



**FINAL
2012**



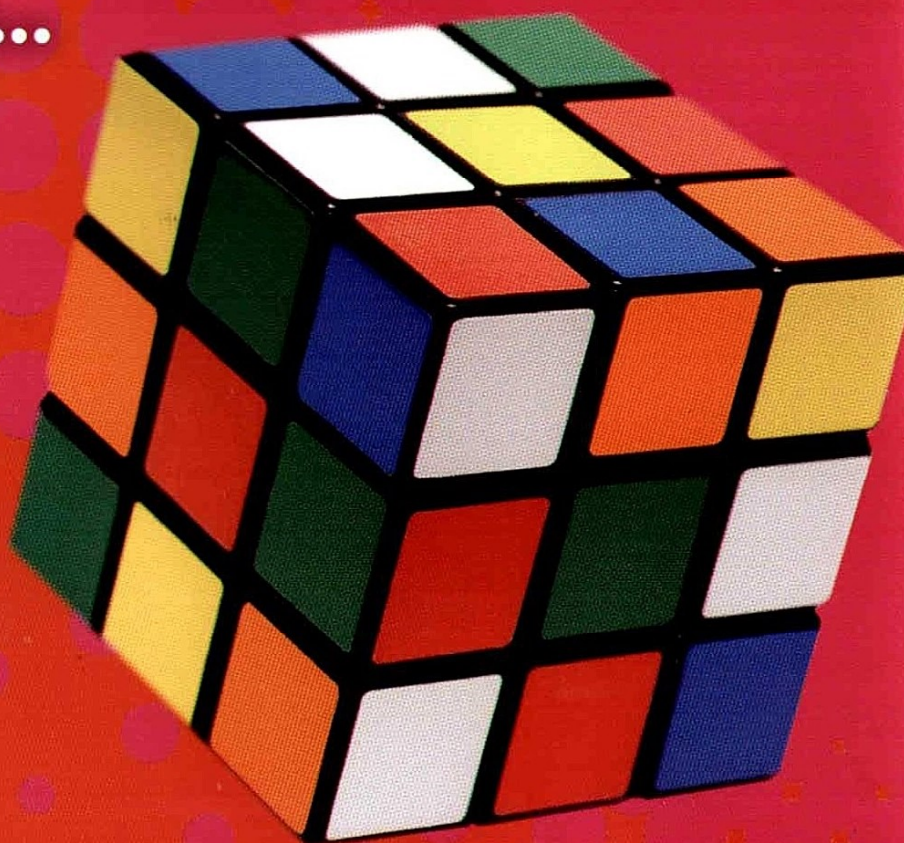
Chesterfield v Swindon Town
25th March 2012, Wembley Stadium, Kick Off 2.00pm

Official Matchday Programme £5.00



1983

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is produced by event360 on behalf of
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ORDER OF *EVENTS*

11.30am **TURNSTILES OPEN**
Pre-match entertainment commences

12.00pm **NPOWER FOOTBALL LEAGUE GIRLS CUP FINAL**
All Hallows Catholic School, Farnham (representing Aldershot Town)
v Whitby High School, Whitby (representing Tranmere Rovers)

12.40pm **JOHNSTONE'S PAINT SIX-A-SIDE FINAL**
Endura Athletic v Stormshield United

1.10pm **PLAYERS WARM UP**

1.50pm **TEAMS ENTER THE STADIUM**
Presentation of the teams and match officials to:
Steve Pocock, General Manager, Johnstone's Paints
Greg Clarke, Chairman, The Football League
Maxine Trotter, Director of Fundraising, Help The Hospices

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM
Led by Olivia Safe

2.00pm **KICK-OFF**

2.45pm **HALF-TIME**
Johnstone's Paint Penalty Shoot-Out featuring Dave Beasant,
followed by Take It Like A Fan Penalty Kick

3.00pm **SECOND HALF**

3.45pm **END OF MATCH***

Presentation of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy and medals by:
Steve Pocock, General Manager, Johnstone's Paints

*In the event of the scores remaining level after 90 minutes, half an hour of extra-time will be
played. Should the scores remain level at the end of extra-time, the winner will be determined 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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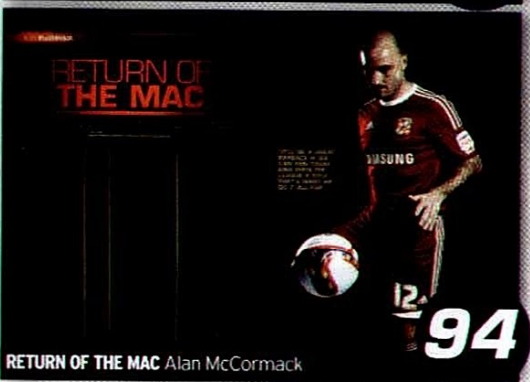
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TALKING TACTICS With Lawrie Sanchez and Paul Dickov



LAST CHANCE SALOON Jack Lester

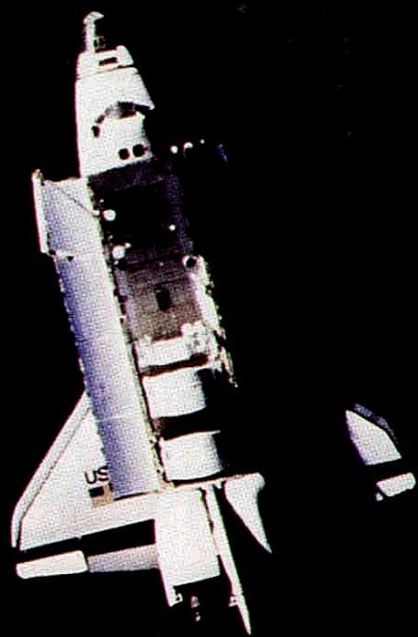


RETURN OF THE MAC Alan McCormack

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1992

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Greg Clarke,
CHAIRMAN, THE
FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Welcome to the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final 2012 between Chesterfield and Swindon Town. This afternoon's match is the 29th Final of a competition that every season excites thousands of fans across the country.

Today, more than 45,000 supporters are expected here at Wembley Stadium, all hoping their club can carve out a piece of cup glory at the home of football.

The continued appeal of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy is testament to the depth and strength of English professional football. There is no other country in the world

where a match between clubs from the third and fourth tiers of their domestic game could boast such dedicated support. Long may that be the case.

Both our finalists have made history by reaching this Final for the first time ever and it gives me great pleasure to welcome their directors, management and players. I hope you have a fantastic day and take home many happy memories, regardless of the result.

Chesterfield manager John Sheridan is no stranger to cup finals at Wembley, having scored the winning goal in the 1991 League Cup Final for Sheffield Wednesday. No doubt he will use all his experience to prepare his players for the Spireites' first visit to the new Wembley.

His opposite number, Paolo Di Canio has transferred the passion and ability he showed as a player into the Swindon Town dugout, taking the Robins to the top of League 2 in the process. Victory today could be the start of a memorable double in his first season in club management.

I would like to thank our sponsor Johnstone's Paints for the outstanding support they give this competition. In December, we announced a three-year renewal of their sponsorship. This extends their association with this competition to nine years - the longest sponsorship in its history. On behalf of League 1 and League 2 clubs, I offer my gratitude for their ongoing commitment.

I would also like to wish good luck to All Hallows Catholic School and Whitby High School who will contest the npower Football League Girls Cup Final ahead of kick-off. I am sure the teams, who are representing Aldershot Town and Tranmere Rovers respectively, will enjoy a truly unforgettable day.

Most importantly of all, I extend my thanks to you, the fans. Your support throughout the season is vital to your club and the ongoing success of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy. I hope your team does you proud.

ENJOY THE MATCH.

WELCOME TO WEMBLEY

The Football League and Johnstone's Paints wish to extend a warm welcome to the directors, management, players and supporters of both Chesterfield and Swindon Town



Steve Pocock,
GENERAL
MANAGER,
JOHNSTONE'S
PAINTS

In footballing terms, the Johnstone's Paint brand might just be referred to as a 'seasoned veteran' when it comes to Wembley finals like this.

We are certainly old hands in welcoming the players, officials and fans of the two Johnstone's Paint Trophy finalist teams and it is a privilege we always take great pleasure in.

So on behalf of Johnstone's Paints, we extend the warmest welcome possible to everyone associated with Chesterfield and Swindon Town today.

To reach the Final of this great competition is no mean feat and while there is an iconic piece of silverware at stake, we hope that both sets of supporters can enjoy a day to remember at the home of football - whatever the result.

While 25 March has been a red letter

date in the diary of every Chesterfield and Swindon Town fan, our road to Wembley actually began in the summer of 2011, when we first kicked off an action packed calendar of activities.

From August right through to today's Final, our ongoing goal has been to 'bring colour to the beautiful game.'

With so many success stories underpinning the 2011/12 sponsorship - from our Ultimate Finish competitions to our Just Rewards incentives - we are delighted to have hit our target.

If the Johnstone's Paints brand remembers the season for one reason alone, then it will be for the announcement made in December, when we extended our sponsorship of The Football League Trophy for a further three years.

Taking our involvement with the competition up until 2015 has been one of our biggest highlights to date, allowing us to interact with thousands more fans along the way.

Our sponsorship has created a huge buzz across our network of decorating centres along with thousands of independent stockists, who are proud to be part of the beautiful game.

We have calculated that more than seven million fans have watched

Johnstone's Paint Trophy matches - in grounds and on television - since our sponsorship began in 2006 and we have also engaged with up to two million people through numerous community projects undertaken during that time.

With facts like these, it is easy to see why we are so thrilled to be at the heart of domestic football for a further three years. But back to today's Final and the feast of football that awaits.

The last time a League 2 side went head to head with League 1 opposition in the Trophy Final, Scunthorpe were limbering up to play Luton Town in 2009.

A five goal thriller like three years ago is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility and if today's fixture is anything like that, we'll be in for an afternoon to remember.

Despite competing in different divisions, the game could barely be more difficult to predict, which should make for a fantastic day of entertainment.

Again, on behalf of everyone at Johnstone's Paints, we hope you enjoy the game and make as much noise as we heard at the b2net Stadium and County Ground when we visited last month.

ENJOY THE GAME.

THE HISTORY BOYS

Today marks Chesterfield and Swindon Town's first appearance in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final, but who will be writing their name into the record books come full-time today?



WORDS: DAVID McVAY,
DAILY TELEGRAPH

The phrase 'ships that pass in the night' has surely never been more appropriate to the contestants of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final than it is today.

Just under a year ago, Swindon Town were anchored at the foot of the table destined for relegation while the team one rung below them in the domestic ladder and about to replace them were celebrating as champions of League 2. That was Chesterfield. That was last season.

Yet confirmation that the sporting fates can be fickle at best came earlier this month when those positions were reversed precisely. Paolo Di Canio's rejuvenated Swindon appear to be sailing on the crest of a wave back to the higher level, while their opponents this afternoon are taking on water in the division above as they battle to avoid dropping out of League 1.

And it is those diametrically opposed aspirations and fortunes that lends additional intrigue to what has become an essential landmark event on the football calendar this afternoon. The appeal of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy certainly does not appear to have waned during its various guises over three decades as the crowd of 10,406 that reverberated around the County Ground when Swindon clinched this appointment will testify.

A narrow 1-0 win over a plucky Barnet was sufficient in the Southern Area Final yet even that figure did not quite achieve pole position in the competition's attendance chart this year. That

belonged to Huddersfield Town who attracted 83 more football fans through the turnstiles for a small matter of West Yorkshire pride and prejudice against Bradford City at the Galpharm Stadium on a bitterly cold October night.

Chesterfield mustered just under 6,000 at their more compact b2net Stadium in the first of their two-legged triumph over Oldham Athletic and their successful progress means there are two newcomers to the ultimate stage of this prestigious trophy.

Novices in that respect, perhaps, but both Chesterfield and Swindon are no strangers to Wembley and, if delving a little deeper, have more in common than meets the eye initially.

For example, it might surprise some, given the humbler ambitions and resources available, that each team has contested an FA Youth Cup final, normally the preserve of the top flight's rich and famous elite since its inception nearly 60 years ago.

Chesterfield were the first to sustain a passage to the final in 1956 where they were beaten 4-3 over two legs by a Manchester United team brimming with Busby Babes including Alex Dawson, Wilf McGuinness and most notably Bobby Charlton. Still, the man later to be knighted Sir Bobby was not the only player destined for England immortality on the team sheets.

Between the sticks for Chesterfield, probably donning flat cap and rain-sodden green jersey, was a young goalkeeper called Gordon Banks, doubtless an influential reason why Chesterfield had, briefly, traded blows with Old Trafford's finest in the mid-Fifties.

2000

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Bringing **colour** to
the beautiful game

INTRODUCTION

PREVIOUS WINNERS

2010/11 Carlisle United 1-0 Brentford
 2009/10 Southampton 4-1 Carlisle United
 2008/09 Luton Town 3-2 Scunthorpe United*
 2007/08 Milton Keynes Dons 2-0 Grimsby Town
 2006/07 Doncaster Rovers 3-2 Bristol Rovers*
 2005/06 Swansea City 2-1 Carlisle United
 2004/05 Wrexham 2-0 Southend United*
 2003/04 Blackpool 2-0 Southend United
 2002/03 Bristol City 2-0 Carlisle United
 2001/02 Blackpool 4-1 Cambridge United
 2000/01 Port Vale 2-1 Brentford
 1999/00 Stoke City 2-1 Bristol City
 1998/99 Wigan Athletic 1-0 Millwall
 1997/98 Grimsby Town 2-1 Bournemouth
 1996/97 Carlisle United 0-0 Colchester United*
 (Carlisle win 4-3 on penalties)
 1995/96 Rotherham United 2-1 Shrewsbury Town
 1994/95 Birmingham City 1-0 Carlisle United*
 1993/94 Swansea City 1-1 Huddersfield Town*
 (Swansea win 3-1 on penalties)
 1992/93 Port Vale 2-1 Stockport County
 1991/92 Stoke City 1-0 Stockport County
 1990/91 Birmingham City 3-2 Tranmere Rovers
 1989/90 Tranmere Rovers 2-1 Bristol Rovers
 1988/89 Bolton Wanderers 4-1 Torquay United
 1987/88 Wolverhampton Wanderers 2-0 Burnley
 1986/87 Mansfield Town 1-1 Bristol City*
 (Mansfield win 4-3 on penalties)
 1985/86 Bristol City 3-0 Bolton Wanderers
 1984/85 Wigan Athletic 3-1 Brentford
 1983/84 Bournemouth 2-1 Hull City
 (*After extra-time)



Fast forward almost a decade and Swindon too were delighting in the emergence of one their own graceful and supremely talented teenagers, the dashing winger Don Rogers, better known as a legend in the Wiltshire town and its environs.

No shame as Swindon also yielded to the Mancunians whose stellar cast listed, in order of team sheet, Jimmy Rimmer, Bobby Noble, David Sadler, John Fitzpatrick, Willie Anderson, John Aston... oh and a promising Irishman by the name of George Best.

Rogers (right) is far too modest to make comparisons with the genius that was Best, but contemporary observers did and the Swindon player earned his place in the club's folklore when the then Third Division Robins comprehensively beat First Division Arsenal 3-1 in the 1969 League Cup Final at Wembley in one of the game's truly outstanding giant slaying acts.

It was Rogers' virtuoso performance and Swindon's thrilling victory over the Gunners that ferried them on a voyage to Europe and another similarity they share with Chesterfield, that of winning what can be described as ephemeral competitions.

Swindon's third tier status precluded them from qualifying for the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, instead the governing bodies created the Anglo-Italian League Cup, a two-legged affair against AS

Roma which Swindon duly won 5-2. They remain the holders today because the hybrid of that one-off fixture came the following season with the more familiar Anglo-Italian Cup. Having smashed Juventus 4-0 in the group stage, Swindon progressed to lift the inaugural trophy. It was not without incident, however. While leading Napoli 3-0 in the final in Italy, the game was abandoned after 79 minutes when the home fans rioted with flying bricks and teargas piercing the Naples air on a barmy May night in 1970.

Not quite fiery Latinos, more feisty Scots are associated with Chesterfield's quirky claim to fame in being the last winners of the Anglo-Scottish Cup having beaten Notts County in 1981, though the Saltergate sides that once played under the gaze of the town's famous crooked spire have much more to offer from a long illustrious past.

The club's production line of top class goalkeepers is unique and unerring in its relentless quality, an entire academy of gloved excellence with Banks setting the benchmark that the likes of Alan Stevenson, John Osborne, Bob Wilson and Steve Grigorovic followed.

Mention of the Ernie Moss-Kevin Randall front partnership tends to transport supporters of a certain age into Seventies nostalgia nirvana, while younger ones will recall that solitary trip to Wembley, a 1995 Play-Off Final win over Bury

Chesterfield's Sean Dyche and his team-mates celebrate his strike against Middlesbrough in the 1997 FA Cup semi-final

to secure promotion from the bottom tier. Spireites of all ages, however, can grumble with some justification that a second visit would have been necessary two years later had Jonathan Howard's FA Cup semi-final shot, that appeared to cross the line, not been disallowed. That strike would have handed Chesterfield a two-goal cushion over Premier League Middlesbrough.

Those fickle fortunes of football again.

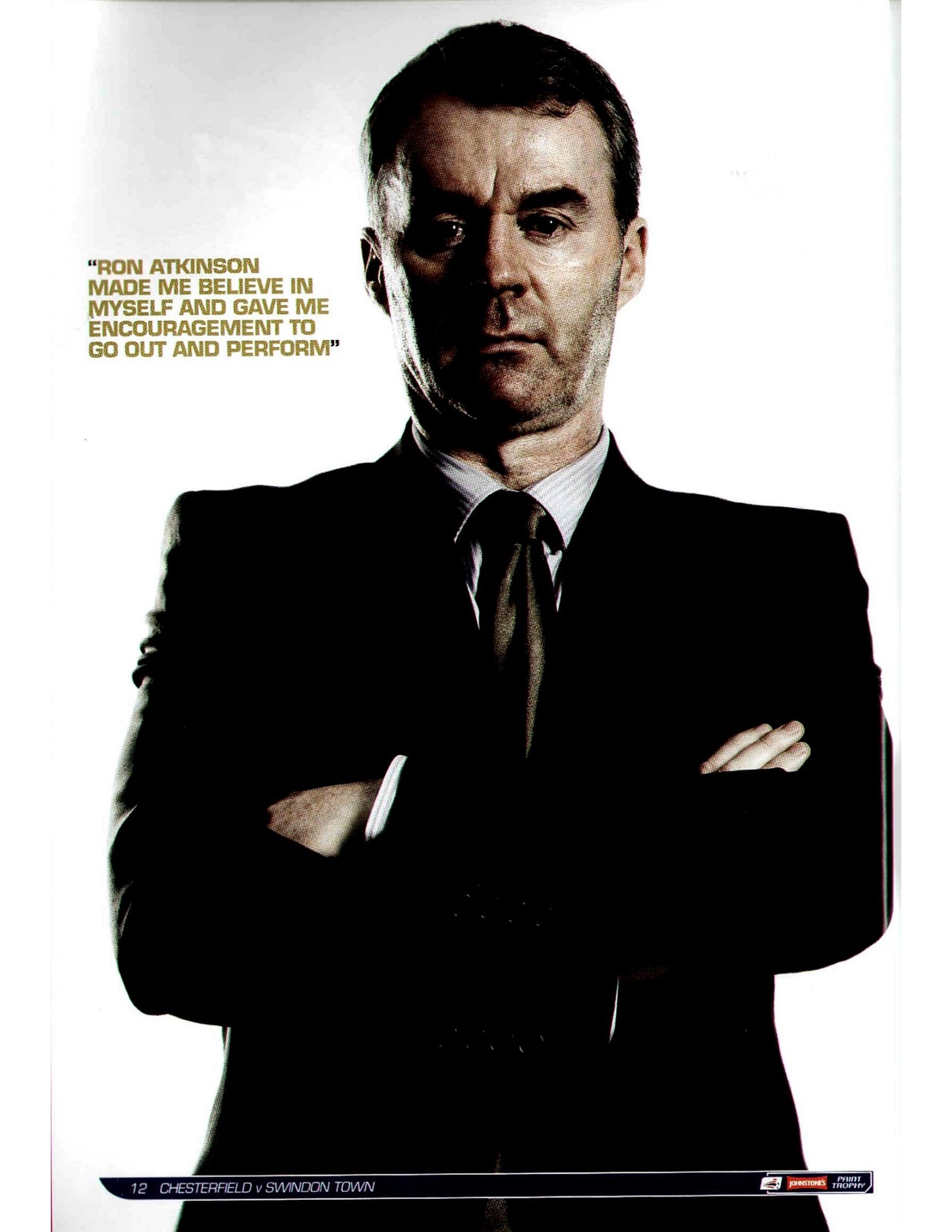
Swindon have befallen them too. There were a couple of Wembley successes in Championship play-off finals under the esteemed tutelage of Ossie Ardiles and Glenn Hoddle in 1990 and 1993, but the former ended in disappointment as financial irregularities saw them miss out on promotion.

Hoddle ensured they bounced back swiftly in one of the most exhilarating play-off finals, a 4-3 extravaganza against Leicester City, though Swindon returned with indecent haste to the second tier the following season. Since those heady days only a charge to the League 1 2010 Play-Off Final - resulting in a rather muted Wembley defeat against Millwall - has lifted spirits at the County Ground. That and Di Canio's new broom and Italian sparkle that seem to be clearing the cobwebs.

Chesterfield or Swindon, both bring historic and richly fascinating legacies to our national game and this uplifting occasion. Whoever wins, there will be a new name on the trophy today, adding to that diverse heritage.

So full steam ahead captains, collision course set. And may the best battleship win.



A black and white portrait of a man, likely a football manager, standing with his arms crossed. He is wearing a dark suit, a light-colored shirt, and a dark tie. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on his face and suit. The background is plain and light-colored.

**"RON ATKINSON
MADE ME BELIEVE IN
MYSELF AND GAVE ME
ENCOURAGEMENT TO
GO OUT AND PERFORM"**

GOSPEL OF JOHN

Chesterfield manager John Sheridan scored the winning goal in the 1991 League Cup Final so will be well placed to preach the virtues of Wembley success to his players today

INTERVIEW: PHIL SHAW, THE INDEPENDENT

At one stage this season Chesterfield went 17 games without a win – did you ever fear you might not be around to enjoy today's spectacle at Wembley?

It's a results-based business and any manager feels under pressure when they're losing matches. We've had two managers in League 1 leave their clubs recently when their teams were in the top four. We've been in the bottom four most of the season and it's not good enough. But I've always felt, and still believe, that we're good enough to stay up.

How do you account for the difference between last year, when you won League 2, and this season's struggle?

Craig Davies did a lot to get us up, but there was never any chance of keeping him and he went to Barnsley. Without paying big money it's difficult to replace someone who gets you 25 goals. We also lost our keeper, Tommy Lee, and Jack Lester to injury for three months each. They're both big players for us and we've really picked up since they returned.

When you came to Chesterfield in 2009 what attracted you to the club?

It was an opportunity to get straight back into management after leaving Oldham. I knew the owner, Dave Allen, from his time at Sheffield Wednesday, and he knew a bit about me which I think played a part. It's a real football town. The club had just moved from Saltergate to the new b2net Stadium, which was exciting and showed their ambition.

