE**  
CHAIRMAN  
THE FOOTBALL  
LEAGUE

**O**n behalf of The Football League, welcome to Wembley Stadium for the 2010 Coca-Cola Football League Play-Off Finals.

For more than two decades, the Play-Off Finals have provided an unmissable, winner-takes-all finale to the domestic football calendar. Few football matches have so much resting on them. For supporters they are a roller coaster ride that culminates in either the unbridled joy of promotion or the utter despair of defeat, whilst for the players, an entire season's work hangs in the balance.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the directors, management and players of today's finalist clubs. Congratulations on reaching Wembley, I hope it proves a memorable occasion regardless of the result.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation, and also that of our clubs, for the outstanding support we have received from Coca-Cola over the last six years. This year's play-offs mark the end of their time as our title sponsor, during which they have made a genuine

connection with fans and helped us raise the public profile of our league to new levels. Quite simply, they have been a class act.

My thanks also go to our broadcast partners Sky Sports and BBC Sport, both of whom demonstrated their commitment to all levels of the professional game through comprehensive coverage of our three divisions. This season, there has been more live coverage of the Coca-Cola Football League than ever before, including all fifteen play-off games in a dramatic end of season festival of football.

This season The Football League recorded its highest attendances for 50 years with more than 17 million fans watching matches. This is a testament to the efforts of clubs to deliver real football to real fans in towns and cities across the country and the extraordinary loyalty shown by supporters to their teams.

It therefore seems fitting that my final welcome goes to the two sets of fans that have travelled to Wembley this afternoon. Enjoy the match and enjoy next season, in whichever division you are watching your football.

# WELCOME TO WEMBLEY

The Football League and Coca-Cola wish to extend a warm welcome to the directors, management, players and fans of both Millwall and Swindon Town

**SANJAY GUHA**  
PRESIDENT  
COCA-COLA  
GREAT BRITAIN  
& IRELAND



**W**elcome to the 2010 Coca-Cola Football League 1 Play-Off Final. On behalf of everyone at Coca-Cola I'd like to welcome you to Wembley Stadium, a fitting arena for the showpiece occasion in Coca-Cola's football calendar.

The prize on offer for today's teams is sure to make the next 90 minutes a tense occasion for fans and players alike. Both Millwall and Swindon Town have performed valiantly to get this far, not only in the play-offs but in their 46 League games

prior. We wish both teams the best of luck for today's game and for next season.

This year's play-offs mark the sixth anniversary of Coca-Cola's title sponsorship of The Football League. To celebrate this milestone we have created a series of unique TV adverts celebrating the true unsung heroes at your club – both you the fans and the dedicated staff behind the scenes – without your loyal support throughout the season none of this would have been possible. The Coca-Cola adverts not only share your passion but also celebrate your role in inspiring the players on the pitch.

The adverts will be shown on Sky Sports immediately prior to kick-off on each final day and the League 1 film can also be seen just before the players take to the field. We hope you enjoy them!

Since we began our association with The Football League back in 2004 we have continuously strived to engage and celebrate with fans up and down the country.

Our first ground-breaking initiative was the Club Colours campaign, which gave each club its own Coca-Cola visual identity, and can still be

seen on the perimeter boards at each club and here today. We have also worked hard to make sure everyone has had a chance to play their part in transforming their club's fortunes. The success of the Win A Player and Buy A Player promotions showed our commitment to fans and clubs alike.

This season, we've been getting fans closer to their clubs than ever before, providing behind the scenes experiences on match days and at the training grounds of each of the teams in The Football League. We are delighted to have been able to extend this offer, providing an exclusive behind the scenes experience to lucky fans from both teams at today's Play-Off Final.

I'd like to personally thank the fans from all 72 clubs for supporting their team and embracing Coca-Cola's involvement in The Football League for the past six years.

We very much look forward to continuing our journey with all of you as we commence our new and exciting partnership with The Football League for the 2010/11 season.

So that's the talking over – now the real business on the pitch can begin. Get behind your team, raise the roof and celebrate this great occasion.





**SEP 5**

Charlton and Leeds top with 6 wins out of 6. Huddersfield 3rd, Norwich 10th

**OCT 17**

Charlton at top, but played 2 more than Leeds. MK Dons third

**DEC 5**

Leeds' lead cut to 4 points, Charlton 2nd, 4 points clear of Norwich

**JAN 16**

Leeds have 3 point lead over Norwich, who are 3 clear of Charlton

TIMELINE OF THE LEAGUE 1 CAMPAIGN

**AUG 18**

After 3 games, Colchester, Charlton and Leeds have maximum points

**OCT 3**

Leeds have 3 point lead over Charlton. Bristol Rovers 3rd and Colchester 4th

**NOV 21**

Leeds have 6 point lead over Charlton, who are 3 ahead of Huddersfield and Colchester

**JAN 2**

Leeds open up an 8 point lead over Norwich and Charlton. Colchester 4th



**2010 PLAY-OFF FINAL**





Norwich City returned to the Championship at the first time of asking by topping the table

# THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL

Dreams will be realised and dashed this afternoon as Millwall and Swindon Town target the Championship

WORDS JON COLMAN

It's never how you start, but how you finish. Not only a useful motto for the play-offs, it might also be the perfect epitaph for the 2009/10 League 1 season once it has reached its champagne-soaked climax today.

This will be remembered as the campaign when the team that was whipped 7-1 on the opening day (Norwich City) ended it as runaway champions, with the free-scoring victors on that sunny August afternoon (Colchester United) nowhere to be seen in the end-of-term reckoning.

It has also been a season when a nine-month occupation of the top six was no guarantee of any garlands in May; Charlton Athletic did not spend a single week below the play-off places but are now facing up to a second successive year in the third tier.

All the Addicks had to show for their own 48-game epic was the appreciation of neutral supporters who cherish the unique drama-and-delirium package that the play-offs provide. Their losing contest with Swindon Town was a classic of its kind and furthered the reputation of the four-team May shoot-out as a purveyor of extraordinary thrills.

Swindon and Millwall, who today jostle for a place in next season's Championship, have plotted their own paths into the promotion picture by stealth.

Kenny Jackett's Lions were more than halfway through their fixtures before they finally clawed their way into the top six.

Danny Wilson's Town were out of the blocks slightly quicker but their season's graph still

fluctuated until the onset of winter, after which their pursuit of honours gathered momentum.

Having slow-burned their way towards the national stadium from Wiltshire and South London respectively, both clubs can not only hoist themselves up a division this afternoon but also put down some roots in the Championship.

Recent history has been kind to League 1 play-off victors. In the previous five finals, ticker-tape has fallen over Scunthorpe United, Doncaster Rovers, Blackpool, Barnsley and Sheffield Wednesday.

Of that quintet, only Wednesday have since tumbled back down. With the winners' medals today therefore comes the opportunity to achieve some longevity in the division above.

Cold statistics suggest Millwall take a nominal edge into today's clash, having taken four points from the Robins in their two meetings in the regulation season; having completed their fixtures three points ahead of Wilson's men (courtesy of a 3-2 win against them on the final day) and with a goal difference figure that is twice as impressive as their opponents.

Swindon's supporters, as they make their pageant to Wembley, may reply that they have a superior record on their travels to that of their Bermondsey foes, who cannot today rely on the formidable atmosphere that is commonly created on the blue slopes of The Den.

Really, though, searching for reliable pointers towards the conclusion of today's red-versus-blue confrontation requires forensic equipment and a pack of sniffer dogs. >>

## FEB 13

Norwich 4 clear but have played 2 games more than Leeds in second place.

## MAR 20

Norwich 8 clear of Leeds, who have 4 point advantage over Charlton and Swindon. Millwall 5th

## APR 17

Leeds back into 2nd with 1 point lead over Millwall, 2 over Swindon and 3 over Charlton

## JAN 23

Norwich top on goal difference, but have played 2 games more than Leeds

## FEB 27

Norwich lead by 5 from Leeds, who are 4 clear of Charlton. Colchester 4th, Swindon 5th

## MAR 27

With 8 games to go, Norwich lead by 11 points from Leeds and Millwall, with Swindon a point behind

## 8 MAY

Leeds secure second place and promotion, 1 point ahead of Millwall, with Swindon in 4th





Mitchell and Beardsley both eyed automatic promotion when they clashed on the final day of the regular season, but were pipped by Leeds

This League 1 season has remained at the height of unpredictability from game one to 46 and beyond, as exhibited by a final afternoon when five teams – today's rivals included – jockeyed for the second automatic promotion spot that was eventually claimed by Leeds United.

Norwich, victims of that opening-day evisceration by Colchester, responded by signing up the Essex club's manager and by January Paul Lambert had dragged Delia Smith's club to first place, a position they retained with few alarms until the campaign's conclusion.

The most convincing demonstration of the Norfolk club's improvement came in January, when Lambert engineered an 11-goal swing to defeat the U's 5-0 on their own, near-waterlogged manor.

The squabble for second place, and the skirmish for play-off berths, remained absorbing throughout. Leeds spent the majority of the season in the top two but had slumped to fourth as recently as April 4, before finding their second wind.

Millwall and Swindon took their turns in the automatic spot – both aided by splendid wins at Elland Road – but couldn't quite cling on.

Charlton came to rest in fourth and Huddersfield dipped in and out of the play-off places before eventually outstripping Colchester – who crashed with a run of two wins from their last 14 games – to achieve sixth spot.

Southampton, hindered by their 10-point penalty and a sluggish start, timed their ominous

## “THE SQUABBLE FOR SECOND PLACE, AND THE SKIRMISH FOR PLAY-OFF BERTHS, WAS ABSORBING”

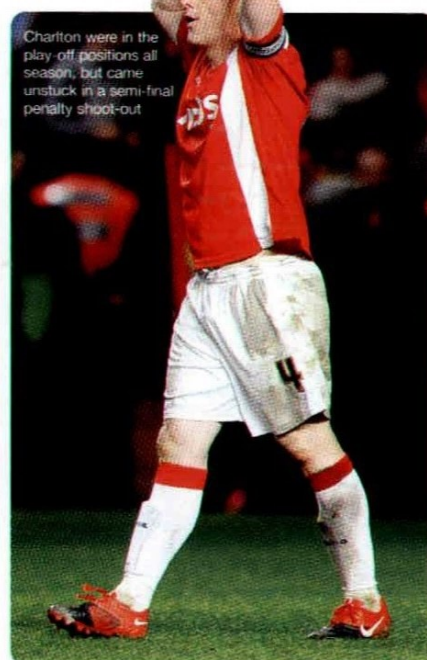
surge a fraction too late and finished seventh, ahead of Colchester, Brentford, Walsall and Bristol Rovers; the latter starting particularly strongly, before eventually tailing off into mediocrity, as did MK Dons.

With the Canaries taking flight back into the Championship, followed by Leeds at their third attempt to escape League 1, it can be argued that the prevailing theme this season has been the reassertion of big-club power in a division won earlier in the decade by smaller names such as Scunthorpe and Southend. Either Millwall or Swindon, with their top-flight past, will happily uphold that theory today.

Another piece of received wisdom which is hard to challenge is that the possession of a pair of lethal strikers is a non-negotiable if you are serious about taking promotion's spoils. This applies equally to play-off winners as to the top two.

Last season, for instance, Leicester City won the title on the fuel of 47 goals from Matty Fryatt and Steven Howard. Runners-up Peterborough United advanced with 44 from Craig Mackail-Smith and Aaron McLean.

Scunthorpe, the play-off victors, were propelled



Charlton were in the play-off positions all season, but came unstuck in a semi-final penalty shoot-out

by the 49-goal pair of Gary Hooper and Paul Hayes. This season's highest rollers in League 1 have equally prided themselves on their predatory pairs, with Norwich's Grant Holt and Chris Martin returning 53 goals and Leeds' Jermaine Beckford and Luciano Becchio contributing 48.

All of which brings us to today's most appealing narrative: a shoot-out under the Arch involving a quartet of marksmen whose personal totals for the season currently stand at 29, 20, 23 and 18 respectively.

From August 8, the day it all began, this season has defied inevitability. But there ought to be few surprises if this afternoon's defining deeds are carried out by one, or more, of Billy Paynter, Charlie Austin, Steve Morison and Neil Harris: four men who know more than most inside Wembley today about the value of finishing with a flourish.

### FINAL COCA-COLA LEAGUE 1 TABLE

	P	GD	PTS
1 Norwich City	46	42	95
2 Leeds United	46	33	86
3 Millwall	46	32	85
4 Charlton Athletic	46	23	84
5 Swindon Town	46	16	82
6 Huddersfield Town	46	26	80
7 Southampton	46	38	73
8 Colchester United	46	12	72
9 Brentford	46	3	62
10 Walsall	46	-3	62
11 Bristol Rovers	46	-11	62
12 Milton Keynes Dons	46	-8	60
13 Brighton	46	-4	59
14 Carlisle United	46	-3	58
15 Yeovil Town	46	-4	53
16 Oldham Athletic	46	-18	52
17 Leyton Orient	46	-10	51
18 Exeter City	46	-12	51
19 Tranmere Rovers	46	-27	51
20 Hartlepool United	46	-8	50
21 Gillingham	46	-16	50
22 Wycombe Wanderers	46	-20	45
23 Southend United	46	-21	43
24 Stockport County	46	-60	25



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# FULL METAL JACKETT

A combative midfielder during his playing days in the Eighties, Millwall manager Kenny Jackett is determined to change his and the club's play-off fortunes after last season's heartbreak

WORDS: PHIL SHAW, INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

**A**nother year, another Play-Off Final – or as one club chairman is wont to say, “it’s dee-jay vu all over again!” For the third time in five seasons, and second time in succession with Millwall, Kenny Jackett finds the result of 10 months’ hard graft in League 1 resting on one fraught afternoon in late May.

Neither the club, in five previous attempts, nor their manager, after three, have ever been successful in the play-offs. Jackett, however, is not a great believer in the idea that fate or fortune might decide whether or not Millwall return to the top tier of The Football League.

For the Watford-born former Wales midfielder, an arch pragmatist who learned his trade alongside Graham Taylor at his hometown club, the standard of football you produce is always the overriding factor in what a team achieves. And this year, after a mediocre run prior to Christmas in which they struggled to shrug off the frustration of losing to Scunthorpe United in last year’s Final, the quality of Millwall’s performances has reflected enormous credit on the 48-year-old Jackett’s quietly efficient style.

Never one to court popularity in the press with slick sound bites or to appease the public by making signings for the sake of it, he relies on astute judgement, a sharp eye for a bargain and the ability to polish rough diamonds on the training ground.

Last summer, for instance, he paid £130,000 for a striker in non-league football, Steve Morison of Stevenage Borough. At first Morison did not impress the denizens of The Den.

Jackett remained confident the player could bridge a two-division gap if given time to adjust.

“We needed more options,” the former Watford and Swansea City manager said. “This time last year we had Neil Harris and Gary Alexander up front but not one forward on the bench.”

It was Morison’s second time in The League, having failed to make an impact at Northampton Town, and Jackett took the flak when he struck just twice in his first 18 appearances.

Yet he arrives at Wembley with 23 goals, the



most recent setting Millwall on their way to play-off semi-final victory over Huddersfield.

Jackett further tweaked the Lions’ squad by bringing in versatile defender Jack Smith on a free transfer from Swindon Town, of all clubs; Danny Schofield, a wide midfielder, who came from Yeovil Town for a nominal fee; and loanees Liam Trotter – not from nearby Peckham as the surname might suggest, but from Ipswich Town – plus Shaun Batt from Peterborough United and Jonathan Obika of Tottenham Hotspur.

No big names, and no big earners, in other words, but once the established personnel and the new recruits began to gel, Millwall stormed up the table. Having trailed pacesetters Leeds by 21 points at the turn of the year, at one point they actually overhauled them and seized second place during a sequence which delivered 45 points from 18 matches.

Jackett cut a dignified figure after Millwall won 2-0 at Elland Road in late March, politely declining to share in the triumphalism of the raucous following from south London. He knew the pressure would come on his own team, which it did in a mini-slump of only four points from four games, and the Yorkshire side rallied just enough to clinch the runners-up spot behind Norwich City.

“It’s been a very good league this season, with strong competition,” Jackett said. “We’ll need to be at our best against Swindon because they’re a good side. I’ve got a lot of respect for what Danny Wilson has done there, and if you’re going to go up you have to beat the best.”

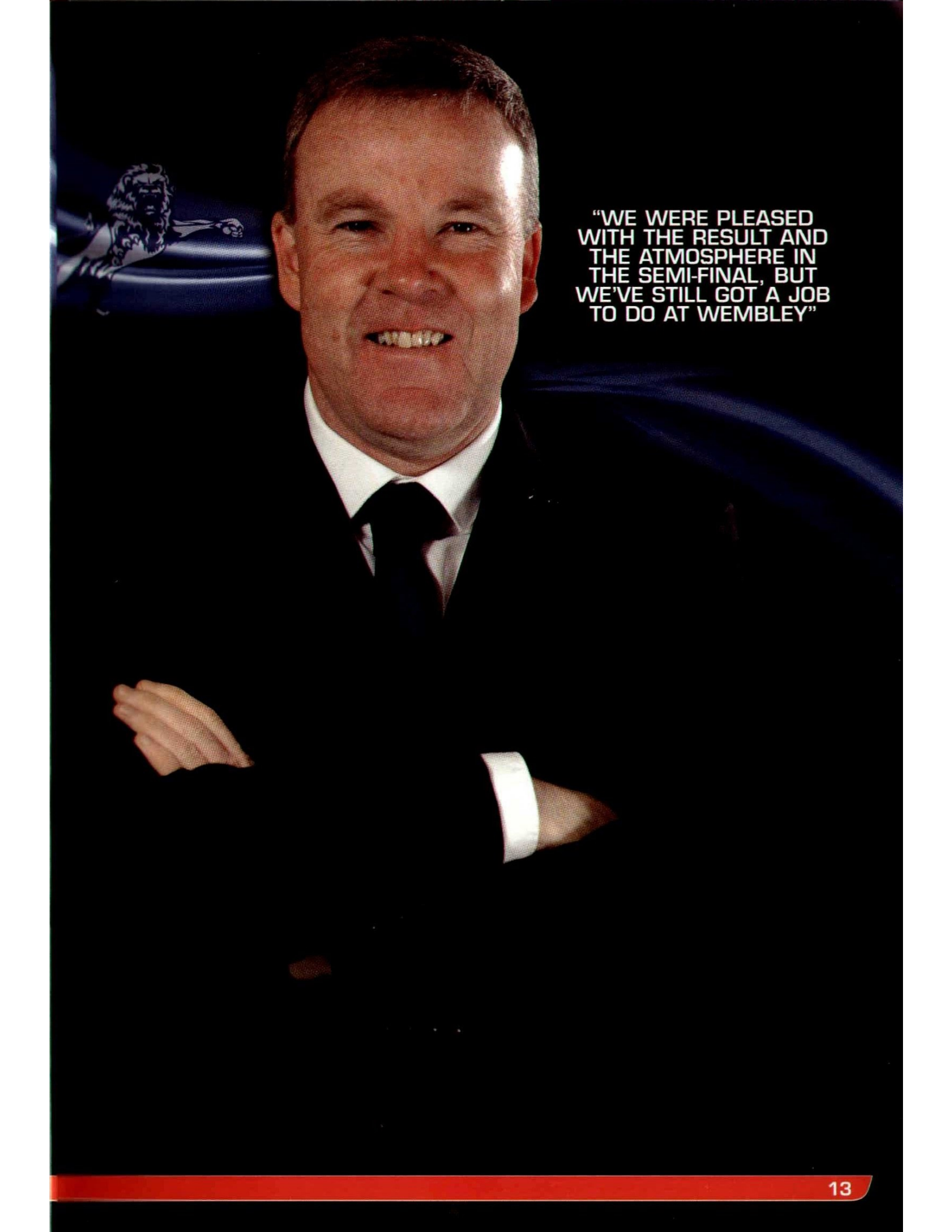
When Jackett arrived two and a half years ago, Millwall were in the League 1 relegation zone. He took his previous club, Swansea, to this Final in 2006, 12 months after leading them to automatic promotion from the fourth tier. The Swans lost on penalties to Barnsley, yet rather than appreciating how far he had taken them, a sizeable section of their supporters never forgave him for that ‘failure’ or his alleged long-ball game.

Next stop was Manchester City to serve on the coaching staff under Sven-Goran Eriksson (the second former England manager to deploy his talents after a long and productive working relationship with Taylor at Vicarage Road) before Willie Donachie’s departure from The Den brought him to London.

What he offers as a manager, according to Taylor, is not “charisma” or “celebrity”, but what he gave as the definitive utility player during Watford’s charge from the Third Division to second place in what is now the Premier League: hard work and honesty. Former Millwall chairman Jeff Burnige rates him their best manager since John Docherty took them into the top flight in 1988. The fans, too, have warmed to him – and the feeling is mutual.

“Against Huddersfield, we told the players that if you play well, it’ll bring the crowd into play, which is a big advantage for us,” Jackett said. “We were pleased with the result and the atmosphere, but we’ve still got a job to do at Wembley.”





"WE WERE PLEASED  
WITH THE RESULT AND  
THE ATMOSPHERE IN  
THE SEMI-FINAL, BUT  
WE'VE STILL GOT A JOB  
TO DO AT WEMBLEY"



# ROBINS REVIVAL

Danny Wilson has breathed new life into Swindon Town, taking them from relegation candidates to the brink of a Championship place

WORDS NICK TOWNSEND, THE SUNDAY TIMES

**F**ew would suspect Danny Wilson of possessing an astrological gift. But when he suggested, "perhaps it was written in the stars," after his Robins secured their place in this afternoon's Coca-Cola League 1 Play-Off Final, you could understand why. The semi-final defeat of Charlton Athletic, after penalties, was the 800th game of his managerial career.

Now he will finally savour the Wembley experience that hitherto, he had only enjoyed as a player. After a career of such longevity, during which he has managed in every division, this day is long overdue.

Yet, he concedes that he harboured no great confidence of such an outcome midway through the second half of that compelling second leg at The Valley. By that time, Swindon Town had lost goalkeeper David Lucas to a shoulder injury, had captain Gordon Greer sent off, and were 2-0 down on the night – though only one in arrears on aggregate.

"It really looked like it was all conspiring against us," Wilson reflected. "But what really pleased me was how those setbacks seemed to galvanise us. Yes, we rode our luck a bit at times, but in between there was some very dogged and determined defending. The players showed great courage."

Danny Ward, Town's on-loan winger from Bolton Wanderers scored to restore parity over two legs and, after extra-time, Town's quintet of penalty-takers were as composed with their spot-kicks as Wilson was on the touchline, to win the shoot-out 5-4. "We'd worked on penalties, but you can't replicate the atmosphere on the night," said Wilson.

"The lads showed great maturity. They held their nerve brilliantly to help get us here today."

A place in the Final is a prize few believed they could possibly secure after the first game of the season when Wilson's men suffered the ignominy of a 5-0 defeat by Gillingham. And certainly not on Boxing Day, 2008, when he succeeded Maurice Malpas at the County Ground. Swindon were then 20th in League 1. For the club's tenth manager in as many years, the first task was survival. But his vast experience held him in good stead.

"The remit when I arrived was just to stay in League 1. It wasn't easy. It was quite nervy before we were finally safe. After that, there were some very difficult decisions. We released about 14 players, and one or two were very unlucky, but it was an opportunity of restructuring the club, not just the squad."

Wilson's priority was the spine of the team. He brought in goalkeeper Lucas, defender Greer (who is suspended today) and midfielder Jonathan Douglas. Already at the club was striker Billy Paynter, this season's leading scorer, with 29 goals in all competitions. Later, Ward was secured from the Trotters. "When the season started, I think everyone would have just been pleased to see some progress and for us not to struggle. Thankfully, we've moved on quicker than a lot of people expected."

There is a certain correlation between what he has achieved at Swindon and his time at Barnsley, where the Wigan-born midfielder arrived in 1993 as the final staging post in an eight club, 18-year, playing career that also earned him 24 Northern Ireland caps.

The following year he took charge of the Tykes when Viv Anderson decamped

to Middlesbrough to join Bryan Robson.

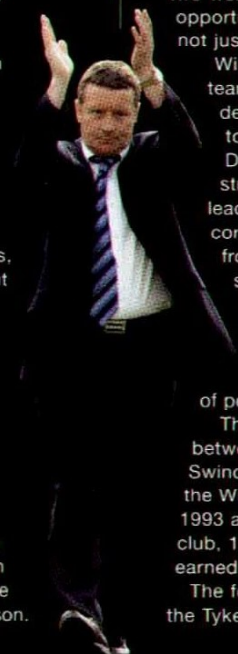
"John Dennis, the Barnsley chairman at the time, felt we were getting some momentum, and certainly some stability, and thankfully he opted for me to carry on. I owe a lot to Viv, who's still a dear friend of mine." In 1997, he led Barnsley into the top tier.