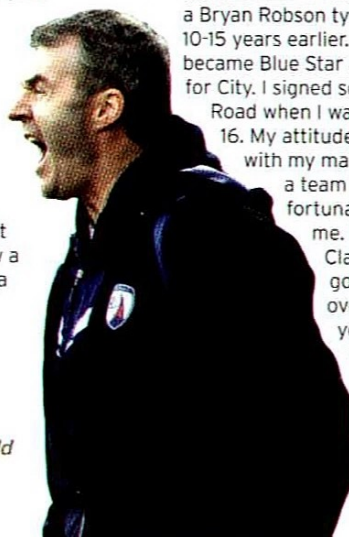
Talking of your time at Sheffield Wednesday, you had great

success there including a certain game at the old Wembley.

I played my best football for them. We had some top, top players, such as David Hirst and Chris Waddle, and I loved playing in midfield with Carlton Palmer. The manager who took me there, Ron Atkinson, made you believe in yourself and gave you the encouragement to go out and perform. We won the League Cup as a Second Division side in 1991 and I was fortunate enough to score the winner against Manchester United in the Final. If I could've picked a team to score against at Wembley, it would've been United, especially since I had friends and family there from Stretford! But it was a team performance, from Chris Turner – who's my chairman now – in the nets, to the lads up front.

As a young lad growing up on United's doorstep, were you a Red?

I was always a Blue and my great hero was Colin Bell. He was a brilliant all-round player, a Bryan Robson type of midfielder, only 10-15 years earlier. I played for Whitehill, who became Blue Star and were a nursery club for City. I signed schoolboy forms at Maine Road when I was 14 but got released at 16. My attitude wasn't right. I hung round with my mates too much. I played for a team called Stretford Vics and fortunately a Leeds scout spotted me. I went for a trial and Allan Clarke signed me. When he got sacked Eddie Gray took over, and he gave a lot of young players their chance, including myself and Tommy Wright, who's my assistant at Chesterfield. Eventually Billy Bremner took over and in 1987 we got to the FA Cup



"PAOLO WAS THE TYPE OF PLAYER I'D LOVED TO HAVE PLAYED ALONGSIDE"

semi-finals. We were 20 minutes from Wembley, 1-0 up on Coventry, but lost after extra time. We also led Charlton 1-0 late in the play-off final replay, but Peter Shirliff, who I later played with at Wednesday, scored twice for them.

You served some big-name managers, including, for one game only, Brian Clough. What's the story behind that?

Howard Wilkinson came in at Leeds and I didn't fit into his plans. It was disappointing because I loved it there. One of my regrets is that I never played in the top flight for them with the lads coming through such as Gary Speed and David Batty. I went to Chelsea and had the medical, but I was a single lad then and didn't want to move to London. Instead I signed for Nottingham Forest. I was excited because of the kind of football they played - I thought they would be ideal for me. But my face didn't fit with Mr Clough. No idea why. Gary

Megson and Asa Hartford went through the same thing with him. The one time he played me, against Huddersfield in the League Cup, I was named man of the match. I thought I'd be in against Crystal Palace on the Saturday but he just shouted across the room, in front of all the players: 'I'm resting you today. You've had a hard week.'

Of all your managers, who had the biggest influence on you?

I didn't get on with them all but I respected them and learned from them. I'd have to say Ron Atkinson had the greatest impact. He could give you a rollicking but knew how to get the best out of his players. I think I learned how to treat people from him. Two nights before the League Cup Final, he let us all go out and have a drink with the wives and girlfriends to celebrate Trevor Francis' birthday. It made us feel relaxed. Then he brought in Stan Boardman to get us laughing with a few jokes on the coach to Wembley, so we had no fear or apprehension. Our goalkeeping coach, Mark Crossley, is the nearest thing we've got to a comedian at Chesterfield. He's a real character.

An ecstatic John Sheridan celebrates his winning goal against Manchester United in the 1991 League Cup Final at Wembley

Are you looking forward to pitting your wits against Paolo Di Canio?

Very much so. We've had Swindon watched and they're going really well. Winning matches is a lovely habit. I never played against him, and he came to Wednesday not long after I left in 1996, but he's the type of player I'd love to have played alongside. He's brought some good players in and, most importantly, got them working really hard.

After Chesterfield beat Wednesday with a spot-kick recently you said you 'never watch penalties' - what if it comes to a shoot-out today?

Dean Morgan scored that day, but Danny Whitaker has been our penalty-taker and I developed a thing where I turned away and pretended to tie my laces when he was about to take one. You just wait for the cheer... or the groan. Fortunately, Danny's got a great record. We won a shoot-out at Preston earlier in the competition and I watched that. There'll be no hiding place at Wembley!

What would it mean to you to win the Johnstone's Paint Trophy?

I played in a World Cup for the Republic of Ireland and in League Cup and FA Cup Finals, but if I keep Chesterfield up it will be as good an achievement as any of them. That's my main aim, but the town has been buzzing and we've got around 20,000 supporters coming to Wembley. If we can win it for them, it will be brilliant.



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CELLISSIMO DI CANIO

With gladiatorial Italian passion spurring them on, Swindon Town are now flying high under the inspirational leadership of Paolo Di Canio

WORDS: NICK TOWNSEND, SUNDAY TIMES

When he arrived at the County Ground last May, Swindon's 12th manager this century prepared to take control of a just-relegated club with a ground capacity of less than 15,000. Eyebrows were inevitably raised in many quarters, here and in his Italian homeland.

Paolo Di Canio may have been regarded as a footballing genius with the ball at his feet over a career spanning 23 years; a player whose bewitching qualities Sir Alex Ferguson attempted, not once but twice, to lure to Old Trafford – unsuccessfully. But could a man of such volatility, of a myriad of contradictory characteristics, truly possess the attributes once he donned the managerial tracksuit?

Thus far, his answer has been emphatic. Swindon meet Chesterfield here today with the chance to lift silverware while at the same time his team are making a strong bid for an immediate return to League 1.

As a player he had exhibited sportsmanship, but was also known for some passionate outbursts. When he arrived as a rookie manager, his Swindon players had no idea what personality to expect.

In his past life, they were aware that he had engaged in contretemps with the best. This, after all was the player who had shoved his then Juventus coach Giovanni Trapattoni and, it was said, come to blows with Fabio Capello.

And yet, Di Canio, now 43, had clearly benefitted from the education he received from those men. "Fabio Capello was brilliant," he wrote of his then AC Milan manager in his autobiography. "He knew how to motivate us, how to pit us against each other in a healthy way. This does not mean that I liked him because I didn't. I have come to

realise that, with a very few exceptions, to be a successful manager, you have to be mean, tough and often a little unfair."

Born in Rome in the working class Quarticcolio area which tends to be populated by Roma followers, he supported Lazio, and signed for his beloved club in 1985. He would later play for Juve, Napoli and AC Milan before moving to Celtic.

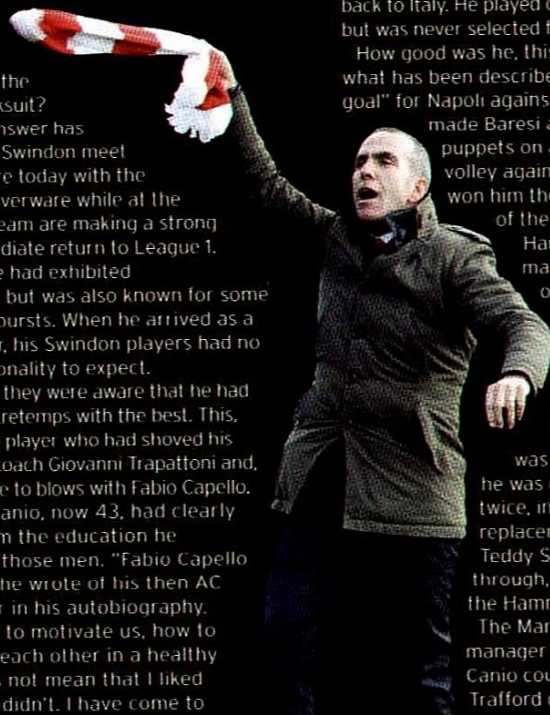
He relished his time in Britain and was an iconic figure at every team he represented: after Celtic came Sheffield Wednesday, West Ham United and Charlton Athletic, before moving back to Italy. He played over 500 games in total, but was never selected for the Italy senior side.

How good was he, this man who once scored what has been described as an "outrageous goal" for Napoli against Milan, in which "he made Baresi and Maldini dance like puppets on a string", and whose volley against Wimbledon in 2000 won him the accolade of Goal of the Season?

Harry Redknapp, his manager at West Ham, once said of him: "Paolo did things with the ball that made you gasp. Other footballers would pay to watch him train."

It was while Di Canio was at Upton Park that he was courted, not once but twice, in 2002 by Ferguson as a replacement for Andy Cole and Teddy Sheringham. A move fell through, reportedly because of the Hammers' £3m price tag.

The Manchester United manager has since said that Di Canio could have become an Old Trafford great, and bracketed



**"I'VE CUT THE
UMBILICAL CORD
WITH ITALY. I LOVE
ENGLAND. I HOPE
I CAN STAY HERE
FOR MANY YEARS"**

him with such performers as George Best, Eric Cantona, Ryan Giggs, Wayne Rooney and Cristiano Ronaldo. Di Canio stayed at West Ham. Ferguson bought Diego Forlan. Di Canio was "flattered" by that interest, but added that he could not have betrayed the fans of the London club. "Football has never been a business," he insists. "Football is a passion."

The Hammers faithful worshipped a player who left even Cantona in his wake when it came to dividing opinion; not just amongst supporters, but amongst players. Team-mates have commented that he was so special a talent that he could get away with things on the training ground while mere mortals were forced to put in the hard yards. So valuable was he to the team that colleagues accepted the fact.

He pushed things too far in 1998, though, shoving referee Paul Alcock to the

ground after being sent off at Hillsborough in a league game with Arsenal, and was banned for 11 matches in total, never appearing for Wednesday again.

Reflecting later on those instances of high emotion during his career, Di Canio explained: "Had I been calmer I wouldn't even have made it as a footballer. I give my best when I argue with the entire world."

Di Canio endeared himself to all football followers worldwide three years later, when he won a FIFA Fair Play Award after catching the ball when he could have scored as Everton goalkeeper Paul Gerrard lay injured.

The Italian returned to his spiritual home, Lazio in 2006 and then moved to the minor club Cisco Roma, before retiring from playing in 2008, with a coaching or managerial career in mind.

Paolo Di Canio shows his Italian style in our exclusive matchday programme photoshoot

So from (goal) poacher to gamekeeper, he has, in a sense, been reborn since being asked to exert the kind of authority he did not always appreciate as a player.

Contrary to the impression his playing days may suggest, far from being a maverick, Di Canio is ordered and analytical in this role. Preparation is all and he has revolutionised the training regime. Just ask the midfielder whom he has successfully turned into a defender, Alan McCormack.

"He covers every last detail of our opponents," says the Irishman. "He watches hours of tapes of our games and the opposition coming up. Even warming up in the morning is very technical."

McCormack adds: "He demands discipline in the team, off the ball, on the ball - even in training. You can have a laugh and a joke - but at the right times. He's got a fear factor about him. He can go mad and has done, but for the right reasons. When we drop our ability and standards he doesn't accept that, and rightly so. It keeps us on our toes, and keeps every player pushing each other. If you don't keep up your standards and keep playing well, you're out of the team."

Di Canio's intense enthusiasm for the task becomes evident when he admits: "I've cut the umbilical cord with Italy" and adds: "I love England. I love the country and I love the people. I just hope I can stay here for many years."

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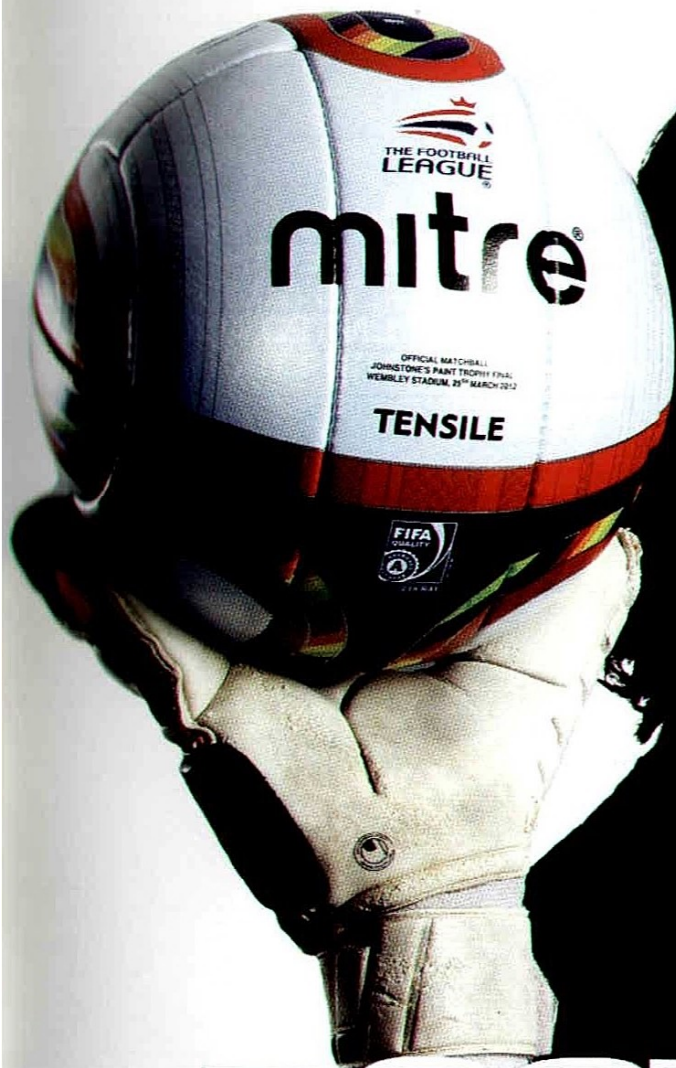


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ROCK ON TOMMY

A regular on the alternative music scene, Chesterfield's Tommy Lee has more than played his role in banging the drum to help the Spireites reach Wembley this afternoon.

WORDS: SIMON HART, INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

Goalkeepers are different. It is the title of a 1971 novel by Brian Glanville, the esteemed former Sunday Times football correspondent, and it is also an oft-repeated observation about net-minders everywhere. It applies to Tommy Lee, the Chesterfield No1, too - albeit in the nicest possible way.

With his long hair, love of indie music and summer trips to the Glastonbury music festival, Lee certainly does not strike you as a follower of the usual footballer fashions; suffice to say, he

admits his favourite bands seldom feature on the iPod in the Chesterfield dressing room, either. "I don't think it'd be on for long if I stuck my music on," jokes the 26-year-old.

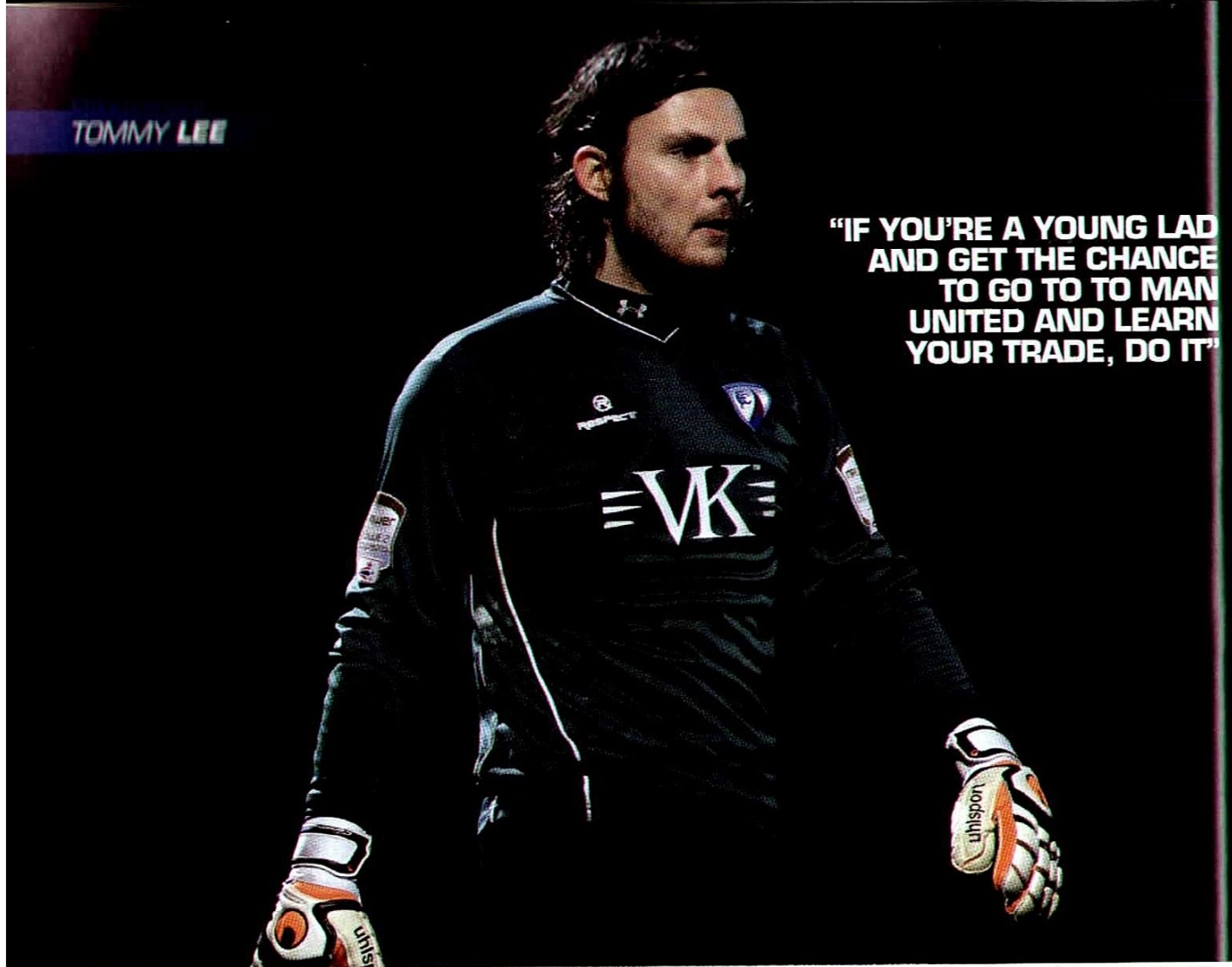
"I get to a few gigs now and then with the missus," Lee elaborates. "I've been to Glastonbury four years on the bounce. Primal Scream last year was the highlight for me. There are a few lads here who like their music as well but it is not normally the choice - I don't think we'll get Primal Scream on before the game that's for sure."

His music may not be to everybody's liking, but his goalkeeping certainly is. Lee has been the Chesterfield Supporters' Player of the Year for the past two seasons and featured in the PFA League 2 Team of the Year for his efforts in last term's title-winning campaign.

Moreover, he played a pivotal role on the Derbyshire club's route to Wembley, defying Preston North End with a string of saves - one in the concluding shootout - in the 11 Johnstone's Paint Trophy draw at Deepdale. He then produced

TOMMY LEE

**"IF YOU'RE A YOUNG LAD
AND GET THE CHANCE
TO GO TO MAN
UNITED AND LEARN
YOUR TRADE, DO IT"**



man-of-the-match displays in both legs of the subsequent Northern Area Final against Oldham Athletic.

For Lee, the two wins over Oldham did not just set up today's Wembley showdown with Swindon Town, but have also "given us the confidence" to win the battle against relegation from League 1. "Since Christmas if you were to look at the form table in our league you would probably find us in the middle, towards the top end."

Worries about relegation will go out of the window today, though, with Lee eager to ensure his second visit to Wembley yields happier memories than the first, which came with Rochdale on the final appearance of a loan spell there in spring 2008. That League 2 Play-Off Final against Stockport County ended in a 3-2 defeat and, as he recalls, passed in a blur.

"We didn't get the right result that day so it will be nice to go back. It will help me. It was a tough day - it was chucking it down and was windy. I don't think I could have done much about the goals but I was four years younger and maybe it passed me by a little. I didn't take it all in. It seemed to be over before it had started so I'll definitely cherish it a bit more this time and hopefully we can get a win."

Hailing from Keighley in West Yorkshire, Lee had the winning ethos drummed into him during seven years as a young

hopeful with Manchester United. "I've said it before - if you are a young lad and you get the chance to go to Man United and learn your trade, do it," he says, looking back on an association that began when he was 12. "I had some good coaches and trained with some good goalkeepers as well, which helped."

Fabien Barthez and Tim Howard were among that number, as well as Tom Heaton, Luke Steele and Ben Williams, all now established with Football League clubs. "I played quite a few games in the reserves, it was difficult at times because there was such a volume of goalkeepers you didn't get the opportunities every week," adds Lee, whose year group included Paul McShane, Kieran Richardson and Chris Eagles. "When I got to 19 and my contract had run out, the gaffer [Sir Alex Ferguson] said to me, 'Look we could keep you here for another year, you could go out on loan but I think the best thing you can do is learn your trade. Go and play league football'. It was the best thing for my career."

Cue a move to Macclesfield Town. "It was a lesson. You've gone from the best facilities in the country to, with all due respect to Macclesfield, not the best facilities. You took your own kit home to

Tommy Lee has become an essential component at Chesterfield, something he puts down to his seven years at Manchester United (below)



wash - a lot of clubs do that, but at the time I was used to having everything there for me. It was a really good grounding and I owe a lot to Macclesfield and Brian Horton for giving me my league opportunity."

After half a season on loan, he became a full-time Macclesfield player ahead of a memorable 2006/07 campaign which featured a red card for Lee in an FA Cup tie at Chelsea, and a Houdini-style escape act under manager Paul Ince. "We were down and out when he came in. We only had seven points just before Christmas, but he gave us belief - he said you were a good player and you believed him, because of the career he had."

A Chesterfield player since summer 2008, Lee is equally appreciative of his current manager, John Sheridan, and his coaching colleagues Tommy Wright and Mark Crossley, who "have definitely brought my career on in leaps and bounds. When they came in two or three seasons ago we were a struggling club, just missing out on the play-offs. The gaffer came in with his ideas and his style of football and we've just skyrocketed really. He was a top player, and the club is lucky to have him."

As a goalkeeper who makes a difference, you could say the same of Lee himself.



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THE ONLY WAY IS BENSON

In search of more firepower in attack, Paolo Di Canio turned to Essex boy Paul Benson in January. As the Swindon Town striker's goals have shown, it has proved an inspired move

WORDS: CLIVE WHITE SUNDAY EXPRESS

Second chances in professional football don't come around too often so when they do it's normal for them to be grabbed with both hands. It surely must be a little different, though, when there has been a break of seven years and the individual in question has found a new focus in his life. But when the offer came Paul Benson didn't have to think twice.

He had re-invented himself as a trainee accountant in the City when Dagenham & Redbridge came calling. He took a pay cut to swap his pinstripes for the somewhat broader red and blue stripes of the Daggers in the Conference. But when you have dropped to such a humble level that you are

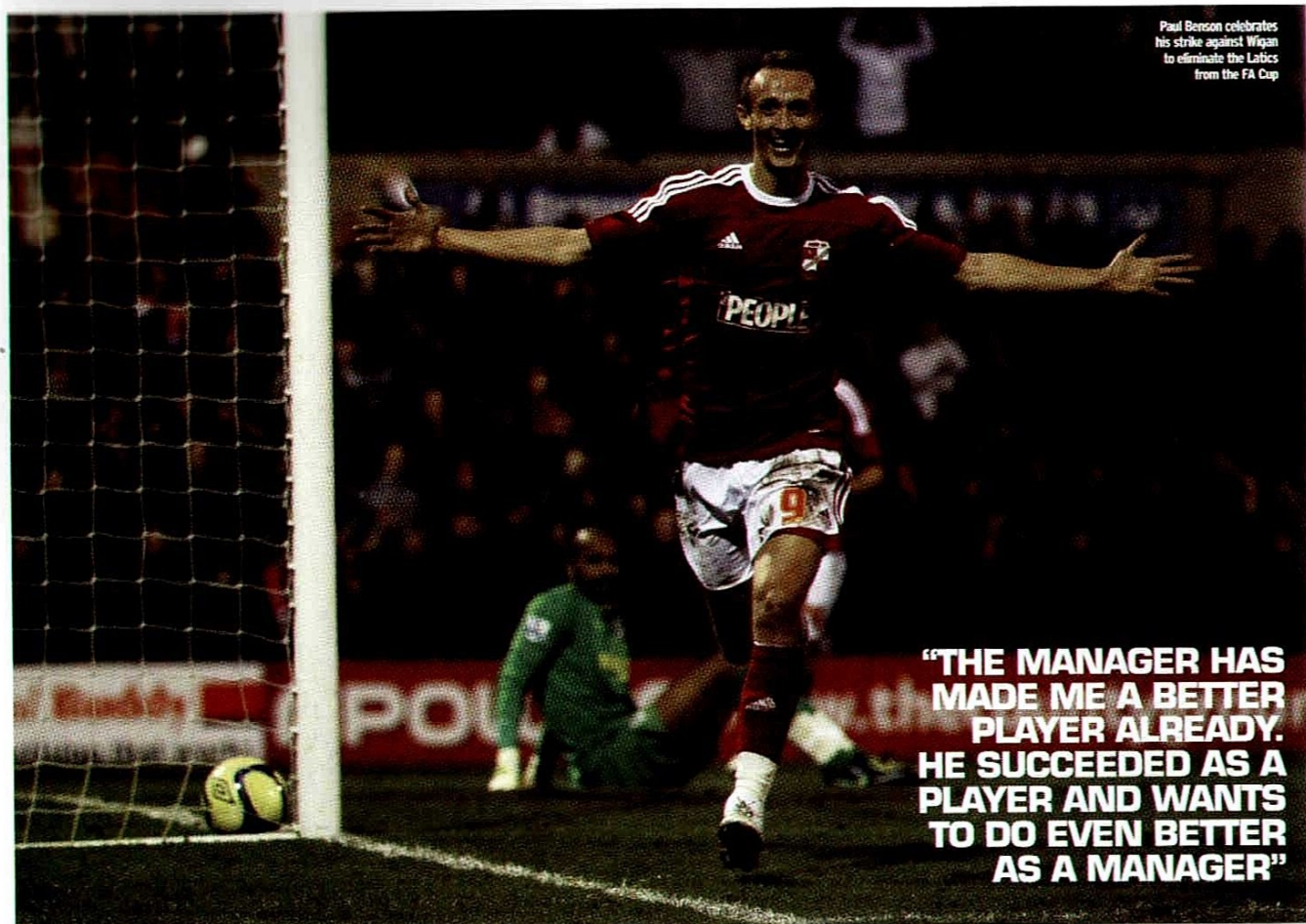
paying to play the game, it's a lot easier to see it as a stroke of good fortune.

Eight years on and the 32-year-old from Essex has absolutely no doubt that it was. This season, following a move from Charlton Athletic to Swindon Town on New Year's Day, has seen him spearheading the Robins' likely immediate return to League 1 with a rich vein of form that includes seven goals in the eight games leading up to last weekend's visit to Crewe. On top of that is a Wembley appearance for the second time in three years.

It is all in stark contrast to when Southend United, his local club, told him at the age of 17, after five years at Roots

Hall, that he would not be kept on. It took him a year to get over it. In the meantime his two brothers persuaded him to join them at White Ensign in the Essex Senior League, which, as he conceded, is the bottom rung of the English football ladder. Nevertheless, 96 goals in two seasons brought him to the attention of a wider audience.

"I was actually paying a fiver a time for the privilege of playing," he said. "And then Dagenham came in and offered me a contract. I was so keen I would probably have signed for even less. I spoke to my parents about it and they said, 'Go for it'. They knew how much I'd always wanted to be a professional footballer. Even if



Paul Benson celebrates his strike against Wigan to eliminate the Robins from the FA Cup

"THE MANAGER HAS MADE ME A BETTER PLAYER ALREADY. HE SUCCEEDED AS A PLAYER AND WANTS TO DO EVEN BETTER AS A MANAGER"

they'd said, 'Don't do it' I still probably would have done, but it's nice to have that backing from your family.

"I think the accountancy firm were a bit taken aback when I told them - they probably thought I was throwing away a career. I still speak to them occasionally and they've told me I can return whenever I want, so it's good to know I've got that to fall back on when my career is over.

"I caught a massive chunk of luck when Dagenham spotted me. I don't want to say I appreciate playing football more than those boys who come through the academies at the top clubs, but I do appreciate so much playing football for a living and for those people who pay at the gate to watch you do it. It's an amazing privilege."

He suffered a second fracture to his right leg in his second season at Dagenham - he first broke it shortly after he was released by Southend - and has also undergone two cartilage operations to his left knee. However he regards himself as fortunate with injuries, inasmuch as he doesn't tend to suffer strains and pulls. "It's all or nothing with me," he said.

Benson has continued to score freely with each step up the ladder, 28 goals in his first season with Dagenham in 2006/07 when they won the Conference

title. After recovering from the fracture, he totalled 21 in League 2 in 2008/09 and then 22 the following season, including a goal in each of the three promotion play-off games. To say that he well recalls the one that helped beat Rotherham United in the Final at Wembley is an understatement.

"I only think about it every day!" he said. "A cross came in from the left, I touched it back towards goal with my left foot and then spun and hit it with my right into the bottom corner."

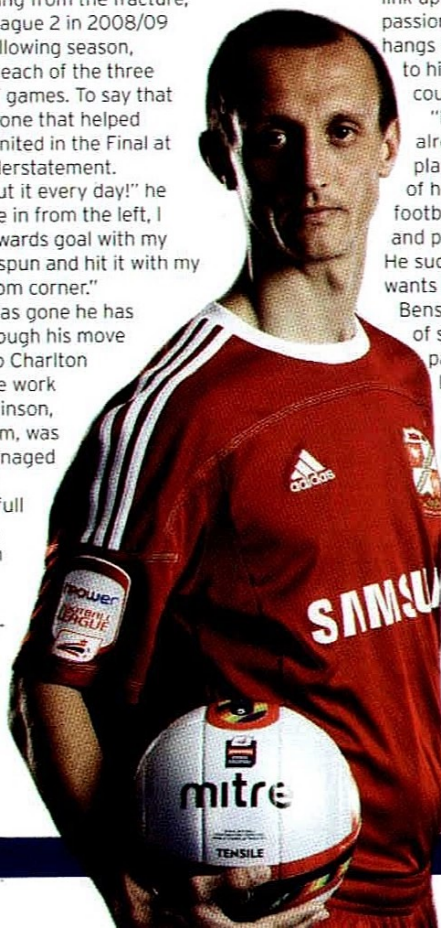
Everywhere he has gone he has scored goals. Although his move from Dagenham to Charlton in 2010 didn't quite work out after Phil Parkinson, who had signed him, was sacked, he still managed to get into double figures in his one full season with them. He even scored on his one and only appearance for England - the non-League version - in a defeat to Northern Ireland.

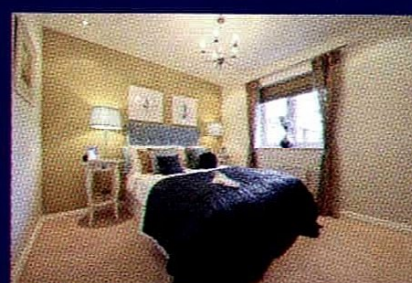
At Swindon, he has had the good fortune to

link up with someone who is even more passionate about the game. He clearly hangs on every word of advice imparted to him by Paolo Di Canio, who, of course, was no mean striker himself.

"He's improved me as a player already. He knows a lot about the players in the division and that side of him has surprised me. He just loves football. He takes every training drill and puts everything into doing well. He succeeded as a player and I think he wants to do even better as a manager." Benson is also indebted to the quality of service he has received at Swindon, particularly from the wide men, Luke Rooney and Matt Ritchie: "It's been unbelievable and has made my job pretty easy really. I haven't got some of the attributes other strikers have, where they can get the ball, beat three or four defenders and then smack it in the top corner, but I do have the ability to be in the right place at the right time."

An illustration of that happy knack was the FA Cup third-round tie against Wigan when a shot from Ritchie deflected off him to give Swindon victory. Lucky breaks, bad breaks, Benson has had them all.





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We went ahead in the eighth minute when Andy McFarlane galloped onto Roger

Freestone's free-kick and chested the ball around their keeper, Steve Francis, before slotting it home. Huddersfield equalised with a Richard Logan header from a corner. There weren't many chances in extra-time and so it went to penalties.

Huddersfield scored only one of theirs through Pat Scully while John Cornforth, Kwame Ampadu and Steve Torpey were on target for us. When Tom Cowan's weak penalty was easily saved by Roger, I was relieved because I was due to take our sixth penalty. We were ecstatic, as can be seen from the photo as Roger, who I roomed with on most away games, and his deputy, Lee Jones, and I celebrated the victory."

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GOOD LUCK TO THE SPIREITES AT WEMBLEY!!

'BANKS OF ENGLAND'

That's how Gordon Banks was known throughout a glorious career that spanned three decades, but it was at Chesterfield where he cut his teeth as a goalkeeper

WORDS: IVAN SPECK, DAILY MAIL

Mention Chesterfield Football Club and you think of goalkeepers. Mention goalkeepers and you think of Gordon Banks. England World Cup winner. The man who denied Pele with a jaw-dropping plunge to his right in the thin air of Guadalajara, Mexico in 1970 - the finest save of all time.

Remarkably, Banks' reputation is still spreading. Now 74, mail from around the world regularly drops through his letter box.

"You want to see the mail I get from China and I'm talking about 13-year-old and 16-year-old lads. From all over, Poland, Germany, Belgium," says Banks humbly. "It's all about the internet now. They see the Pele save on there, they write about it in the letter and they want an autograph. I find it unbelievable that after all these years people of that age know all about me. It just seems crazy."

Not bad for someone whose football career began as a teenage part-timer with Chesterfield while he made up his money bagging coal and bricklaying. But even then the future 'Banks of England', the last line of defence in Sir Alf Ramsey's celebrated team of 1966, was attracting attention.

"I was playing for Chesterfield reserves in the Central League at 17, playing on all these big grounds. Sometimes you came across international players coming back from injury. I'll never forget one game against Leeds and John Charles was playing. This guy was an absolutely fantastic player, really special. He was a giant and I mean huge. We tossed the coin and changed ends.

"I ran past the centre circle and I heard this shout: 'Oi, Banksie'. I turned round and he was wagging his finger as if to say: 'Come here, young lad'. We walked over to each other and he said: 'Don't worry, son. I shan't hit you in the air.'

"I'LL NEVER FORGET ONE GAME FOR CHESTERFIELD RESERVES AGAINST LEEDS AND JOHN CHARLES WAS PLAYING"



celebrating winning the FA Cup with Gordon Banks, who says he enjoys a reunion with former England

Forwards were allowed to do that then, and did. But true to his word, every cross I came out for, he jumped for it, but never hit me in the air once."

If the Central League was Banks' classroom, the FA Youth Cup Final in 1956 gave him exposure to what would become his natural platform. Tiny Chesterfield took on Manchester United, the Busby Babes youth team of Duncan Edwards, Bobby Charlton and all.

"We were 3-0 down at Old Trafford in the first leg, but pulled it back to 3-2. There were 32,000 there that night and I have never heard a crowd go so quiet in my life. Then at home we scored in the first 20 minutes which evened up the score and it wasn't until injury-time that they got the equalising goal on the night and the winner on aggregate. There were 19,000 at Saltergate where the average crowd for the Chesterfield first team at the time was something like 16,000. It was so special for our lads, especially playing against the names in the Man United team."

It would be another two years before Banks made his first team debut. That was because National Service in Germany intervened, although football was still uppermost in Banks' priorities. With his Royal Signals regimental teammates, he won the Rhine Cup.

Word quickly spread to Chesterfield who signed him as full-time professional immediately upon his return. His break came when first team keeper Ronnie Powell was injured in late 1958. The 20-year-old Banks stepped in and kept his place for the rest of the Third Division campaign. That summer Leicester

City paid £7,000 for his services and after just 23 first-team appearances for the Derbyshire club, he was gone, heading for the First Division and the international stage. He never played at Saltergate or against Chesterfield again.

"I wasn't aware that I had any particular talent while I was at Chesterfield. I had got in the first team and I was chuffed just being there playing in the first team on big grounds and in front of big crowds. Even the lower league grounds were all full.

"It was funny how the club produced a string of keepers after me, the likes of Alan Stevenson, John Osborne and Bob Wilson, but although we shared the same link, we never came across each other. And although I never came across Chesterfield on the pitch, I've never forgotten my time there. It was that Central League experience which made me the keeper I became."

That was a keeper good enough to win a total of 73 international caps in a magnificent career which was effectively ended at the highest level when he lost his right eye in a car accident while with Stoke City in 1972.

"I went to the big reunion Chesterfield had before they moved from Saltergate and I still look for their results. The players will never forget their day at Wembley and I wish them all the best. The fans, too."



WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN

Kevin Davies recalls the day on which he almost helped Chesterfield to reach the FA Cup final with a mixture of pride and heartache. Having just turned 20, Davies was a boy among men in that 1997 team.

The Bolton striker, who scored four goals in the cup run, still shakes his head at the injustice of the 'goal' that wasn't given when Jonathan Howard's shot struck the bar and appeared to bounce down over the line with Chesterfield leading 2-1 against ten-man Middlesbrough. The Premier League side escaped with a 3-3 draw and won the replay.

Davies (pictured during his Chesterfield playing days), who ended his four-year spell with the club soon after, moving to Southampton for £750,000, recalled: "It was one of the classic semi-finals, still being shown now. It was great to be involved in a game like that, but it's still heart-breaking now when you look back on it. If we had had goal-line technology back then I think we would have been in the final. These things happen, but for myself and all the lads, that can't hide what a wonderful cup run it was.

"I still have my Chesterfield shirt from that day with its special inscription on it. It was an amazing day, a brilliant experience and we were so close. I've got lots of good friends at the club still, the manager (John Duncan), Mark Jules (Chesterfield Centre of Excellence manager) and Andy Morris (head of the club's Coaching in the Community programme). I'm sure they will all have a great day at Wembley."

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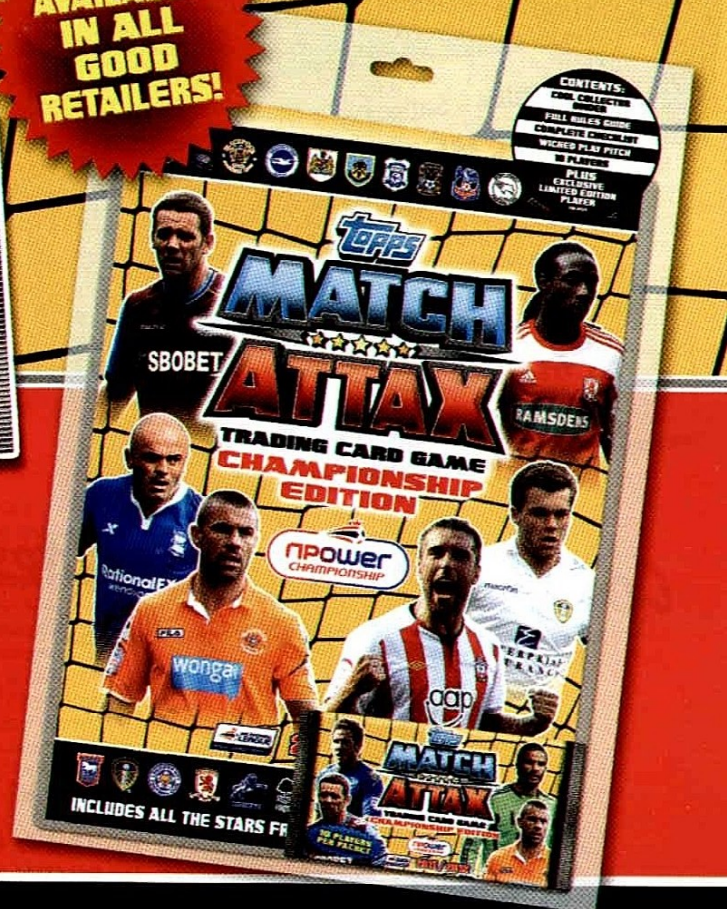


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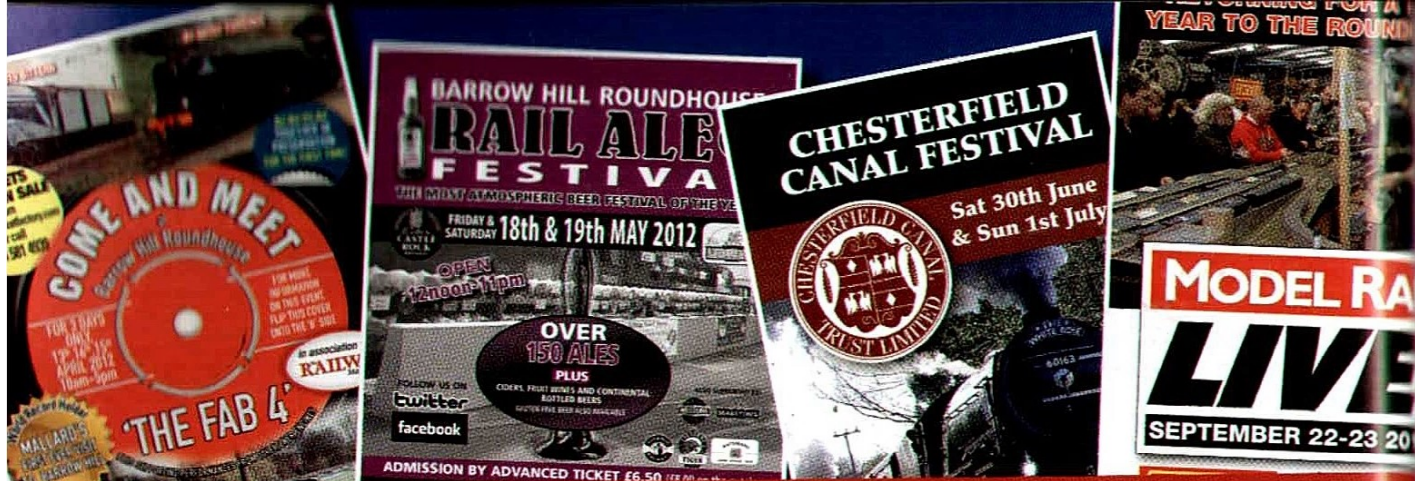


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THE WAITING GAME

Drew Talbot spurned the chance to appear at Wembley in favour of joining Chesterfield in 2009. Three years on, he's thrilled to be here today

WORDS: SIMON HART,
INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

It has taken him over three years but Drew Talbot will finally complete some unfinished business today.

It was in January 2009 that the Yorkshireman turned his back on the prospect of a Wembley appearance in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final with eventual winners Luton Town when joining Chesterfield in a loan deal that became a permanent transfer.

His last Luton appearance had actually come in the Area Final first leg against Brighton and there are no regrets as he considers the honour he took on the road to Wembley. "I came on loan to Chesterfield as they had money problems down there," says the 25-year-old. "A different manager came in and owners said they wanted to ship out a lot of players. I wanted to come back home, Chesterfield took me and I've been back three years now and enjoyed every minute. I was over the moon when Luton won it, but now it's my turn."

Talbot has never played at Wembley but did visit the old Twin Towers in 2000 to see Barnsley, his hometown team, lose a play-off final to Ipswich, and has since been to the new stadium to watch the NFL. "It was with Barnsley that he started out before 'a few bad injuries' almost kept him out of the game; fortunately, he recovered and completed his football education with Sheffield Wednesday. He graduated with honours, ending his first senior season aged 18 by coming off the bench to score the last goal as Wednesday beat Hartlepool 4-2 in the 2005 League 1 Play-Off Final at the Millennium Stadium.

"I've actually got the shirt framed," he says, "it's something I'll remember for the rest of my life. There were nearly 70,000 there that day. As a kid most people would probably find that really daunting, but I jumped at the chance. I got the shirt of it and hopefully, fingers crossed, it will stand me in good stead [today]."

If that strike - notable for his cool rounding of the keeper after bursting clear 40 yards from goal - remains his favourite, a spectacular effort for Chesterfield against Burton Albion in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy won him the club's 2009/10 Goal of the Season prize. He followed that up with the 2010/11 Players' Player of the Year award.

It is not surprising Talbot's teammates appreciate him given his unstinting effort in several different positions. Chesterfield's website lists him as a striker yet Talbot, in his words, "had a couple of good seasons playing right wing" before "playing right-back at the end of last season and most of this season".

He is guaranteed to give "110 per cent every game" according to John Sheridan, his Chesterfield manager and another man with a showpiece goal for Sheffield Wednesday in his back catalogue - albeit Talbot only learned about that 1991 League Cup Final winner after tuning into ESPN Classic recently.

"I saw the goal and thought, 'Pretty good'. Fingers crossed we can go there and repeat what the gaffer did." And get his hands on that winner's medal which eluded him three years ago.



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ELIABLE ROBIN

An inspiration for Swindon Town this season, the stage is set for Alan Connell to shine on the biggest of them all

WORDS: TREVOR HAYLETT
www.swindontownfc.co.uk

Those with a predilection for backing a likely match winner in cup finals could do a lot worse than to scribble the name of Alan Connell on their betting slip this afternoon.

The 29-year-old has become something of a talisman in the bigger games for Paolo Di Canio's side, scoring the opening goal that helped ensure a stunning FA Cup victory over Wigan Athletic in the third round. Then, a month later, it was his finely judged header that took Swindon Town past Barnet in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Area Final second leg and onto the Wembley highway.

"Scoring against Wigan was great but arguably the goal that beat Barnet was more important," Connell explained. "We were never going to win the FA Cup whereas this competition gives teams like us a realistic chance of getting to Wembley."

"At the start of the season I had the feeling that something special was going to happen. We've had some really good things happen already and hopefully there are some even better things to come."

The Barnet goal spoke of a player supremely in tune with his penalty-area craft. It was a beautiful delivery that Paul Caddis dispatched from the right and the header, cushioned and measured, sent the ball back towards the opposite corner of the net with goalkeeper Dean Brill anchored to the floor and helpless to react.

"As soon as I headed it I knew it was in and I was wheeling away in celebration even before the ball had crossed the line," he explained. "It was a great moment for me. To score the goal that got Swindon to Wembley was a dream come true because as a kid it was always a burning ambition to play there."

Surprisingly, Connell followed that triumph with only two starting appearances before last weekend's visit to Crewe. In a big squad, led by a manager who enjoys ringing the changes, it is a price he is

"SCORING AGAINST WIGAN WAS GREAT, BUT THE GOAL THAT BEAT BARNET WAS MORE IMPORTANT"



Alan Connell has been a deadly force in front of goal for the Robins this season, including finding the back of the net against Wigan in the FA Cup (below)

It's not known how much football Di Canio had watched at that level before he accepted the challenge of trying to put the Swindon ship back on an even keel following relegation, but his faith in the goalscorer has been amply rewarded.

"He's obviously got his scouting network, people in England that he trusts and someone must have recommended me. He watched some DVDs and made an offer that Grimsby accepted. I jumped at the chance to come to Swindon. To get to sign for a great club like this was amazing."