"Big money was just starting to be pumped into the Premier League and it was very difficult to break in, but we went on a good run, really came up on the rails – a little bit like we've done here to get into the play-offs. We had started out with crowds of 3,000 and that went up to 18,000 virtually each game. Momentum was gained, and the fans got their belief back. It's been pretty similar here, really."

Wilson, 50, who has also managed Sheffield Wednesday, also in the top flight, Bristol City, MK Dons, and Hartlepool United, added: "What this club has now, which it possibly hasn't had for quite a few years, is stability at the top. That's why this season there's been a lot more belief from the fans."

Though he hasn't led a team into the national stadium before, he has certainly tasted success there as a player. He was twice a League Cup winner, with Luton and Sheffield Wednesday – on the first occasion, scoring a match-saving goal against Arsenal in 1988, before the Hatters went on to defeat George Graham's Arsenal 3-2. "It was a boyhood dream come true. We were massive underdogs, and if we could emulate and beat a team in Millwall who are very much the favourites, and win promotion, that'll be a fantastic memory, too."

"Millwall are very experienced, very dogged, and Kenny Jackett always has his teams well organised. There's not many chinks in their defensive armour that you can exploit. But we've been creating chances all season, and we've got to believe we can do that in this one last game."












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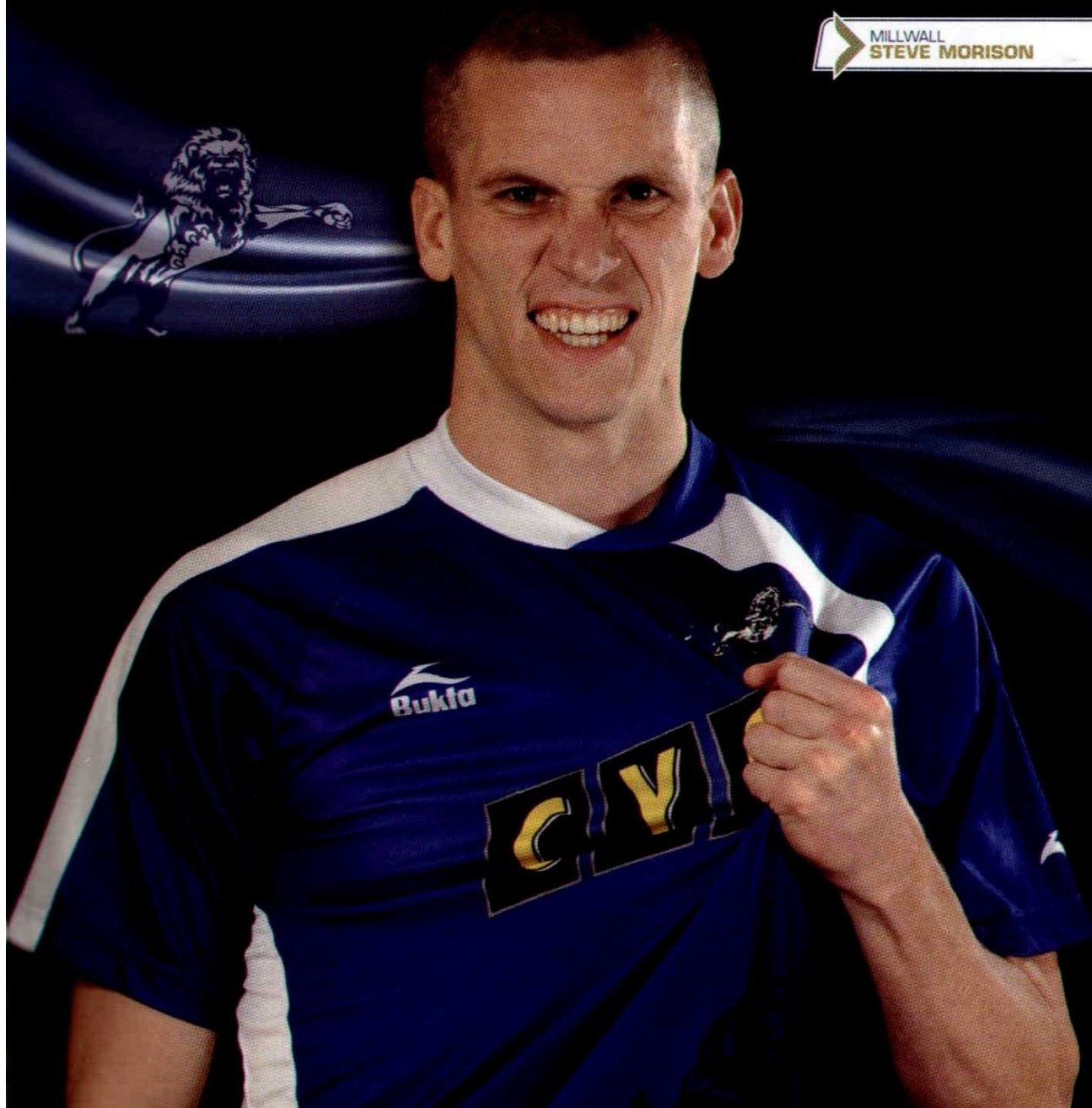
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# GOAL MACHINE

Twice a winner at Wembley Stadium with his former club Stevenage Borough, Millwall top scorer Steve Morison is looking for a rare hat-trick at the home of football

WORDS MARTIN SMITH

**S**teve Morison has been here before. In fact, he has already played twice beneath the Wembley Arch. Twice a Wembley winner; twice a Wembley goalscorer. No wonder the talk is all about third time lucky.

Morison, Millwall's top goalscorer in a whirlwind first season with the south London club, recognises his good fortune.

"Some people never get the chance to play

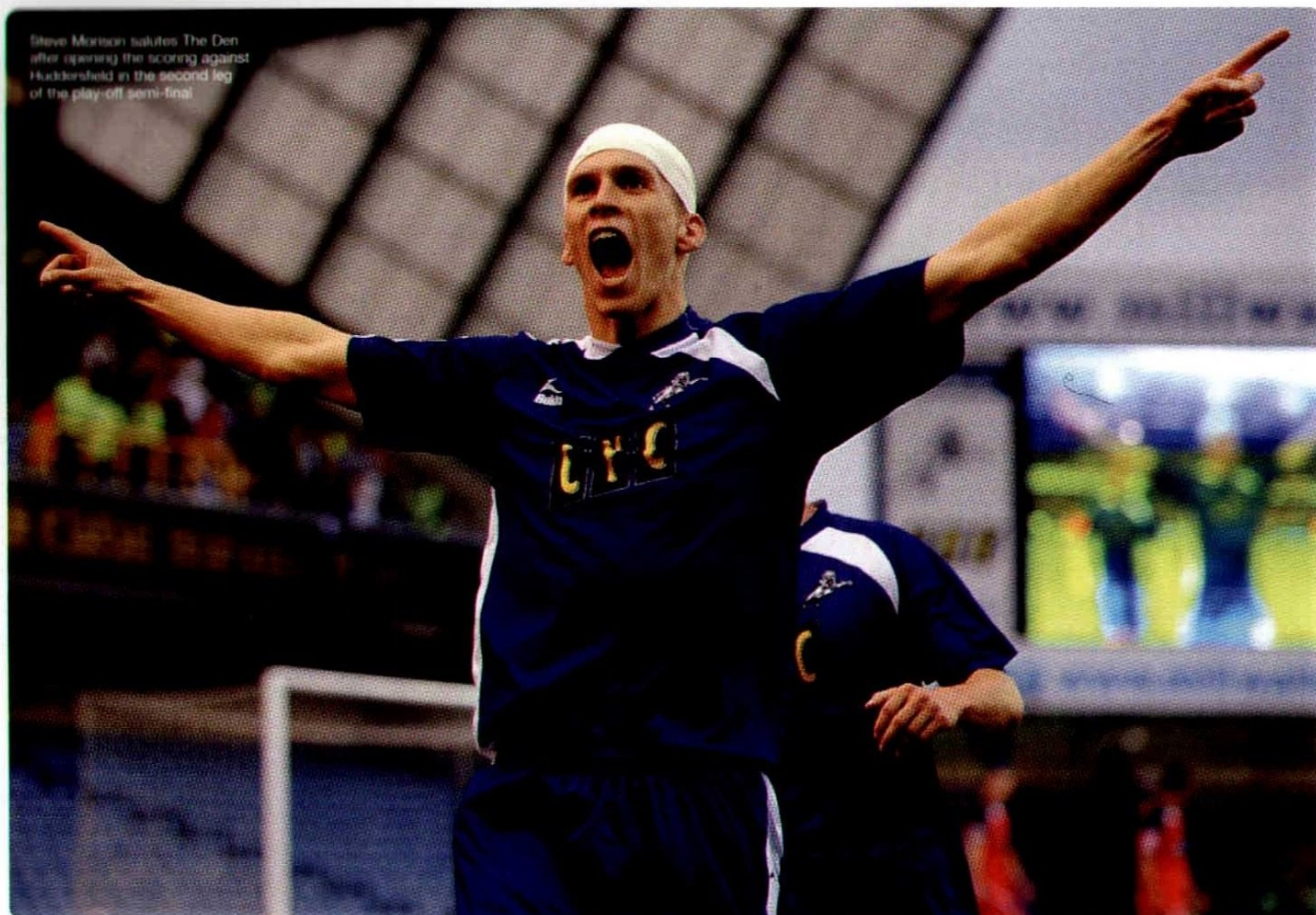
at Wembley in their whole career," he says, "and this is my third time in four years."

The 26-year-old scored the first competitive winning goal in the new stadium when his 89th-minute strike enabled Stevenage Borough to complete a remarkable second-half turnaround and beat Kidderminster Harriers 3-2 in the 2007 FA Trophy Final.

"We were 2-0 down at half-time and hadn't really turned up," he remembers. "The manager [Mark Stimson] told us to take a look at ourselves and go >>



Steve Morison salutes The Den after opening the scoring against Huddersfield in the second leg of the play-off semi-final



out and put it right. We managed an early goal and once we scored it seemed there was only one team going to win it. And that was the case."

Two years later, he was back, leading Stevenage to a second Trophy triumph, scoring the first goal as York were beaten slightly more straightforwardly, 2-0. Today, though, is "the biggest game of my career". He promises: "I'll be looking to score and we'll be looking to win."

It would cap a fairytale year since his last Wembley appearance prefaced a move to The Den. The goal he scored in the second leg of the semi-final against Huddersfield was his 23rd of the season – the sixth successive season he has passed the 20-goal mark.

It would be enough to go to a young man's head. Not Morison's, though: he knows where he has come from, and his feet are planted firmly on the ground. Five years ago, his initial foray into league football, as a precocious youngster with Northampton, ended in personal disaster.

"I did all right there as a kid and was involved in the first team quite early. But I went the wrong way about it: I thought I had made it and I hadn't. I enjoyed myself a little too much. I got released and went to Bishop's Stortford, which was the step down you sometimes have to take.

"It gave me the chance to re-evaluate things, look myself in the mirror, and say, 'You need to sort yourself out'. I did that and worked my way back up, and I'm getting my rewards now."

He is a hungrier player for dropping out of The Football League. "You realise what you don't want to be doing, and what you do want. You don't want to be working all day and training in the evening, and playing in front of 500 or 1,000 people. You want to be playing in front of a full house at The Den every week. I had to do it the hard way, wait for my break and thankfully it came."

To make ends meet, Morison worked for Shredaway. "We used to go around shredding confidential paper. I worked in the office and on the lorries – I did a range of jobs. At Stortford, we had trips where we'd go to Newport County on a Tuesday night and get back at two or three in the morning. Then you'd have to get up for work at the normal time. That's what happens in non-league; it's a totally different way of life."

Those days are behind him. Now he just wants to shed Swindon's promotion hopes.

So how much further can his scoring boots take him? "I don't put a limit on it," he says. "I think I can play at any level. I look at players in the Premier League and think I can do what they do."

His favourite goal for his new club was the one that turned around both his season and Millwall's: the 90th-minute winner against Milton Keynes Dons in early December. He had managed just two goals to that point and, like the team, was struggling. "I got the ball, turned a defender and put it under the goalkeeper." He has not looked back since.

**"THIS IS A ONE-OFF GAME AND ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN. IT'S GOING TO BE DOWN TO WHO CAN TAKE THEIR CHANCES"**

Two of his 20 league goals came against today's opponents in a dress rehearsal on the final day of the regular season. However, the 3-2 win at The Den counts for no more than the three points that enabled Millwall to finish third.

"This is a one-off game and anything can happen." To back up his argument he points out that on the same day, Stevenage – without Morison this time – were losing in another FA Trophy appearance here at Wembley.

"Stevenage were the champions of the Blue Square Premier and Barrow finished near the bottom, yet Barrow beat them. It's the same today: it doesn't matter what happened three weeks ago. They're going to give their all, we're going to give our all, and it's going to be down to who can take their chances."

Swindon would be advised to prevent the Wembley specialist in the No. 20 shirt having any chances at all.



**STEVE MORISON**

POSITION STRIKER D.O.B 29/08/1983  
2009/10 APPS 51 2009/10 GOALS 23  
SIGNED JULY 2009  
NATIONALITY ENGLISH





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# SIX

# OF THE BEST

With a long, tough League 1 season about to reach its finale this afternoon, we asked six players and managers to name their winners of the season, the only stipulation being that they could not vote for their own clubs

## DARREN BYFIELD WALSALL

### WHO HAS BEEN THE BEST PLAYER IN LEAGUE 1?

Southampton's Rickie Lambert. This season is the first time I've played against him and he is a proper player – he scores goals, holds the ball up well and he's a great target man; basically, he's got the lot and should be playing at a higher level.

### WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE SEASON?

Norwich City finished as champions so it has to be Paul Lambert. Especially in the circumstances – they weren't exactly flying when he came in, but he did a great job and to finish on top ahead of Leeds United and Charlton Athletic was no mean feat.

### WHICH WAS THE BEST TEAM PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR SIDE?

Southampton, home and away, when they beat us 5-1 and 3-1. They are the only team in the whole season who beat us up. We competed against every other side, but they were worthy winners in both games against us.

### WHO GAVE THE BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR TEAM?

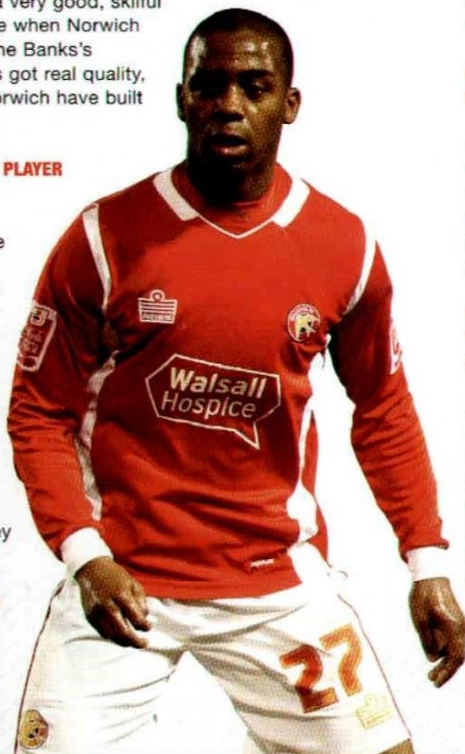
Wes Hoolahan is just a very good, skilful player and he was on fire when Norwich beat us in a 2-1 win at the Banks's Stadium in January. He's got real quality, and you can see why Norwich have built their side around him.

### WHO WAS THE BEST YOUNG PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?

Southampton's Adam Lallana. He's got genuine pace, good feet and an eye for goal – he's a fine young player with a very bright future.

### WHO HAS UNDERACHIEVED THIS SEASON AND WILL BE CONTENDERS NEXT TIME?

I'd have to go for Southampton again in this category. I know they had 10 points taken off them, but even so, I feel they could have finished higher in the table. I do think they will be one of the teams to beat next season.



## SIMON GRAYSON LEEDS UNITED

### WHO HAS BEEN THE BEST PLAYER IN LEAGUE 1?

There are a number of strong contenders but I would pick Wes Hoolahan. He gets the nod just ahead of his Norwich City team-mate Grant Holt for the quality of his delivery. When Hoolahan was missing – which wasn't very often – Norwich weren't the same team.

### WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE SEASON?

I'm going to turn to Norwich again and say Paul Lambert, because of the way they played. Norwich produced some attractive football to win the title and Paul has to take credit for that.

### WHICH WAS THE BEST TEAM PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR SIDE?

Millwall beat us 2-0 at Elland Road on a Monday night towards the end of the season and were very strong and well organised. We found them hard to break down and they were also very dangerous on the counter-attack.

### WHO GAVE THE BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR TEAM?

I'll have to stay with that game and nominate a Millwall player. It has to be Steve Morison for the way he held the ball up and worked his socks off. To round off an impressive display he also got one of the goals.

### WHO WAS THE BEST YOUNG PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?

For Charlie Austin to come from non-league and score the goals he has done for Swindon Town reflects very well on him. He looks comfortable at this level and Swindon deserve praise for picking him up.

### WHO HAS UNDERACHIEVED THIS SEASON AND WILL BE CONTENDERS NEXT TIME?

I think Southampton will feel that they slightly underachieved, although they did have the 10-point penalty. They will be disappointed not to have made the play-offs and I fancy them to be one of the favourites next season.





BIRMINGHAM TOWN  
CHARLIE AUSTIN



"I JUST TRY TO PUT  
MYSELF IN THE RIGHT  
POSITION AND PUT THE  
BALL IN THE NET. IT'S  
WHAT I'M PAID TO DO"



**CHARLIE AUSTIN**

POSITION STRIKER D.O.B 05/07/1989  
2009/10 APPS 38 2009/10 GOALS 20  
SIGNED JULY 2009  
NATIONALITY ENGLISH



2010 PLAY-OFF FINAL



# AUSTIN POWERS

Every Wembley final has an uplifting story and at Swindon Town it's striker Charlie Austin. In only a matter of months he has been catapulted from working as a bricklayer to having a genuine shot at Championship football

WORDS: CLIVE WHITE, SUNDAY EXPRESS

**T**here are times when you think every footballer should be forced to make the journey from non-league to full-time professional level – it might make for fewer big time Charlies. For Swindon's Charlie Austin, his life as a bricklayer is far too recent for him to take anything for granted. He seems to have spent the whole season pinching himself as one incredible experience has given way to another.

He sounded as though he was still in a dream after the semi-final win against Charlton Athletic: "It's just mad," he said. "To think I played... at New Milton in the first game of the season and in the last I'm going to Wembley. Unbelievable."

"Unbelievable" is his favourite word, but perhaps the only way to describe his fairytale rise to fame. Rejected by Reading as a boy he pluggled on in the Wessex League with Poole Town in the hope of one day becoming a professional footballer and then just when he had "found Friday nights and was drifting downhill," Danny Wilson, the Swindon manager, discovered him. Actually, it was his local club Bournemouth who discovered him first but because of a transfer embargo they were unable to sign him so Swindon stepped in.

Unbeknown to Wilson, the day he watched Austin, the striker had been working as a bricklayer at Basingstoke until 4.30pm and then driven for an hour to the game. Wilson saw him score twice in the first half and then left at half-time. Two days later he came in with a £160,000 offer which Poole accepted.

"We didn't know it was going to work but we felt he could do a job, so we took a punt," said Wilson, who has now signed his find on a two-and-a-half year contract. "We will hopefully progress him, educate him further in footballing terms – and get some more goals out of him!"

Since scoring two minutes into his full debut at Carlisle, it has been one success after another for the amiable 20-year-old. In fact, it started earlier than that with six goals in five reserve games, but that first one will obviously live long in his memory.

"The ball just came across from Billy [Paynter, his even more prolific partner] and I gambled, got across my man and just hit it and hoped," he said. "I knew it was in as soon as I'd hit it – I didn't even see it hit the net. I just ran away to celebrate with the boys as soon as I could. It was a dream start."

It was his prolificacy for Poole which first attracted the attention of a wider public: Forty-six goals in

46 games last season. No wonder when he failed to score for the first time in four games for Swindon he beat himself up. "I thought the fairytale was finished," he said with an endearing innocence. "But I played in the next game, against Brighton and scored

again. My life had changed from being a bricklayer to a regular goalscorer in League 1."

The puns about him laying the foundations for a good career and cementing his position in the game will probably continue for a while longer, but he's not complaining. After all, he's only just got used to the fact that he doesn't have to clean his own kit any more. As for people asking for the No 32's autograph, it still tends to prompt the same thought: "Are you sure?"

Scoring at Elland Road was a big moment for him, but probably his personal highlight of the season before today was scoring the winner at Southampton in March. "Wardy [Danny Ward] played a great ball, and I saw the keeper [Kelvin Davis] set himself, so I knew if I knocked the ball past him I'd have a decent chance," he said. "I did that and it was just a matter of rolling it in after that."

He joked with his dad that he would target 15 goals in his first season after that first one at Carlisle. When he rose like a latter-day Frank Stapleton to head the ball past Darren Randolph for Swindon's opening goal in the home game with Charlton it was his 20th of the season. He doesn't quite know how he has been able to transfer his goalscoring ability to the higher level, but one senses he doesn't want to examine it too closely lest he loses the knack.

"I don't know, people say if you're a scorer you're a scorer," he said. "I just try to put myself in the right position and put the ball in the net. It's what I'm paid to do, but the service has been great from the boys."

Needless to say, when it came to penalties at The Valley he immediately put his name forward. Unlike many teams Swindon had practised them – once. "We had one penalty each the day before the game and that was it," he said. "If you miss, you miss, there's no point taking it again. So that's what happened and we're at Wembley! Unbelievable."

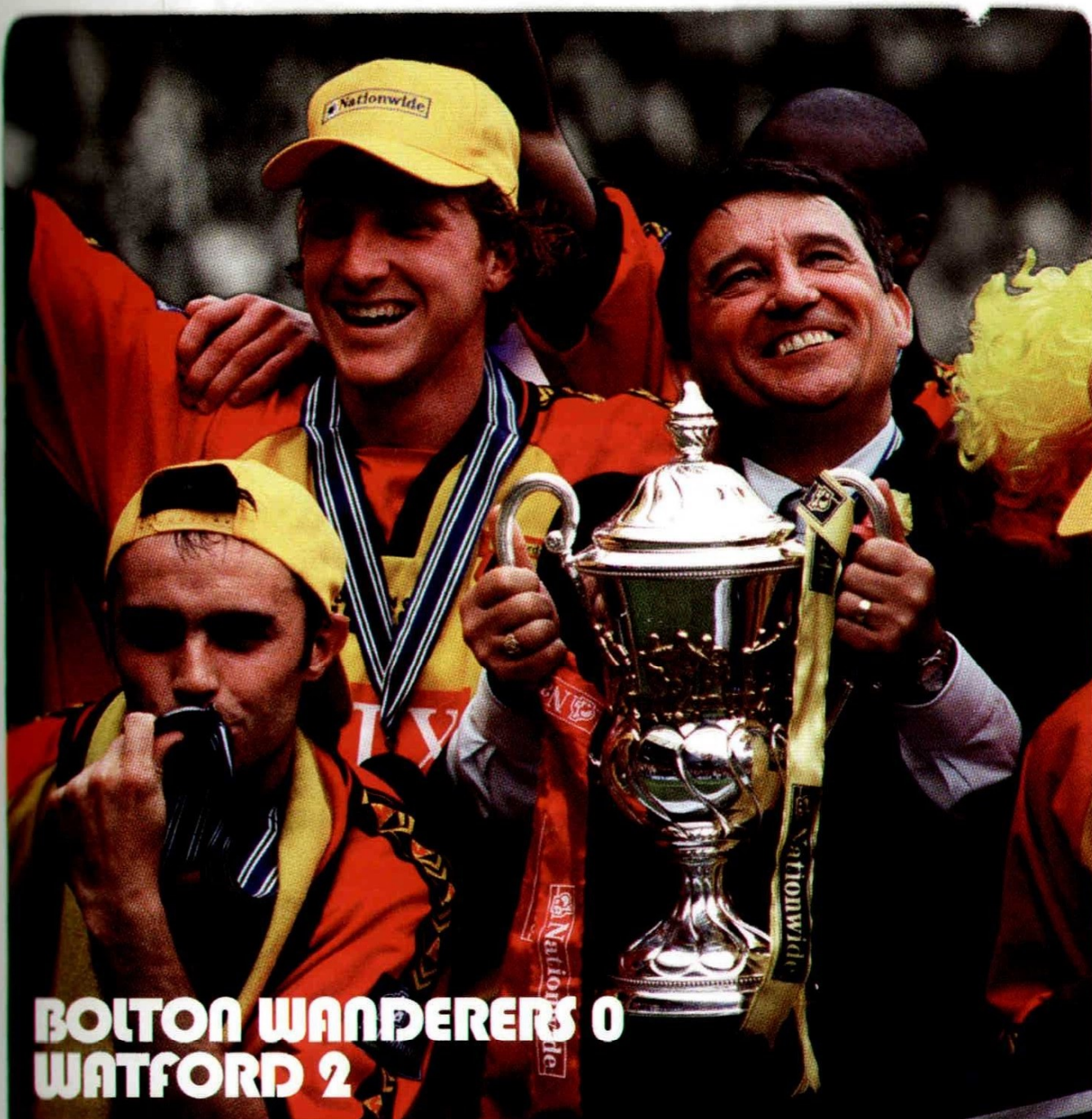




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## BOLTON WANDERERS 0 WATFORD 2

### PLAY-OFF FINAL MOMENTS GRAHAM TAYLOR, 31 MAY 1999

“ It was a truly wonderful day and the whole of Watford must have been there to witness the Division One Play-Off Final. We had come up the season before and to get into the top six was a marvellous achievement, but we felt we could go all the way. In the semi-final we got through on a penalty shoot-out against Birmingham, but Bolton probably went into the final as favourites. Eidur Gudjohnsen missed an excellent chance early on, but we managed to take the lead through Nicky Wright in the first-half. At only 1-0 though, anything can happen and when Allan Smart got a second for us with just three minutes left, it was a terrific feeling.