And, he adds, for a manager who had earned a glittering reputation during his own playing career. But surely it makes life difficult having to impress someone who had such formidable success in front of goal himself?

"Everyone knows how passionate he was as a player and now as a manager. The biggest compliment you can pay him is that we've all improved as players. You can see we are well drilled and organised and that is down to the manager."

"Yes, he can be very hard on the strikers. He's always on at us to be better, to do certain things better. He's always giving us little tips and bits of advice and we would be foolish not to take them on board. The fact that the club had appointed someone who was a hero of the Premier League era told me that they were ambitious and going places. I wanted to be a part of that."

As an Arsenal supporter whose younger years included many a trip to Wembley to cheer on his favourites, stepping out on the hallowed turf has been a dream for as long as the Enfield-born marksman can remember. His determination was heightened in 2008 when he watched his best friend Brian Stock skipper Doncaster Rovers to a League 1 Play-Off Final victory at the new stadium.

"That was an unbelievable day for him and as I looked on I remember thinking that I really, really want to play there. We were at Bournemouth together and I'm going to be his best man when he gets married in the summer. It would be nice if I can also say that I've a Wembley win under my belt."

"It's always a poignant time for my family because my mum passed away in March three years ago and if

I'm lucky enough to play in the Final she will be uppermost in my mind."

"We've proved against higher opposition this season how good a team we can be. We'll go to Wembley with confidence, we'll have loads of supporters there and hopefully it will be a day to remember."



prepared to pay while he eyes a promotion-Wembley double.

"It seems the gaffer has four or five regulars and the rest of us are part of a squad rotation. I accept the situation - we've got a great squad of players and have strength in depth. I work hard every day and whenever I'm called upon I'll give it my best," he said.

It's always been that way, ever since his YTS days with Ipswich Town - he was part of a talented generation there that included Darren Bent and Darren Ambrose - and his first professional steps with Bournemouth. After a two-year stint on the south coast second time around he was disappointed not to be offered a new contract and in 2010 was forced to

look for new pastures. He found them outside The League when Grimsby Town identified him as the man to spearhead their attempt to regain senior status.

Goals flowed with impressive regularity in the Conference - 26 in all - and it was no disgrace to finish behind the prolific Matt Tubbs in the scoring hierarchy. "It was a good season for me and I loved it at Grimsby. They are really good people there, good supporters. Sometimes you have to take a step back to reassess things and then move forward again."



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CHESTERFIELD



SPIREITES GOALKEEPER COACH **MARK CROSSLEY** ENJOYED A 24-YEAR CAREER BEFORE FINISHING AT CHESTERFIELD IN 2010. HE INTRODUCES JOHN SHERIDAN'S MEN

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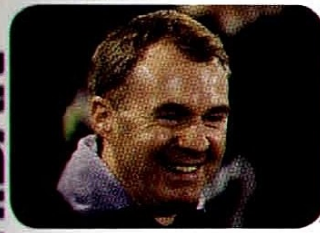
HONOURS

LEAGUE TITLES: FIVE
(DIVISION THREE
NORTH & LEAGUE 2)
PLAY-OFFS: ONE (LEAGUE 2)
ANGLO-SCOTTISH CUPS: ONE

LAST SEASON

LEAGUE 2: CHAMPIONS
FA CUP: SECOND ROUND
CARLING CUP: FIRST ROUND
JPT: SECOND ROUND

JOHN SHERIDAN



I played with John at Nottingham Forest and then he signed me for Oldham, which is where I finished my playing career, and got me involved in the coaching side of it. He's had five really good seasons as a manager, but this year has been a tough one so I hope we can put a bright spot on it with a win today.

DOB: 19/02/1972
NATIONALITY: IRISH

MANAGER

APPOINTED:
JUNE
2009

TOMMY LEE



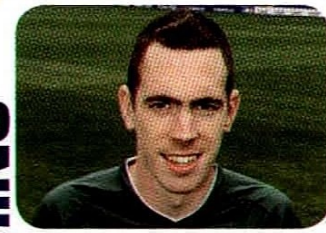
I've got to give myself a pat on the back for how well Tommy's done - he's been Player of the Season here for the past two years and he got in the PFA Team of the Year, too. That's all down to me! He's been outstanding and I haven't seen too many better than him at this level.

DOB: 03/01/1986
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

GOALKEEPER

1

GREG FLEMING



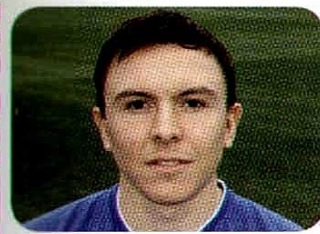
We knew Greg from Oldham and were looking for a No2 goalkeeper who could push Tommy, which is what Greg has done with some fantastic performances in training. He was a bit unfortunate that when he got his chance in the team earlier in the season we were on a poor run of results.

DOB: 27/09/1986
NATIONALITY: SCOTTISH

GOALKEEPER

13

GREGOR ROBERTSON



Gregor has been really unfortunate with injuries, but he's someone we think very highly of and the way he's come back from a double fracture and a serious Achilles injury is a credit to him - he's such a determined lad, with a great attitude and work-rate, although he's very quiet.

DOB: 19/01/1984
NATIONALITY: SCOTTISH

DEFENDER

3

JAMIE LOWRY



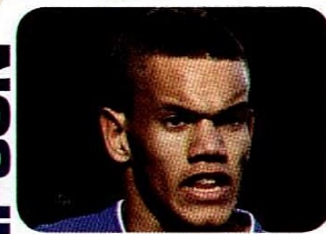
Another lad who's been injured, Jamie spent a bit of time on loan at Crewe and did really well there, so we've called him back and he's staking his claim for a place in the team. The only problem is, I look after the complimentary tickets and he's always asking for eight or 10!

DOB: 18/03/1987
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

4

JOSH THOMPSON



Josh played 15 times for Celtic last year, so we knew what sort of pedigree we were getting when we got him in on loan. He certainly fitted the bill for us and what we needed. The results have picked up since he came in so we're delighted with how he's done and the impact he's made.

DOB: 25/02/1991
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

5

ROUTE TO THE FINAL

SECOND ROUND

Notts County 1-3 Chesterfield
Despite the dismissal of Lee Johnson after just 22 minutes, Chesterfield showed enough guile and determination to overcome Notts County. They did slip behind when Karl Hawley put the home team ahead just before the interval, but they hit back through Mark Randall shortly after the hour mark. Dean Morgan added a second four minutes later before Jordan Bowery's 77th-minute strike ensured the win.

AREA QUARTER-FINAL

Chesterfield 4-3 Tranmere Rovers
After a hard-fought victory away to Notts County, Chesterfield were made to work for their win over Tranmere Rovers. Adam McGurk put the visitors ahead and while strikes from Alex Mendy and Jordan Bowery put the Spireites in control, Enoch Showunmi and Mustafa Tiriyaki ensured the pendulum swung back in Rovers' favour as they led 3-2. That was until Bowery grabbed a second with 10 minutes remaining before Craig Westcarr's dramatic 90th-minute winner.

AREA SEMI-FINAL

Preston North End 1-1 Chesterfield
(Chesterfield win 4-2 on penalties)
Eager not to do things the easy way, it would seem, Chesterfield put their supporters through the mixer once more - this time winning on penalties against Preston North End. Jamie McCombe put the home side ahead, but Craig Westcarr levelled and that's how it remained until the Spireites held their nerve from 12 yards to secure an impressive win at Deepdale.

AREA-FINAL (1st Leg)

Chesterfield 2-1 Oldham Athletic
Given their difference in league position and form, Oldham had been the slight favourites to win this tie, but Chesterfield had other ideas as Scott Boden put them 1-0 up just after the interval. Robbie Simpson levelled on 59 minutes, but Danny Whitaker's penalty 10 minutes later ensured the Spireites remained in control as they took a slender lead to Boundary Park for the second leg.

AREA-FINAL (2nd Leg)

Oldham Athletic 0-1 Chesterfield
(Chesterfield win 3-1 on aggregate)
As he has often done throughout his time with the club, Jack Lester proved to be Chesterfield's hero with the decisive strike in the second leg of their clash with Oldham to book a place at Wembley. In a tight affair, neither side had given much away, but with Oldham pushing forward to find the all-important goal to level the scores on aggregate, Lester reacted quickest to a defensive error and tapped the ball home with just two minutes remaining to send Spireites fans into a state of delirium.

SIMON FORD



I've never known a man to get through games and limp so much, but he somehow does it! Fordy's had a bad knee for a while and he doesn't train too much, so I think a few of the lads have nicknamed him "Ledley King", but he never lets anyone down when he plays.

DOB: 17/11/1981
NATIONALITY: JAMAICAN

DEFENDER

6

NATHAN SMITH



Mr Laid Back Larry! We brought him in from Yeovil and he's very quick - as a full-back, there's no substitute for pace. Even though things haven't really been going for him of late, he's still a great lad to have around. He's a typical soul man, always with the earphones on and dancing to his music.

DOB: 11/01/1987
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

28

MARK ALLOTT



Mark is one of those players you might not notice, but he's very effective and he guarantees you a seven out of 10 performance every week, which is the kind of guy you want in your team. Although he started out as a striker, he doesn't score too many - but when he does score, it's usually a worldie!

DOB: 03/10/1977
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

7

JAMES HURST



Hursty is someone we watched on a number of occasions when he was playing for West Brom's reserves and we managed to get him in on loan. He's an outstanding prospect with great energy and he loves getting forward. He actually had a spell in Iceland a couple of years ago, believe it or not.

DOB: 31/01/1992
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

18

TENDAYI DARIKWA



Craig Clay's sidekick! They both live in Nottingham and they never go anywhere without each other. Like Craig, Tendayi has come up through the ranks and he's actually been transformed from centre-forward in the youth team to right-back, which is what we think his long-term position is.

DOB: 13/12/1991
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

27

DEREK NIVEN



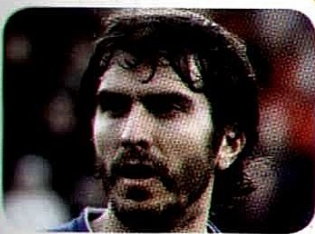
Del has bounced back from a terrible illness and even though he's not getting in the team as much, he never lets his head go down - you can always rely on him. He played a massive part in getting us promoted last year and is a really popular guy in the dressing room.

DOB: 12/12/1983
NATIONALITY: SCOTTISH

MIDFIELDER

8

JIMMY JUAN



Jimmy has also played for Monaco and Ipswich, and although we haven't seen much of him because of injury, he scored a great goal at Orient. I always joke with him because he's got grey hair right on the top of his head, so it looks like he's been painting the ceiling and catching his head on it.

DOB: 10/06/1983
NATIONALITY: FRENCH

MIDFIELDER

22

MARK RANDALL



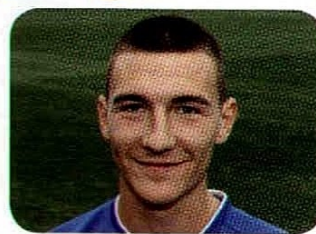
Mark broke his arm this year and it's been hard for him to get going, but you can tell he was schooled at Arsenal because he's a very good footballer and I think we're still to see the best of him while he gets used to the hustle and bustle of this level.

DOB: 28/09/1989
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

23

CRAIG CLAY



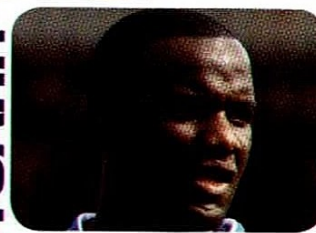
Another of those to come through the youth ranks, Craig has been on loan at Alfreton recently. We feel he's got a very promising future ahead of him and the experience of being in and around the squad on a matchday at Wembley will stand him in good stead.

DOB: 05/05/1992
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

24

CRAIG WESTCARR



I call him Eddie Murphy because he loves to play jokes on everyone in the dressing room and he's got a great sense of humour. I think every team needs a few jokers and Craig certainly falls into that category. We signed him from Notts County and I think he's got the most assists for us this season.

DOB: 29/01/1985
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

9

MIDFIELD SCHEMER

Probably the best footballer in the team. Danny likes to play on the left and come inside to that little hole where it's difficult to mark him, and that helped him get 15 goals last year, which was a major reason why we got promoted. But he's not just about goals, he's a very effective passer, too. I reckon he looks a bit like the old Italian referee, Pierluigi Collina, and I used to call him Frank Leboeuf when I played with him at Oldham. He certainly gets a fair bit of stick for his bald head!

DOB: 14/11/1980
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

10

NICKY AJOSE



Nicky was asked by Jack Lester about how well he did at school, to which he replied: "How can you question me when I've got eight GCEs?" Luckily, his talent on the football field isn't in question and we didn't hesitate to sign him because he was among the top 10 players in League 2 last year.

DOB: 07/10/1991
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

11

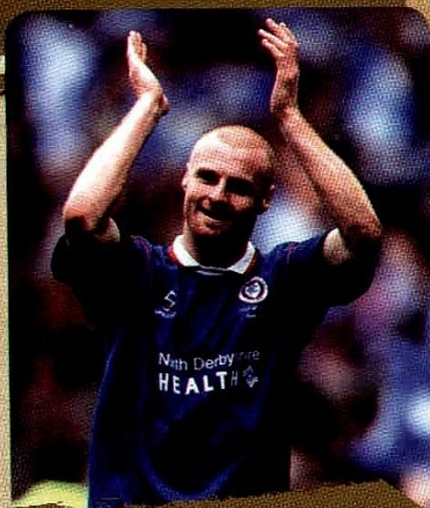
DANNY WHITTAKER

SPIREITES LEGEND

SEAN DYCHE

DEFENDER // APPS: 232 // GOALS: 8

Described as an inspirational leader, Dyche almost led Chesterfield to the FA Cup final in 1997 as he captained the side that narrowly missed out to Middlesbrough by virtue of some misfortune in their semi-final at Old Trafford. He scored in that game, too, smashing home from the penalty spot to give the Spireites a 2-0 lead, which Boro later clawed back. That season proved to be his last with the club, but 15 years on, memories of that cup run still live strong in the minds of many.



SPIREITES LEGEND

NICKY LAW

DEFENDER // APPS: 111 // GOALS: 11

One of those rare breeds, Nicky Law is still highly regarded at Chesterfield after successful spells at the club as a player and then later, manager. Currently boss of Alfreton Town, he captained the club to Play-Off victory in 1995 and was later appointed as John Duncan's replacement in the dugout in 2000, guiding the Spireites to automatic promotion from Division Three.



JACK LESTER



Probably the most influential player in the dressing room. Jack's had a fantastic career, he's scored loads of goals and, even at 36, you can always rely on him. And he'll never be far away from the jokes - him and Craig are definitely the two jokers in the pack from what I can gather.

DOB: 08/10/1975
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

14

SCOTT BODEN



Scotty's been at the club a little while and he's a really good impact player who has done most of his damage coming off the bench. He's still a young lad, learning the game, but apparently he's got the most goals from the bench for Chesterfield - so watch out for him if we need a goal!

DOB: 23/11/1989
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

19

DREW TALBOT



Drew was transformed into a right-back last year and he was excellent - winning the fans' Player of the Season award. We've pushed him forward a bit this year because of his energy and enthusiasm. He's had a good career and there's still more to come from him.

DOB: 19/07/1986
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

25

ALEX MENDY



Alex was at Leeds earlier this season, but they weren't 100 per cent sure about him. He's still adapting to the culture but we feel as though we've got a good player on our hands. He's 6ft 2in, very direct and, unusually at this level, he's got Europa League experience, too.

DOB: 14/12/1983
NATIONALITY: FRENCH

FORWARD

16

JORDAN BOWERY



We think very highly of Jordan, which is why he's just been given a new contract. He's probably the quickest player at the club and he always catches the eye. I know of his dad, Bert, who played for Nottingham Forest a bit before me. If Jordan listens to his dad and us, then he'll go a long way.

DOB: 02/07/1991
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

21

JACOB HAZEL



Jacob is still an apprentice here and we've had him on the bench a couple of times this season. He's a talented lad - definitely one for the future. It makes me feel old to see his date of birth - I made my debut for Forest in 1988, six years before he was even born!

DOB: 15/04/1994
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

29

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INTERVIEWS: GRAHAME LLOYD AND RUSSELL KEMPSON

TALKING TACTICS



Oldham Athletic manager **Paul Dickov** and Barnet boss **Lawrie Sanchez** give an insight to how this afternoon's game will be won and lost



» **Chesterfield** will carry a big threat up front today through the guile and experience of Jack Lester but at the same time they will need no reminding that in Paul Benson, Swindon Town possess a marksman who has put a host of League 2 defences to the sword in recent weeks.

Paul Dickov and Lawrie Sanchez, the managers of Oldham Athletic and Barnet, can vouch for the striking talent on display at Wembley this afternoon having seen their own dreams of walking out on the hallowed turf destroyed by these two teams in the Area Finals.

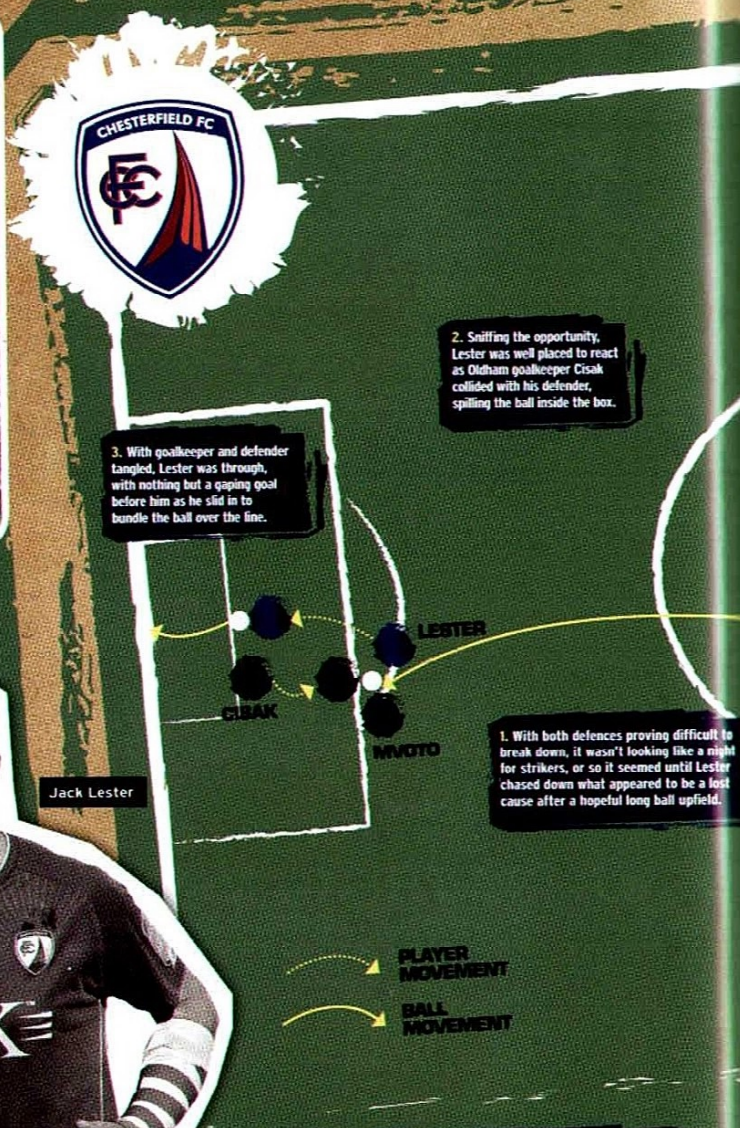
Dickov said: "As we saw in the second leg, you can keep Jack Lester quiet for 89 minutes but he's always got it in the bag to pop up and score a goal. If he gets a chance, nine times out of ten he'll score."

"He brings an experience and a calmness to John Sheridan's young team. He's very clever at holding up the ball and when he drops off into little pockets of space between the central defenders and the midfielders it is hard to pick him up. Because he's good technically, when he gets in there, he finds the space to run at defenders or bring in other players."

Sanchez is an admirer of the reliability both Benson and Alan Connell can demonstrate in front of goal but believes



Jack Lester



OLDHAM ATHLETIC 0-1 CHESTERFIELD

After their 2-1 victory over the Latics at the b2net Stadium in the first-leg of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Area Final, Chesterfield knew they would face a difficult test at Boundary Park. It was very much a backs-to-the-wall operation, but Jack Lester's 90th-minute strike proved decisive on the night.

PAUL DICKOV



An ex-Scotland international, Dickov enjoyed a fine playing career, starting out at Arsenal before enjoying spells with Manchester City and Leicester City.

LAWRIE SANCHEZ



Sanchez's most famous moment as a player came when he scored the winning goal against Liverpool for Wimbledon in the 1988 FA Cup Final.

SWINDON TOWN 2-1 WIGAN ATHLETIC

As well as shining in League 2 this season, Swindon have shown their pedigree in the cups, notably knocking Premier League Wigan out in the third round of the FA Cup with a fantastic display at the County Ground.

3. Ritchie's floated ball was inch perfect for Connell and he did enough to flick it beyond Gary Caldwell, guiding his header beyond Ali Al Habsi.

2. It was Ritchie's cross that set up Alan Connell for the equaliser, with the Swindon striker peeling off his marker Ben Watson to ghost into the box unmarked.

1. Having trailed 1-0, Paolo Di Canio's side didn't let their heads drop and kept plugging away at the Wigan backline, with Matt Ritchie in particular giving the visitors a tough afternoon.

RITCHIE

CALDWELL

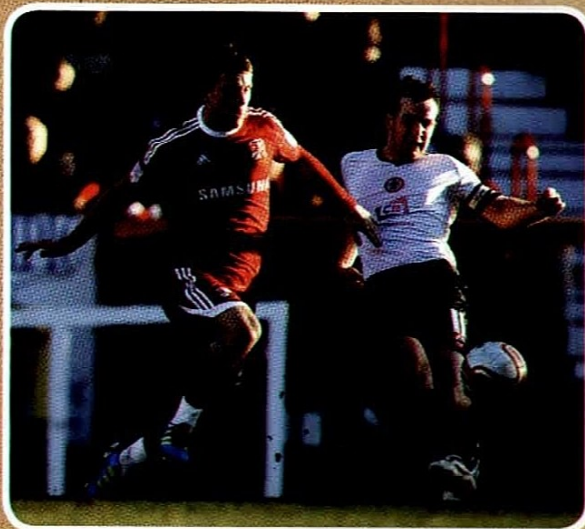
AL HABSI

CONNELL

WATSON



Simon Ferry



the biggest danger to the League 1 outfit lies in the left boot of one of the Swindon midfielders.

"Matt Ritchie is the star of the Swindon team for me," Sanchez stated. "A right-winger with a lovely left foot, he can cross a ball onto the smallest of targets - with a touch of wicked curl on it, too. And when he cuts inside, he can be lethal, as his double-figure goals tally for this season testifies.

"If Raffaele De Vita plays on the opposite flank, he complements Ritchie nicely. He can also provide a succession of teasing crosses and can suddenly twist inside. With the pair running at Chesterfield from all angles, the higher-division side will need the utmost concentration to survive."

It poses the question, where else will the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final be won and lost? Our experts give us more of their views...

PD: More often than not, Chesterfield will go 4-4-2 but sometimes - like they have against us - it's been 4-4-1-1 or 4-3-3. The one thing that is guaranteed is that they will get the ball down and play. John Sheridan sets them up to play good, attacking football. He was a skilful player himself and he likes his teams to express themselves.

Josh Thompson will try and play out from the back. He's a promising youngster who's going to benefit from playing as many games as he can. He's settled in well and he's a big player for them. Their full-backs bomb on and support the wide players as well so by no means are they a long-ball team.

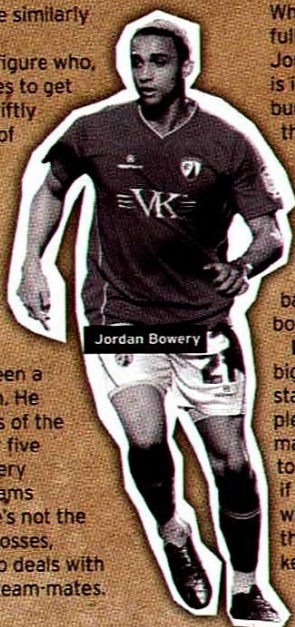
LS: Swindon have influential players all over the park, with Simon Ferry a commanding performer in central midfield. He is comfortable in possession and always looking for the diagonal pass forward - along the ground or in the air - that can quickly unhinge even the most organised opponents.

Swindon have a strong midfield that has the potential to cause Chesterfield problems, with Kallouche (in Villa kit right) a skilled performer



And at the back, Swindon are similarly well served. Goalkeeper Wes Foderingham is a dominant figure who, having gathered the ball, likes to get the action going again as swiftly as possible. He's something of a clean-sheet specialist as well; just look how few goals Swindon have conceded this season. Joe Devera, the former Barnet centre half, has played a leading role in that impressive defensive record, too.

PD: Tommy Lee, Chesterfield's keeper, has been a thorn in our side this season. He was outstanding in both legs of the Area Final and made four or five unbelievable saves. He's a very good shot-stopper. Some teams look at his size - because he's not the tallest - and put in lots of crosses, but he's a confident boy who deals with them and it rubs off on his team-mates.



Jordan Bowery

When the ball is taken wide by the full-backs, watch both Jack Lester and Jordan Bowery come alive. Bowery is in his first full season, has pace to burn and at 6ft 11in, he really attacks the ball when it comes in from the wing. He's also good at running into the channels and getting behind teams.

Behind them, Mark Allot and Danny Whitaker are two more good footballers who get on the ball and pass it well - and they're both astute runners off the ball.

LS: Swindon have one of the biggest squads in League 2 and, for starters, that allows Paolo Di Canio plenty of room for manoeuvre. He makes frequent changes to his team, to combat different opponents, and if that might upset a player or two when they find themselves out of the starting line-up, it certainly keeps them on their toes.

He prefers a regulation 4-4-2

"PAOLO DI CANIO'S ANIMATED PRESENCE WILL HELP SWINDON TODAY. I THINK HE'S ALREADY PROVING THE DOUBTERS WRONG" - LAWRIE SANCHEZ

formation, with solidity in all areas of the pitch. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is his strategic mantra. But Di Canio is quite willing to switch tactics in mid-match, should the tried-and-trusted system be failing him, and he's not afraid to go the direct route, either.

Di Canio's animated presence on the Wembley touchline will help Swindon today. A lot of people thought that he might fall as a manager because of his fiery personality. As a player he was very much an individual. Yes, he retains that fire as the boss, but I think he's already proving the doubters wrong.

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GROUND THE COUNTY GROUND
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WEB WWW.SWINDONTOWNFC.CO.UK

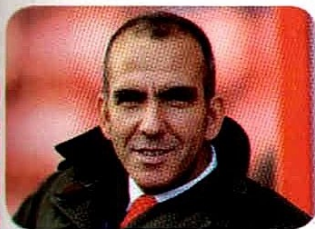
HONOURS

LEAGUE TITLES: TWO
(LEAGUE 1 & 2)
LEAGUE CUPS: ONE
ANGLO-ITALIAN CUPS: ONE
PLAY-OFFS: THREE
(CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 2)

LAST SEASON

LEAGUE 1: 24TH
FA CUP: SECOND ROUND
CARLING CUP: FIRST ROUND
JPT: QUARTER-FINAL

PAOLO DI CANIO



What is there to say that hasn't been said already? The most passionate guy I've ever met - the gaffer loves football and doesn't think about anything else. He's turned the club around. The training is totally different to anything I've done before and it took a while getting used to coming in every day but it's working.

DOB: 09/06/1968
NATIONALITY: ITALIAN

MANAGER

APPOINTED:
MAY 2011

PHIL SMITH



Phil keeps himself to himself, but when he talks we all listen. He's been here for a long time and he's great to have around. Played his part in the penalty shoot-out against AFC Wimbledon that helped get us to Wembley. Has never let us down and he's unfortunate Wes has played so well.

DOB: 14/12/1979
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

GOALKEEPER

26

WES FODERINGHAM



The number of clean sheets he's kept are a real credit to him. Wes came in and impressed straight away. Has made some great saves. He's consistent, young and he's going to do well for himself. We call him 'toothpick' because he sends the boys to sleep with his stories. Has the skinniest legs, too.

DOB: 14/01/1991
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

GOALKEEPER

35

CALLUM KENNEDY



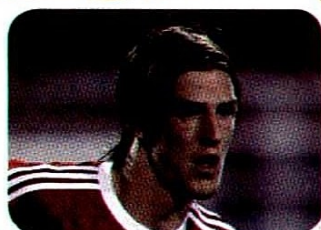
Callum started the season well. Has been in and out of the team since but he always does the job when selected, particularly in the bigger games. His performances against Huddersfield and Wigan stand out. Has a great left foot and he likes to get forward. A very good player and a good lad.

DOB: 06/01/1989
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

3

ADEN FLINT



Aden's done really well in his first professional season. He had a great start but was unfortunate to pick up a serious injury. Has a dry sense of humour and the boys slaughter him, particularly his tattoos. He's got one of Las Vegas on his arms and he's never even been there.

DOB: 11/07/1989
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

4

JOE DEVERA



Joe is a top man when he's not 'busy' in the gym. Has had to be patient because he's been in and out of the team but recently he's been brilliant. Good at playing the ball out from defence, he rarely loses a header and he gets the boys up for a game in the dressing room.

DOB: 06/02/1987
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

DEFENDER

5

ROUTE TO THE FINAL

SECOND ROUND

Exeter City 1-2 Swindon Town

The road to Wembley is always a difficult one no matter the competition and Swindon's started with a tricky away tie to League 1 Exeter. Had they any nerves prior to kick-off, they need not have worried as they were 2-0 up by the interval with Jake Jarvis bagging a brace. Daniel Nardiello's strike 20 minutes from time did threaten to rock the boat, but the Robins held on to get their campaign off to a flyer.

AREA QUARTER-FINAL

Swindon Town 1-1 AFC Wimbledon

(Swindon won 3-1 on penalties)

The Robins looked all set to reach the semi-finals of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy after Oliver Risser had given them the lead midway through the first half, but they were pegged back with just eight minutes remaining by AFC's Rashid Yussuff who bagged an 82nd-minute equaliser. It took the game to penalties and Swindon held their nerve in front a home crowd to progress, winning 3-1 in the shoot-out.

AREA SEMI-FINAL

Southend United 1-2 Swindon Town

A Blair Sturrock strike just after the hour mark ensured Swindon went behind for the first time in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy this season, but they showed great character to come back at Roots Hall with Paul Caddis drawing them level eight minutes later. They made sure of the win through Ronan Murray's 81st-minute goal.

AREA FINAL

Barnet 1-1 Swindon Town

With the prospect of Wembley beckoning, both sides looked cagey at Underhill as Barnet and Swindon came head-to-head for a place in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final. And it was first blood to the visitors, as Aden Flint put Paolo Di Canio's side 1-0 ahead on the stroke of half time. Barnet came back strong in the second half, though, responding through Mark Hughes who made sure of a tight encounter in the second leg.

AREA FINAL (2nd Leg)

Swindon Town 1-0 Barnet

(Swindon won 2-1 on aggregate)

The tension was palpable at the County Ground in the Southern Section Area Final, second leg, but within 17 minutes Swindon's nerves were calmed as Alan Connell rose highest to nod home the only goal of the game. His header kick-started fantastic scenes of celebration in the stands, but nothing could match the scenes when the referee blew his final whistle to send the Robins through to the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final for the first time in their history.

ALESSANDRO CIBOCCHI



He's one of the weirdest guys I've ever met but he's really funny. His English isn't great but that makes him funnier. He gets a hard time for his gear. He likes a pair of Gucci loafers, but he also has denim jeans with a picture of Pluto on the pocket! He's done well in defence recently.

DOB: 18/09/1982
NATIONALITY: ITALIAN

DEFENDER

27

MATT RITCHIE



Matt's a nightmare and has had more shots this season than the rest of us put together. He's had a lot of interest and you can see why with the goals he's scored. But he's a pest off the pitch. If he went on a diet he'd have even bigger clubs coming in for him.

DOB: 10/09/1989
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

10

ETIENNE ESAJAS



He's been unlucky with injury and the form of others this season. You can see in training he has great ability and on his day he's been good for us. Played in wide positions earlier in the season and showed he could take players on and have a pop at goal.

DOB: 04/11/1984
NATIONALITY: DUTCH

MIDFIELDER

11

ALAN MCCORMACK



Macca's a big voice in the dressing room and gets the other boys up for games. He started in centre midfield and then dropped back into defence. Is now our vice-captain and that shows you how highly the gaffer rates him. He looks hard but it's all front. He's a big tube underneath it all.

DOB: 10/01/1984
NATIONALITY: IRISH

MIDFIELDER

12

OLIVER RISSER



Oilly has the biggest legs ever. One of his is like two of mine! He's done really well since coming come back into the team. Has been asked to play in a variety of positions and in some big games, too, which shows the gaffer has faith in him. He always gives his all. Strong in the air.

DOB: 17/09/1980
NATIONALITY: NAMIBIAN

MIDFIELDER

13

LEE COX



He knows a few boys that us Scots know north of the border and we'd heard he was a funny lad. I wasn't sure how to take him at first, but he has fitted in very well. He's a neat and tidy player who makes things happen, so he's been a good signing. He gets on with all the boys.

DOB: 26/06/1980
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

16

LUKE ROONEY



He's a London lad who could talk forever. And eat forever as well. He's another one the boys have taken to straight away. Has good pace, is skilful and great going forward. Made an immediate impact when he joined from Gillingham in January but his banter's horrific and his gear's not much better.

DOB: 28/12/1990
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

19

LANDER GABILONDO



Gabi's a good wee guy. He's not made many appearances but I can think of a few times when he's come on and changed a game. He can be a handful when running at any defender. Has been the victim of the success of the other guys but he never lets anyone down.

DOB: 30/04/1987
NATIONALITY: SPANISH

MIDFIELDER

21

LEE HOLMES



Lee is the latest arrival but he probably knows more about the club than some of the other lads because he's been here before on loan. Has good quality as he showed when setting up two goals against us for Oxford a few weeks ago. We'll have to have a word with him about that.

DOB: 02/04/1987
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELD

22

RAFFAELE DE VITA



No-one has a bad word to say about Raffa. He gets on with his job quietly. He's really good in training, technically brilliant and his touch is amazing. Was having a really good season before Rooney arrived and while he hasn't played as much recently he's been a big part of why we've done well this season.

DOB: 23/09/1987
NATIONALITY: ITALIAN

MIDFIELDER

23

JONATHAN SMITH



Jonathan would run through a brick wall for you, he works so hard and is an honest guy. Never gives less than 100 per cent. He's one of the boys you're happy to have alongside you. I try and stay away from him in training because even though he's skinny I've never seen anyone tackle like him.

DOB: 17/10/1986
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

MIDFIELDER

24

PAUL CADDIS

CAPTAIN MARVEL

He's played Champions League football and nothing fazes him. He could be preparing for any game and he wouldn't get nervous. I'm sure he could play at any level he wants. Cad's been brilliant this season, a great captain who has led by example. Has been a big voice on the pitch and the way he plays has an effect on those around him, so he's adapted to the armband very well. I've known him since I was 12 when he came to Celtic. I'd already been there for a couple of years and Cad came from Rangers, so we've known each other for some time. He was always very level headed back then and has always taken his football very seriously. That's probably why he's so good. He got injured a couple of weeks ago but thankfully it wasn't as bad as first thought and hopefully he'll be there to lead us out today.

DOB: 19/04/1988
NATIONALITY: SCOTTISH

DEFENDER

7

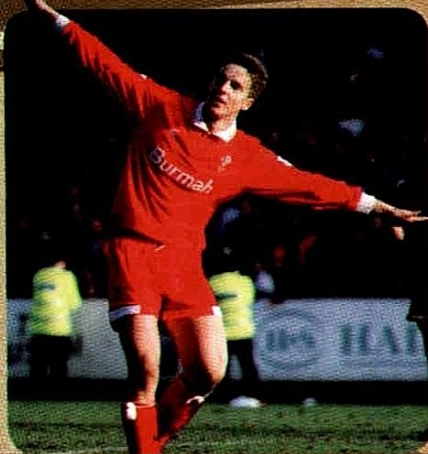


ROBINS LEGEND

JAN AAGE FJORTOFT

FORWARD // APPS: 72 // GOALS: 28

Although Swindon's one and only season in the Premier League in the Nineties saw them succumb to the difference in class the top flight offers, one man from within their ranks stood out - Jan Aage Fjortoft. He had arrived for a record fee of £500,000 when the club were promoted and while he struggled to adjust at first, his form in the second half of the season saw him bag 13 goals in 17 games. It wasn't enough to keep them up, but his aeroplane celebration saw him become a cult hero in England.

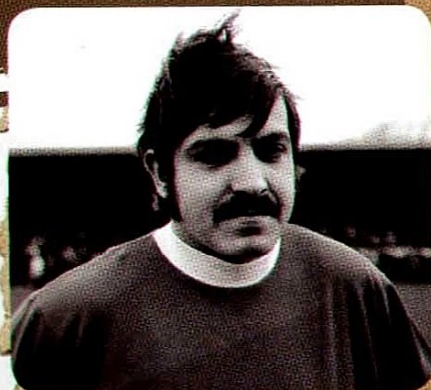


ROBINS LEGEND

DON ROGERS

FORWARD // APPS: 400 // GOALS: 147

Arguably the club's most proudest moment, Don Rogers was instrumental in Swindon Town's victorious League Cup campaign of 1968/69. Then aged 23, Swindon's talisman wrote his name into the record books as he scored both goals in extra-time to help his side to a 3-1 victory over Division One giants Arsenal in the final. Swindon were in Division Three at the time and their victory at Wembley is one of the greatest giant killings the League Cup has seen.



PAUL BENSON



One of the older lads, Paul's made a huge difference. The run of 10 wins in a row coincided with his arrival and he's scored some important goals. He's played every minute since he joined, which proves how important he is. Holds the ball up and works hard. A nice guy - you can speak to him about anything.

DOB: 12/10/1979
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

9

JONATHAN TEHOUE



JT's new to the squad after arriving from Leyton Orient on loan in March. We haven't seen too much of him yet, but he's looked good in training and he'll add competition for places. He came on against Cheltenham and I'm sure he'll have a part to play before the season has finished.

DOB: 03/05/1984
NATIONALITY: FRENCH

FORWARD

25

RONAN MURRAY



He dresses like a labourer but he's up for a laugh. Has scored some key goals for us, including the winner at Southend in the quarter-final. He's settled in well, which is probably because his missus has him under the thumb - they are very lovey dovey on Twitter.

DOB: 12/09/1991
NATIONALITY: IRISH

FORWARD

34

ALAN CONNELL



Alan's been very good this season and even though he's been in and out of the team he's been one of our top goalscorers. A great guy to have in the dressing room, he keeps everyone going and is a great professional. Works on things after training and we appreciate how much of a team player he is.

DOB: 05/02/1983
NATIONALITY: ENGLISH

FORWARD

17

BILLY BODIN



Billy's going to be a really good player. He's strong for a young lad and his feet are firmly on the ground. Some of the things he does in training are beyond belief. He's a great lad, a Swindon boy who wants to do well. Everyone gets on with him. He's a pretty wee boy, too!

DOB: 24/03/1992
NATIONALITY: WELSH

FORWARD

31

SIMON FERRY



I think I've done OK. The whole team has done well and I'm just glad to have played my part. We play good football, which suits my game because I like to get the ball down and play. This season feels like my first here all over again. Everyone is working hard for each other.

DOB: 11/01/1988
NATIONALITY: SCOTTISH

MIDFIELDER

8



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3 APRIL 2011
PETER MURPHY



**WREXHAM 0
 CARLISLE UNITED 1**



"It was a weekend I'll never forget. My first child, Oscar, was born two days before the game and for him and my fiancée, Lisa, to be at Wembley with the rest of my family and for me to then score the winning goal and receive the Man of the Match award was unbelievable.

Once Oscar had arrived I caught a lunchtime train to London. I was shattered and had to sit on the floor because the train was packed with Carlisle fans. At the hotel I had my dinner and then went straight up to bed. After training the next day, I relaxed at the hotel and was fine for the match. We wanted to win so much because of the manner of our 4-1 defeat by Southampton in

the 2010 Final and the fact that I'd been on the losing side three times in the previous eight years motivated me.

In the 12th minute, a corner went over my head, hit one of their players and just came back to me. I took a touch on my thigh and then volleyed the ball home through a crowd of bodies. It seemed fitting to then do the 'Bebeto' celebration, rocking an imaginary baby. Having scored so early, we knew we were going to be put under pressure but we were well organised and one goal proved enough. At the final whistle, I knew where Lisa and Oscar were sitting so I ran across to celebrate with them."

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I LIKE IT ALLOTT

Chesterfield's Mark Allott is pinching himself at the prospect of finally turning out at Wembley this afternoon

WORDS: NICK JOHNSON

Mark Allott will be thankful he ignored the old adage that you should 'never go back' as the experienced midfielder has prospered in his second spell at Chesterfield following two years away. Allott first signed for the Derbyshire club 10 years ago after impressing on loan from Oldham Athletic. He returned to Oldham five-and-a-half-years later before rejoining Chesterfield in the summer of 2009 via a brief, ill-fated stop off at Tranmere Rovers.

"I spent less than a month at Tranmere after doing some pre-season training there," Allott explains. "The reason behind it was that Ronnie Moore signed me and then left the club a couple of days later. John Barnes, who took over, brought quite a few midfielders in and I received a call offering me a chance to return to Chesterfield."

The Mancunian was named the Players' Player of the Year in his first season back and was then a key member of last term's League 2 title-winning squad. Now he is relishing the prospect of making an appearance at Wembley in the twilight of his career.

Of course, Chesterfield's place on the hallowed turf today came about at the expense of his old club. "It was quite ironic that we got Oldham in the Area Final," says the 34-year-old. "We did well in the first leg, going 2-1 up and it was all to play for at their ground."

"We went to play attacking football but it didn't turn out that way. Oldham played really well on the night and we just had to dig in. We showed a lot of team spirit and pinched a goal at the end."

A decade after he initially linked up with Chesterfield, Allott is ideally placed to reflect on the changes that have taken place in that time and talks enthusiastically about the progress that has been made. "It's just



great to see what's happened to the club since I first joined.

"It's been a complete transformation, especially following the move to the new stadium. The club is going forward and I'm pleased for everyone involved. I used to like playing at Saltergate, because the pitch was okay, but the dressing-room and the areas where the fans sat weren't great.

"The b2net is really nice for everybody and you enjoy playing there. They're making money through various different ways now and not just because of what happens on the field. Football is a business which needs to be run in the right way and Chesterfield is a club that are doing that."

Last season's title-winning success was marked by an open-top bus ride through the town for the players and management, followed by an invitation to a civic reception at Chesterfield Town Hall.

Despite being embroiled in a relegation battle this season, Allott points out that reaching the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final has done much to boost morale. "Last year was great for us in the league. With the new ground and winning the title, the town was buzzing. It's not gone well in the league this season but there has been another buzz after getting to Wembley."

Allott's only previous visits there have been as a spectator at the old stadium and now he is desperately hoping to play at the famous venue. "I was at Oldham from the age of nine so I got a few tickets when they played Nottingham Forest in the 1990 Littlewoods Cup Final. I saw Manchester City beat Gillingham in the Second Division Play-Off Final in 1999 and also watched my mate Dave Beresford play for the England Under-16s.

"I'm looking forward to going to the new stadium and hopefully I can get a chance to play there because when you're a kid, you dream of playing at Wembley. This is my first and probably last opportunity to play there."

Allott will have plenty of people rooting for him in the crowd today. "My wife Claire and three boys - Jack (8), Luca (8) and Harry (6 months) - are coming with my dad, my mother-in-law, father-in-law and a lot of other family members. There are also a number of friends attending. Hopefully it should be a good day for everyone.

"Jack and Luca have been to a couple of games but it will be Harry's first. He won't realise, of course, but it'll be nice to tell him when he's older that the first game he went to was at Wembley."

Allott, who has made over 650 senior appearances since being handed his debut in 1996, counts himself fortunate to have avoided any major fitness concerns. "Touch wood, I've not really had any serious injuries, which has been lucky. I'm a believer in training hard because you only get out what you put in.

"It's nice to get a bit of success in the last couple of years. At my age, I



Mark Allott celebrates winning League 2 last term with teammate Danny Whitaker

probably appreciate it more than I would have done if I was younger."

On the subject of age, Allott admits that his thoughts often turn to what he might do when his playing career comes to an end. "It crosses your mind near enough every day as soon as you pass 30! You tend to do a lot of thinking about what you want to do.

"I've done level two of the UEFA 'B' Licence and I'd like to get into coaching in some way. If not in the professional game, then maybe in a school or college. After being involved in football for so long, I feel I've got a lot of experience to pass on."



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Congratulations to Swindon Town for reaching the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final!



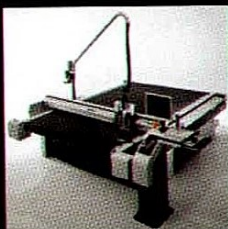
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Wishing Paolo and Swindon Town every success in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final!

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RITCHIE RICH

Already named League 2 Player of the Year, Matt Ritchie is hoping to inspire Swindon Town to Wembley glory

INTERVIEW: GARRY HAYES

How does it feel to win the Player of the Year for this season?
It must have been a great feeling. I felt honoured to win it and to be up on stage collecting the award is something I will stick with me for a long time. I've enjoyed playing in this team all season. While it's a personal award, I need to thank my teammates also as they have been there with me every step of the way. They've given me a little bit of stick since I won the award, but it's all been in good jest.

Swindon are set to play around the cup final. How does it feel to reach the Johnstone's Paint Trophy at Wembley. Do you think you have a chance of being defeated by a team that you will help you in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final?

I'm still very young then, so just to be out there on cup final day was an amazing experience for me. This is different from playing, but I have been to Wembley before. I have seen how everything works away from the game, so I hope I can put that experience to good use. Hopefully I won't be as overwhelmed as I was when I went to Wembley with Portsmouth and concentrate on my game a lot more.

What does it mean to you, Wembley, and what does it mean to you?

Not really. It's just as big a day for me as for them. There are players in the squad like Paul Benson who have played and won at Wembley. They have been there and done it before - they're experienced and know

what it's all about. I've only been a spectator there. The experience I had in the changing rooms on game day will help me personally, but I'm not sure how much advice I can offer.

Under Paulie D. Gough, the club has tried to change completely this year. What's been the difference?

The gaffer has come in with a really positive attitude and approach and that has rubbed off on everyone else. Since I have been here I have always thought the club was a great place to play and I think the gaffer has come in and helped us realise our potential. He has changed the whole mentality here and it's now a real positive, upbeat place to be again.

What has he done to implement that new mentality?