I signed those two lads from Carlisle and they were excellent pros. I was delighted they got the goals that sent us up and funnily enough they were both playing for a Watford legends team recently – that’s how important the win was, even if we probably weren’t ready for the Premier League. We treated the day as a cup final and everyone was determined to enjoy it, wearing the suits and everything else. Leading the team out at Wembley Stadium was such a special moment and it was certainly one of the highlights of my career. It was significant because I’d had a difficult experience with England and it was great to get back into league football and achieve something with a club I have a lot of affection for.

”





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**O**f all the players in today's nail-biting showdown, no-one can lay claim to the kind of play-off experience enjoyed by Millwall's Danny Schofield. If enjoyed is the right word, that is.

Before arriving at The Den, Danny spent a decade with Huddersfield Town – ironically this season's conquered semi-final opponents – during which time he experienced the highs and lows of just what it means to play in such a nerve-racking fixture.

Eight years ago, after Huddersfield finished sixth, Danny found himself on the losing end of the semi-finals against Brentford. Four seasons later it was heartbreak again when, having won the first leg away from home, Huddersfield were toppled by Barnsley.

In between, there was sheer elation as Danny scored one of the penalties in a 2004 shoot-out win at the Millennium Stadium that ensured promotion from the old Third Division as Mansfield Town were dispatched after a 0-0 draw.

If the Millwall players want some advice about how to prepare for their second successive Wembley Final, 12 months after being upset by Bournemouth United, they certainly know who to ask. "I hope my play-off experience will rub off against Swindon Town," said Schofield, who played such an integral part on both flanks of Millwall's midfield during the regular season.

It's a great day, as long as you win. It's such a fine line between success and failure, but everyone knows what's at stake. There was very little celebrating in the dressing room after we beat Huddersfield. I wasn't here this time last year but no one wants another heartache. This club and its fans deserve to be in the Championship."

He admits it was strange playing against his old club in the semi-final return. Ten years is a long time in football and he had to suppress any hint of mixed feelings. "I guess I'd prefer to have knocked out any other team than Huddersfield, but I'm a professional and as soon as that first whistle went, it was down to business."

Laying on the first goal in Millwall's 2-0 win was a special treat – especially after missing recent games with a calf muscle problem – but not as special as winning today. "We've been favourites since the play-offs panned out, but I know all about these one-off games. As long as we are committed and focused, we should be okay."

Incidentally, the 30-year-old began his career in the Championship, but never got a starting role. "I was on the bench and came on a couple of times when I first went to Huddersfield. I was a striker at the time, but I couldn't dislodge the main two."

Schofield, who joined the Lions on loan last September after a spell at Yeovil before agreeing a permanent deal, played against Liverpool and Chelsea while at Huddersfield. Few players on the field today have more big-match experience, yet he knows regular season consistency can be swept away in the heat of battle.

"We've had a good season and deserve to go up. There's a good squad here and a lot of competition for places. We had two tough games against Swindon in League 1 and the gaffer told us after the Huddersfield game that we were only halfway there. It's up to us now to finish the job."



# DANNY SCHOFIELD WEMBLEY WAY

Millwall's Danny Schofield has experienced the highs and lows of the play-off lottery several times and he hopes to put that knowledge to good use today

WORDS: ANDREW WARSHAW



**DANNY SCHOFIELD**  
POSITION: MIDFIELDER D.O.B: 10/04/1980  
2009/10 APPS: 41 2009/10 GOALS: 9  
SIGNED: AUGUST 2009  
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH



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# SWINDON TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



## CLUB INFORMATION

Founded: 1879  
 Nickname: **The Robins**  
 Chairman: **Andrew Fitton**  
 Ground: **The County Ground**  
 Website: [www.swindontownfc.co.uk](http://www.swindontownfc.co.uk)

### DOMESTIC HONOURS

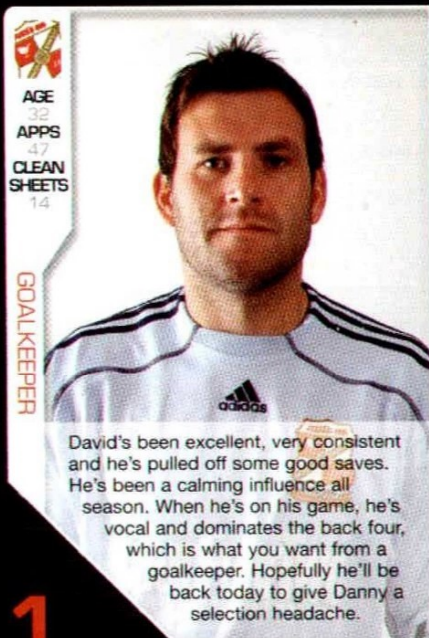
Charity Shield runners-up 1911;  
 Division Three runners-up 1963, 1969;  
 League Cup winners 1969; Division  
 Four champions 1986; Division  
 Two champions 1996

### THIS SEASON

Coca-Cola League 1: 4th  
 FA Cup: 3rd Round  
 Carling Cup: 2nd Round  
 Johnstone's Paint Trophy: Quarter-final

### SEASON REVIEW: 2009/10

A 5-0 away defeat to Gillingham on the opening day of the season could have seen panic spread throughout the County Ground, but testament to Danny Wilson's managerial ability, his side bounced back immediately with a 4-1 thumping of MK Dons in the Carling Cup, getting their season back on track. From there, the Robins went 11 games unbeaten in League 1, eventually suffering a 2-0 home defeat to Hartlepool United. The result proved a slight blip, however, as Wilson's side plugged away to maintain their place in the play-off positions, beating Leeds United 3-0 at Elland Road in April en route to finishing fourth.



AGE  
32  
APPS  
47  
CLEAN  
SHEETS  
14

GOALKEEPER

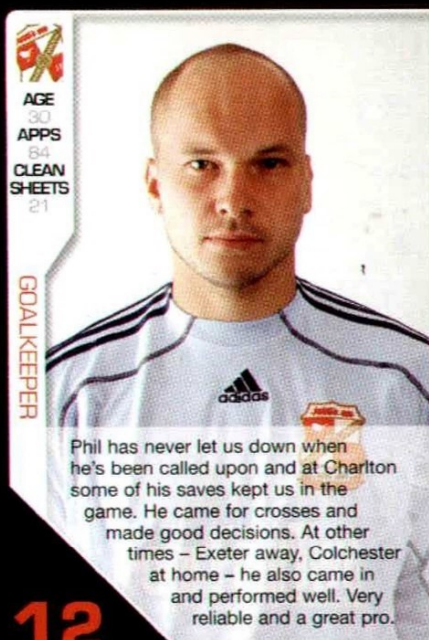
David's been excellent, very consistent and he's pulled off some good saves. He's been a calming influence all season. When he's on his game, he's vocal and dominates the back four, which is what you want from a goalkeeper. Hopefully he'll be back today to give Danny a selection headache.

**1**  
DAVID LUCAS



## PETER SHIRTLIFF

Swindon Town's assistant manager introduces today's Play-Off Final squad



AGE  
30  
APPS  
64  
CLEAN  
SHEETS  
21

GOALKEEPER

Phil has never let us down when he's been called upon and at Charlton some of his saves kept us in the game. He came for crosses and made good decisions. At other times - Exeter away, Colchester at home - he also came in and performed well. Very reliable and a great pro.

**12**  
PHIL SMITH



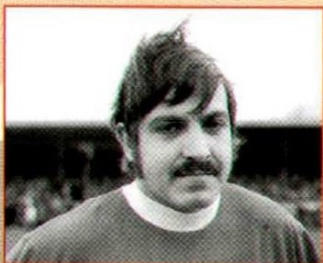
AGE  
26  
APPS  
45  
GOALS  
3

DEFENDER

He's got better as the season's gone on and has brought something different to the team in terms of his pace and aerial ability - his all-round game is very strong. Scottie has shown a level of ability that could definitely suit a higher level - I can't give him any greater praise than that.

**2**  
SCOTT CUTHBERT





## SWINDON TOWN LEGEND: DON ROGERS

Seen by many as the most exciting player to have ever pulled on a Swindon Town shirt, Rogers made his first-team debut against Southend United aged just 17. A skilful winger, he was regularly top scorer for the Robins and his crowning moment came in the 1969 League Cup Final when he scored the two extra-time goals for Swindon in their 3-1 win over Arsenal. He spent a few years at Crystal Palace and QPR, but returned to Swindon to finish his career in 1977. In over 400 appearances for the Robins he scored 147 times and now runs a sports shop in the town.

AGE  
23  
APPS  
60  
GOALS  
1

DEFENDER



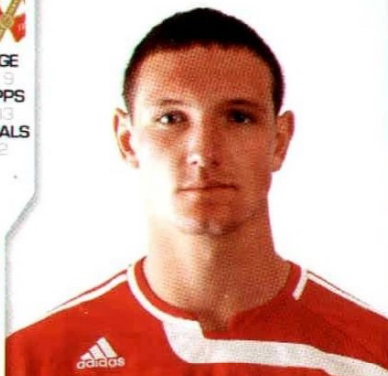
Alan's given us a different outlook on the left because he's very strong in possession of the ball. He gives us quality with his range of passing and crossing ability, as we saw in the first leg against Charlton. He's done well defensively and he boasts accuracy from dead-ball situations.

**3**

ALAN SHEEHAN

AGE  
19  
APPS  
33  
GOALS  
2

DEFENDER



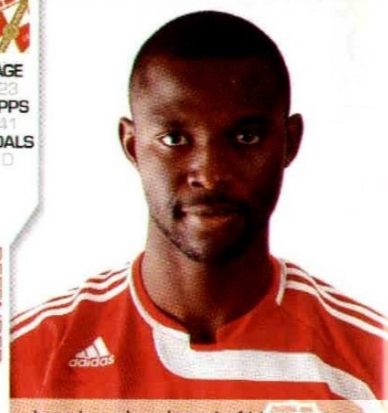
He scored the winner against Southampton in a 1-0 win earlier in the season, but lost his form a little bit. Greer and Cuthbert formed a strong partnership and he found it difficult to get back in the team. He went on loan and progressed in terms of his match fitness but hasn't had the opportunities.

**14**

SEAN MORRISON

AGE  
23  
APPS  
41  
GOALS  
0

DEFENDER



Lecs has played most of his games at left-back for us this season, but looks more comfortable in the centre. When asked to play on the left he's acquitted himself well, but I think he has a good future in the middle. It looks like it will be between him and Sean to fill in for Gordon today.

**19**

LESCINEL JEAN-FRANCOIS

AGE  
29  
APPS  
70  
GOALS  
0

DEFENDER



It's a great shame Gordon can't play and I'm really disappointed for him. Football can be a cruel game at times. He's been excellent all season, but unfortunately his red card at Charlton means he won't be able to contribute today. Has led by example all season and is still improving.

**6**

GORDON GREER

AGE  
28  
APPS  
26  
GOALS  
0

DEFENDER



Kevin did so well when he came on at Charlton and showed he can take a penalty! He has played well all season and earned himself a new contract. He gives us more going forward on the right and he's happy to bomb on. At 6ft 2in, he's certainly a presence anywhere on the pitch.

**15**

KEVIN AMANKWAH

AGE  
21  
APPS  
14  
GOALS  
0

DEFENDER




For a young lad, Stephen has a calm head on his shoulders. He has pace, picks a pass and while he's got good ability, he will get better. He's improved as a result of coming to us on loan from Liverpool and playing first-team football and as he fills out and gets stronger, he will improve again.

**21**

STEPHEN DARRY





  
**4**
  
**JONATHAN DOUGLAS**

AGE 23  
 APPS 103  
 GOALS 0

MIDFIELDER


The Supporters' Player of the Year, every aspect of his game has been superb. If he had reason to be disappointed about anything, it's that he hasn't scored. Maybe it's written in the stars that he'll get one today. He'll admit he's missed some decent chances, but keepers have pulled off great saves to deny him.


  
**8**
  
**CRAIG EASTON**

AGE 31  
 APPS 82  
 GOALS 8

MIDFIELDER


A great pro who keeps himself very fit, Craig is a valuable player to have at the club. I imagine he'll be able to play into his late 30s, no question. Craig's an important squad member and great to have around because you always know what you're going to get: a high level of performance.


  
**18**
  
**ALAN O'BRIEN**

AGE 25  
 APPS 13  
 GOALS 0

MIDFIELDER

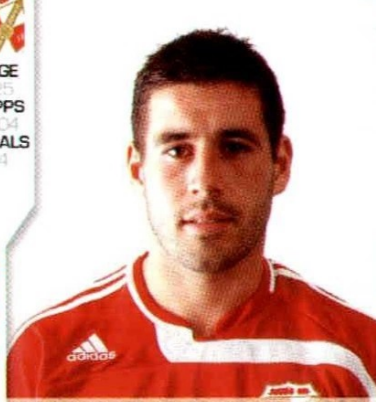
I feel sorry for Alan because he's had a desperate season and I hope that's behind him now. On his day, with his pace and crossing ability, he's a danger and a good finisher too. You can see the Wembley pitch suiting him - I wouldn't want to be a defender chasing after him today!


  
**7**
  
**JOON-PAUL MCGOVERN**

AGE 25  
 APPS 104  
 GOALS 4

MIDFIELDER


One word: consistent. His level of performance has been magnificent and his quality on the ball showed when he made the goal at Charlton, one of his many assists this term. Like Dougie, he's been unlucky in front of goal this year. Has great fitness levels and has worked very hard this season.


  
**10**
  
**MICHAEL TIMLIN**

AGE 25  
 APPS 104  
 GOALS 4

MIDFIELDER

Whether he's started or come on as a sub, he always gives you a performance at a consistent level. I can recall several games where he's come on and upped the energy levels, which every team needs sometimes. The good thing is that Michael can play anywhere along the midfield.


  
**30**
  
**SIMON FERRY**

AGE 22  
 APPS 25  
 GOALS 2

MIDFIELDER

Simon came down on loan from Celtic at the start of the season and we put him straight in the team. The pace was too much for him at first, but he's become fitter, stronger and he's adapted to this level. An intelligent player who can pick a pass - he's been superb alongside Johnny Douglas.

### SWINDON TOWN LEGEND: SHAUN TAYLOR

Signed from Exeter City for £200,000 in 1991, Shaun Taylor instantly forged a fearsome defensive partnership with Colin Calderwood, and while not blessed with great skill or pace, he made up for it with total commitment. Known for wearing a gumshield, he regularly left the pitch bloodied and bruised, helping the Robins win promotion to the Premier League in 1992, scoring in the Play-Off Final. He captained the club in the top-flight and remained at the County Ground as they suffered two consecutive relegations. He finished his career with the club on a high, though, leading Swindon to the Second Division title in 1995.







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# **Play-off semi-final (first leg):** **Swindon Town 2-1 Charlton Athletic**

Swindon Town held the narrowest of leads in their League 1 play-off semi-final first leg after Charlie Austin and Danny Ward scored second-half goals leaving Charlton Athletic with plenty of work to do for the return at The Valley.

Although Deon Burton pulled one back for Charlton, the Robins finished the game feeling they should have had a two-goal advantage going into the second leg when Vincent Pericard directed his header against the foot of the post at the death.

Swindon had enjoyed the best of the first half exchanges, peppering the Charlton goal with both Austin and Ward guilty of missing chances.

The former had two great chances to open the scoring, seeing his headers palmed away by keeper Darren Randolph and Ward, on loan from Bolton Wanderers, blazed an effort across the goal after being set free by Alan Sheehan.

After the break, Charlton captain Nicky Bailey went close, his superb free-kick coming off the post, but it was the Robins who deservedly made the breakthrough with Ward heading home a Sheehan cross after 52 minutes to set the Country Ground alight.

Only eight minutes later Ward doubled the lead with a low shot past Randolph. Although Burton replied for the Addicks five minutes later, he missed a gilt-edged chance moments later to level the scores, which he would come to rue as the tie wore on.

Although there was still time for chances at both ends, the game finished 2-1, leaving proceedings finely balanced as Swindon Town stood on the brink of reaching their first Play-Off Final in 17 years.



## **SWINDON TOWN LEGEND:** **JAN ÅGE FJØRTOFT**

'Jan the man' as he was christened by supporters, joined Swindon Town in 1993 from Rapid Vienna for £500,000 following their promotion to the top flight. Already an experienced marksman, his Premier League return was modest, but his prodigious workrate and skill meant he was a huge hit with the fans. Famous for his fly-past salute celebration, Fjørtoft really hit his straps the following year in Division One, scoring 25 goals as he helped Swindon reach the League Cup semi-finals, notably scoring a hat-trick against Charlton Athletic. He later joined Middlesbrough for £1.5 million.

AGE  
28  
APPS  
138  
GOALS  
27

MIDFIELDER

Mark has performed well when he's played. He's got pace and is a tough player - he springs back up when he gets knocked down. Has great potential and was superb for us in the away win at Southampton in March.

Nothing gets him down - he just gets on with the job.

**25**  
**MARK MARSHALL**

AGE  
18  
APPS  
8  
GOALS  
0

STRIKER

Frank hasn't played many games at this level and I think the speed of it surprised him. He played a few times wide left on loan at West Brom, but he wants to play as a centre forward. He's got pace to burn and it's a question of whether he can use his attributes to become even more effective.

**9**  
**FRANK NOUBLE**

AGE  
27  
APPS  
15  
GOALS  
0

STRIKER

When he's on form and feeling confident, Vincent's a real handful. He's had injury niggles since joining us, but when he came on against Charlton in the first leg you saw a glimpse of what he can do and he caused them problems. He's a big-game player, so it wouldn't surprise me if he played a part today.

**5**  
**VINCENT PERICARD**





**Play-off semi-final (second leg):**  
**Charlton Athletic 2-1 Swindon Town**  
*(2-2 on aggregate, Swindon win 5-4 on penalties)*

Swindon Town won a dramatic penalty shoot-out to snatch victory and seal a place in the League 1 Play-Off Final at Wembley Stadium.

The odd one out in the spot-kicks was Addicks skipper Nick Bailey, who was heartbroken after missing the only penalty.

The night started in somewhat dramatic fashion for Swindon Town as goalkeeper David Lucas dislocated his shoulder in the first minute, leaving Phil Smith to deputise, making a number of fine saves.

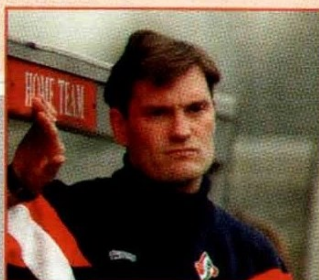
Both sides had been profligate throughout the tie, wasting several goal-scoring opportunities, with the woodwork saving the Robins on several occasions and substitute goalkeeper Phil Smith making several important saves.

The Addicks opened the scoring through Swindon's Simon Ferry, who inadvertently hooked into his own net and they doubled their lead before the break when David Mooney rifled the ball past Smith.

The gloom darkened for Swindon when skipper Gordon Greer was shown red for a dangerous tackle on Deon Burton, however, against the odds they managed to level the tie only seven minutes later through a cute finish by Daniel Ward to set up a grandstand finish. As the tie drifted into injury time at 3-3, the Addicks were also reduced to 10-men as Miguel Angel Llera dragged Charlie Austin to ground.

In extra-time the Addicks had the best of the exchanges but they were still unable to get the all-important goal, leaving the game to go to penalties, where Swindon's 100 per cent record took them to Wembley.

"We're at Wembley on merit and no-one can take it away from us," said Danny Wilson.



**SWINDON TOWN LEGEND: GLENN HODDLE**

Feted as one of the Robins' most charismatic and talented managers, Hoddle arrived at Swindon Town from AS Monaco in the twilight of his playing career. When he arrived, the club were struggling in Division Two, but Hoddle steadied the ship, preventing Swindon slipping into the third tier and they improved during his second season, finishing ninth. The following campaign saw Swindon beat Leicester City 4-3 in the play-offs to reach the Premier League for the first time. Hoddle was in demand as a coach, though, and joined Chelsea shortly after helping the Robins win promotion, and later took England to the 1998 World Cup.

AGE  
25  
APPS  
132  
GOALS  
50

STRIKER

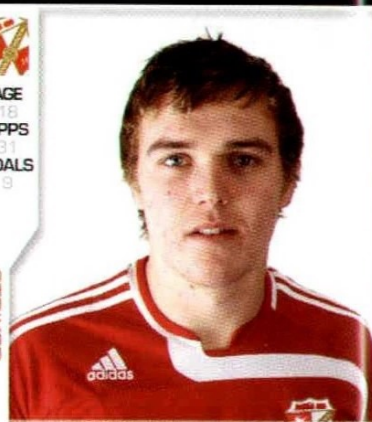


Billy's had an excellent season. When he was out of the side for a bit he got his head down, came back in and he's gone from there. He is a good pro, is strong, and we all know how well he can finish as his goal tally shows. A big-game player - he could cause Millwall major problems today.

**7**  
**BILLY PAYNTER**

AGE  
18  
APPS  
31  
GOALS  
9

STRIKER



Wardy's another player who has improved as the season's gone on. He's confident and he can play in several positions and is a threat wherever he plays. He can finish, is strong on the ball and all-round has a lot going for him. Bolton made a good decision to let him come to us on loan.

**24**  
**DANNY WARD**

AGE  
20  
APPS  
25  
GOALS  
20

STRIKER



Danny gave Charlie his first start at Carlisle in October, he scored after two minutes and hasn't looked back. He's really confident and his awareness is getting better. Not so long ago he was getting up at 5am to lay bricks with his dad. This is a totally different environment but he's taken to it with ease.

**32**  
**CHARLIE AUSTIN**



40  
OYSTER PERPETUAL  
SUBMARINER DATE  
IN YELLOW ROLEXOR  
MM



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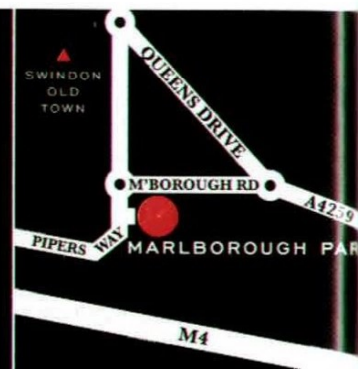
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# LIONS FULL OF PRIDE

Hartlepool United manager Chris Turner outlines the tactical strengths that Kenny Jackett's Millwall side will employ at Wembley this afternoon

INTERVIEW: MEL HENDERSON

**M**illwall's victory over Huddersfield Town in the play-off semi-final was not only down to the players' hard work, but also the tactical nous of Kenny Jackett, who pinpointed the main opposition threat and nullified it. Jordan Rhodes and Lee Novak had scored 37 goals between them, but the fact that Millwall kept two clean sheets was a massive factor in booking their Wembley return.

In the first leg, Kenny's aim was clearly to shut off the supply line to the Huddersfield front men. He made sure wingers Anthony Pilkington and Gary Roberts were tightly marked and it worked a treat. In the return it was all about Millwall's power and strength, and closing down their opponents while playing at a great tempo.

Huddersfield are capable of beating anyone, so for Millwall to triumph without conceding a goal was a tremendous achievement. Their organisation was superb and they restricted Huddersfield from creating many chances, so I will not be surprised if they adopt similar tactics against a Swindon Town side renowned for their attractive, attacking football.

For Rhodes and Novak, read Paynter and Austin, so Kenny will be looking for his central defenders, Paul Robinson and Darren Ward (below), to once again rise to the occasion. Skipper Robinson has come through the system at Millwall, which has given him a real feeling for the club, and he shows a tremendous spirit every time he plays, while Ward has bags of experience and a lot of it gained at a higher level.