He got us winning games for starters. It always helps to have a team winning games and he has got us working hard in training, which we have carried over into games. He's been great for me personally and I think my performances this season demonstrate that. I always look forward to coming into work every day and now we have the chance to lift some silverware, it's exciting. We want to win the Johnstone's Paint Trophy today and then go on from there to get promoted back to League 1. We know we can do it and the manager has given us the confidence to achieve it. Hopefully we can and it will cap off an excellent year for the club.



THE HAND OF HOD

Swindon Town are enjoying a renaissance under Paolo Di Canio, but before the Italian it was a pair of former high-profile footballers who brought the glory days to the County Ground - Ossie Ardiles and Glenn Hoddle

WORDS: RICHARD GODDEN

As Swindon Town supporters departed Wembley Stadium as losing finalists in the 2010 League 1 Play-Off Final, nobody could have predicted the year that would follow for the club.

From promotion contenders, Swindon finished 2010/11 propping up the division, contemplating life in League 2. Things were looking bleak. Enter Paolo Di Canio.

Since the Italian's appointment in May last year, the Robins have been, well, flying high, and the storm clouds have revealed themselves to be carrying a silver lining in the form of the Italian.

Without tempting fate, they look favourites for automatic promotion this term and reaching today's Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final is an instant reminder of the positive impact Di Canio has made during his short time in charge.

Today marks his first appearance at Wembley as a player or manager and should he finish the day lifting silverware, there are two former high-profile Swindon managers who will know exactly how he feels.

Ossie Ardiles and Glenn Hoddle are

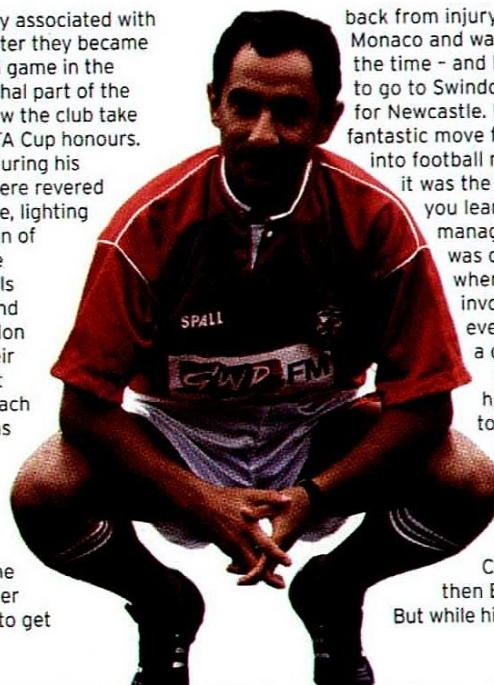
names most commonly associated with Tottenham Hotspur after they became legends of the English game in the Eighties, forming a lethal part of the Spurs midfield that saw the club take home FA Cup and UEFA Cup honours.

Similar to Di Canio during his playing career, they were revered for their skill and poise, lighting up matches with a turn of flair that captured the imagination of neutrals across the country. And like the current Swindon boss, they started their managerial careers at the County Ground, each later taking the Robins to Wembley.

"Looking back at my career, it was the perfect scenario for me," remembers Hoddle, who joined the club as player/manager in 1991. "I was trying to get

back from injury - I came back from Monaco and was training at Chelsea at the time - and I got the opportunity to go to Swindon after Ossie had left for Newcastle. I felt it would be a fantastic move for me if I wanted to go into football management, because it was the type of club where you learned everything that management would bring. It was one of those clubs where you would get involved with absolutely every part of it, so it was a great learning curve."

Indeed it was and after he had guided the Robins to the Premier League by virtue of a dramatic Play-Off final victory over Leicester City at Wembley in 1993, Hoddle later became Chelsea manager and then England boss in 1996. But while his stint at the County



"I CUT MY TEETH IN MANAGEMENT AT SWINDON, WORKED WITH SOME LOVELY PEOPLE AT A GREAT CLUB AND OBVIOUSLY IT WAS GREAT TO BRING SOME SUCCESS THERE" - GLENN HODDLE

Ground would last just two years, it was that Play-Off victory that has forever endeared him to fans of the Wiltshire club.

"My word, what a game!" he continues. "It was absolutely incredible. We were 3-0 up, playing superbly, and then suddenly they came back - and full credit to Leicester for that, they were down and out and threw caution to the wind, making it 3-3. The last 20 minutes was like the Alamo, but Paul Bodin popped up with the penalty that made it 4-3, thankfully. It was a wonderful occasion and we got our just rewards for the good football we played that season."

Much like Swansea City in the Premier League now, it was Swindon's free-flowing style that had seen them capture the imagination of fans in Division One as they marched on to experience top-flight football for the first time in the club's history.

But without the appointment of his former Spurs teammate Ossie Ardiles, would Hoddle have had it so good at the County Ground?

"No way, not at all!" jokes Ardiles, who was appointed Swindon boss in 1989 following the departure of Lou Macari. "I came in and introduced a totally different style to the club, moving on from the era they had before so when Glenn replaced me, he was able to continue my project."

"That's not to say they didn't play good football, but it wasn't how I liked to play and I was able to change things for the better, I think. Glenn was able to take it a step further and make a real impact."

"It was a wonderful club to join. The people of Swindon were very forthcoming and I have great memories from my time there, especially our own trip to Wembley."

Three years prior to Hoddle leading his players out beneath the Twin Towers, Ardiles had done the same with the



Glenn Hoddle celebrates winning the 1993 Play-Off Final with Paul Bodin, Craig Maskell, and Shaun Taylor (main image), while above, Ossie Ardiles and Alan McLoughlin celebrate a Wembley victory of their own in 1990

Robins, winning the Division Two play-offs, but their joy would be replaced by despair when matters off the pitch resulted in the club missing out on reaching Division One. "Aside from that, it was a magical day," remembers Ardiles.

"The fans were magnificent and I should imagine it's what Paolo will experience today. I really hope they can win the trophy. I

had such a great time with them." Hoddle echoes such sentiments.

"I look back at Swindon and it was one of my happiest times as a coach, how we played as a team and the style was very close to my heart. The icing on the cake was that we were successful as well. We had a limited budget, limited squad, but it was about getting the best out of it and we played some fantastic stuff. The aim was to get promotion and we achieved it by getting to Wembley."

"I cut my teeth in management at Swindon, worked with some lovely people at a great club and obviously it was great to bring success there. I look back at it with very fond memories."





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LIVING THE DREAM

CHRIS SMITH is living the dream.

He has just signed a professional playing contract with Swindon Town FC after winning Samsung's 'Win A Pro Contract' competition.

Just nine months ago Chris, 21, was studying for a sports degree when he decided to enter 'Win A Pro Contract' - the annual nationwide search for talented amateur players who could be good enough to make it as a pro.

And just three weeks ago he started training with Paolo Di Canio's first-team squad!

Chris, of Stoke, said: "Since the gaffer chose me as the winner, my feet have hardly touched the ground.

"I was preparing for my exams when he called to say he wanted to look at me, and three others. We attended a week's training to see how we handled ourselves in a club and squad environment, where I thought I did okay.

"I was gobsmacked when he phoned again to say 'This is your new manager calling'!

"Out of nearly 5,500 players from all over the country who entered 'Win A Pro Contract' he had chosen me. My mum and dad were there when I got the call. It was really emotional.

"After that, it was all a bit of a blur. There were TV, radio and newspaper interviews to do.

"There was a flat to find near the County Ground. There were all the new teammates and back room staff at the club to meet. Amazing, really amazing."

Swindon boss Paolo Di Canio said: "Chris is intelligent, strong and has quality on the ball.

"He has shown great hunger to win the competition and become a professional. He deserves a chance to prove himself and become a good player.

"Chris has done very well since joining my squad. He has fitted in well, concentrated hard and showed his spirit."

As a kid, full-back Chris spent time at Everton and Stoke City, but, like so many other youngsters, those early hopes of a career in football came to nothing.

But 'Win A Pro Contract' opened the door to another chance - a fresh shot at letting Chris prove he was good enough to truly live the dream...that every football fan carries in his heart.



Chris Smith in action during December's 'Win A Pro Contract' Final at the County Ground.



Chris Smith signing his professional contract with Swindon Town FC CEO Nick Watkins.

IN THE SQUAD

TEN days after arriving as the unknown new boy at Swindon Town FC, Chris Smith saw his name in the First Team squad!

A couple of injuries to key players meant that manager Paolo Di Canio had to start juggling with his squad.

Chris said: "I couldn't believe it when I saw my name up on the sheet. I never expected it.

But I could understand, given the injuries and big games coming up, why the gaffer was considering every one of us.

It just goes to show how quickly things can change when you are in a professional environment. And how important it is to keep yourself in top condition all the time.

As it turned out, I didn't make the bench but I'm delighted to already be considered!"

WIN A PRO CONTRACT



HOW IT WORKS

More than 5,500 players applied for 'Win a Pro Contract' in 2011.

Applications were vetted by a team of experts at FootballCV (www.footballcv.com) and players were selected to attend trials at a Goals Soccer Centre (www.goalsfootball.com) up and down the country. Scouts from Swindon Town FC kept a close eye on the skills and fitness tests and a total of 88 players were selected to play in 11-a-side matches at semi-professional football grounds.

By which time, Swindon manager Paolo Di Canio was running his eye over the hopefuls.

After these trial matches, the best 11 players went forward to play in the Final at the club's County Ground against a Swindon Town FC Select XI.

Di Canio then selected the players he wanted to train with the First Team for a week - before choosing the winner, who immediately picked up a one year professional contract and a boot deal with Pro-Direct, the online sportswear retailer (www.prodirectsoccer.com).

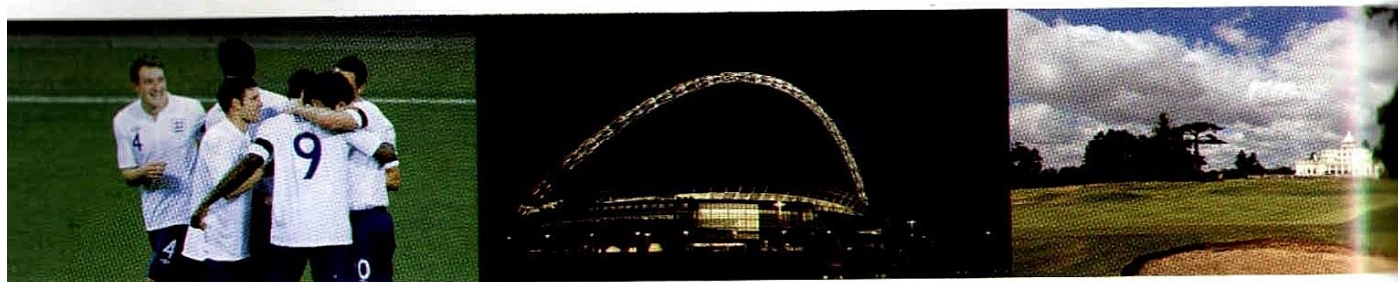
Samsung Sponsorship Director Martin Howard said: "We are proud to have developed 'Win A Pro Contract' and are delighted that in our second season we nearly doubled the number of entries for trials. There are thousands of talented players in this country who deserve the chance to prove they are good enough to become a professional footballer and Samsung 'Win a Pro Contract' gives them that opportunity".

The Samsung 'Win A Pro Contract' competition is open to amateur players aged 17 and over who are not currently signed on professional terms.

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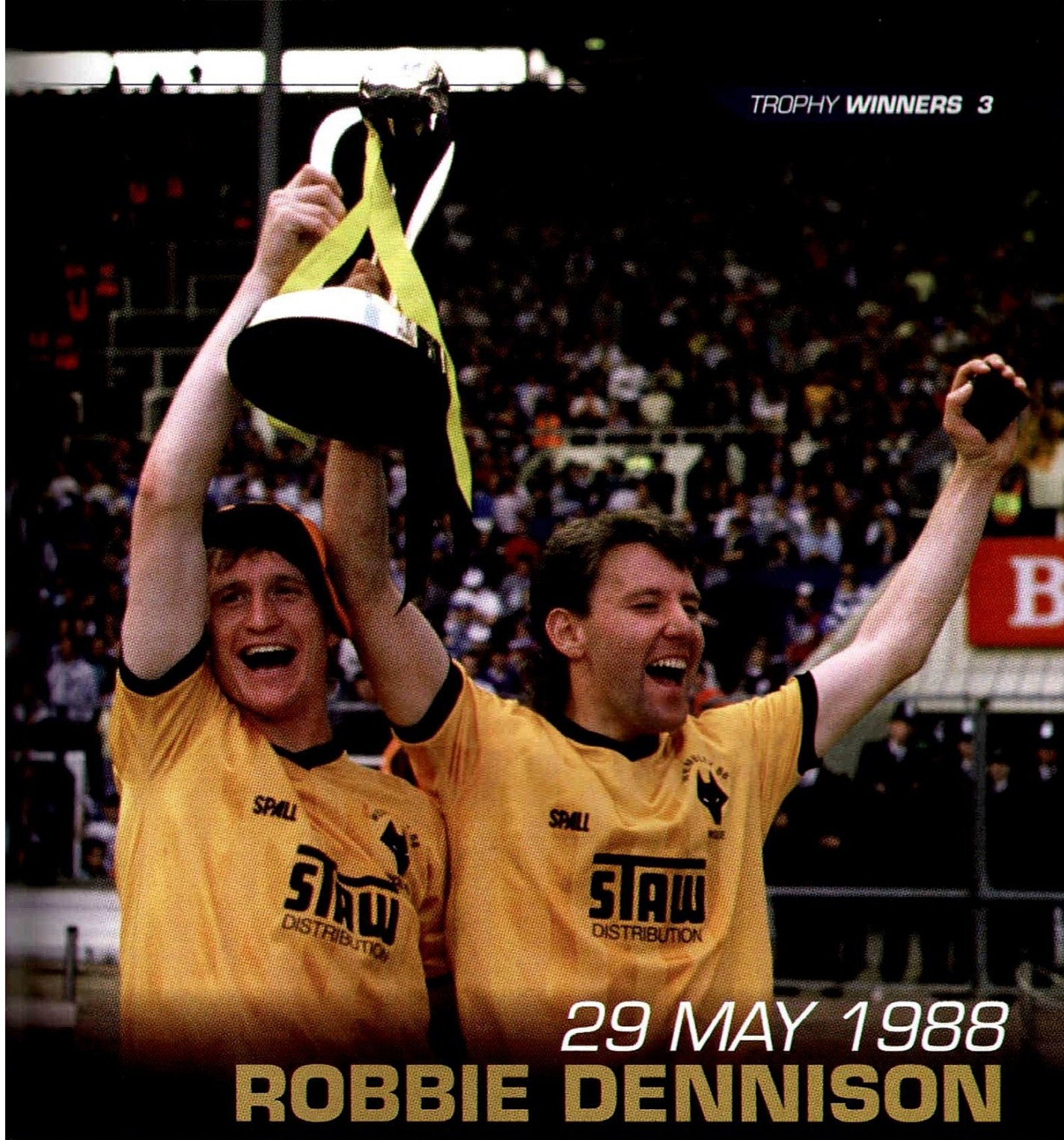
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**BURNLEY 0
WOLVERHAMPTON 2
WANDERERS**



"I'll never forget Wolves at Wembley in 1988. We'd clinched the Division Four title a few weeks previously, now we had a Wembley final to contest against Burnley. It was a fantastic day and to get on the scoresheet is the stuff of dreams. A noisy crowd of nearly 81,000 made for a great atmosphere with both ourselves and Burnley well supported.

We went ahead in the first half through Andy Mutch [above, left with Robbie]. Then, six minutes into the second half we were awarded a free-kick. I'd been on set-piece duty all season and this was well positioned for a right-footer,

about 22 yards out and to the left of centre. I took a few steps and managed to curl a beauty into the top left corner past Chris Pearce. I remember that there was a bit of a breeze, but I knew I had a chance as I'd caught it so sweetly.

To see the ball go in was a fantastic feeling. And it was brilliant to see Wolverhampton absolutely packed when we subsequently showed off the trophy in the city on an open-top bus tour. Wolves had been in a lull for quite a while but you could really sense that the revival was happening - and it was truly wonderful to be a part of getting the famous football club back on track."

WAYNE'S WORLD

A cult hero wherever he played, Wayne Allison was proud to name Chesterfield and Swindon Town among the clubs where he enjoyed some of his finest memories

WORDS: MIKE WALTERS, DAILY MIRROR

Clapperboards and film scripts were never really his style, so after 828 appearances and 208 goals, Wayne Allison slipped quietly from the lights, cameras and action.

In the summer when Chesterfield's former ground was transformed into a film location for Michael Sheen's acclaimed portrayal of Brian Clough in *The Damned United*, the 'Chief' called time on one of football's most enduring, and endearing, careers.

Ostensibly, after its makeover in a municipal shade of green paint, Saltergate's main stand bore a passable likeness to Clough's old theatre of parody at Derby's Baseball Ground, but there was no fooling the Spireites cognoscenti among multiplex screen patrons. The good people of Chesterfield know a crooked spire from a perfectly upright steeple, and they recognised their ancestral home immediately - just as they recognised the supreme professionalism with which Allison kept the final curtain in abeyance.

In four years raging against the twilight of his playing days in Derbyshire, Allison reached twin milestones which spoke volumes for his fitness and application: 750 League appearances and a double century of goals.

It is another tribute to his spirit that

from youthful promise at Halifax to elder statesman at Saltergate - and six clubs in between - Allison was a crowd favourite wherever he played in 22 years on the front line.

"I should be grateful that football matches are not beauty contests because my playing style wasn't always easy on the eye," said Allison, now 43. "There is football for purists, and then there is me! But fans seemed to appreciate my effort and in return, I never took their indulgence for granted.

"Although I was never driven by stats, I will always be indebted to Chesterfield for the opportunity to reach those landmarks. From scoring on my debut, which is always a smart career move if you want to endear yourself to a new set of supporters, they were good times for an old stager.

"I'm delighted they won League 2 last year. That was a great way to christen the new b2net stadium, and now they have a fantastic day out at Wembley to enjoy.

"I know it all ended quietly for me at Chesterfield, but I didn't want to become a bit-part player fading into the sunset, and I had made a pact with myself that I wasn't going to be playing at 40. I had my time, it was wonderful while it lasted, but I didn't want to take up a space

which would block a young player's progress.

"I had already started to take my coaching badges, study for a PhD in sports science and go on the Certificate of Football Management course at Warwick University to try and make myself employable in football beyond my playing career. I just happened to be at Chesterfield when the music stopped."

In his pomp, Allison - now a research manager at St George's Park, the Football Association's national coaching centre in Staffordshire - was a brave, bustling, belligerent centre forward. Although he never played in the Premier League, he was the type of striker gilded defenders dreaded meeting in cup ties because he never gave them a moment's peace.

Statistically, his two most prolific seasons were at a former prisoner of war camp which became the first League ground with floodlights - Swindon's County Ground, where Steve McMahon paid £475,000 for Allison to spring the escape hatch from a productive stint at Bristol City in 1995.

From Don Rogers, their Wembley hero in 1969, to John Trollope (770 League appearances for a single club), Swindon have always been susceptible to cult heroes, and Allison took to the Robins like a rubber duck to bathwater.

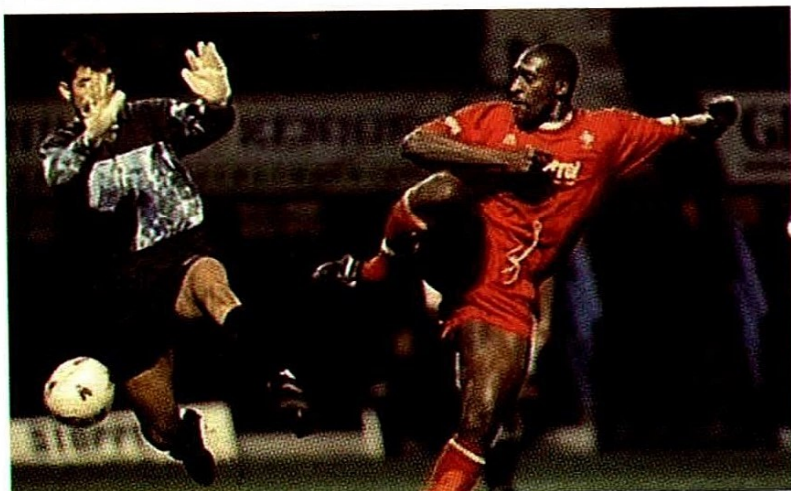
"First impressions often count the

A FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS





Wayne Allison was regularly on the score sheet at Chesterfield and Swindon during his time with both clubs



most, and I can remember being impressed with Steve from our first conversation," he said. "He told me not to waste my energy running into the channels and making extra work for myself. He told me to stay central, hold the ball up, bring others into play and get in the box to meet the crosses.

"I thought, 'I like this fella, he doesn't want me to run around like a headless chicken, we're going to get along famously.' And we did - in fact the whole team were good friends. We socialised with each other, we backed each other on the pitch and we won promotion back to the Championship at the first attempt after the club had been relegated two years running.

"I look back on my two years at Swindon with great affection. I learned to be a target man - you don't always get a lot of rewards but you certainly get kicked every week - and I grew up there as a player.

"They are obviously having a great time under Paolo Di Canio now: it is not easy for a manager to convey

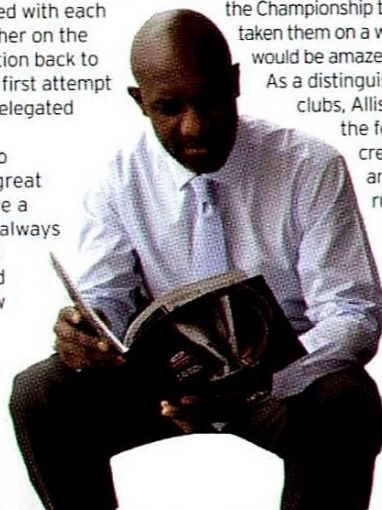
such passion on the touchline and reflect his own personality in his team's performances, but he has already achieved that.

"In a sense, it's hard to believe where they are now; less than two years ago, Charlie Austin was clean through against Millwall in the play-off final, one-on-one with the keeper, and the ball bobbled horribly as he executed his shot.

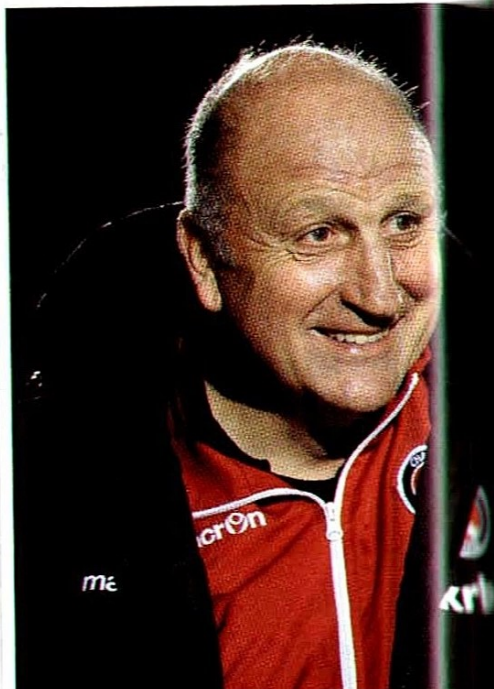
"If that had gone in, I think history might have been different and Swindon would be in the Championship today. But Paolo has taken them on a wonderful run, and I would be amazed if they didn't go up."

As a distinguished servant of both clubs, Allison is happy to sit on the fence, with lashings of creosote, this afternoon and let impartiality run its course.

Whether Di Canio's histrionics and colourful hand signals win the day, or Spireites manager John Sheridan is celebrating tonight, Wembley will be an Allison wonderland.