Millwall are more direct in that they will often hit the front and play from there, but that is not a criticism. They can vary it and I have seen them totally dominate teams with their football in the opposition half. One of the key aspects of their play is Steve Morison's ability to get in behind defences. He works tirelessly and is full of running, while alongside him Neil Harris is one of the game's top professionals. He also works his socks off for the team and his intelligence, allied to his awareness, are great attributes. It was also a clever

ploy to play Danny Schofield against his former club Huddersfield in the semi-final second leg. He's good on the ball, as well as having the knack of popping up to score, so he's an obvious threat.

Millwall have plenty of energy in midfield, with Jimmy Abdou and Liam Trotter prepared to do a lot of the donkey work.

Again, though, they are not one-dimensional. They can cope physically, but they can also play and pass. Scott Barron has a tremendous left foot and can go past people to deliver the ball into the front men, while his background as a left-back also means he can get his foot in and make vital tackles.

The full-backs, Jack Smith and Tony Craig, were on top of their game in both legs of the semi-final. Huddersfield's wingers like to swap from left to right but they had no joy on either flank against these two. They are strong and have a no-nonsense approach to their defending, while also being comfortable enough to bring the ball forward.★







## CREWE ALEXANDRA 1 YORK CITY 1

(YORK WIN 5-3 ON PENALTIES)

### PLAY-OFF FINAL MOMENTS

## DEAN KIELY, 29 MAY 1993

“ I left Coventry in 1990 because York City gave me the chance to play first-team football and to have the opportunity of moving up a division via the Division Three Play-Off Final was huge for us. It was the old Wembley, Twin Towers, the chance of playing higher up the League and the monetary rewards that brings as well as the satisfaction of winning something.

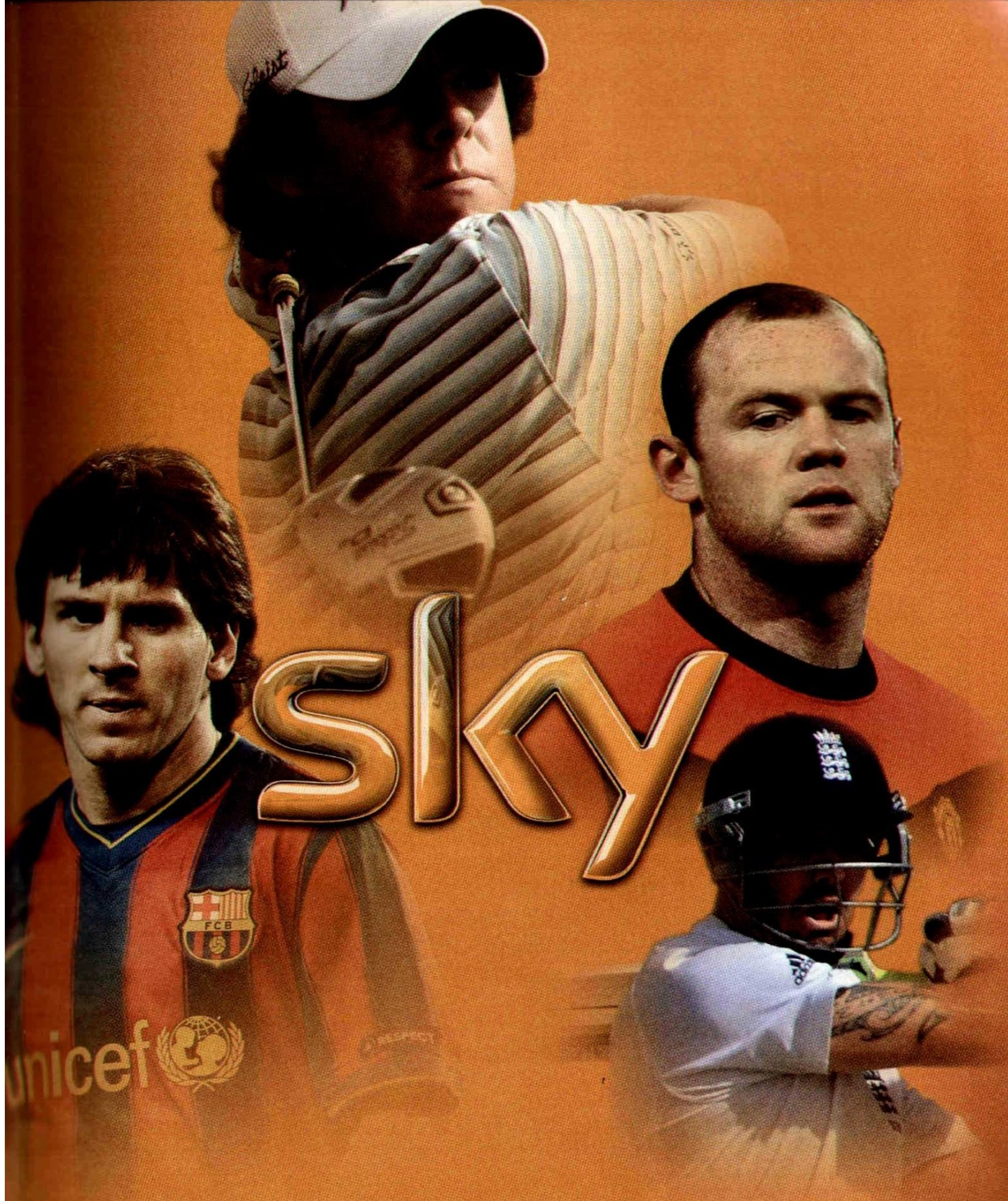
As a contest it was like a game of chess. Nobody wanted to give anything away, it was a hot day and there were very few chances. At halfway I remember thinking I'd had nothing to do and told myself to stay concentrated. It left me drained in that respect because you know

you're only one set-piece or counter-attack away from being tested. It was nerve-wracking – 40-odd matches came down to that one game. It was 1-1 at the end of extra-time and then it was on to penalties. I knew I had to do my job but it wasn't easy because for long periods I had little to do.

I saved Gareth Whalley's attempt, plunging low to my left. As a goalkeeper you want to be saving at least one of the five penalties and it helped us win the shoot-out 5-3. I didn't really take in the whole Wembley experience at the time but as your career goes on you appreciate what a landmark it is. It remains one of the proudest achievements of my career.

”





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# FEELING THE HEAT

After two nail-biting games to make it to Wembley, Sky Sports experts Scott Minto, Andy Hinchcliffe and Garry Birtles are eagerly anticipating today's showdown. Here is their play-off diary from the semi-finals

INTERVIEWS: GRAHAME LLOYD



Swindon Town's goalscorer Charlie Austin caught Scott Minto's eye during the play-off first leg at The County Ground

## FRIDAY MAY 14 SWINDON TOWN 2 CHARLTON ATHLETIC 1

SM: I spent seven years with Charlton at the start of my career and obviously wanted them to go through but I'm employed by Sky to call it as I see it and I pretty much did that.

Peter Shirtliff, assistant to Danny Wilson at Swindon, was Charlton's captain and centre-half when I made my debut at 17. He was very good to me and always made sure I was OK – on and off the pitch. Peter loves the play-offs – he scored both the extra-time goals against Leeds that kept Charlton in the old First Division in 1987 – and before the game he was pretty relaxed, even though on-fire striker Billy Paynter was missing through injury.

I was working alongside Martin Tyler and we had a good bit of banter. When Scott Wagstaff came on, Martin said he was the first person to win successive Player of the Season awards at Charlton since I did back in 1989/90. What do you say to a stat like that? I could have replied with something like 'nice of you to mention it Martin' but I kept quiet. In the game I was particularly impressed with Charlie Austin, his general hold-up play and the way he looked after himself caught the eye.



## SATURDAY MAY 15 HUDDERSFIELD TOWN 0 MILLWALL 0

AH: Huddersfield Town will always have special memories for me because I was in the Manchester City team which beat them 10-1 in 1987 when three players – Paul Stewart, Tony Adcock and David White – scored hat-tricks. I'd never been to the Galpharm Stadium before and the crowd generated a brilliant atmosphere on the day. Because it's a newish ground, the media facilities are great with the gantry perfectly positioned.

It was lovely and sunny for the lunchtime start but then, typical Yorkshire, the weather changed, the wind started to whistle across the gantry so on went my fleece and I had to pin down my notes. If the notes go, you're so high up you'll never get them back.

The main incidents in a fairly dull and conservative match were Millwall's two penalty appeals. I've never seen such blatant penalties – Peter Clarke's handball in the first half and a trip by Clarke on Scott Barron in the second. It was amazing – the referee was well positioned but missed them both.



Huddersfield Town's Peter Clarke rises above Millwall's Gary Alexander in the cagey play-off first leg at the Galpharm

## MONDAY MAY 17 CHARLTON ATHLETIC 2 SWINDON TOWN 1

(3-3 ON AGGREGATE, SWINDON TOWN WIN 5-4 ON PENALTIES)

GB: I left home at midday for the long trek to south-east London and before the start I chatted to both Phil Parkinson and my former Nottingham Forest team-mate Danny Wilson. When we met he grabbed me in a rather sensitive place – like Brian Clough used to! Danny hasn't changed, he was always a great lad, and it showed he was nice and relaxed.

The game had everything – Swindon losing their keeper in the first minute, three goals, including an own goal, two sendings-off, extra-

time and penalties. It was an absolute delight to be there and I said in commentary that whatever happened, the two teams deserved a standing ovation for the effort and desire they'd shown.

The penalties were quality – not one was saved and only Nicky Bailey missed the target. Full credit to Stephen Darby – apparently, he'd missed a couple in training but was still prepared to take the winning kick.

For once, the outfield players, rather than the keepers, were the heroes.

I shot straight off home after the game and got back to Nottingham at 1.30am, absolutely shattered.



Rocking Robins. Swindon Town make it through on penalties



Goalscorer Steve Morison is leapt upon by Scott Barron to begin the celebrations at The Den

## TUESDAY MAY 18 MILLWALL 2 HUDDERSFIELD TOWN 0

(MILLWALL WIN 2-0 ON AGGREGATE)

AH: I travelled down from Manchester on the midday train and arrived at The Den at about four o'clock. As a player you're ferried to and from hotels and grounds by coach and you never actually get a feel for the communities in which clubs are based. But since working for Sky I have found it interesting to catch trains and tubes and walk to grounds to get more of a flavour of the local area. I caught up with Martin Keown, who I used to change next to in the Everton dressing room, and Dion Dublin, the pundit in the Sky studio. I'd not seen him face to face, apart from on the pitch, since we were on the plane coming back from

preparing for France '98 after Glenn Hoddle left us out of his final England squad with, among others, Paul Gascoigne. The first thing we both said to each other was, 'I can't believe it's 12 years since we last met!' The home crowd were very vocal and passionate – they really were Millwall's 12th man. Their players made it hard for Huddersfield on the pitch and their fans added to this by creating a lot of noise. After scoring more than 100 goals this season, Huddersfield's open and attacking style seemed to get lost – to be replaced by long balls. Despite the understandable euphoria over Millwall's deserved win, manager Kenny Jackett insisted the job was only half done.

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# OF THE BEST

Two more Coca-Cola League 1 protagonists continue our review of the 2009/10 campaign

## **WES HOOLAHAN** NORWICH CITY

### **WHO HAS BEEN THE BEST PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?**

Rickie Lambert at Southampton gets 25-30 goals a season and strikes the ball so well – he's a complete striker. He could definitely play at a higher level; he will always get you goals.

### **WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE SEASON?**

Swindon Town's Danny Wilson has done brilliantly. They were down at the bottom last year but they have done very well this season. We played them at their place towards the end of the season and I thought they were excellent. The manager has got them well organised. Nobody expected them to be challenging for promotion.

### **WHICH WAS THE BEST TEAM PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR SIDE?**

Millwall were very strong when we played them at The Den. They had a game plan against us and won 2-1, even though we were flying at the time and were on a long, unbeaten run. They were solid all over the pitch and were a very strong, powerful unit.

### **WHO GAVE THE BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR TEAM?**

I played with the Leeds United midfielder Robert Snodgrass at Livingston and he is an excellent player, very good on the ball. He could step up to a higher level and in our game at Carrow Road in March, he was very impressive.

### **WHO WAS THE BEST YOUNG PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?**

Jack Payne really caught my eye. He was outstanding at right-back when we played Gillingham a few weeks ago. He's only 18 but he was very, very good and could be one to watch. He was quick, confident on the ball and didn't look out of his depth, despite being so young.

### **WHO HAS UNDERACHIEVED THIS SEASON AND WILL BE CONTENDERS NEXT TIME?**

Colchester United have been up there all season – they've got a decent manager and a talented squad so they will pretty disappointed that they have fallen away after starting so well. MK Dons struggled at the end of the season and they should also do better next season.

## **KELVIN DAVIS** SOUTHAMPTON

### **WHO HAS BEEN THE BEST PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?**

If I can't vote for my team-mate Rickie Lambert who has been exceptional this season I'd go for Grant Holt at Norwich City. He has banged in goals all season to keep their promotion push on track and, along with Rickie, must be the best buy of the League 1 season.

### **WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE SEASON?**

Paul Lambert has done a fantastic job at Norwich. They were on a real low after losing 7-1 to his own Colchester United side on the opening day of the season and he picked them up and moulded them into the best team in the division.

### **WHICH WAS THE BEST TEAM PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR SIDE?**

Swindon Town were excellent at St Mary's Stadium in March when they beat us 1-0 with a great tactical game plan and brilliant winning goal. We were flying at the time and edging towards the play-offs but they made life very difficult for us.

### **WHO GAVE THE BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR TEAM?**

I'm going to go right back to August and name Huddersfield Town's Jordan Rhodes who scored two goals against us in a 3-1 win. Huddersfield were excellent all-round that afternoon and it was a sign of how far we had progressed when we beat them 5-0 in the reverse fixture in March.

### **WHO WAS THE BEST YOUNG PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?**

I'm going to nominate Rhodes for this one as well. A lot of people were surprised when Roy Keane let him leave my old club Ipswich last summer and they could probably have done with him this season. Aside from his excellent display against us, he scored on a consistent basis and he is still at an age where he will get better.

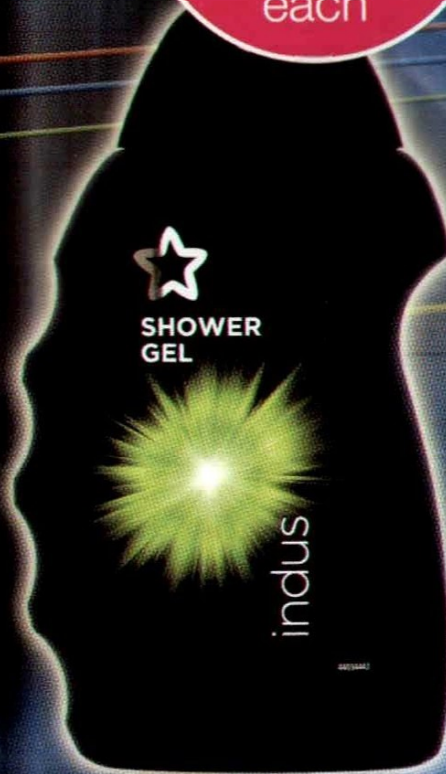
### **WHO HAS UNDERACHIEVED THIS SEASON AND WILL BE CONTENDERS NEXT TIME?**

That's a tough one because most of the sides who were expected to do well in League 1 have lived up to their billing, so my team to watch in this division next season is Notts County. It would not surprise me to see challenging for a top six finish.





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# HOPE JON-PAUL

Swindon Town midfielder Jon-Paul McGovern isn't praying for divine intervention today, just putting in a performance that can clinch promotion

WORDS CLIVE WHITE SUNDAY EXPRESS

**J**on-Paul McGovern was a key member of the Sheffield Wednesday side that gained promotion from the play-offs in 2004/05 – but according to the Glaswegian that bit of experience counts for nothing. "The games are so competitive and so different that it doesn't matter if you've played in five play-offs or one, they're cup games," he explained. "It's all about who plays well on the day."

And on the day of the second leg of the semi-final against Charlton, he and his team-mates played well – surprisingly well in the circumstances. Swindon never stopped believing in themselves, even when they went 2-0 down on the night and were reduced to 10 men with captain Gordon Greer sent off.

"We've got players in the team who can score goals out of nothing and we've got people who can create – and I'd like to include myself among those," said McGovern.

There is little doubt that had it not been for his driving run from deep midfield in the 74th minute – that Charlton Athletic allowed to go unchecked – Swindon would not be at Wembley today. McGovern is not one of your fair-weather players who only perform in the comfort of home, a fact recognised by Swindon's away fans who made him their Player of the Year. His run that night caused panic in the Charlton defence and Danny Ward, one of those inspirational goalscorers to whom McGovern alluded, was able to profit from it. The goal took the tie into extra time and ultimately penalties in which Swindon prevailed.

The midfielder wasn't uppermost in the thoughts of Danny Wilson at the start of the season, but at least he had survived the close season cull which saw 14 players depart the club after they had flirted with relegation the previous season.

McGovern was left out of the opening game at Gillingham in which Swindon lost 5-0. He was back in the starting line-up for the second game – a 4-1 away victory over MK Dons – and the team then went on an unbeaten run of 14 games. It was no coincidence. McGovern was never omitted again. He was similarly ever-present in Wednesday's promotion season.

"The manager has been fantastic for me," said the 29-year-old. "I was out of favour, so for me it was an uphill battle to make sure I was doing my bit and he gave me the chance to do that. The way the manager wants to play – passing the ball – suits my game down to a T."

McGovern has been invited back to Wednesday as a guest on a couple of occasions, which has enabled him to take a first hand look at the level of football to which Swindon aspire. He has seen nothing to make him think they cannot handle it. "Obviously the manager would add a few, but the nucleus of the squad is good enough to play in the division. We've got born footballers who actually want to play. The strikers as you go up the league are that little bit sharper, that's all – one chance, one goal."



## JON-PAUL McGOVERN

POSITION MIDFIELDER D.O.B 03/10/1980  
2009/10 APPS 53 2009/10 GOALS 2  
SIGNED AUGUST 2007  
NATIONALITY SCOTTISH





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LEAGUE 1 PLAY-OFF FINAL  
REFS' ASSESSMENT



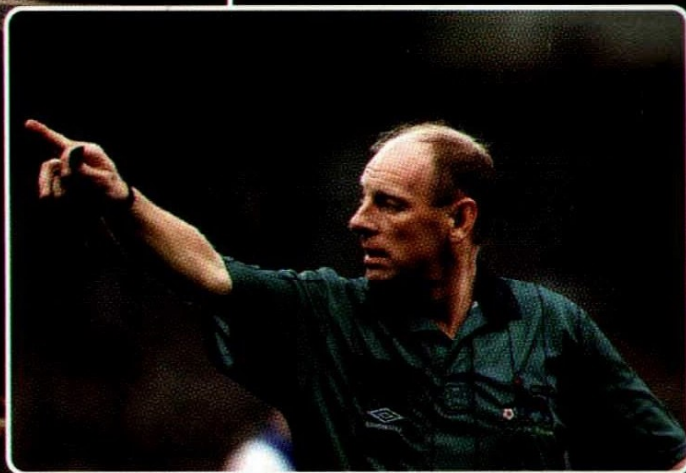
# UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT



2010 PLAY-OFF FINAL



Left: Kelvin Morton compiles his report at the City Ground  
Below: Morton officiates a Premier League game in 2004



As part of their efforts to raise refereeing standards, the Professional Game Match Officials Limited monitor the performance of the men in black at every game played in The Football League and Premier League. Here, we offer an insight into how the process works

**W**ith so much at stake in the play-off semi-final second legs, spare a thought for the match officials who have to operate amidst all the sound and fury knowing potential controversy is never far away. Running the rule over referee Mark Clattenburg and his assistants at the City Ground as Nottingham Forest took on Blackpool was assessor Kelvin Morton and *The Times*' Russell Kempson was granted rare access to sit alongside him. Here is his fly-on-the wall report...

Kelvin Morton has had a good drive to the City Ground from his home in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, aided by TomTom, his constant companion.

"I like to arrive at the ground two hours before the game," he muses. "But I always allow a bit of extra time, just in case of the traffic. You never know."

He arrives in the Garibaldi Room, a small suite in which rival managers seeking a sneak preview of their next opponents or prospective purchases, club scouts and guests gather. And the match officials and their assessor. The room is almost deserted apart from a tray of sandwiches, marked "Referee and Assistants", in the middle of a large table.

Kelvin considers a stealthy raid but resists the urge. He reminisces with the tea lady about the good old days, when Brian Clough ruled with an iron fist and when Morton, a leading referee, strutted his stuff in the middle.

"It's nice to turn back the clock sometimes," he reflects. But before he grows misty eyed, Mark Clattenburg, his assistants, Mike McDonough and Stephen Child, and Lee

Mason, the fourth official, arrive. A quick chat and, 15 minutes later, they leave. Down to business.

Morton, 64, still enviously eyes the sandwiches but, soon, it is down to business for him, too. A briefing with the head of ground security and the chief police commander. An hour before kick-off, Kelvin trots off to see the captains – Paul McKenna, of Forest, and Charlie Adam, of Blackpool. Clattenburg has a word with both, telling them what he expects and that he wants no silly bookings. Teamsheets are handed in, the expectation mounts.

Ten minutes before the off, Morton takes his place in the directors' box. On the right of the stairs, second row, first seat in. Prime position to judge Mark, Mike, Stephen and Lee. Little can escape Morton's attention and little does. "It's a great atmosphere," he says, stopwatch dangling from his neck and clipboard on his lap.

Clattenburg blasts his first whistle. Game on. "Ask me what you want," Kelvin says. "But I might be making notes. And you won't be able to read my writing. It's like a doctor's!" It is. By half-time, a spider dipped in ink appears to have crawled across his two sheets of paper. "They're my crime sheets," he says. "What I call submissable evidence."

Over the years, since he retired from refereeing in 1995, he has devised his own note-taking strategy – Assessing Made Easy. Columns for strengths, room for improvement, incidents, bookings, errors, free kicks. He divides the pitch into nine segments for simple identification.

As the game progresses, Clattenburg appears to be racking up an impressive amount of mentions in the "strengths" section. "But I look at all four of them," Morton explains. "How they work as a team. That's important."

Forest are leading 1-0, all is fairly quiet in the world of officialdom until, in first-half stoppage time, Child flags for offside against Forest. "Just off," Morton murmurs. Child's play, clearly. >

Mark Clattenburg was the referee under scrutiny at the City Ground



**"I LOVE DOING THIS JOB. I REFEREED WITH A SMILE ON MY FACE, I WAS KNOWN FOR THAT. I LIKE A RAPPORT WITH PEOPLE"**

David "Ned" Kelly, Forest's assistant manager, does not agree and exchanges views with Ian Holloway, the Blackpool manager. Mason intervenes and gets a finger-jabbing from Billy Davies, the Forest boss. Calm is restored as Clattenburg signals the interval.

Taking refreshment in the Garibaldi, Morton is suddenly aghast. "Yeah, as I was saying, it was just offside ... oh dear." He glances at the television replay and notices, as does everyone, that the ruling should have been, er, onside! "It goes to show how difficult these judgements are and the benefit should have been given to the attacker."

One minute into the second half, it is McDonough's turn in the spotlight. Robert Earnshaw races through to score for Forest but Mike's flag is raised. "Too slow, too slow," Kelvin mutters. Not Earnshaw but McDonough's decision-making. He should have been quicker, even by a fraction, on the draw.

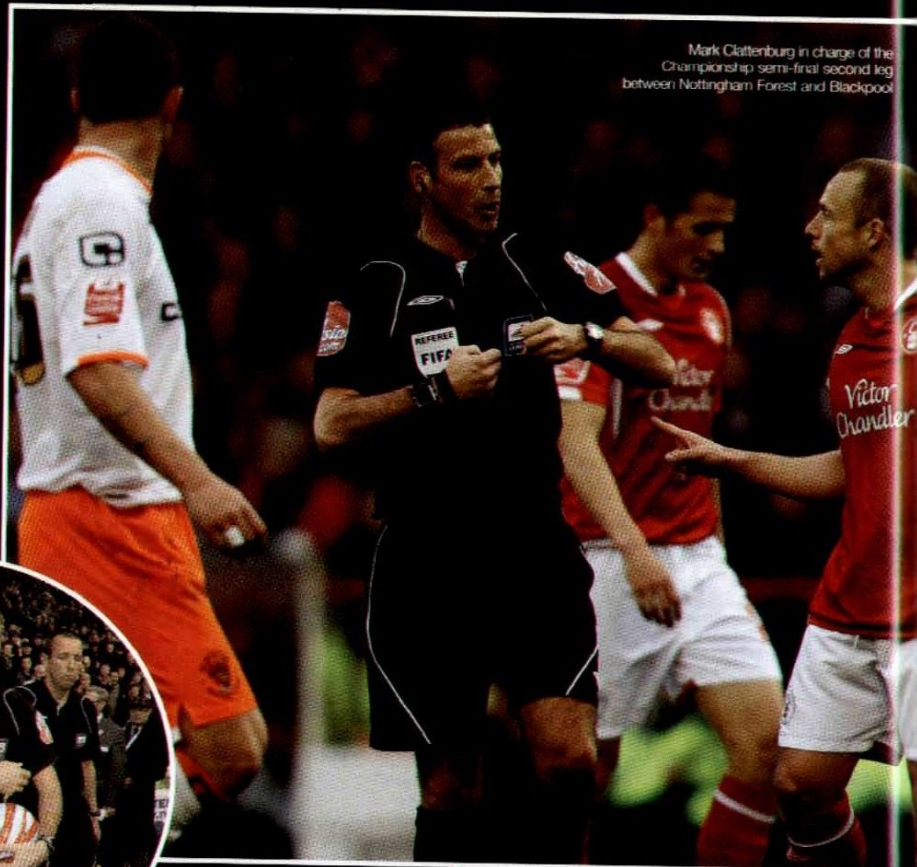
From then on, Forest are felled and as the Blackpool goals rain in, the home technical area becomes more crowded and agitated. "Only two can stand in it and only one at the front," Kelvin observes. "They've got four in there." Mason stands motionless, arms crossed. Morton makes a note.

As Forest collapse farther, Davies retreats into his dug-out. Game over, Blackpool are on their way to Wembley – the Tangerine Dream – while back at Garibaldi HQ, Morton, a general manager with a power supply company, analyses his officials' performances. No need to refer to the spider's crawl, either, his memory is perfect.

"Mark had an outstanding command of the game from the outset. He took no risks with match control and worked extremely hard in his man-management of the players.

"The assistants did very well overall. As we now know, there was an offside given just on half-time that we thought was a good call. I know it was tight and, in fact, it was proven to be level. Onside. It was one of those difficult ones.

"Early in the second half, Mike had a disallowed



Mark Clattenburg in charge of the Championship semi-final second leg between Nottingham Forest and Blackpool

goal. Perfectly correct but I felt maybe he could have flagged slightly earlier. And Lee maybe could have been a bit more proactive in the home technical area. You don't want him to micro-manage but you want him to do a bit more than he did. But it was a good day at the office, a good team effort. The one who was most sure did the leading and the other was happy to follow. Therefore, they were at one."

The dust has settled and Morton sets off for a debriefing with the quartet in their changing-room. "When I go in, I don't sit on the fence, I give an opinion," he reveals. "I think we get more respect for that.

"I love doing this job. I refereed with a smile on my face, I was known for that, and I like a rapport with people, I like the interaction. All the guys were pleased and they were very receptive to what I had to say."

It is nearly 11pm. A fine drizzle descends from the darkness and TomTom is waiting in the car park to guide Morton home. He has to write separate reports on Messrs Clattenburg, McDonough and Child the next day and also a summary, which could take up to three hours.

Time to perhaps assess the assessor: Let's go for an "A". It would have been A+, Kelvin, but for the spider! •

#### KELVIN MORTON EXPLAINS WHAT AN ASSESSOR LOOKS FOR FROM MATCH OFFICIALS:

"I'm what we call a guardian of standards. I'm expecting the referee and his assistants to carry out the laws of the game in a professional manner to make sure that there is good match control, allowing the game to flow but not to the detriment of control. They must also get decisions right and work hard. Most important of all, the referee must show good and appropriate man-management skills. Sometimes, he may need to be a bit stronger and, at other times, he can just have a quiet word, which can be equally effective. We have what we term the "Step" process. Sometimes, it is that quiet word that is needed; then there is the public rebuke. Then, if that doesn't work, it has to be a yellow card. You cannot give more than one public rebuke to the same player. I often use the phrase: it is like being savaged by a sheep! Referees are encouraged, where possible, to make effective use of the captains."



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# FRIENDS REUNITED

Having spent four productive years with the Robins, Millwall defender Jack Smith is relishing renewing old acquaintances at Wembley this afternoon

WORDS: PATRICK MASCALL

**F**or Millwall's Jack Smith, this Play-Off Final will be a special occasion on two counts. The defender is not only making his Wembley debut but will also be coming up against his former side Swindon Town, from whom he joined the London club last summer.

"I've never played at Wembley before so it's a big one for me," he said after the 2-0 defeat of Huddersfield Town had propelled Millwall into today's showdown. "I went there a few weeks ago to watch my brother Tommy playing for Portsmouth in the FA Cup semi-final and that was the first time I'd been to the new stadium.

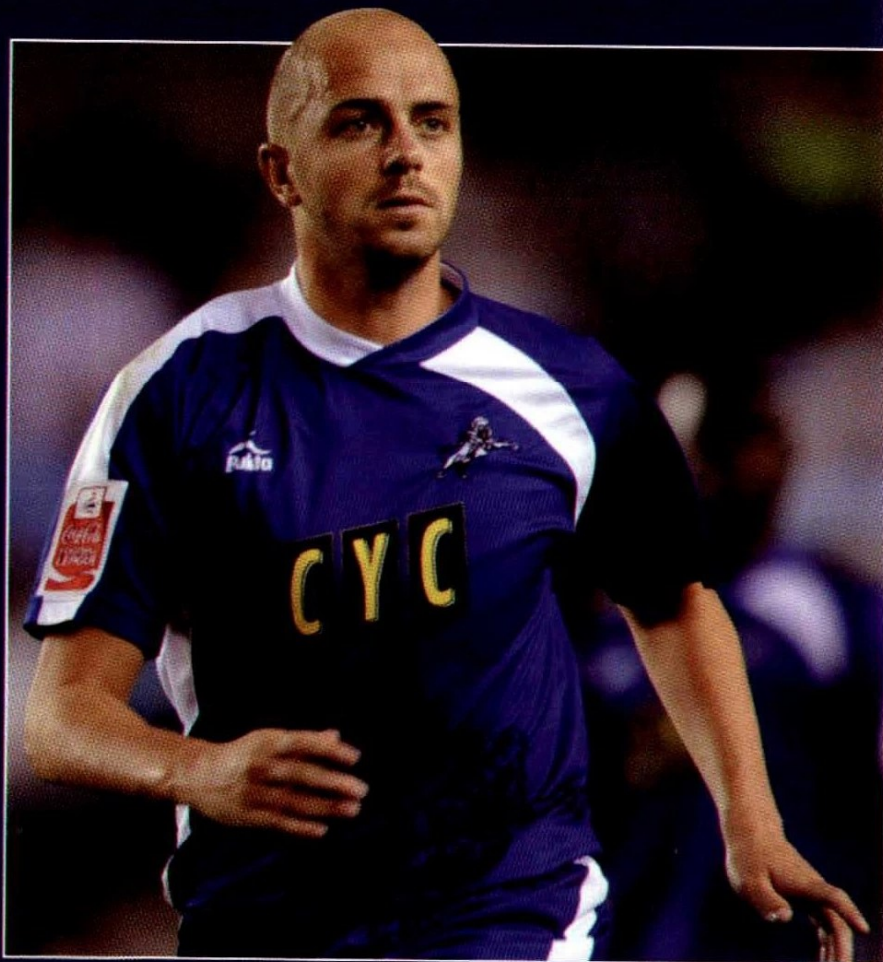
"But to actually play there will be unbelievable. It's certainly the biggest game of my career so far, and with the biggest prize at the end of it, without a doubt. Hopefully it will be a full house and a great atmosphere."

It was, of course, the atmosphere at The Den in the victorious semi-final second leg that Millwall manager Kenny Jackett credited with playing such a significant role in his side's win over Huddersfield. Smith, too, is full of praise for the faithful who have done him and his team-mates proud throughout the 2009/10 campaign.

"They have been brilliant for us all season. I think the average age of the Huddersfield team is somewhere in the early 20s so to come to The Den and play in an atmosphere like that was probably quite intimidating for them.

"The fans got right behind us from the start and were really loud throughout the game and that gives you an extra boost when you're feeling a bit tired. You hear the noise and you just go again."

Does that mean the 26-year-old is a believer in the old cliché about the fans being the 12th man?



"Yeah, definitely! I think scoring first certainly gave us something to hold on to, as well. Our defensive record this season is the best in the league so we always felt that if we could nick one we'd have a good chance of keeping a clean sheet and winning.

"But I think you could see what a massive goal the second one was by the reaction from both the fans and the players. It certainly made the last few minutes of the game a lot more comfortable."

As for today's test, Smith will be reacquainting himself with a few familiar faces having spent four seasons at Swindon prior to his move to Millwall last summer.

"I watched the second Swindon versus Charlton game the night

before we played Huddersfield," he adds.

"Obviously I've got a few old friends there but I wasn't really bothered who won. At this stage in the game we know it's going to be tough whoever we were to face in the Final.

"Swindon are a good team with good goalscorers so it will certainly be a big challenge. We played them on the last day of the regular season and pipped them 3-2 but it could have gone either way. It'll just be a case of going out and giving it our all as we always do, and hopefully that will be enough."



## JACK SMITH

POSITION DEFENDER D.O.B 14/10/1983  
2009/10 APPS 41 2009/10 GOALS 1  
SIGNED AUGUST 2009  
NATIONALITY ENGLISH





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## PLAY-OFF FINAL MOMENTS CHRIS KAMARA, 26 MAY 1996

**“** The Division Two Play-Off Final in 1996 was a fantastic day. We were due to arrive at Wembley first, before Notts County, and we had around 32,000 fans supporting us. County had around 12,000, so what I didn't want to happen was for us to arrive and get a massive cheer, then for County to come out and get booed by our fans. That could have given them an incentive so I had a word with a policeman at our hotel and asked if we could come out second. He phoned ahead and sorted it out for us!

When we walked out onto the pitch in our suits and ties, this massive cheer went up and you could see the Notts County players looking nervously at each other. It had the desired effect that we hoped it would.

It was Bradford's first ever appearance at Wembley and I'd only been given the job in the November. My remit for the season was actually to save

them from relegation, so to get to the Play-Off Final was a dream come true.

I've commentated on a lot of Play-Off Finals and most of them have been tense, but once the game started, it was never in doubt – I've never felt so comfortable in a game of football. We'd lost the first leg of the semi-final 2-0 at home to Blackpool, meaning we had to go to Bloomfield Road and win 3-0, and we'd done just that, so we were full of confidence.

I'd dropped a local lad, Ian Ormondroyd, to the bench at Wembley but after Des Hamilton had scored early on, we were totally on top, so I took Andy Kiwomya off and brought 'Sticks' [Ormondroyd] on in the second half and he was involved in our second goal. At 2-0 up with just over 15 minutes to go, the fans started to enjoy themselves. It was a party atmosphere – a fabulous day and one that I'll never forget.

**”**





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Armed Forces personnel take in the applause on their lap of honour before last Saturday's Championship Play-Off Final

# SUPPORTING OUR ARMED FORCES

During the 2009/10 season, The Football League's Official Charity Partner has been Help for Heroes

WORDS TOM HARVERSON



**B**efore kick-off this afternoon, both sets of fans will have the opportunity to show their support for our Armed Forces, as 100 soldiers recently returned from the Afghan frontline take part in a lap of honour around the Wembley pitch.

For the third season running, The Football League has invited troops to the Coca-Cola Football League Play-Off Finals to enjoy our hospitality and the thrilling spectacle that these matches provide.

This year's play-offs also mark the end of The League's 'Official Charity' partnership with Help for Heroes. During the 2009/10 campaign clubs, players, managers and fans from all corners of England and Wales have united to support Help for Heroes through donations, auctions and fundraising which has generated hundreds of thousands of pounds for the charity which helps rehabilitate injured military personnel.

"The Football League's support has been invaluable, both in raising awareness and fundraising for H4H," explains Bryn Parry who

co-founded Help for Heroes in October 2007 with his wife Emma after visiting heavily wounded personnel in Birmingham's Selly Oak hospital.

"We at Help for Heroes would like to say a huge thank you to The Football League, the clubs, players and all their supporters for their fantastic fundraising."

In addition to numerous 'Help for Heroes days' staged by clubs throughout the season, The Football League came together for 'Football for Heroes Week' in March, with all 72 clubs donating a home game to raising awareness and funds for the charity.

From Plymouth to Newcastle and Cardiff to Norwich, clubs offered free tickets for troops, managers wore the charity's wristbands, players warmed up in Help for Heroes T-shirts, posed for photos with Help for Heroes banners and signed balls to be auctioned.

"Football League clubs have been magnificent in their support for Help for Heroes this season, with all 72 clubs playing their part," added Gavin Megaw, Director of External Affairs at The Football League.

"We are delighted to be hosting members of our Armed Forces at each of our Play-Offs again this season, not only is it great recognition for what they do for their country but it is a fitting way to celebrate our season-long partnership with Help for Heroes."

And in recognition of the century-old bond between the game and the Forces – which began in the trenches of World War One – The Football League this season appointed a team of Ambassadors with close links to both.

The 12-strong group included Cardiff City Manager Dave Jones, Ipswich Town Chief Executive Simon Clegg, players Peter Leven (MK Dons) and Lee Bradbury (AFC Bournemouth) as well as Chairman of the RAF FA, Group Captain Mike Neville and Sergeant Mark Margetts currently on the frontline in Afghanistan.

Following the huge success of this season's partnership with Help for Heroes, The Football League will continue its charity support during the 2010/11 campaign with cancer charity Marie Curie Cancer Care. •



# WE SALUTE YOU

The Football League says the hard work of the Help for Heroes Ambassadors has been invaluable

WORDS TOM HARVERSON



Members of the Armed Forces on a lap of honour at The Den



**T**he Football League would like to thank all 12 Help for Heroes Ambassadors for their sterling efforts this season.

**The Ambassadors:**

**Simon Yeo** – Former professional footballer. Before a successful career with Chester City, Peterborough United and Lincoln City, Simon served with the 22nd Cheshire Regiment in Bosnia and Northern Ireland.

**Simon Clegg** – Ipswich Town Chief Executive. A Major in the 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, Simon organised an Apache fly-by as part of the Tractor Boys' end of season Help for Heroes day.

**Aaron Mitchell** – Professional Footballer. The former Nottingham Forest defender is a strong Help for Heroes supporter following the tragic death of his brother, Lance Corporal Keiron Hill who was killed last year whilst on duty in Afghanistan with the Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters).

**Joe Roach** – AFC Bournemouth Youth Team and Reserve Team Coach. Joe joined the Royal Engineers in 1975 and has worked in the Army Physical Training Corps as well as delivering FA Coaching to troops and managing the Combined Services football team.

**Group Captain Mike Neville** – Chairman of

the RAF Football Association. Following a distinguished career in the RAF, Group Captain Neville assumed command of RAF Lyneham in December 2007 and has been Chairman of RAF FA since 2008.

**Paul Mitchell** – Former Professional Footballer. The ex-MK Dons midfielder is now Community Ambassador for the club and is a strong supporter of Help for Heroes.

**Phil Stant** – Football League Youth Development Regional Manager for the Midlands. Before playing for Notts County, Reading, Fulham and Lincoln City, Phil saw action in the Falklands as an SAS Bomb Disposal expert.

**Sergeant Mark Margetts** – Doncaster Rovers Community Coach. In an Army career spanning 18 years, Sergeant Margetts now works part-time in the community set-up at Doncaster. He is currently on a six-month tour of Afghanistan with the 1st Battalion.

**Dave Jones** – Manager, Cardiff City. As patron of armed forces medical schemes, Dave was instrumental in inviting the Welsh Guards to attend the club's match against Crystal Palace in October.

**Peter Leven** – Professional Footballer. The MK Dons midfielder has donated £5 to Help for Heroes for every goal that the club scored during the campaign – raising a total of £300 for Help for Heroes.

**Gary Holt** – Former Professional Footballer. The former Scottish international midfielder's football career dates back to the days when he worked in the Army Catering Corps. Holt also played for the British Army football team before joining Celtic.

**Lee Bradbury** – Professional Footballer. A former Army recruit, the Bournemouth player moved straight from the Forces to Portsmouth in 1995.



Swindon Town manager Danny Wilson and Bristol Rovers' Paul Trollope show their support for Help for Heroes





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# RELIANT ROBINS

Bristol Rovers manager Paul Trollope saw his team beat Swindon Town twice this season, but he's a great admirer of their football philosophy

INTERVIEW: MEL HENDERSON

**C**ards on the table – I was raised as a Swindon Town supporter which is fairly surprising since my dad, John, holds the club appearance record and was also manager of the club in the early Eighties.

I have a lot of time for Danny Wilson and the way he wants his teams to play, and considering where Swindon were last season, together with the fact that they were so close to winning automatic promotion, he has done a magnificent job.

My own team managed to complete the double over Swindon this year, winning 3-0 at home and 4-0 away, but we lacked the consistency to join them in the top six. In essence Swindon are a 4-4-2 team but when in possession they quickly evolve into an attacking, passing team and it is clear that Danny has put his stamp on the club. His philosophy has shone through this season, just as it has been evident at all his previous clubs.

When Swindon have, what I would call, comfortable possession, they tend to make the pitch very big. The full-backs push forward and the central defenders split to start the team's

attacks from the back. Midfielder Jonathon Douglas (below) has proved a fantastic acquisition since his arrival from Leeds United.

He has good technical ability and the means to dictate the play from deep positions, while Simon Ferry has bags of energy and supplies the 'legs'. Ferry's forwards runs offer a real threat to any opposition – as we saw in the semi-final first leg against Charlton Athletic – and he is also a good passer of the ball. There is a good balance between them.

Jon-Paul McGovern may line up on the right of midfield, but he regularly comes inside and this allows full-back Stephen Darby to go down the outside and his displays show why he is so highly regarded at his parent club, Liverpool.

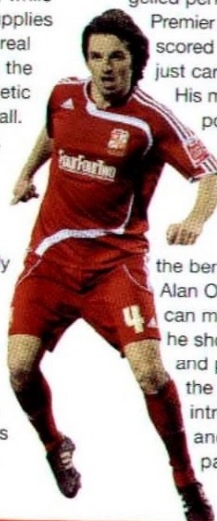
McGovern likes to get on the ball and apart from his eye for a pass, he has consistently demonstrated his ability at set-pieces. Another loanee, teenager Danny Ward, has amply proved his worth with a goal in each of the semi-final games and adds to Swindon's attacking options.

The main spotlight has been on the front two of Billy Paynter and Charlie Austin as a result of all their goals. Paynter is showing the best form of his career and the partnership with Austin has gelled perfectly. Austin arrived from Wessex Premier League team Poole Town, where he scored at a phenomenal rate, and he has just carried on putting the ball in the net.

His movement is top-class, he finds good positions in and around the six-yard area, and not only plays without fear but with a lot of confidence.

Swindon took a chance on him and it has paid off handsomely.

The Robins have good options on the bench, which can be crucial, and in Alan O'Brien they have a left-winger who can make a real difference to a game, as he showed at The Valley with his quality and pace. Talking of players coming off the bench, goalkeeper Phil Smith was introduced after just five minutes there and went on to play an important part in their success.







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WORDS TOM HARVERSON & JAMES TUNESI

**F**rom tackling drug and alcohol abuse to raising awareness on sexual health, The Football League Trust works daily in 72 diverse communities across England and Wales using the power of football to make a tangible difference to people's lives.

Formed in 2007, The Trust is the charitable arm of The Football League and is responsible for overseeing Community and Youth Development projects at clubs.

Focusing on the five core themes of Health, Sports Participation, Social Inclusion & Community cohesion, Helping Young People Realise Their Potential and Environment, the Trust currently works with 2,500 full and part-time community staff to deliver schemes to one and half million people a year.

Both Millwall and Swindon Town play an active role in their local communities, regularly rolling out a diverse range of initiatives designed to target their locality and provide effective engagement for local people.

Last year, the Millwall Community Scheme teamed up with Charlton Athletic and the Metropolitan Police to dedicate their league match in December to the "Street Violence Ruins Lives" campaign which delivers the dangers of street violence straight into classrooms in London.

The fixture was played in memory of Rob Knox and Jimmy Mizen, two young supporters of the respective clubs who were killed in 2008.

The club also joined forces with NHS Lewisham, to provide free NHS health checks to supporters before their league game against Norwich City in February. Fans had their blood pressure checked, lungs tested and received advice on healthy living – including the chance to ride a 'Smoothie Bike' which crushed fruit in a bid to raise awareness of healthy eating.

Since early May, Swindon's Community Trust has been providing training sessions to Swindon Deaf FC. The Robins' 'Every Player Counts' project is also supporting the deaf football club in their quest to participate in the Wiltshire and Dorset Ability Counts League from next season.

And in February, the community team travelled to Zambia where they spent a week in Livingstone delivering football coaching programmes to local adults and children as well as participating in building projects for the community.

The trip included a visit to a local community school, Nakatindi where the Swindon representatives were greeted by children witnessing football for the very first time. Across the week, the team worked with nearly 600 local children and adults delivering coaching sessions and giving away football boots and kit. •



# A POSITION OF TRUST

The hard work of The Football League Trust has had a positive impact on communities everywhere

Above: Swindon sent a community team to Zambia to deliver a coaching programme and (right) Millwall manager Kenny Jackett backed an initiative to provide free NHS health checks to fans







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# PAYNTER & DECORATED

Swindon Town hot-shot Billy Paynter hopes to put a gloss finish on a fine season by firing the Robins into the Championship

WORDS DAVID INSTONE

**B**illy Paynter has yet to sample the euphoria of promotion in his incident-filled career, but well remembers the unusual circumstances of his nearest miss.

Unlike this term, the striker was left on the wrong side when the line was drawn on the final League 1 table in 2003/04 to show which teams had made the play-off cut and which were left disappointed.

His Port Vale team did all they could on the last day of the regular campaign, only to then learn that events elsewhere had contrived against them and gone in favour of none other than Swindon Town.

"We were at Rushden on the final day and won by two or three goals," Paynter recalled. "We scored early on and in the last minute and our fans were celebrating for a lot of the afternoon."

"But Swindon were playing Hartlepool on the

same day and the only way we could be denied a place in the play-offs, if we won, was if they drew. Unfortunately, that's what happened because Hartlepool scored fairly late and held on for a draw.

"We missed out on goal difference, which was heartbreaking because we had finished with a run of three wins and would have fancied our chances in the play-offs."

"As it happened, neither Swindon or Hartlepool went up or even reached the Final that season but it's strange that my chance has now come around with Swindon a few years down the line."

Brighton were to beat Bristol City in that 2003/04 climax at the Millennium Stadium, leaving Paynter to plough on for another couple of seasons in the third tier with a club with whom he had made a sizeable impact.

He became both their youngest player for some >>



Billy Paynter is hoping to point the way forward to the Championship at Wembley this afternoon



two decades when given his debut at 16 by Brian Horton in May, 2001, and their youngest scorer for even longer when he delivered his first goal, although he was made to wait until early in 2002/03 for that privilege.

If he hoped the breakthrough would represent an opening of the floodgates, he was to be disappointed, however. Goals came at a trickle rather than a gush until he helped himself to 14 in 2003/04 and followed up with 13 in the campaign after to win the club's Player of the Year award.

They are accomplishments that Robins fans would clearly recognise now as the 25-year-old Liverpoolian, having nursed a hamstring strain in the last couple of weeks, arrives at Wembley in hungry pursuit of his 30th goal of the season.

"It's every player's dream to play at Wembley and every striker's dream to score there," he added. "I didn't get much chance to make an impression against Charlton in the semi-final. I missed the first leg and didn't have much drop for me around the area while I was on the pitch in the return.

"But we always think we can score goals. A lot of people would have doubted us when we were two down at Charlton, with a man short, but the gaffer here has given us belief and we now have a lot of confidence in ourselves. We remained positive and pulled through, although it was obviously very close.

"Of course I'd be thrilled to score in my first game at Wembley, but winning promotion for the first time in my career is more important."

Alongside the extraordinary rise of non-league graduate Charlie Austin, Paynter has ensured that Swindon have kept to a bare minimum any fans' yearning for Simon Cox, the prolific striker

who left them 12 months ago for a promotion-winning year at West Bromwich Albion and now stands at the gateway to the Premier League.

Between them, the duo are nudging the 50-goal barrier for 2009/10 and looking to succeed today like the junior partner did in the first leg against Charlton Athletic.

Not that Paynter hasn't hit on harder times on his career path. Having been a firm favourite in the Potteries, he became goal-starved at Hull City despite a promising start on loan and had a distinctly lean spell at Southend United before starting to rediscover his old instincts when he was borrowed by Bradford City.