Left: Allison samples today's Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final matchday programme



A MANAGER FOR ALL SEASONS

Paul Hart once had to justify spending £4.50 on studs as manager of Chesterfield but he claims a win at Wembley for his old friend John Sheridan would be priceless.

Hart has managed both of the clubs fighting for the Johnstone's Paint Trophy this afternoon, with more success during his three-year spell at Chesterfield, despite having to operate on a shoestring budget.

Now the Academy director at Charlton, Hart recalled: "During my time there I learned how to manage in extreme situations. We were not allowed to carry any stock, studs included. But one morning we were sitting in my office and it was lashing down outside, so we had no choice but to go and get some long studs.

"They cost a grand total of £4.50. But a few days later I was called in by the chairman to explain the invoice! "It was a club working within its limitations but I owe them a debt because they gave me a chance in management. I learned a lot about myself."

Hart spent just over two years at Saltergate, taking the club to the Fourth Division Play-Off Final in 1990 where they lost 1-0 to Cambridge United. His spell at Swindon at the end of last season lasted just eight weeks and he admits to having mixed feelings about today's Final.

"Swindon didn't go to plan. It wasn't a great time for the club. But they have a young lad, Matt Ritchie, who came through when I was there.

"He's tearing the division apart now, and I'd like him to get something out of the game. Swindon are on fire at the moment and will probably start as favourites."

Paul Brown

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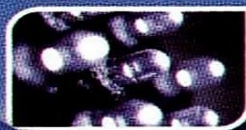
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Former Home Secretary and chairman of Help the Hospices Michael Howard soaks up Wembley

It has been a long road to Wembley for today's Johnstone's Paint Trophy finalists Chesterfield and Swindon Town, but for some football fans, the path to success and glory promises to be much longer this summer.

In June, Help the Hospices, The Football League's Official Charity Partner for 2011/12, is staging a three-day bike ride from London to Paris to help raise funds to enable its hospices to care for 360,000 people each year, including patients and their friends and families.

Starting at Wembley Stadium on Thursday 14 June, the Arch to Arc Bike Ride will take fans from across the country on a 244-mile journey through the English countryside and French vineyards and villages before making a triumphant finish at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

"The bike ride is going to be excellent and great fun for all involved," said Michael Howard, chairman of Help the Hospices and former Home Secretary.

"Our partnership with The Football League is working very well and we hope to raise over £400,000 throughout the course of the season with events such as the Arch to Arc Bike Ride."

There was also a special week of action from 3 to 11 March when all Football League clubs staged a game

ON YOUR BIKE

Help the Hospices, The Football League's Official Charity Partner, is staging a London to Paris bike ride this summer to help raise much-needed funds

dedicated to Help the Hospices, making collections on behalf of the charity and visiting their local hospices.

"Hospice care helps seriously ill people to live well. The majority of hospice income comes from fundraising, with only a small amount subsidised by the government. At Help the Hospices we depend on donations and events such as the bike ride and the week of action.

"Lots of Football League clubs do wonderful things in their communities and this is just another way that football is being used to make a positive impact on society."

• You can support Help the Hospices at the touch of a button. Text **GOAL33E3** to **70070** to make a £3 donation to Help the Hospices.

• For more information on how you can take part in the Arch to Arc Bike Ride, visit www.helpthehospices.org.uk/truecolours

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2011/12

LAST CHANCE SALOON

A Wembley winner in the past, Chesterfield's Jack Lester says that, at 36, today could be his final opportunity as a player to sample the stadium's unique atmosphere

WORDS: GRAHAME LLOYD

Jack Lester knows he's approaching the twilight of his career but after netting the goal which confirmed Chesterfield's appearance in this afternoon's Final, the evergreen striker has no plans to call it a day just yet. In fact, he still sees himself as a bit of a Jack the Lad.

"I may be 37 in October but I still feel good," Lester stated. "Because of my age, I'm realistic about how much longer I've got in the game but I still love it because I really enjoy playing."

With more than 500 games under his belt, he has lived with the 'veteran' tag for longer than he cares to remember while his impressive scoring record over the last five years has secured him legendary status with the Spireites.

"I have the hunger to keep going for as long as possible," he added. "In my view, there's no better job - especially when I speak to former players who let you know how hard it is giving up the game. You're a long time retired and I'll know when I've become an embarrassment because there'll be no more job offers."

Throughout his career, Lester has always been a regular rather than a prolific goalscorer, operating as either an out-and-out striker or an attacking midfielder playing as a foil to a front man.

Born in Sheffield, he supported



the Blades as a boy but opted to join Grimsby Town because he got on well with Richard O'Kelly, their youth team coach at the time and who earlier this month was appointed Hereford United boss.

"I could have signed for United but Richard persuaded me to go to Blundell Park. Grimsby were a nice club who allowed me to stay at school and do my A-levels. I'd go there one day a week. They were in Division One at the time - the same as United - and I hoped I'd have more chance breaking through with a smaller club."

"I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT REACHING THE FINAL AT THIS STAGE OF MY CAREER. REALISTICALLY, WHEN IS IT GOING TO HAPPEN AGAIN?"

Three years later, Lester helped the Mariners pull off a famous Wembley double, winning the 1998 Auto Windscreens Shield against Bournemouth and, a month later, securing promotion back to the second

tier via the play-offs after being relegated the previous season.

"I missed the first game through suspension," Lester recalled, "and it was very disappointing not to play in front a crowd of 60,000.

Our manager, Alan Buckley, said there was no point in my going so I watched it at home on the telly but then a month

later we were back at Wembley for the Division Two Play-Off Final and beat Northampton 1-0.

"We had a good team that year, it was a fantastic occasion and Alan's love of the passing game gave me a great footballing education."

Lester's key role in a 4-3 win over Nottingham Forest in January 2000 when he scored the opening goal persuaded Forest boss David Platt to pay £300,000 for him a couple of weeks later. "I liked David Platt but it wasn't very harmonious there at the time what with the club's financial problems."

He had a 16-month spell with Sheffield United starting in July 2003 before a surfeit of strikers prompted a return to the City Ground under Joe Kinnear

and then Colin Calderwood. In his first spell there he suffered play-off disappointment - ironically losing to Sheffield United in the semi-finals - and there was more heartbreak in 2007 when Forest's quest to climb out of League 1 foundered at the hands of Yeovil at the same stage.

"We lost 5-4 on aggregate both times and they're probably the worst two nights of my career. The Yeovil one was tougher as we led 2-0 after the first leg and 3-1 on aggregate until the 82nd minute of the return. We also

led 3-1 on aggregate in the second game against Sheffield United before being pegged back."

When Calderwood released him after the Yeovil defeat, Lester moved to Chesterfield where the goals have continued to flow. In his first two seasons, he set a club record by becoming the first Chesterfield player to score 20 times in consecutive campaigns for 82 years.

As the Spireites roared to the League 2 title last May, he netted 18 goals in 29 starts but the captain's appearances this season have been disrupted by both injury and suspension.

"I had a good pre-season and was feeling really fit but then I broke my arm in September. I missed the next three months and the arm is now being held in place by pins. It was frustrating because the team were struggling.

"I scored in my first game back after the injury but then received a three-match ban. The injury and suspension did set me back but I feel I'm contributing."

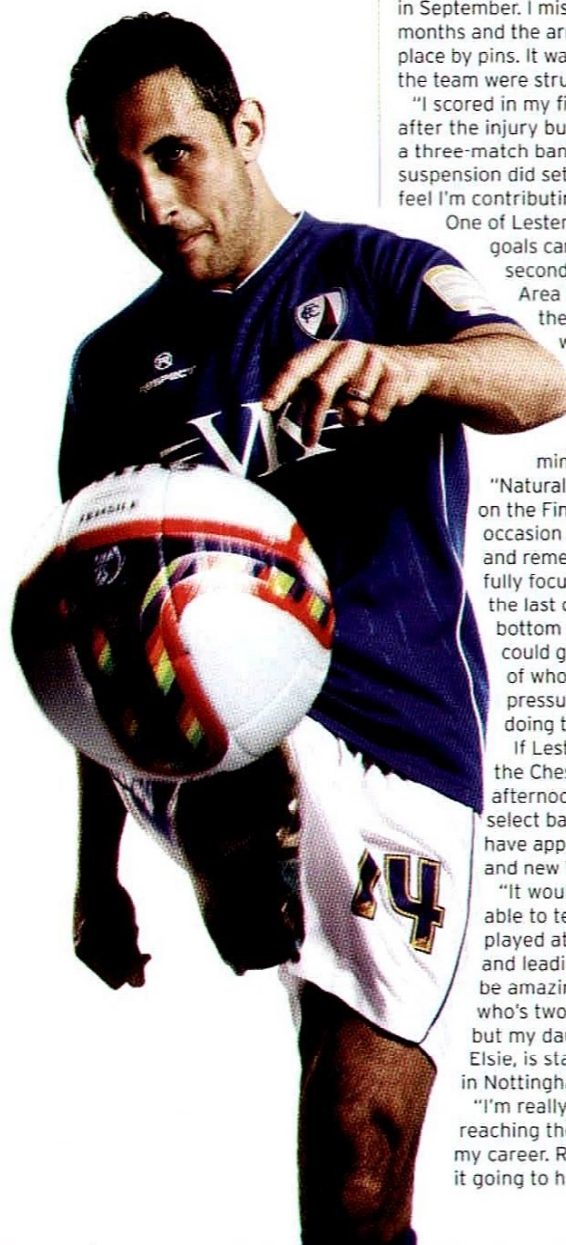
One of Lester's most important goals came at Oldham in the second leg of the Northern Area Final. Leading 2-1 from the home tie, Chesterfield were under almost constant pressure until a defensive mix-up enabled Lester to nip in for the 88th-minute winner.

"Naturally, you have an eye on the Final because it's an occasion you want to be part of and remember, but we've been fully focused on the league for the last couple of months. The bottom seven or eight teams could go down - it's a case of who can best handle the pressure. I think we've been doing that quite well."

If Lester is included in the Chesterfield team this afternoon, he will join a select band of players to have appeared at both the old and new Wembley stadiums.

"It would be nice to be able to tell my kids that I'd played at both grounds - and leading the side out would be amazing. My son, Stanley, who's two, will be coming but my daughter, five-month-old Elsie, is staying at home in Nottingham.

"I'm really excited about reaching the Final at this stage of my career. Realistically, when is it going to happen again?"



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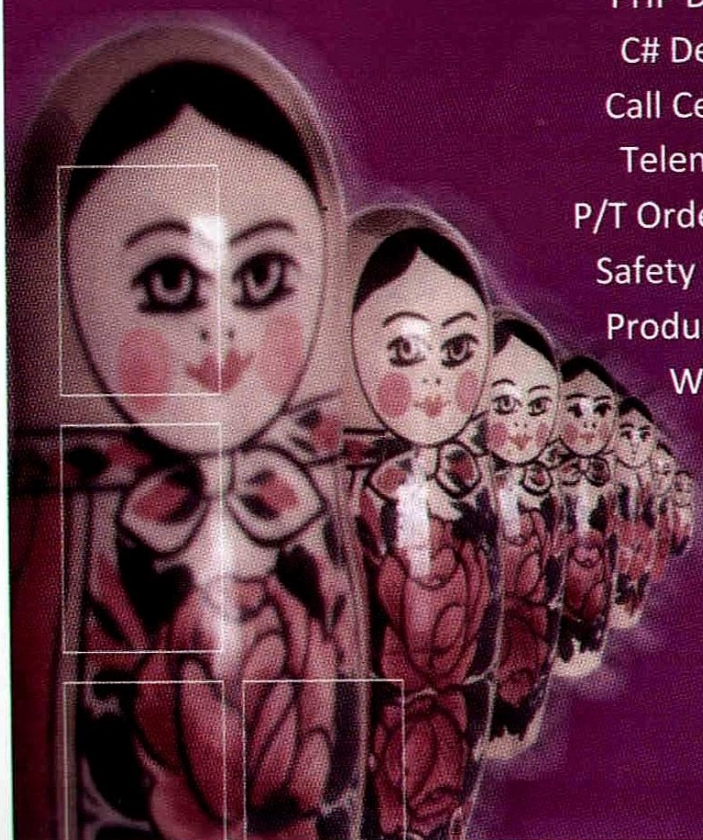
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GO WES!

Clean sheet or not, Swindon Town goalkeeper Wes Foderingham just wants to lift silverware at Wembley Stadium today **WORDS: ANDREW WARSHAW**

Keeping clean sheets is the number one priority for all goalkeepers but Swindon's Wes Foderingham has already become something of a cult hero when it comes to shutouts. Signed in October last year - initially as cover for the injured Phil Smith - he quickly cemented his first-team place on the back of a series of remarkable games that so impressed manager Paolo Di Canio, his loan deal was soon turned into a permanent contract. In his first five appearances at Swindon, home and away, Foderingham didn't concede a single goal, setting a club record for a new keeper starting out in the team. Nor did he once kick the ball out of his net in his first seven league games at the County Ground - from 16 October to 21 February. Naturally they are statistics that give immense satisfaction to the player who learned his trade at a Premier League academy and who today will rightly enjoy his moment in the Wembley spotlight. "I played in one of the first games at the new Wembley for England Under-16s against Spain and didn't concede a goal either," he recalls of the victory. "But this is different. This is a big crowd and is live on TV. Our main objective has always been promotion; this would be a great bonus, but we deserve it." Foderingham is modesty personified when it comes to discussing his remarkable clean sheet record. "We've been pretty sound defensively, the lads have helped me out a lot. It's testament to the team." But surely he must take some of the credit? "Obviously I'm very proud. But to be honest



I'm more interested in being recognised for my performances rather than breaking records. "I've always believed I could do a job at this level, and higher. With young goalkeepers it can be difficult. You might have the ability, but sometimes managers don't trust you completely. That's why I have nothing but thanks for the gaffer. We've got a lot of quality in the side but he's instilled the ethics. We have hardly any days off, working on little details. That's one reason why we've got where we are." Although he never managed a first-team appearance during his 16 months at previous club Crystal Palace, Foderingham looks back on being groomed at Fulham as the time that gave him the tools to be an all-round keeper. "I've done my apprenticeship at a Premier League club, then I was around first-team players at Palace so I've had some pretty solid grounding," adds Foderingham, who has also played for England at U17 and U19 level. "I learned from some of the best coaches and I had a full year training with Mark Schwarzer and David Stockdale." All he needs to do now is keep another clean sheet against Chesterfield today. "That, or become a hero in a penalty shootout - though hopefully it won't come to that."



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SET IN STONE

Ever dreamt of having your name cemented in Wembley's history alongside some of the world's biggest football legends? Now, thanks to Wembley Stadium, you can make it happen

Whether you are a Chesterfield or Swindon Town supporter, why not mark today's Final by personalising your own stone on Wembley Way?

Your stone will be laid around the outer concourse of the stadium, creating a lasting tribute which will allow you to join football legends and fans both past and present, who have all made Wembley the great national stadium we know and love today.

Chairman of Wembley Stadium, Melvin Benn, said: "Wembley is one of the most iconic stages in the world with an unrivalled history. We are delighted to be able to offer our fans this opportunity to be a part of Wembley's history for ever."

Wembley recently unveiled stones on Wembley Way for seven members of the current England squad, including Steven Gerrard, Frank Lampard and Wayne Rooney and members of England's 1966 World Cup winning team.

Lampard said: "Wembley is a special place

and it makes me very proud to know that I will have my own stone there for ever, alongside so many footballing greats."

Other football legends that have been commemorated on Wembley Way include Sir Geoff Hurst, who was honoured alongside his England teammates for his achievements in the 1966 World Cup Final.

The stones can be inscribed with your own special messages, dedications or memories and will be set in the ground along a number of panels dedicated to some of the greatest events ever to take place at Wembley. In 2012, Wembley will unveil a new panel celebrating one of its most epic League Cup Final encounters between Manchester City and Newcastle United in 1976.

Made from the finest grey granite, the Wembley Way stones come in various sizes starting from just £50. Visit www.wembleystadium.com/wembleyway for more details.

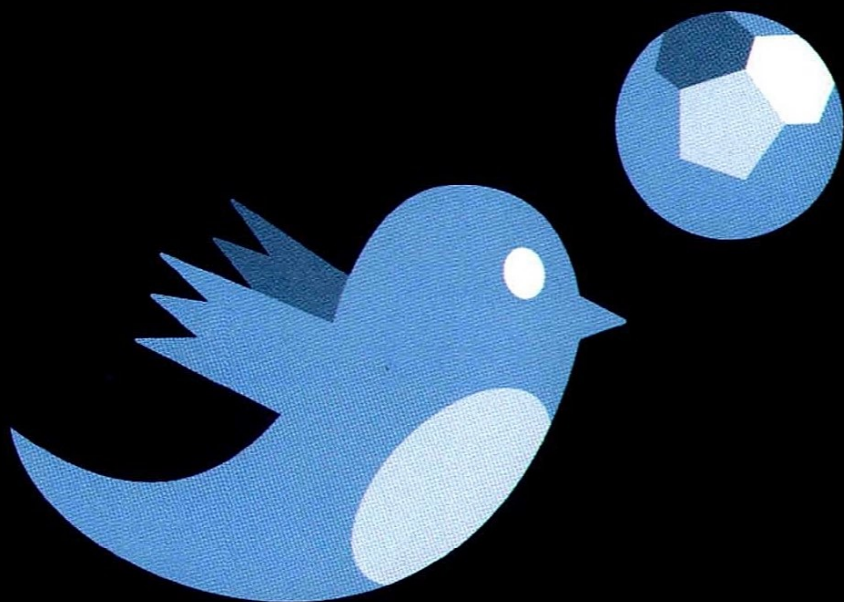
Vinnie Jones, whose giant-killing exploits



Sir Geoff Hurst (above) and Frank Lampard are just two famous names to be honoured on Wembley Way

helped win The FA Cup with Wimbledon in 1988, made a recent return to Wembley after 25 years, starring in an interactive film in which he presents fans with their personalised Wembley Way stone. In the film, Vinnie pays tribute to the national stadium joking: "It's a lot like Hollywood, only closer to the North Circular."

You can star alongside Vinnie in a video for your Wembley Way stone by visiting the website and share it with your friends and family on Facebook.



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HERE COME THE GIRLS

Today's npower Football League Girls Cup Final will be fought out by All Hallows Catholic School and Whitby High School

WORDS: CHRIS RIVETT

At the start of October the local stages of the U13 npower Football League Girls Cup kicked-off and over 5,000 children at nearly 700 schools all had aspirations of a day out at Wembley.

This afternoon that dream will become a reality for the pupils of All Hallows Catholic School and Whitby High School when they take to the field at the national stadium for an occasion they will never forget.

The two teams, representing Aldershot Town and Tranmere Rovers respectively, have emerged triumphant through local, area and regional finals over the last six months to be here this afternoon.

The competition was re-launched last season with the support of npower and as schools progress they are rewarded with certificates, pennants, medals and more.

The biggest prize though, in the eyes of All Hallows' PE Teacher Lee Marker, is the nature of the education - on and off the field - it has provided for the girls.

"Everyone is simply buzzing at the moment. It has had such a positive impact on the school in general; they have all kept up with their work and are noticeably more bubbly and happy around their school life, which has benefited their studies.

"It has had a positive influence on the school's image and highlighted what we have to offer in sporting areas. The number of girls playing at school level has shot up and we hope that will help us attract increased numbers of good, athletic students."

Their opponents today are Whitby High School who will be hoping to follow in

the footsteps of a school just 18 miles up the road. West Kirkby Grammar School were joint winners in 2007/08 when also representing Tranmere Rovers however, regardless of the result, PE Teacher Sam Austin feels that the pupils already deserve to be regarded as winners.

He explained: "The girls are very bright and they have taken everything in their stride. They have been a credit to the school and the tournament has encouraged them to embrace the competitive aspect of sport in a responsible manner.

"With the school behind them, their success has had a knock-on effect with girls football, not just within the school but locally and that has to be positive for everyone involved."

The npower Girls Cup is one of two tournaments for junior footballers from schools across the country that is delivered by community teams at all 72 clubs on behalf of The Football League and Football League Trust.

"The competition encourages youngsters to be active, healthy and develop a keen sense of teamwork," commented Mike Evans, General Manager of The Football League Trust. "More significantly, with the support of npower, it also provides Football League clubs with the opportunity to strengthen connections within their local community and help make a difference to peoples' lives."

To read a match report from today's game and to find out how your school can participate in the U11 npower Football League Kids Cup or U13 npower Football League Girls Cup next season, please visit www.football-league.co.uk.



ALL HALLOWS SCHOOL (representing Aldershot Town)

- Tamsin De Bunsen
- Joanna Hall
- Rebecca Tabbener
- Rebecca Williams
- Dorothy Usher
- Emma Barratt
- Jade Arnott
- Lauren Kilbride

Teachers: Lee Marker,
Nathalie Groves

Club community coaches:
Kirk Wheeler, Gavin Delf



WHITBY HIGH SCHOOL (representing Tranmere Rovers)

- Harriet Shaw
- Emma Davies
- Bethany Brizell
- Tanisha Adolph
- Eden Richardson
- Libby Marsh
- Paige Cole
- Natasha Rothery

Teachers: Sam Austin,
Chris Parker

Club community coaches:
Shirley Wareing,
Louise Edwards

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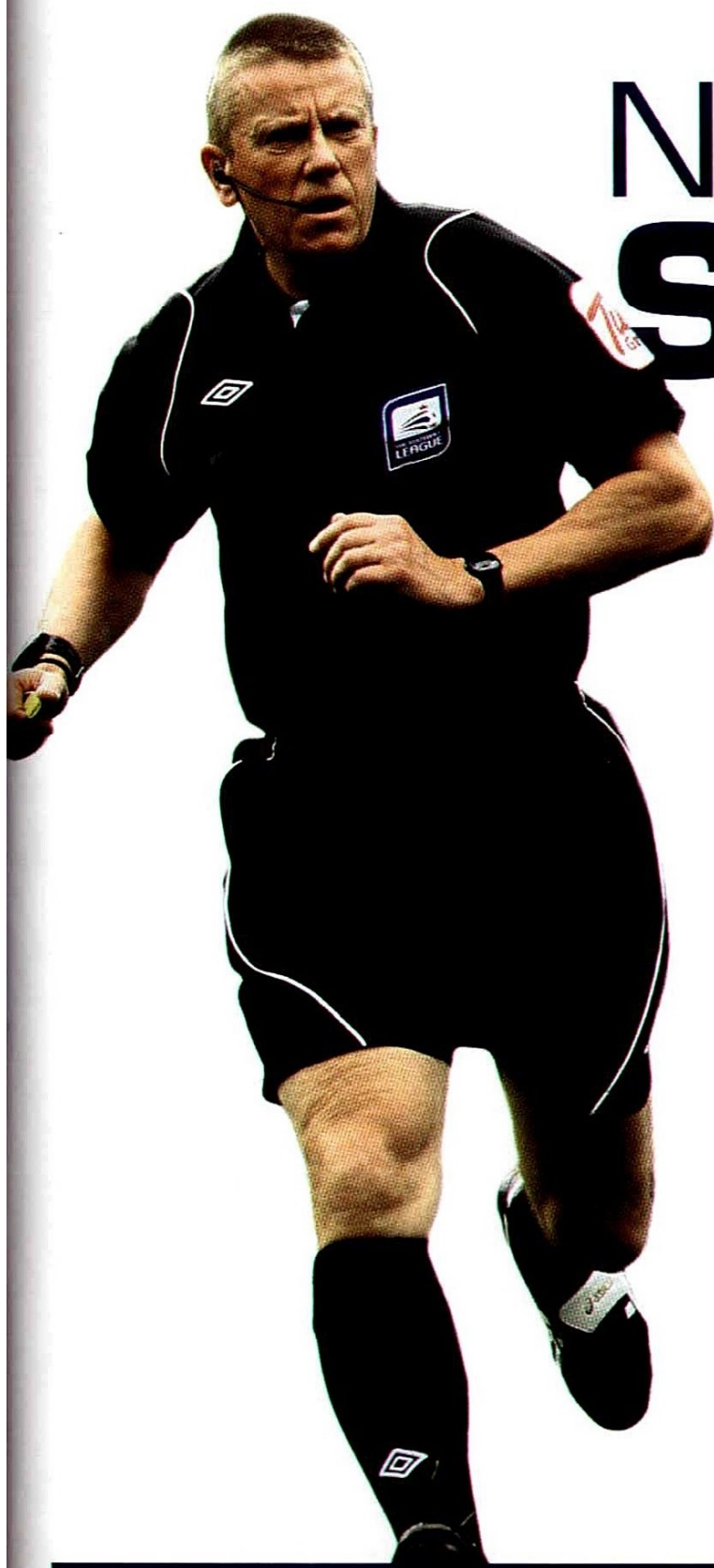
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TROPHY



NEED FOR SPEED

A keen fan of speedway, today's referee Tony Bates can't wait to race around the Wembley pitch today

WORDS: RUSSELL KEMPSON



Today is a big day for Tony Bates. To referee at Wembley will realise a lifelong ambition. But next Saturday is a similarly important and eagerly anticipated date in his diary, when Stoke Potters roar out of the gate at Loomer Road for the start of their new season.