He is past the 50 mark for his present club at the rate of much better than one every three games despite one oddity – he failed to find the target in a 6-0 annihilation of Vale in 2007/08.

And the combative front-runner will be looking to take a leaf from one of his Premier League favourites today – with a different outcome.

One of his two visits to the stadium as an Everton supporter came at the 2009 FA Cup Final against Chelsea when Louis Saha scored inside a minute for the Merseyside club.

"I was among the Everton fans behind the goal and just managed to drag my dad to the seats for the start rather than let him have another drink," he explained. "It's just as well we did and I'll be hoping to have a similar experience this time with a different result of course."

**"OF COURSE I'D BE THRILLED TO SCORE IN MY FIRST GAME AT WEMBLEY BUT WINNING PROMOTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY CAREER IS MORE IMPORTANT"**



#### BILLY PAYNTER

POSITION STRIKER D.O.B 13/07/1984  
2009/10 APPS 48 2009/10 GOALS 29  
SIGNED AUGUST 2007  
NATIONALITY ENGLISH



# Good Luck Swindon Town!



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# HULL CITY 1 BRISTOL CITY 0



## PLAY-OFF FINAL MOMENTS **DEAN WINDASS, 24 MAY 2008**

**“** It was a dream come true for me to score the winning goal. I remember waving to Fraizer Campbell to get him to play the ball to me on the edge of the area. When he did, I volleyed it and knew as soon as I'd hit it that it was in. It was quite emotional to listen to the radio commentary of the goal afterwards and I had it on my mobile phone for a while. I must have watched the goal on Sky+ a thousand times!

The actual match was all a bit of a blur, to be honest, but I remember before the game that we stayed in the dressing-room until the warm-up and didn't have a look around on the pitch in our suits as

most teams do. That's because Phil Brown had been talking to Sir Alex Ferguson about the best preparation and he suggested we shouldn't do anything that could distract us.

Winning at Wembley is one of those moments in your life that you'll never forget. It was one of the best days of my life. For Hull to get to the Premier League was unbelievable, especially as I'd supported the club as a boy and played there at the start of my career. Afterwards we had a party at the plush Grove Hotel and I remember being carried back to my room at half past five in the morning after drinking too much champagne! **”**



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# TEAM OF THE SEASON

After a fascinating League 1 season that will conclude at Wembley today, the experts from BBC Sport's The Football League Show select their best XI

INTERVIEWS NICK JOHNSON

**P**aul Robinson, who captains Millwall in today's Final, was an automatic choice for the heart of the back four in the League 1 select side. Robinson's leadership qualities were praised by Leroy Rosenior who described him as "a strong centre-back who leads by example".

Reporter Mark Clemmit echoed his colleague's sentiments, saying: "Robinson has been a real driving force for Millwall."

Two other players involved in the play-offs – Charlton Athletic's Frazer Richardson and Peter Clarke of Huddersfield Town – also feature in defence, alongside Carlisle United's vastly experienced Ian Harte. The panel members were particularly impressed with Harte's attacking contribution. Presenter Manish Bhasin commented: "To score 12 goals from full-back is staggering," while Clemmit noted: "You'd put him in there for his free-kicks alone."

Goalkeeper Fraser Forster is one of three representatives from champions Norwich City. Forster, who spent the majority of the season at Carrow Road on loan from Newcastle United, held off competition from Southampton's

Kelvin Davis and Brentford loanee Wojciech Szczesny to take his place between the posts.

Forster's team-mate Wes Hoolahan was a unanimous choice in midfield. "Hoolahan is a player you can trust with the ball and he has a fantastic goal-scoring record from midfield," said Steve Claridge. Charlton's Nicky Bailey and Adam Lallana were also selected by all four panel members. Giving his thoughts on Bailey, Rosenior said: "He does everything you want from a midfield player."

Rickie Lambert, who scored 37 goals for Southampton in all competitions, is joined in attack by the Canaries' 30-goal striker Grant Holt. Lambert is described by Rosenior as "an intelligent player who scores with his left foot, his right, and his head," while Clemmit says that Holt has "revelled in the Norwich captaincy".

Swindon Town's Billy Paynter has to settle for a place among the subs after narrowly missing out on the starting line-up. Team-mate Charlie Austin also came close to being selected after an impressive first season following his transfer from non-league Poole. In fact there was an embarrassment of riches in attack with Millwall's Steve Morison and Jermaine Beckford of Leeds also considered.

## THE PANEL



**MANISH  
BHASIN**  
PRESENTER



**MARK  
CLEMMIT**  
REPORTER



**STEVE  
CLARIDGE**  
PUNDIT

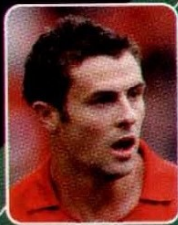


**LEROY  
ROSENIOR**  
PUNDIT





FRASER  
FORSTER  
NORWICH CITY



FRAZER  
RICHARDSON  
CHARLTON ATHLETIC



PAUL  
ROBINSON  
MILLWALL



PETER  
CLARKE  
HUDDERSFIELD  
TOWN



IAN HARTE  
CARLISLE UNITED



ROBERT  
SNODGRASS  
LEEDS UNITED



ADAM  
LALLANA  
SOUTHAMPTON



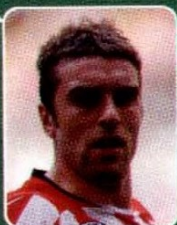
NICKY BAILEY  
CHARLTON  
ATHLETIC



WES  
HOOLAHAN  
NORWICH CITY

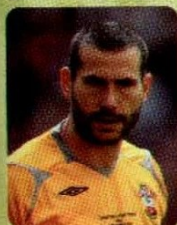


GRANT  
HOLT  
NORWICH CITY



RICKIE  
LAMBERT  
SOUTHAMPTON

## SUBSTITUTES



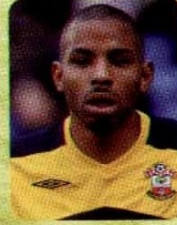
KELVIN  
DAVIS  
SOUTHAMPTON



PATRICK  
KISNORBO  
LEEDS UNITED



GARY  
DOHERTY  
NORWICH CITY



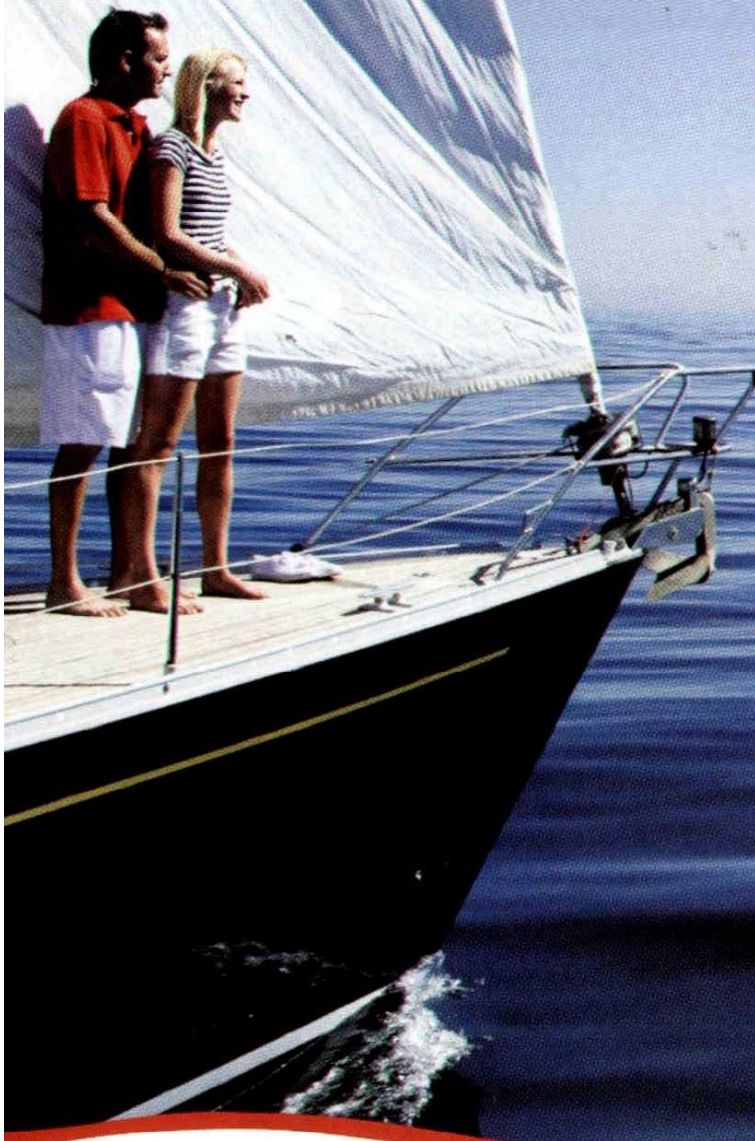
JASON  
PUNCHEON  
SOUTHAMPTON



BILLY  
PAYNTER  
SWINDON TOWN



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# SIX

# OF THE BEST

Our review of the 2009/10 campaign concludes with the views of two more League 1 players

## SEAN GREGAN OLDHAM ATHLETIC

### WHO HAS BEEN THE BEST PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?

Southampton striker Rickie Lambert. You just have to look at the amount of goals he has scored and his all-round game – he's a great player.

### WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE SEASON?

Paul Lambert... considering they got beat 7-1 by Colchester United on the opening day, he has done a terrific job at Norwich City. After that result it would have been easy for the club to go one way but he's taken charge there and they have won the league by a mile in the end.

### WHICH WAS THE BEST TEAM PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR SIDE?

Brighton impressed me when they beat us 2-0 at Boundary Park in March and since Gus Poyet took over they played a good brand of football. They have some finance at the club and could be a team to watch next season.

### WHO GAVE THE BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR TEAM?

When we went to Norwich City in December, Wes Hoolahan was just unplayable. The lads couldn't get near him to kick him! He was named in the Team of the Year and is so comfortable on the ball. He has also scored a lot of goals.

### WHO WAS THE BEST YOUNG PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?

Southend United's Harry Crawford could be one to watch. He played up front towards the end of the season at our place in a 2-2 draw and was a real pest. He could be a player to keep an eye on.

### WHO HAS UNDERACHIEVED THIS SEASON AND WILL BE CONTENDERS NEXT TIME?

MK Dons have got a fantastic stadium and infrastructure and maybe expected to do better after getting in the play-offs last season. Paul Ince has departed and the wheels have come off for them recently but they will be hoping to challenge next year.



## CRAIG ALCOCK YEOVIL TOWN

### WHO HAS BEEN THE BEST PLAYER IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP?

Wes Hoolahan cut us open at will when we lost 3-0 to Norwich City at Carrow Road in March. He was a class above. He has plenty of tricks and also an eye for a pass.

### WHO IS THE MANAGER OF THE SEASON?

Danny Wilson has done really well at Swindon Town because they were the surprise package among the teams who were contesting the promotion places. They are a smaller club compared to the others who were up there. They've obviously got good players up front but all-round they are very strong.

### WHICH WAS THE BEST TEAM PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR SIDE?

I would say Norwich in that game in March or Swindon when they beat us 3-1 away in December. Leeds United were also very impressive in the second half at their place when they beat us 4-0, however, for the best performance over 90 minutes I would go for Norwich.

### WHO GAVE THE BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AGAINST YOUR TEAM?

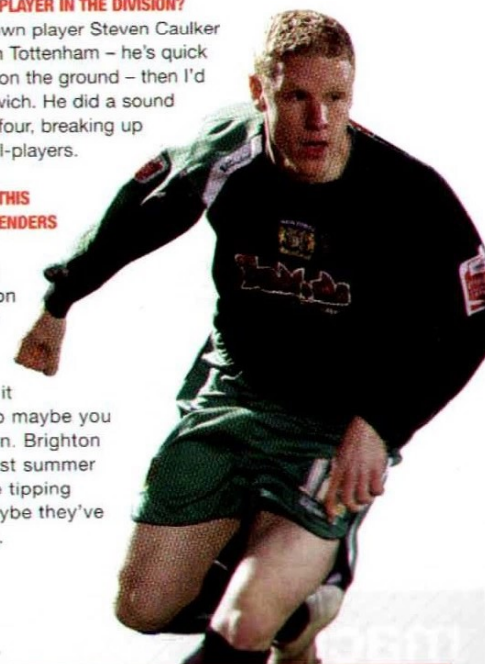
Wes Hoolahan was right up there but I will go for Nicky Bailey of Charlton Athletic. He played in central midfield against us and brought a lot of energy to their team. He also has the ability to pick a pass and score a goal.

### WHO WAS THE BEST YOUNG PLAYER IN THE DIVISION?

If I can't vote for our own player Steven Caulker who's been on loan from Tottenham – he's quick and good in the air and on the ground – then I'd say Korey Smith of Norwich. He did a sound job protecting the back four, breaking up play and feeding the ball-players.

### WHO HAS UNDERACHIEVED THIS SEASON AND WILL BE CONTENDERS NEXT TIME?

I know Southampton had a 10-point reduction at the start of the year but two seasons ago Leeds had a 15-point penalty and still made it to the Play-Off Final so maybe you could say Southampton. Brighton had new investment last summer and many people were tipping them to do well so maybe they've underachieved as well.







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#### REPRESENTING OLDHAM ATHLETIC

##### SOUTH FAILSWORTH PRIMARY

###### LINE UP

GEORGE RAYNES  
DANIEL DONEGAN  
MACE GOODRIDGE  
MAX DAVIDSON (CAPTAIN)  
BEN MATTHEWS  
REECE HORAN

MATTHEW SLATTERY  
LUKE DONEGAN

TEACHERS: EMMA-JANE DAVIES, DR. STUART BARLOW, MIKE JONES

OLDHAM ATHLETIC COMMUNITY STAFF:  
JAMES BLOOD

## CHILD'S PLAY

Young pupils representing  
Oldham Athletic and  
Wycombe Wanderers will  
compete in the Community  
Cup Final this afternoon



It was honours even in last season's  
Community Cup Final at Wembley

#### REPRESENTING WYCOMBE WANDERERS

##### GATEWAY SCHOOL

###### LINE UP

FRED SANDERS  
SAM KEMP  
JAMIE FRANKS (CAPTAIN)  
RAJDEEP JUTLA  
REUBEN LIN  
JAMES MCINTYRE

BRANDON ALLEN  
OSCAR GLENISTER

TEACHER: ROBERT GROSSE, HOWARD JUDGE  
WYCOMBE WANDERERS COMMUNITY STAFF:  
ALAN DUNHAM

A football dream comes true today for 16 youngsters when they will take part in The Football League Community Cup Final at Wembley Stadium.

South Failsforth Primary, from Oldham, face Gateway School, from Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire.

The six-a-side tournament, open to pupils in Year 6 or below, saw more than 14,000 youngsters take part throughout the season.

Both of today's teams won regional and national heats to earn the right to represent their local Football League team – Oldham Athletic and Wycombe Wanderers respectively.

Today the youngsters will take a behind-the-scenes tour of the stadium, before lining up on the pitch for their game, which kicks off at 1.40pm.



PE teacher Emma-Jane Davies, from South Failsforth, said: "The boys can't wait to play at Wembley. They've been brilliant this season, and deserve their chance. We're all looking forward to the match."

Gateway teacher Howard Judge said: "It's great for everyone involved. The whole school is excited. Family and friends all bought tickets to come along to support us. It should be a fantastic day."

The competition has been run by The Football League Trust – the charitable arm of The Football League. Trust General Manager Dave Edmundson said: "One of our core themes is participation in sport by a range of youngsters. This national competition embraces 72 diverse communities and is a fantastic opportunity to play in a Wembley final. We wish the very best of luck to both sides."



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\*Matches that form part of a tournament or bid event where The FA is not the owner, such as the Olympic Games, the Rugby World Cup and the UEFA Champions League Finals are not included. Wembley Stadium will however try to secure tickets for those excluded events where possible. Terms and conditions apply.





Millwall striker Neil Harris shows his support for 2018



David Beckham hands over the Bid Book to FIFA President Sepp Blatter

## BECK THE BID

England's campaign to host the 2018 World Cup received a boost when David Beckham presented a 1,752 page book detailing the country's vision

**E**ngland 2018 has officially delivered its FIFA World Cup Bid 2018/2022, promising the highest ever commercial revenues for FIFA and committing to invest in a series of sustainable legacy projects around the world.

The official Bid Book was presented to FIFA President, Sepp Blatter by England 2018 Vice-President, David Beckham who headed the England 2018 delegation. Former England captain Beckham, said: "As a player nothing could possibly beat playing in front of your own fans in your own country at the World Cup and I hope our players of the future will be fortunate enough to experience this."

England 2018's bid book of 1,752 pages contains details of England's vision for the World Cup Finals which will build on the country's

passion, diversity and technical expertise to deliver the most commercially successful World Cup in history, providing the inspiration for extensive football, social, human and environmental development on a global scale.

Amongst England's legacy plans is a new global fund for football known as "Football United" which will engage people all over the world in fund raising activities to be invested in football and social programmes aligned to FIFA's aims. It is estimated that 1 billion people will be reached by a range of innovative legacy programmes inspired by a World Cup in England. FA President, HRH Prince William, who has endorsed the bid, said: "As President of the Football Association I pledge that, should we be chosen for this great honour, we will provide a lasting legacy for the global game."

England's Bid Book sets out a number of other

football and social development goals in England and abroad. These include plans by the 12 Candidate Host Cities to inspire a new generation of home grown talent by creating 4.5 million more young players, 20,000 more referees, 100,000 more coaches and 11,500 young football leaders.

England's bid has exceeded FIFA's requirements in many respects. Each city will have two FIFA Fan Fests, many with unique themes such as in Liverpool where one is based around the city's Beatles Magical Mystery Tour attraction. There is a 100% public transport solution for each match while ticketed spectators will be able to travel on local transport for free on match day in every city.

To read more about England's Bid and to show your support visit [www.England2018bid.com](http://www.England2018bid.com) or text ENGLAND to 62018 (standard network charges apply)





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# MILLWALL FOOTBALL CLUB



## CLUB INFORMATION

Founded: 1885  
 Nickname: **The Lions**  
 Chairman: John Berylson  
 Ground: **The Den**  
 Website: [www.millwallfc.co.uk](http://www.millwallfc.co.uk)

## DOMESTIC HONOURS

Division 3 champions 1928, 1938;  
 Division 4 champions 1962; Division 2  
 champions 1988; The Football League  
 Trophy 1999; FA Cup runners-up 2004

## THIS SEASON

Coca-Cola League 1: 3rd  
 FA Cup: 3rd Round  
 Carling Cup: 2nd Round  
 Johnstone's Paint Trophy: 1st Round

## SEASON REVIEW: 2009/10

Among the early-season favourites for promotion from League 1, things didn't start as planned for Millwall. The Lions drew four of their opening five league matches, only defeating Oldham Athletic 2-0 and things got worse, with back-to-back defeats against Bristol Rovers and Gillingham. However, with Steve Morison finding his scoring boots, Kenny Jackett's side soon turned things around, thumping Tranmere 5-0 at The Den before an emphatic 4-0 away victory against Stockport. Maintaining their good form into the latter stages of the campaign, Millwall beat Charlton Athletic 4-0 in March, but missed out an automatic promotion spot by a single point to Leeds United.



AGE  
33  
APPS  
110  
CLEAN  
SHEETS  
38

GOALKEEPER



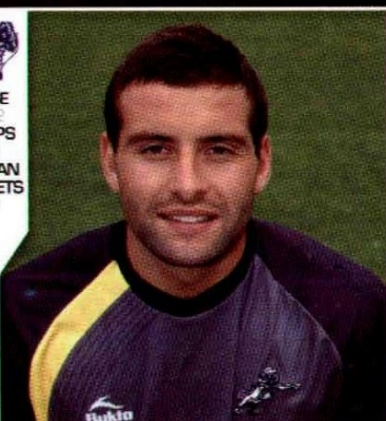
Forde's one of the poker school and is a great lad. He's been terrific again for us this year between the posts, repeating his form from last season when he was excellent, and he's been a very strong leader. One of the best goalkeepers at this level of the game.

DAVID FORDE



AGE  
32  
APPS  
0  
CLEAN  
SHEETS  
0

GOALKEEPER



Sully's only a young lad who works very hard in training. He has a good mentor in David Forde and hates to concede any goals, which is always a great trait to have in a goalkeeper. Sully has been known to bite back a bit, though, at some thoughtless comments made in his direction.

JOHN SULLIVAN



AGE  
27  
APPS  
207  
GOALS  
19

DEFENDER



## NEIL HARRIS

Millwall's record goalscorer gives the lowdown on his Lions team-mates



AGE  
27  
APPS  
207  
GOALS  
19



Dunne is officially the worst poker player at the club. He's been here since he was a boy and is Millwall through and through. He won the Player of the Year award this season and no one deserved it more. He's been excellent for us this year and is one of the reasons we're back at Wembley.

ALAN DUNNE





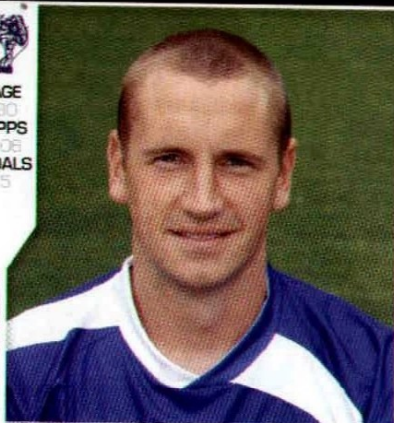
## MILWALL LEGEND: BARRY KITCHENER

Hailing from Dagenham, Barry Kitchener was a loyal servant for Millwall, playing for the club for 17 years, retiring in 1982. Initially joining as an apprentice in 1965, he made his full debut for the club just 18 months later, replacing the injured Harry Cripps against Birmingham City. The East Ender soon endeared himself to the Millwall crowd, smashing home a 30-yard screamer against Sheffield United in his next game. Kitchener went on to make a record 602 appearances for the club and in 2007 was voted by the supporters as Millwall's representative in the PFA Hall of Fame.



AGE  
30  
APPS  
108  
GOALS  
5

DEFENDER



Framps is a warrior, a winner and a focused professional. He's very anti-social on the coach - I sit next to him and it must be either my banter or the fact that he loves his films because he can't get his headphones on quickly enough! Has been a top performer this season.

ANDY FRAMPTON



AGE  
25  
APPS  
175  
GOALS  
7

DEFENDER



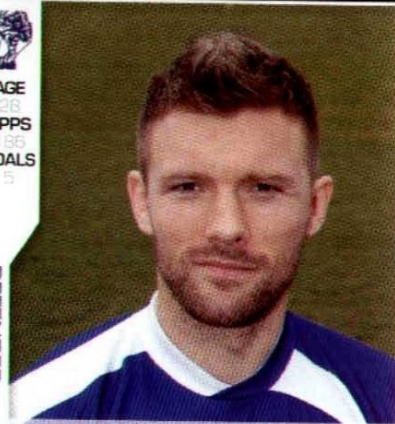
Tony is what you would class as a typical Millwall player: he's wholehearted, aggressive, strong, and wears his heart on his sleeve. But he does lack a certain style when it comes to his hair, and has been nicknamed Fluff by the players. All round, he is a good fella to have around the place.

TONY CRAIG



AGE  
28  
APPS  
186  
GOALS  
5

DEFENDER



It's great to see Darren's mullet has gone. He takes his own food everywhere he goes, and has been known to have a beer in one hand and a banana in the other on a night out. He's a quality defender and surely must be the only footballer to have ever owned a cattery.

DARREN WARD



AGE  
28  
APPS  
239  
GOALS  
17

DEFENDER



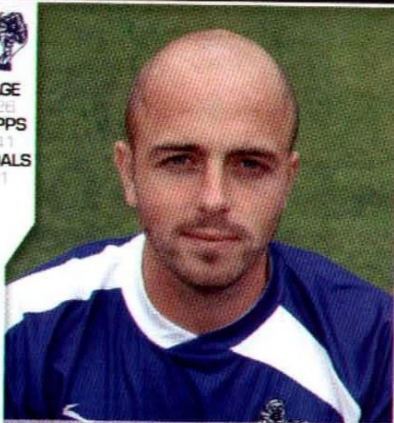
I've played with Robbo for nearly all my 10 seasons at Millwall. He's the club captain and he's a real winner, an ultimate professional on and off the field. My room-mate whenever we travel to away games, he makes a lousy cup of tea, snores and talks in his sleep.

PAUL ROBINSON



AGE  
26  
APPS  
41  
GOALS  
1

DEFENDER



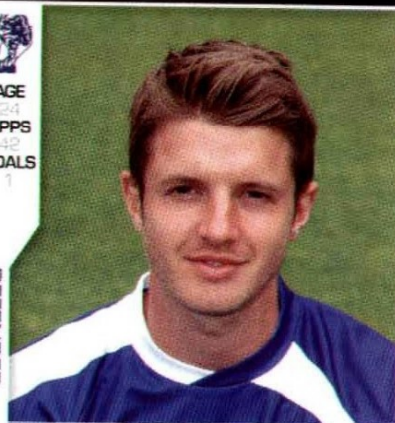
A lot of people think Jack's the elder statesman in the side by the way he looks. He isn't! He joined us from Swindon last summer and he will have a point to prove to Danny Wilson and the rest of the team after they let him go. He's come to Millwall and settled really well, having a good season.

JACK SMITH



AGE  
24  
APPS  
42  
GOALS  
1

DEFENDER




Is he a left-back or a left winger? He's been used in both positions this season and has always put a performance in. Scott's grown in stature, both as a player and a person this year. He's very popular in the dressing room and is good at finding a place in front of the mirror.


SCOTT BARRON



2010 PLAY-OFF FINAL






**AGE**  
30  
**APPS**  
41  
**GOALS**  
8  
**MIDFIELDER**



Danny's not often at the front of the queue to buy a beer – and that's if he's allowed out! Someone once saw a £5 note in his pocket on a piece of string. He's a terrifically talented player and has been a great addition to the squad. He's a key part of our game.


**DANNY SCHOFIELD**



**AGE**  
26  
**APPS**  
50  
**GOALS**  
5  
**MIDFIELDER**



'Eurostar' is possibly the nicest lad you'll meet in football. His energy and work-rate are phenomenal – he never stops running for 90 minutes. His family live in France, but he handles being alone superbly, never moans and just gets on with playing. Has had another good season.

**NADJIM ABDOU**


**AGE**  
27  
**APPS**  
22  
**GOALS**  
1  
**MIDFIELDER**



Trotts wears a pair of Rascal slippers on a night out, which people tell me passes for fashion nowadays. He has been a real presence in the side since he came in on loan from Ipswich Town just after Christmas. Another talented player who's got a huge future ahead of him.


**LIAM TROTTER**

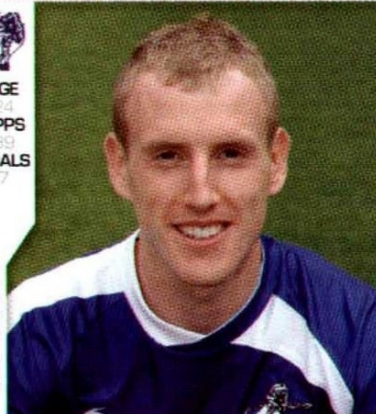

**AGE**  
27  
**APPS**  
115  
**GOALS**  
5  
**MIDFIELDER**



Recently became a father to daughter Amelia. Chris has had a testing time on and off the pitch this season, but his delivery from set-plays is second to none in this division. He's worked really hard and earned the respect of all the players. A good guy.


**CHRIS HACKETT**

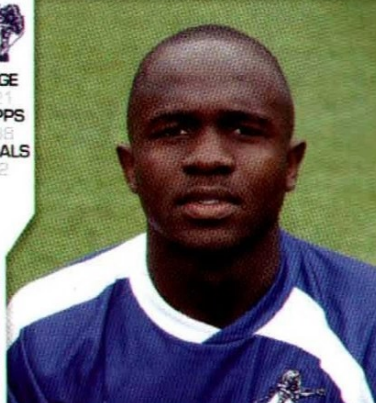

**AGE**  
24  
**APPS**  
80  
**GOALS**  
7  
**MIDFIELDER**



Laird's pure entertainment in the dressing room. He's a nice fella and a very talented footballer. You can never shut your eyes on the bus, or leave your hotel room door ajar, because I shudder to think what will happen if Laird's around. He's always on the look out for some banter.

**MARC LAIRD**


**AGE**  
27  
**APPS**  
66  
**GOALS**  
2  
**MIDFIELDER**



I'm not sure if Ali will be with us this afternoon because he'll probably be looking for his birth certificate – to prove we're all wrong because everyone thinks he's about 37! He has come in and done a good job when called upon and despite his age, has made a lot of appearances.

**ALI FUSEINI**

### MILLWALL LEGEND: HARRY CRIPPS

Given the rivalry between the clubs, it's not often, if ever, that a player has represented West Ham and gone on to become a legend at Millwall. Harry Cripps, though, is an exception to that rule. A left-back, Cripps came through the ranks at the Boleyn Ground alongside Bobby Moore, winning the FA Youth Cup in 1959. He soon joined the Lions in 1961, though, making the most of an injury to Johnny Gilchrist to establish himself. The fans loved him immediately – adoring his combative performances and no holds barred approach, a trait he displayed consistently during his 400 league appearances for the club.







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Julie, Billy, Tom & Louise of Block 8.....

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### Play-off semi-final (first leg): Huddersfield Town 0-0 Millwall

The only game to finish goalless in this season's play-offs, the semi-final first leg clash between Huddersfield Town and Millwall wasn't without its talking points.

The visitors had two penalty claims turned down, with Scott Barron's first-half shot appearing to strike the hand of Terriers defender Peter Clarke, while Barron later fell under a challenge from the defender as he dashed into the box.

By their own standards this year, though, it was a subdued performance from Kenny Jackett's side as they rarely threatened Alex Smithies in goal, although Neil Harris saw his second-half strike ruled out for handball.

Having finished in sixth place in League 1, Huddersfield were the underdogs, but they enjoyed the better chances with Jordan Rhodes and Daniel Drinkwater, on loan from Manchester United, coming close.

Rhodes saw an effort flash over the bar from six yards out after some good work on the wing from Lee Novak and Drinkwater's effort was expertly saved by David Forde.

Millwall finished the season with one of the best defensive records in the league and as the game wore on they showed just why, snuffing out the Terriers' threat without too much trouble.

"We defended well and we battled well," Kenny Jackett commented.

"It does bode well that we can put on that kind of performance. Everything goes on to the second leg and we'll see what we can do now.

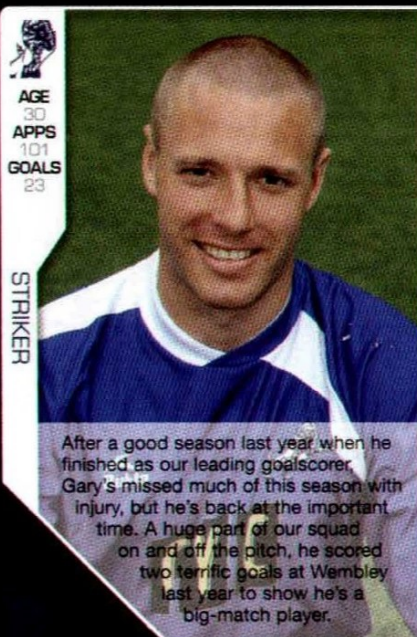
"There will be a good crowd and we need a very good performance to bring our fans into play.

"I'm pleased with the performance and commitment the players have shown. They were top class today and gave their all."



### MILLWALL LEGEND: KEITH STEVENS

A typically tough-tackling defender, Keith Stevens, or Rhino as he was known at The Den, was a mainstay in the Millwall defence for almost 20 years. Coming through the ranks at the club, he made his debut against Oxford United as a 16-year-old in 1981 and went on to make a further 462 appearances. He later took over from Billy Bonds as manager in 1996 and came close to getting the club promoted back to Division One in 2000, eventually losing to Wigan Athletic in the play-off semi-finals. Now involved with women's football in Australia, Stevens is currently the assistant coach of W-League outfit Brisbane Roar.

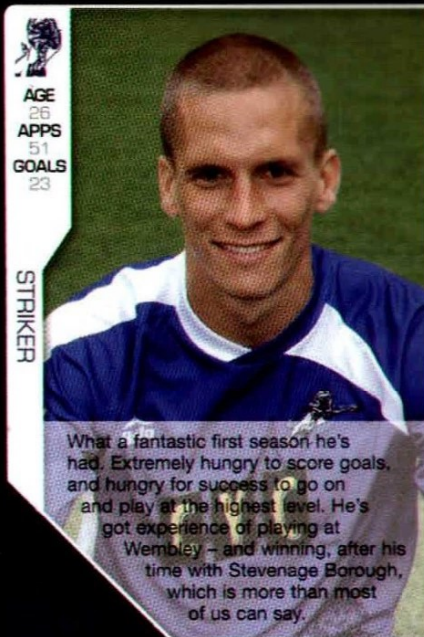


STRIKER

AGE  
30  
APPS  
101  
GOALS  
23

After a good season last year when he finished as our leading goalscorer, Gary's missed much of this season with injury, but he's back at the important time. A huge part of our squad on and off the pitch, he scored two terrific goals at Wembley last year to show he's a big-match player.

GARY ALEXANDER

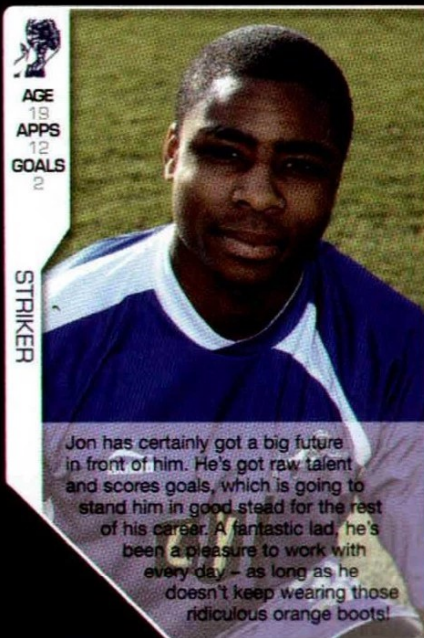


STRIKER

AGE  
26  
APPS  
51  
GOALS  
23

What a fantastic first season he's had. Extremely hungry to score goals, and hungry for success to go on and play at the highest level. He's got experience of playing at Wembley - and winning, after his time with Stevenage Borough, which is more than most of us can say.

STEVE MORISON



STRIKER

AGE  
19  
APPS  
12  
GOALS  
2

Jon has certainly got a big future in front of him. He's got raw talent and scores goals, which is going to stand him in good stead for the rest of his career. A fantastic lad, he's been a pleasure to work with every day - as long as he doesn't keep wearing those ridiculous orange boots!

JON OBIKA



# Play-off semi-final (second leg):

Millwall 2-0 Huddersfield Town

• (Millwall win 2-0 on aggregate)

Steve Morison and Paul Robinson proved to be Millwall's heroes as the pair fired the Lions back to Wembley for their second League 1 Play-Off Final in as many years.

With the first leg finishing goalless, the tie could have swayed in either team's favour, but it took just 23 minutes for Morison to set his team on their way when Terriers goalkeeper Alex Smithies parried a cross into his path, leaving Morison to tap home from eight yards into an empty net.

The former Stevenage striker has been terrific for the Lions this term, bagging 23 goals since his summer move from the Blue Square Premier.

Despite trailing, Huddersfield didn't let their heads dip and showed some signs of a comeback, especially from their set-pieces, which caused some uncomfortable moments in the Millwall penalty area.

As the game wore on, becoming more and more stretched, Scott Barron almost sealed it for the home side, but his shot smashed against the crossbar.

Robinson calmed Millwall's nerves in the 82nd minute, however, when he rose highest to head home the winner.

"I'm delighted, very proud, but that's half the job done," said a jubilant Kenny Jackett at the final whistle.

"The players put in a terrific performance and brought the crowd into play with their effort and application.

"Huddersfield are a very good team and you look at their average age and they will come again.

"To keep them to a clean sheet over 180 minutes is a great achievement, but we are only halfway there. We still need to go to Wembley and win against Swindon - and that's what we aim to do."

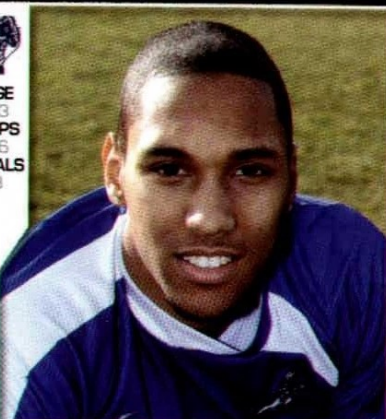


## MILLWALL LEGEND: TEDDY SHERINGHAM

Before the glory of lifting the UEFA Champions League with Manchester United in 1999, Teddy Sheringham had learnt his trade in south London with Millwall. The club had spotted him playing for non-League outfit Leytonstone & Ilford in 1982 and didn't wait too long before snapping him up as an apprentice. They say to start as you mean to go on and that's exactly what the youngster did, scoring in only his second appearance for the club. Becoming an overnight star, he formed a lethal partnership with Tony Cascarino that saw the Lions promoted to Division One for the first time in 1988. He made 220 league appearances, banging in 93 goals.

AGE  
23  
APPS  
16  
GOALS  
3

STRIKER

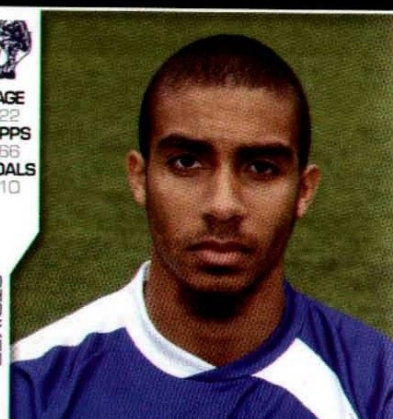


Batts might be a little bit too fast for his own good, for his own body, the way his hamstring has been going in the last few weeks. He's got pace to burn and has scored some really crucial goals. Having a player like him in the team gives us something different.

SHAUN BATT

AGE  
22  
APPS  
66  
GOALS  
10

STRIKER



Lewis has got pace in abundance and now he's got himself match-fit he looks much sharper. His beard has got longer, though, and he gets plenty of stick for it. Hopefully he'll get around to shaving it off before it reaches his knees. He's only young and has plenty of potential.

LEWIS GRABBAN

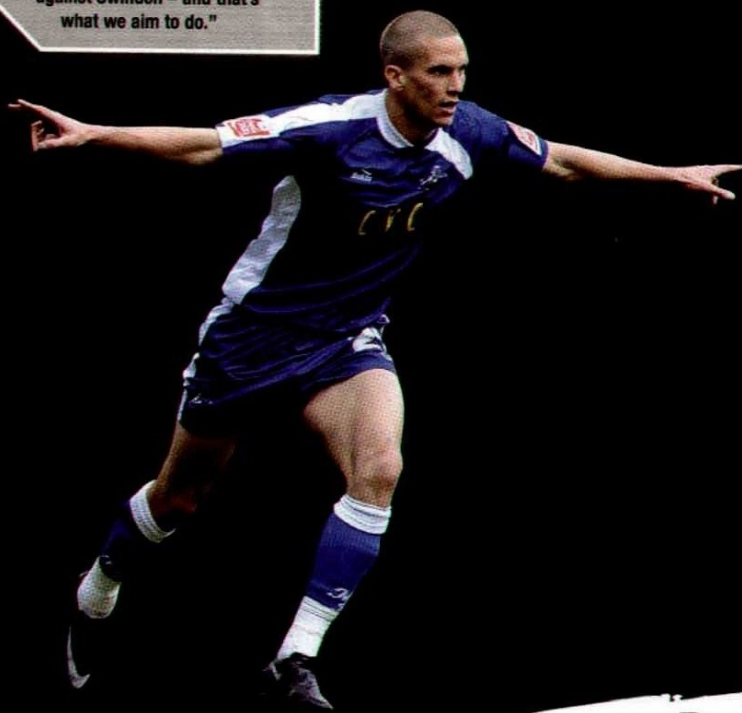
AGE  
32  
APPS  
399  
GOALS  
132

STRIKER



I'm hoping it's third time lucky this afternoon after two defeats in play-offs before. I'd love to score at Wembley in my 400th game for the club and success - to win a trophy for the club I love - would mean everything. I've been here a long time and it would be the icing on the cake.

NEIL HARRIS





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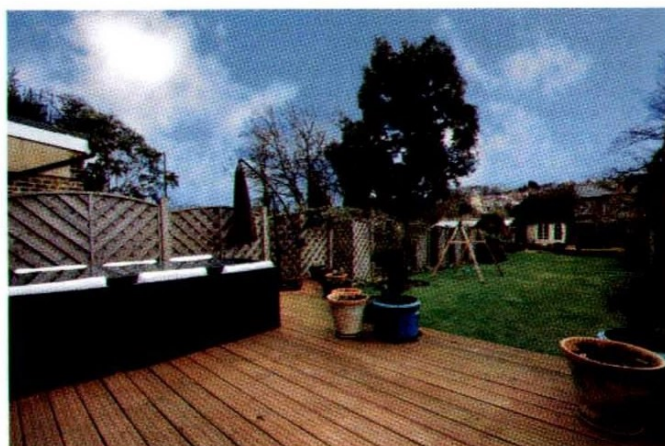
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**A**t the age of only 21, Stephen Darby doesn't have a lot of first-team experience against his name but what memories he already has! Brushes with Atletico Madrid, Fiorentina and PSV Eindhoven have lit up an Anfield senior career totalling only six appearances, he is a former FA Youth Cup winning captain and now he is at Wembley after despatching the penalty that has brought Swindon Town to the League 1 Play-Off Final. Win or lose today, it will all end for him in Wiltshire this week when he returns to Merseyside following a highly eventful two-and-a-half months on loan.

But, for as long as he lives, he will remember the moment he had the decisive last say at the business end of the shoot-out at The Valley 12 days ago.

He had missed one or two spot-kicks in practice that week but you wouldn't have guessed that by the way he side-footed low into one corner while Charlton goalkeeper Darren Randolph dived the other way.

"I volunteered for the penalty," said Darby, who celebrated by jumping into the arms of Swindon keeper Phil Smith. "I didn't need to be asked to take it and I didn't mind that it was our fifth one – and possibly the most vital.

"You always want to make a mark on games and I'd never taken a penalty in professional football, let alone scored a goal at first-team level, so I'm sure I raised a few eyebrows.

"A couple of things hadn't gone for us, with losing David Lucas to an injury and then having Gordon Greer sent off, but the spirit here is fantastic and you could see from the celebrations how much winning meant to us as well as to the supporters."

Darby doesn't appear to faze easily. In days gone by, young players might have grown up cleaning the boots of players like Steven Gerrard and Fernando Torres. Such chores now rest elsewhere but he has shared a dressing room with them and has sampled a taste at the top table.

Having been presented with the first of Liverpool's two successive FA Youth Cups in 2006, he received the Premier League reserve trophy at Anfield and made his Premier League debut against Tottenham in November 2008.

He was then praised by no less an authority than Jamie Carragher when following up with his FA Cup debut in the draw at Reading this winter.

As a Swindon player, the former England Under-19 international has already comfortably passed his total of six Liverpool appearances and he is determined to return to his home city walking tall.

"We showed great character to come through the second leg of the semi-final but the job isn't done and we knew we couldn't let ourselves get carried away. We have one more huge game to come and we have to stick together and try to pull through again."



**STEPHEN DARBY**

POSITION DEFENDER D.O.B 06/10/1988  
2009/10 APPS 17 2009/10 GOALS 0  
SIGNED MARCH 2010 (LOAN)  
NATIONALITY ENGLISH



# DARBY DAY

On loan from Liverpool, young right-back Stephen Darby wants to give Swindon Town the leaving present of promotion before he returns to Anfield

WORDS DAVID INSTONE







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MILLWALL  
PAUL ROBINSON



# ROBBO

After four failed attempts at winning the play-offs, Millwall's Paul Robinson says the players must forget about the past and concentrate on achieving promotion at Wembley

WORDS: MARTIN SMITH

**P**aul Robinson has been at The Den long enough to know the full horror of Millwall's record in The Football League's promotion play-offs. The word 'jinxed' is an understatement.

Four times before, three of them attempting to reach the top division, then last season at this same stage in the League 1 Final, Millwall have tried and failed. It is a record remarkable for its awfulness.

In 2002, the young trainee Robinson was only months away from making his first-team debut when Millwall succumbed to Birmingham City in the First Division semi-final; last year injury prevented him making more than a cameo appearance as Millwall finally reached a Play-Off Final, only to lose a rousing encounter with Scunthorpe United.

"I know people keep mentioning the past," says the Millwall captain, "but that can't affect what's going to happen against Swindon Town. All we can affect is what's going to happen in the future and work hard towards it.

"Mind you, after last season, we'll be doubly determined. There's a great opportunity for every player here to make a name for himself by being part of the first team at the club to be successful in the play-offs.

"There was a lot of hurt here last year.

Even though it was an achievement to get to the Final, our aim was to get promoted and we didn't achieve that. Our aim is still the same and we'll be looking to go one better this time.

"The manager [Kenny Jackett] spoke exceptionally well after last year's Final. It was a difficult time because emotions were raw. But he spoke passionately about using that anger and that hurt to drive us on this year.

"Although we had a slow start to the season, I believe that was more down to injuries and disruption to the team than any hangover from the Final. You can see since Christmas how we've pushed on. Now we've got a second opportunity. It's great to play in a stadium like Wembley, but it will be even nicer to win there."



2010 PLAY-OFF FINAL



# REFLECTS

For Robinson, it is a chance to right a wrong: he was part of the squad relegated from the Championship in 2006 after more than two decades out of the third tier.

"The relegation season was my first season playing week-in, week-out. It was bitter-sweet for me really: I was pleased I'd played so many games, but it was also a very, very bitter pill to swallow after we'd been relegated. It was hard for the players to take in, so to be the one to lead us back up will be some kind of payback."

Apart from coming on in the 86th minute of last season's semi-final second leg at Leeds, and the 90th minute at Wembley, Robinson was missing from the heart of Millwall's defence through injuries from January to October last year.

He has played every possible minute since then and capped another season of whole-hearted and committed performances with the second goal in last week's semi-final against Huddersfield Town at The Den, a powerful header at the far post from a corner.

"This season's squad is definitely stronger than last year," he says. "We've got the best defensive record in the league, and two excellent strikers in Neil Harris and Steve Morison, who have both contributed around 20 goals – last season our top scorer got 11 over the 46 regulation games. We have strengthened and improved. We're a stronger club and a better side as a result."

"The team spirit and camaraderie is also the best I've been part of. Everyone's willing to work hard for each other. Of course, a winning team breeds confidence in one another and builds good relationships. If there's trust among you, you know if you make a mistake your team-mate is going to help you out. And you're desperate to help him if he makes a mistake."

Nowhere is that better exemplified than at the back where Robinson and central-defensive partner Darren Ward have been reunited. "It's been a pleasure to play alongside Wardy again, we've built up a good relationship and that's been the bedrock of our team: defensively we don't give a lot away and teams have to work hard to get anything from us."

While the league meeting with Swindon Town three weeks ago – which Millwall won 3-2 to secure third place – is largely irrelevant in terms of today's match, Robinson says: "It is fresh in the memory and it was pleasing to beat them. But all it will give is an idea of what Swindon are about and what their players are capable of."

"They've got a very good strike-force, they're a good attacking team and they play football. It's going to be a hard afternoon's work for us, but we'll relish the challenge."

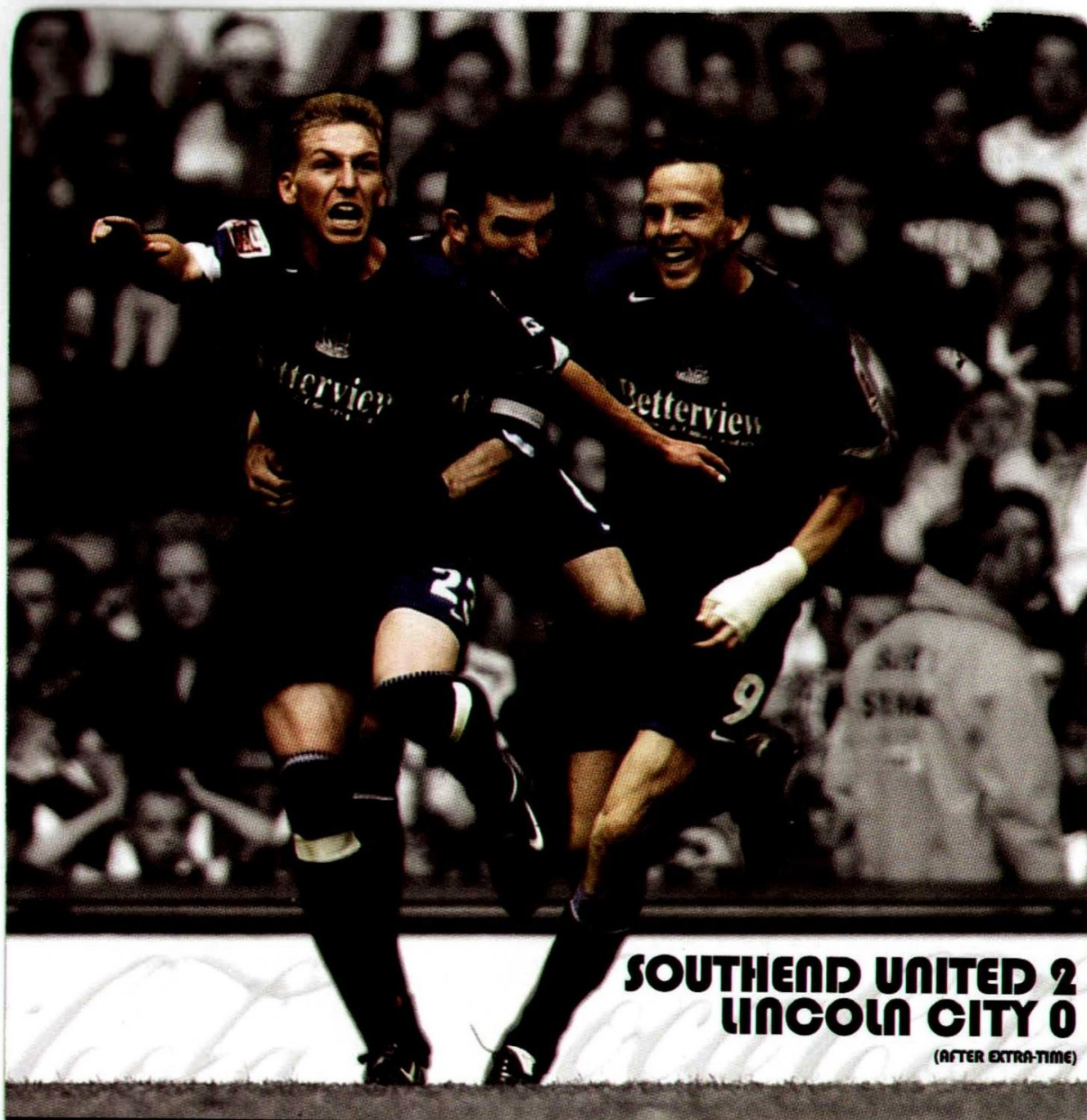
To lead the team out at Wembley will mean everything to Robinson. "It's what you dream of as a child growing up. You want to play at Wembley and to captain the lads, lead them out, will be an honour and a privilege." Overturning the jinx will make the captain a Millwall immortal.



## PAUL ROBINSON

POSITION DEFENDER D.O.B 07/01/1982  
2009/10 APPS 42 2009/10 GOALS 6  
SIGNED AUGUST 2001  
NATIONALITY ENGLISH





**SOUTHEND UNITED 2  
LINCOLN CITY 0**

(AFTER EXTRA-TIME)

## PLAY-OFF FINAL MOMENTS **FREDDY EASTWOOD, 28 MAY 2005**

**“** I joined Southend on loan from Grays Athletic in October of 2005, so for me it was a real achievement to leave a non-league club and play in The Football League. I started scoring a few goals for the Shrimpers and despite other clubs showing an interest, I wanted to stay.

I settled in really quickly at Roots Hall, but to go to the Millennium Stadium and win the League 2 Play-Off Final to get promoted was the best thing I'd ever achieved in my career at the time. I was rejected by West Ham United as a kid, so to come back and make a name for myself on the big stage was a fantastic feeling. It made it all the more special because all my family were there watching me.

It was a tense game and it finished 0-0 after 90 minutes. Lincoln City

were a very big side and had about five players over 6ft 2in, so we were particularly worried about them at set-pieces because we weren't the biggest, although we were a good counter-attacking side.

As it turned out my goal came from a corner about halfway through extra-time. My strike seemed to settle us down and not long after I played Duncan Jupp through for our second goal.

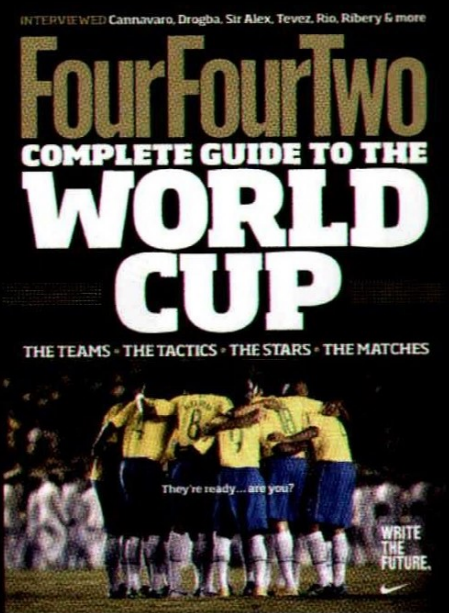
The emotions after the game were unbelievable. I feel my achievements that season, in scoring 24 goals, really set me on my way in my career. I went into the next season feeling really confident, scored 25 goals and helped us get promoted to the Championship. Everything I've achieved in my career seemed to snowball from that one play-off campaign.

**”**



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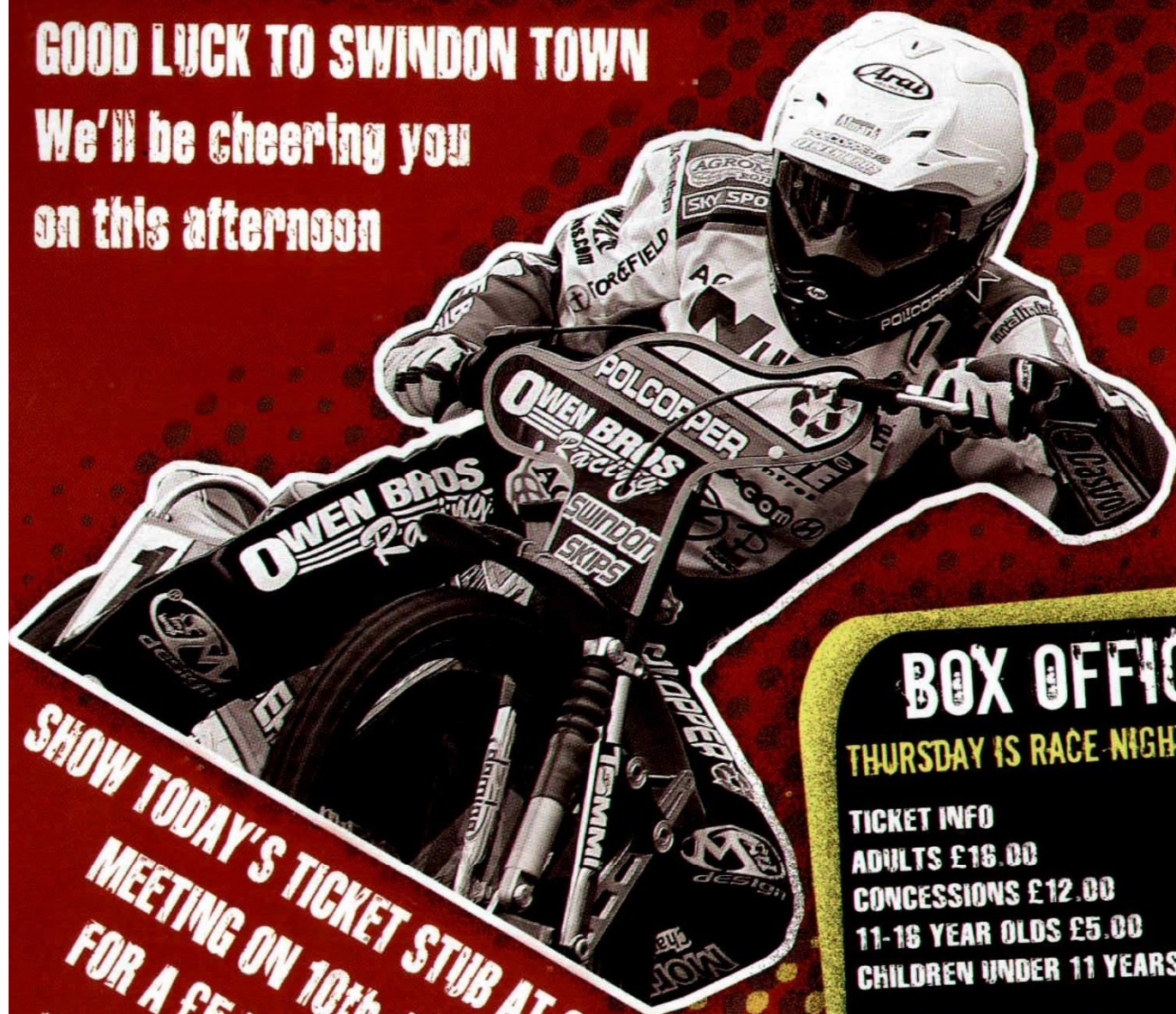




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**P**romotion to the Championship is the ultimate aim this afternoon, but for many players – including Swindon midfield orchestrator Jonathan Douglas – there are ghosts that need to be laid to rest.

Douglas, along with the Millwall players who were on this same stage 12 months ago, has recently experienced play-off pain.

The Republic of Ireland midfielder captained Leeds United in 2008 in this Final when they lost to a Doncaster Rovers side featuring his current team-mate, Gordon Greer.

Last year, Douglas was again on the losing side when today's opponents knocked Leeds out of the semi-finals. Millwall had their day in the sun at Wembley but it ended in heartache as Scunthorpe United overturned a 2-1 deficit to win 3-2.

"It's not nice getting all the way to the Final and losing, especially by a single goal," explains Douglas. "'Gordy' was at Doncaster at the time and I saw him after the game and he was buzzing, and rightly so. Hopefully the two of us can be celebrating together this time.

"This is the third consecutive year I have been involved in the play-offs and they are exciting games. Winning at Wembley is a great achievement, but I am yet to experience that. Hopefully this is my chance."

Douglas has been an instrumental part of the Robins' most seminal moments since switching from Elland Road last summer. A class act who retains possession and who can dictate the ebb and flow of a game, he's played 49 games in total and is second only to Jon-Paul McGovern in terms of Swindon appearances this season.

His growing collection of Player of the Year awards are testament to his popularity with many fans describing him as the central midfield player the club has been missing for years. The only minor detail eluding Douglas in his successful sojourn in SN1 so far is a goal in Swindon colours. "It would be nice if it came at Wembley!" he laughs. "But to be honest I don't care if I don't score as long as we win."

To do that, Douglas and his team will have to negotiate their way past a Millwall side who beat them only three weeks ago. Douglas was involved in Millwall's equaliser, making the challenge that saw the Lions awarded a penalty after Danny Ward had given the visitors an early lead. It was a rare misjudgement from a player who hasn't really put a foot wrong all season.

With Douglas' help, Swindon have gone under the radar for much of the campaign. Even at The Valley, despite a 2-1 lead from the first leg, many predicted that it would be Charlton who would emerge victorious. Danny Wilson's team rose to the occasion, something they've managed several times this season, most notably in doing the double over Leeds and Southampton, and Douglas is confident they can do it one more time.

"On our day we are capable of beating any side in the division and that's why we have reached this stage. I think we play better when teams attack us. We've just got to go into the game believing that we are going to win. It's what we've done all year."

# THIRD TIME LUCKY

Jonathan Douglas is looking to put consecutive play-off defeats behind him and make three the magic number

WORDS: NICK JUDD



## JONATHAN DOUGLAS

POSITION MIDFIELDER D.O.B 22/11/1981  
2009/10 APPS 49 2009/10 GOALS 0  
SIGNED JULY 2009  
NATIONALITY IRISH





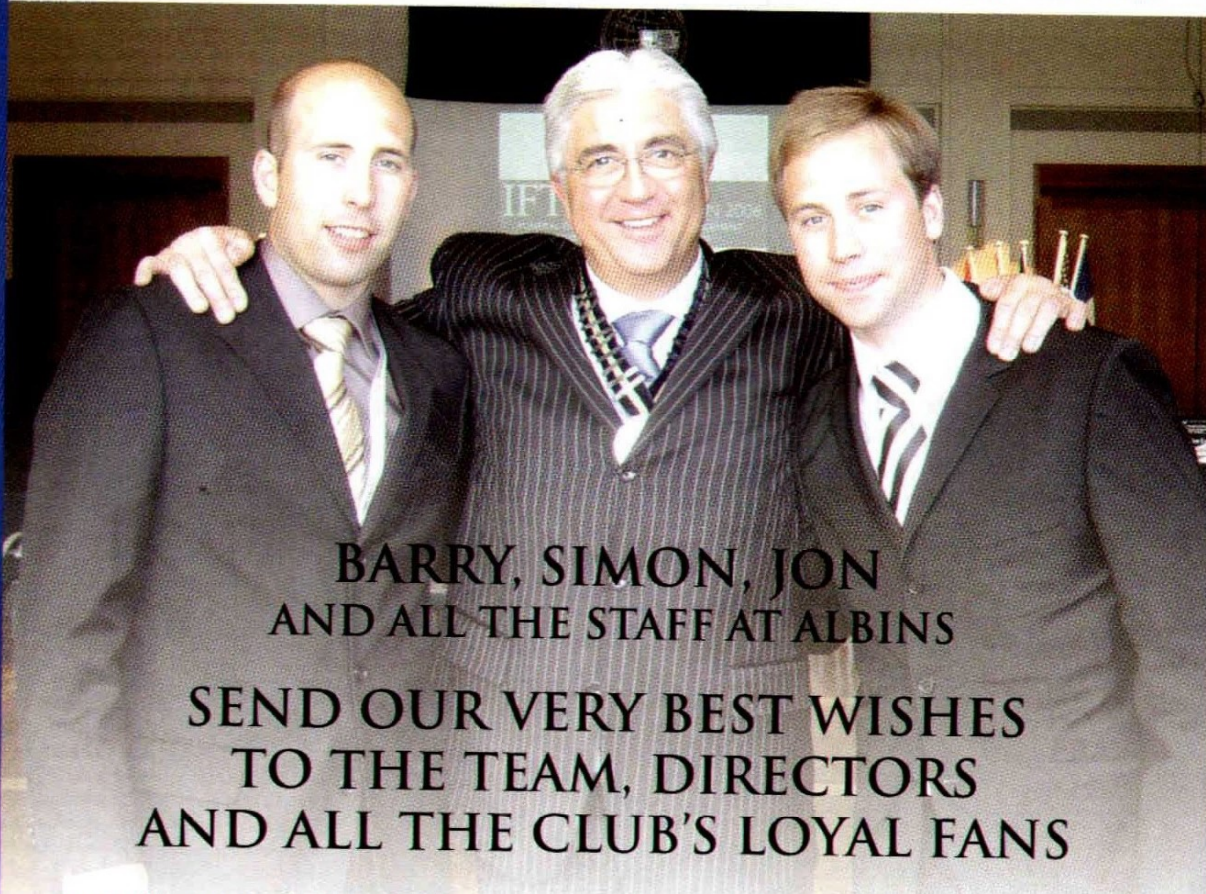
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**M**illwall goalkeeper David Forde admits the fear of failure will be his motivation as he aims to banish the ghosts of last season's Play-Off Final heartache.

Twelve months after Forde and his Lions team-mates suffered the unbearable agony that defeat in this fixture guarantees, the Irishman is determined to ensure this afternoon's script has a different conclusion for Kenny Jackett's men.

"I never want to feel the way I did after that Wembley defeat last May," states the goalkeeper, who was left heartbroken as three goals flew past him with Scunthorpe United coming from 2-1 down to celebrate a memorable triumph. "You walk off the pitch in the last game of the season and the empty feeling inside is impossible to cope with.

"Different people might deal with a big setback better than I do, but my emotions were all over the place for a few weeks and I have to admit the Scunthorpe defeat ruined my summer. It was hard to think about anything else when you have got so close to promotion and the desire to get back to this position has driven us on all season."

Even though it was impossible for Forde and his team-mates to find any consolation after that defeat, he believes the lessons learnt from that fateful afternoon can now work in Millwall's favour as they prepare to take on Swindon Town.

"I'm convinced the experiences of last year can help us this time. The build-up to the game was a long and draining affair, but the manager has made sure we treat this year's Final as if it is a normal league game.

"Being familiar with Wembley should also give us a little edge over Swindon, but we realise they are going to be tough opponents. We only played them in the league a couple of weeks back and won a tight game 3-2, so hopefully we can get the same outcome today without all the nerves."

A quick return to the Championship was Forde's aim when he joined Millwall from Cardiff City a couple of years ago and while he is now a mere 90 minutes away from achieving his target, the 30-year-old from Galway admits his two seasons as a Lion – in which he has played all 97 league fixtures, including play-off games – have been the highlight of his career whatever the outcome of the Wembley Stadium showdown.

"There is an Irish tradition running through

# FORDE FIESTA

Millwall goalkeeper David Forde is desperate to avoid the play-off heartache he experienced last May

WORDS: KEVIN PALMER



**DAVID FORDE**

POSITION GOALKEEPER D.O.B 20/12/1979  
2009/10 APPS 55 CLEAN SHEETS 17  
SIGNED JUNE 2008  
NATIONALITY IRISH

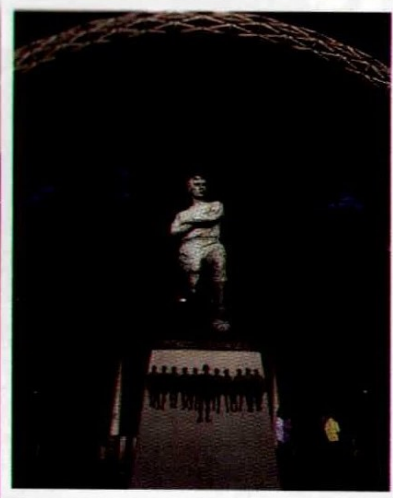


Millwall with Mick McCarthy having been manager here a few years back and plenty of connections since then. Maybe that's why I felt at home from the moment I walked through the door and hopefully this is the day when two years of hard work gives us some reward.

"Millwall is a club with a fantastically loyal fan base and our semi-final win against Huddersfield Town was a great example of what we are all about when our supporters are behind us. Our crowd makes a noise like no other, so we have to make sure they are singing at the end of this game."

A second successive miserable summer is not an option worth contemplating for Forde and Millwall, so they have to ensure they are Wembley winners at last this afternoon.





# WEMBLEY STADIUM RULES

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

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- In the event of an emergency you will hear a message over the public address system – please listen to the message carefully and follow the instructions of Wembley staff. Evacuation of the stadium is a last resort and we may ask you to move from your immediate area initially.
- Please remain vigilant at all times and report anything that you consider suspicious to a member of Wembley staff.
- The use of threatening behaviour, foul or abusive language is strictly forbidden and will result in arrest and/or ejection from the ground. Wembley Stadium may impose a ban from the ground as a result.

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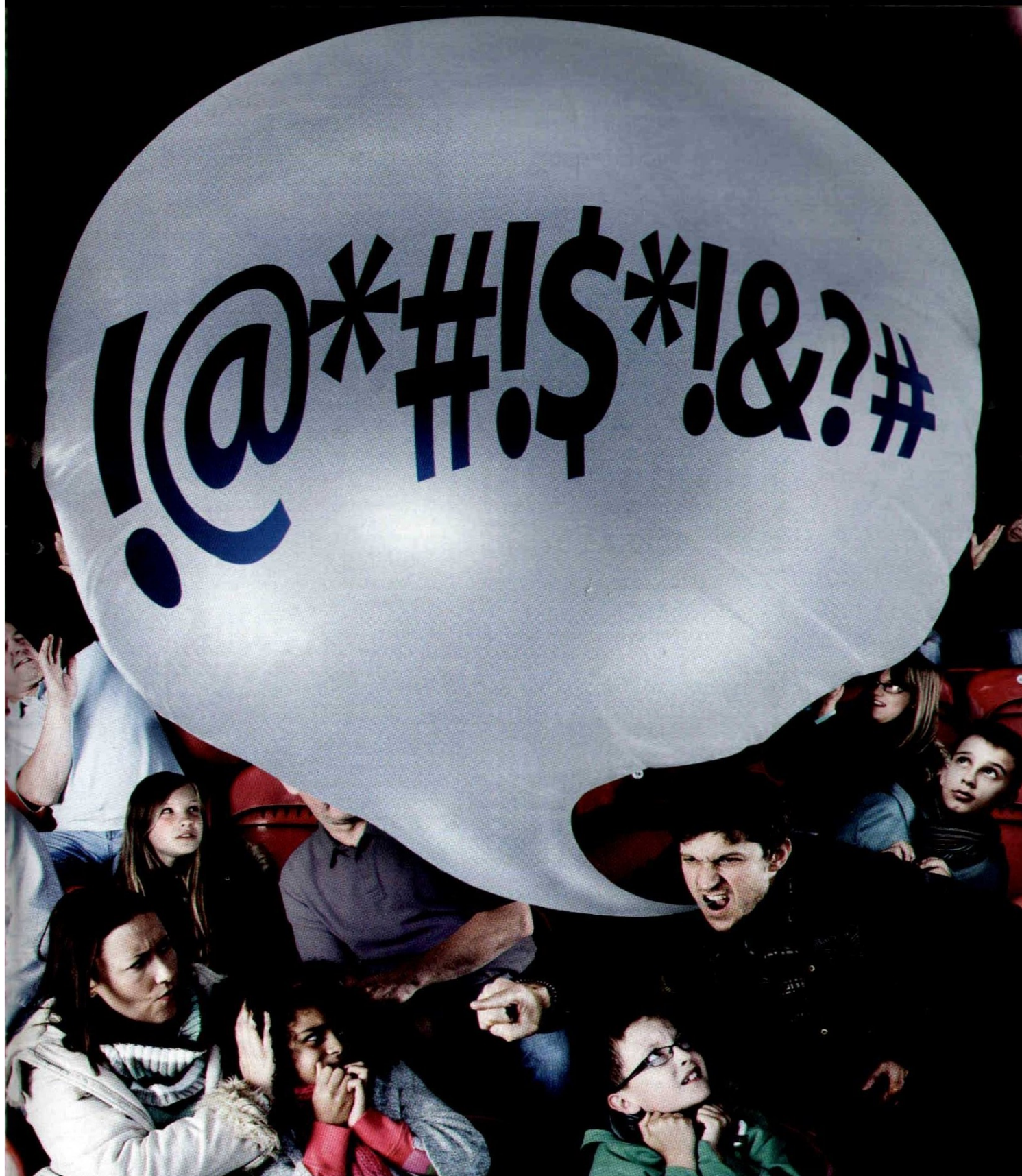
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3. WNSL reserves the right to reschedule events without notice and without liability.
4. If an event is postponed or abandoned, contact event organisers for refunds.
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6. Prohibited articles are knives, fireworks, air-horns, weapons, flares, dangerous or hazardous items, bottles, laser devices, glass vessels, and any article that might be used as a weapon.
7. Threatening behaviour, racial abuse, throwing objects, entry onto the playing area, and foul or abusive language is forbidden. Conviction may result in a Banning Order.
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9. Nobody may stand in any seating area during play.
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20. WNSL reserves the right to eject from the ground any person failing to comply with any of the Stadium Regulations.



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KENNY JACKETT

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- 3 Andy **FRAMPTON**
- 5 Paul **ROBINSON**
- 7 Danny **SCHOFIELD**
- 8 Gary **ALEXANDER**
- 9 Neil **HARRIS**
- 10 Lewis **GRABBAN**
- 12 Chris **HACKETT**
- 13 John **SULLIVAN**
- 15 Tony **CRAIG**
- 16 Scott **BARRON**
- 18 Darren **WARD**
- 19 Ashley **GRIMES**
- 20 Steve **MORISON**
- 21 Jack **SMITH**
- 22 Ali **FUSEINI**
- 23 Jason **PRICE**
- 24 Marc **LAIRD**
- 25 Shaun **BATT**
- 26 Nadjim **ABDOU**
- 30 Jonathan **OBIKA**
- 34 John **MARQUIS**
- 40 Liam **TROTTER**

## SWINDON TOWN

**MANAGER**  
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- 1 David **LUCAS**
- 2 Scott **CUTHBERT**
- 3 Alan **SHEEHAN**
- 4 Jonathan **DOUGLAS**
- 5 Vincent **PERICARD**
- 6 Gordon **GREER**
- 7 Jon-Paul **MCGOVERN**
- 8 Craig **EASTON**
- 9 Frank **NOUBLE**
- 10 Michael **TIMLIN**
- 12 Phil **SMITH**
- 14 Sean **MORRISON**
- 15 Kevin **AMANKWAH**
- 17 Callum **KENNEDY**
- 18 Alan **O'BRIEN**
- 19 Lescinel **JEAN-FRANCOIS**
- 20 Billy **PAYNTER**
- 21 Stephen **DARBY**
- 22 Lloyd **MACKLIN**
- 23 Nathan **THOMPSON**
- 24 Danny **WARD**
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