Bates is a speedway fanatic, no more content than when watching four riders on bikes with no brakes hurling themselves around a track for four laps. The whiff of methanol, the flying shale and perhaps the occasional spectacular crash add to the fascination.

Stoke may have fallen into the National League, the sport's third tier, but when the tapes go up for their challenge match against the Isle of Wight Islanders, he wants to be there. "It just depends where I am," Bates said. "I've had a lot of long treks recently, to Plymouth, Middlesbrough and West Ham, and I could be many miles away from Stoke.

"You either love or hate speedway. I went to my first meeting as a 10-year-old and the speed, the smell, filling in the programme with the heat details, everything just grabbed me. Sure, the crashes are part of the spectacle, but you never want to see anyone getting hurt."

Bates, 50, a joiner by trade, is now in the twilight of his refereeing career. But the production manager for a firm of architectural and aluminium specialists in the Potteries has many fond memories. Among them, running the line in the 1995 Charity Shield and 1996 FA Cup Final and in the Euro '96 match between Germany and Czech Republic at Old Trafford.

Yet when he does hang up his whistle, Mark Murfitt, his 19-year-old stepson, may soon be ready to follow in his footsteps. "Mark's at Level 5 going for Level 4," Tony said. "I'm very proud of him and would love to see him get on to the League list eventually."

Much pride will also be felt at Wembley this afternoon by the Bates clan, including his wife, Jackie, her daughter, Samantha, 25, and partner, Sam. But for a brief and fraught moment, when Dave Allison, the National Group Referees' Manager, informed Tony of his appointment, it did seem that he might not be in any decent physical shape for his big day.

"I was driving when Dave rang. I told him it was quite a shock and that I'd almost driven off the road. The signal then disappeared and I couldn't get back to Dave for four or five minutes. When I did he was relieved because he thought I had crashed!"

"I WENT TO MY FIRST SPEEDWAY MEETING AS A 10-YEAR-OLD. THE SPEED, THE SMELL, FILLING IN THE PROGRAMME, EVERYTHING GRABBED ME"



TRUST MATTERS

Chesterfield and Swindon Town's community projects are playing a vital role in helping the disadvantaged

Chesterfield Community Trust manager, Andy Morris, was a part of football history when he featured for the Spireites in the first Football League Play-off Final to be staged at Wembley in May 1990.

"Cambridge won 1-0 - a Dion Dublin header - and it still hurts 22 years later because it was a controversial winner!" said Morris.

Morris took charge of the community trust scheme after retiring in 2000, and has overseen a huge period of change, particularly in the past 12 months with the facilities at the new b2net Stadium providing a superb base for delivering a range of projects to help support the local community.

In addition, Chesterfield's Community Trust has just received a grant from The Football League Trust to join one of its leading projects - Midnight Leagues, made possible with a grant from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust. Midnight Leagues runs in conjunction with another Trust initiative, On Target, and together these programmes involve 13 club community schemes.

On Target and Midnight Leagues use the positive power of football to engage with disaffected young people on Friday and Saturday evenings in areas identified by the police as 'hotspots' for anti-social behaviour and crime. Once 'engaged' the project seeks to

Chesterfield's Jamie Lowry meets youngsters at one of the club's many community projects

raise aspirations in the young people, specifically with regards to education, and participants are encouraged to complete Sports Leaders qualifications.

"It's fantastic to get Chesterfield onto this programme," said Mike Evans, General Manager of The Football League Trust. "We have now got 13 clubs involved in On Target and Midnight Leagues, and local police forces are asking us for more as crime and anti-social behaviour in the areas where it runs all but disappears."

The Football League Trust is a registered charity that governs, advises and audits the 72 charitable trusts associated with the professional clubs of The Football League. These 72 member trusts have a combined turnover of more than £35 million, and 2,500 members of staff who deliver a wide range of projects under The Trust's main themes of education and employment, health, inclusion and sport. In the past 12 months these projects have engaged with over 1.3 million people of all ages.

Another leading project of The Football League Trust is Every Player Counts - the largest disability sports programme in England and Wales made possible by a grant of £2.59 million from The Football Pools.

The objective of Every Player Counts is to provide opportunities for disabled

people, and to increase their ability to live independently, enjoying the same choice control and freedom of other citizens at home, at work and as members of the community by improving confidence and building their social network.

Swindon Town Football in the Community Trust joined Every Player Counts at its inception in 2009, having already established a wide reaching disability programme.

Swindon Town now run teams for Downs Syndrome, wheelchair football, learning disabilities, Deaf Swindon FC and pan disability sessions for children and adults of all ages and abilities in a programme that engages with close to 1,000 people across Wiltshire every year.

Jon Holloway's Swindon Town association spans nearly 20 years and with Joint Community Manager Clive Maguire, they have established the club's Football in the Community Trust programme as one of the most respected schemes in The Football League.

"We are both very fortunate to be in our roles within Football in the Community, and it is a great time to be associated with the club," said John.

"Paolo Di Canio has transformed Swindon, there's a fantastic buzz at the club again, and he is also very supportive about the work we deliver within our Community Trust."

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**BOLTON WANDERERS 4
TORQUAY UNITED 1**



"Phil Neal was rebuilding the club as it had been the first time Bolton had dropped to the bottom division so to get promoted and then win The Football League Trophy in successive years was a great achievement.

The history of the club was one the reasons I signed in 1987 from Grimsby, so to play a small part in trying to bring back better days was very special. When you went into the town you could tell that the supporters were down about what had happened in previous years, so it was nice to do it for them that day.

There was a massive turnout from Bolton and we were on a good run of form, so

the players were always confident that we could get the job done. The manager had assembled a tight group who all played for each other and even when we went a goal down, the lads didn't panic.

Lifting the trophy was the main objective on the day, but for me to score as well was the icing on the cake. I wasn't known for my goalscoring ability but I managed to find myself in the box on the counter attack, with Torquay trying to get back into the game. It was a great ball played into me and I chested it down and chipped the goalkeeper to make it 3-1 - it was all instinct really."

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Wembley's new five-year deal with the NFL will mean a decade of American football at the new venue

The NFL have announced a new deal with Wembley Stadium which gives the venue exclusive rights to their International Series games in the UK for the next five years.

The first game will see the St. Louis Rams host Super Bowl XLVI runners-up the New England Patriots on Sunday 28 October 2012.

Wembley Stadium's Managing Director, Roger Maslin said: "This deal gives Wembley the exclusive staging rights to all overseas NFL games in the UK for the next five years. It cements the extremely positive partnership that exists between Wembley and the NFL and is acknowledgement of Wembley's position as one of most important and iconic sports venues in the world.

"We have welcomed the NFL, their teams and fans to Wembley for the last five consecutive years and each time our aim has been to improve their experience at the stadium and to enhance the service we provide so they will want to return to our venue again and again.

"The 2011 game at

Wembley was the best yet and we are delighted that the success of this event, combined with our commitment to making improvement year on year, has given the NFL the confidence to expand their presence at Wembley for the next five years. This is fantastic news for the NFL and for Wembley and for all fans of American football. We look forward to being the home away from home for the NFL for many years to come."

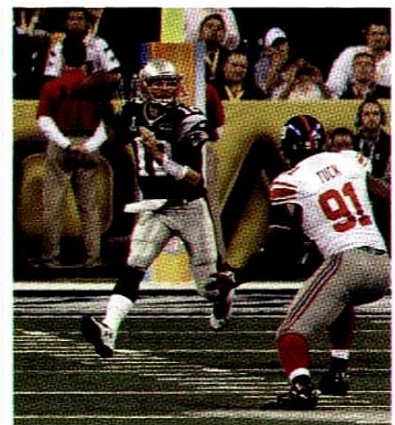
Roger Goodell, NFL commissioner, said he is confident the deal will allow the NFL to better serve its

growing popularity beyond the borders of the US.

"The response to NFL games in the UK among our British fans has been exceptional," he said.

This will be the sixth consecutive International Series NFL game at the new Wembley and by 2016 the stadium will have hosted a

NFL fans will get to see the St. Louis Rams cheerleaders (above) and quarterback Kellen Clemens (left) in action against the New England Patriots in October



decade of American football. Wembley has already helped two previous Super Bowl winners along their journey to glory and this crucial mid-season match-up could propel the winner towards the play-offs. This must-win game is not to be missed!

General admission ticket sales for the 28 October International Series game between the St Louis Rams and New England Patriots at Wembley Stadium are now on sale. Visit www.wembleystadium.com/events for more information. You can also call the Club Wembley team with hospitality enquiries on 0844 980 0038 or email sales@wembleystadium.com

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NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

Josh Thompson only joined Chesterfield in January and is already walking out at Wembley. With the experience of an Old Firm derby behind him, he won't be fazed by the occasion today

WORDS: GRAHAME LLOYD

Just three days after turning 18, Josh Thompson played in an Old Firm derby in front of a fanatical 50,000-strong crowd at Ibrox. A year later, he was a member of the England team beaten 3-1 by Spain in the semi-finals of the European U19 Championships in France.

With that sort of big match experience, it seems unlikely that he will be too fazed by this afternoon's Final. But while Thompson is looking forward to making his bow at the home of English football against Swindon Town, he admits that he'll be stepping into the unknown.

"At my age, it's just a case of seeing what it's like on the day," says the Bolton-born defender. "Wembley is the place you pretend you are when you're kicking a ball around the back garden so it's great to have the chance to play there."

Thompson began his career at cash-strapped Stockport County where his handful of impressive first-team appearances led to trials with Manchester United and West Bromwich Albion in May 2009, spending a week at The Hawthorns and two days at Old Trafford.

"I was star-struck when I walked in at United because I thought I'd be training with the reserves or the A team. But the first person I met was Rio Ferdinand and then I found myself training with the first-team squad.

"I really liked the staff and the atmosphere at West Brom when Tony Mowbray was the manager. I ended up

going to Celtic for £500,000 when Tony took over there.

"The thought of joining such a massive club didn't intimidate me," recalled the 21-year-old. "I just wanted to play and it was too good an opportunity to miss.

"I'd watched the Glasgow derby games on TV but it's very different when you're taking part. It's 110 per cent from the off, the noise is so loud at the beginning and it continues all the way through. We went down to 10 men after an hour and they scored a very late winner. It's an experience that will live with me for ever."

When Neil Lennon replaced Mowbray, the new manager opted for experience. Thompson's subsequent career as a loan ranger has been a limited success because of limited opportunities.

"I made only 12 appearances for Rochdale and it was the same at Peterborough - their defence did so well I hardly played." In the January transfer window he made the move to Chesterfield and his debut appearance saw the Spireites lay the foundations for a place at Wembley as they beat Oldham Athletic 2-1 in the Northern Area Final first leg, following that with a 1-0 win at Boundary Park two weeks later.

"After the second leg, Wembley was on my mind but it had gone by the next league game because we need to get as many points as we can. We came up as champions and our priority is to stay up - I'm fully confident that we can. To win today would be the icing on the cake."

RETURN OF THE MAC

He has already appeared in a Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final with Southend United and although he lost on that occasion, Swindon Town's Alan McCormack isn't thinking about anything but victory this afternoon

WORDS: NICK TOWNSEND, SUNDAY TIMES

When Swindon midfielder Alan McCormack was asked to step in and become a rock of the Robins' rearguard, he scarcely looked ideally cast for the role. As transformations go, it was about as likely as Vinnie Jones auditioning for a romantic lead.

Since the Dubliner had arrived in England as an 18-year-old trainee with Preston North End a decade ago he had been always typecast as a tigerish central midfielder. And, at 5ft 8in, his aerial prowess was assumed to be limited.

But that perception of him changed within two months of arriving at The County Ground last summer when, early on in the 2-0 defeat of his former club Southend United, an injury to Oliver Risser - himself a midfielder playing as an emergency centre-back - meant "Macca" was pressed into service in Paolo Di Canio's back line.

McCormack retained the role (though he has also deputised at right back for injured captain Paul Caddis) and, with the Robins having kept a clean sheet in nearly half the games he has appeared in since moving into defence, it has proved an inspired move. The 28-year-old has developed into an accomplished centre-back and forged a redoubtable partnership with the more conventionally-built Aden Flint and, more recently, Joe Devera, both 6ft 2in.

The engaging McCormack attributes his ability to deal with towering strikers and high balls pumped into the area to his days as a youngster, playing Gaelic football for Dublin County.

"No, you don't get to see the kind of positional move I made very often," he concedes with a wry smile. "But I've always been quite confident in my ability to head the ball. With Gaelic football the ball's always in the air and you're constantly jumping to try and catch it. I've always had that little knack of being able to time when to go up. I think I'm capable of competing with anyone in this league to win a header."

He adds: "I get a lot of mickey taken out of me by the boys, saying the change I made means 'that's the end of your career', but I'm really enjoying playing as centre-half. Maybe I should have done it a little bit earlier? We haven't been conceding many despite having had some great tests against teams including Colchester and Wigan (both in the FA Cup). We've held our own and grown in confidence with that. It makes you feel an extra inch taller; your chest is out an extra bit. It's been nice getting compliments from teammates, managers and fans."

It doesn't mean he has lost his attacking instincts though. "I do get bored at times, smashing away headers, and I do like to get forward. I scored against Northampton and set one up at Crawley. It's nice when you can create something or start a breakaway."

McCormack's potential was uncovered when playing for the Stella Maris club in Dublin before being signed by Preston. During five years at Deepdale, McCormack had loan moves to Leyton Orient and Motherwell and two spells at Southend. He finally signed permanently for the Shrimpers on New Year's Day, 2007. There, he made an enormous impression in midfield, alongside Nicky Bailey, now at Middlesbrough. In that first full season (2007/08) the pair scored 20 goals between them, with McCormack netting nine.

"Yeah, I loved every minute of that season. Nicky and I just bounced off each other. We were a similar type of player - aggressive, hot-tempered, and we hated being second best. We used to push each other on. I would see him go in and absolutely nail two blokes in a challenge and everybody would be raving about him, and I'd want to do the same. And vice-versa. It was the same when one of us scored."

The following season, McCormack was a member of the Southend side who famously drew 1-1 at Stamford Bridge with a Chelsea side containing Frank Lampard, Joe Cole and Didier Drogba in

the third round of the FA Cup - although the Premier League team were 5-1 victors in the replay.

During his first loan period at Roots Hall, the Irishman played in the 2005 Final of this competition at the Millennium Stadium. Southend lost 2-0 after extra time to Wrexham, then in the division higher. "It was a great day out. We weren't expected to win, but we weren't steamrollered and could hold our heads up high."

You remind him that this time his side, as leaders of League 2, are likely to be favourites, despite Chesterfield's League 1 status.

"A lot of people have said that. But in games like the Final, it's about who wants it the most. It doesn't matter how talented you are. The gaffer drills it into us every day. 'Want it! You've got to want it. If you don't want it you're out of my team. If you don't show me passion, you're gone'. He doesn't give you a second chance."

"I think you can see it in our games - we may not always play great, but we certainly battle and keep going until the very end."

Understandably, events have fully vindicated his decision to drop down a division after spending last season at Charlton Athletic. There had been interest from League 1 but McCormack was persuaded to head for Wiltshire by Di Canio's vision for the club.

"He's passionate and a winner and he doesn't expect anything different from you. He wants things done right. He believes you should earn every single penny you make."

As a player who would like to move into coaching or management in time, McCormack appreciates Di Canio's high level of organisation and preparation before matches. Even the demanding training regime.

"Every aspect of the game, he's in our heads. All the early mornings and long training sessions, the hard pre-seasons - it'll be a great payback if we can lift the Johnstone's Paint Trophy and the League 2 title come the end of the year. That's what we do it all for."

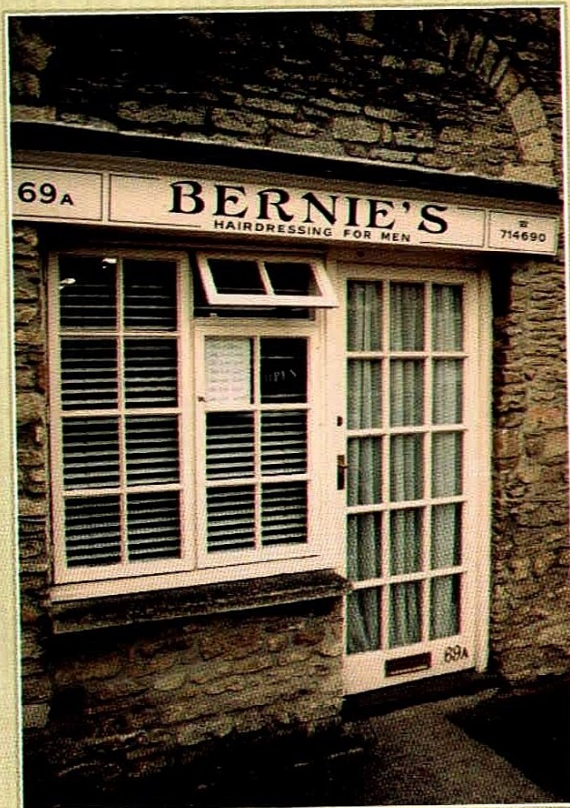
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KIDS' ZONE!



Today there's a special family area here at Wembley, including face painting, photo walls and a special kids menu. To keep you busy before kick-off why not have a go at our fun activities on this page? Good luck!

QUESTION TIME

Test your football knowledge with these brain teasers.

1. Who scored the winning goal in last season's Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final?
2. True or false: Chesterfield and Swindon Town have never played in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy Final
3. How many London clubs did Swindon Town manager Paolo Di Canio play for during his career?
4. John Sheridan scored the winning goal in the 1991 League Cup Final, but who was he playing for?
5. How old is Chesterfield's veteran striker Jack Lester?
6. Matt Ritchie was named League 2 Player of the Year for 2011/12. True or false?

WORDSEARCH

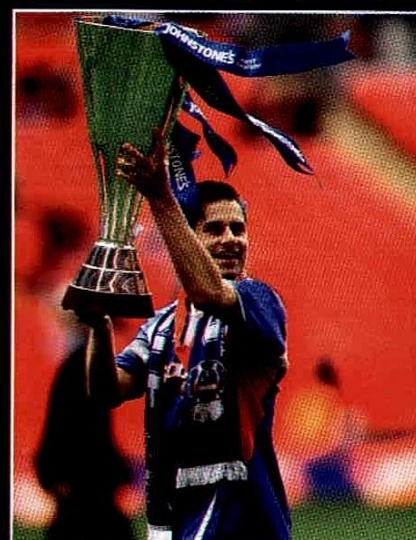
Can you find the 10 words below in our Johnstone's Paint Trophy word puzzle?

F	N	A	D	I	R	E	H	S	H	C	N
O	K	K	E	T	N	E	D	O	E	E	
O	R	R	R	C	P	W	O	I	G	L	R
T	R	O	P	H	Y	L	N	E	S	E	E
B	B	B	B	R	O	A	N	F	Y	B	K
A	F	F	N	O	C	L	A	E	X	R	I
L	X	X	O	I	E	L	L	I	V	A	R
L	D	D	D	N	A	B	E	R	C	T	T
T	T	T	N	Z	M	Y	D	V	L	E	S
A	A	A	I	E	V	B	H	J	J	K	K
M	E	N	W	U	Y	T	L	A	N	E	P
C	H	E	S	T	E	R	F	I	E	L	D

1. SWINDON 2. CHESTERFIELD 3. WYNNILLY 4. DI CANIO 5. SHERIDAN
6. FOOTBALL 7. TROPHY 8. STRIKER 9. PENALTY 10. CELEBRATE

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Paul Thirlwell lifted the Johnstone's Paint Trophy for Carlisle United last year. Can you spot the five differences in these pictures of him celebrating?



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: MISSING JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY LOGO ON THE TROPHY BASE, LEFT PAUL JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY LOGO HAS WASHED ON THE TROPHY BASE, THE CLIMBERS IS MISSING ON HIS SHIRT, CAPTAIN'S IS MISSING FROM HIS ARM, THE BLACK LOGO IS MISSING ON THE BOTTOM OF HIS SHIRT, ANSWERS: QUESTION TIME: 1. PETER MURPHY, 2. TRUE, 3. PAUL WESTHAM UNITED, AND CHARLTON ATHLETIC, 4. CHESTERFIELD WEDNESDAY, 5. 35, 6. TRUE

ANSWERS



CHESTERFIELD

MANAGER: JOHN SHERIDAN

- 1 TOMMY LEE
- 2 NEAL TROTMAN
- 3 GREGOR ROBERTSON
- 4 JAMIE LOWRY
- 5 JOSH THOMPSON
- 6 SIMON FORD
- 7 MARK ALLOTT
- 8 DEREK NIVEN
- 9 CRAIG WESTCARR
- 10 DANNY WHITAKER
- 11 NICKY AJOSE
- 12 LIAM RIDEHALGH
- 13 GREG FLEMING
- 14 JACK LESTER
- 16 ALEX MENDY
- 17 DEAN MORGAN
- 18 JAMES HURST
- 19 SCOTT BODEN
- 20 DAN GRAY
- 21 JORDAN BOWERY
- 22 JIMMY JUAN
- 23 MARK RANDALL
- 24 CRAIG CLAY
- 25 DREW TALBOT
- 26 DAVID DAVIS
- 27 TENDAYI DARIKWA
- 28 NATHAN SMITH
- 29 JACOB HAZEL
- 30 FRANCK MOUSSA

REFEREE
TONY BATES

FOURTH OFFICIAL
EDDIE ILDETON

ASSISTANTS
IAN CROUCH
ROB MERCHANT

RESERVE ASSISTANT REFEREE
HARRY LENNARD



SWINDON TOWN

MANAGER: PAOLO DI CANIO

- 1 MATTIA LANZANO
- 3 CALLUM KENNEDY
- 4 ADEN FLINT
- 5 JOE DEVERA
- 6 DANIEL BOATENG
- 7 PAUL CADDIS
- 8 SIMON FERRY
- 9 PAUL BENSON
- 10 MATT RITCHIE
- 11 ETIENNE ESAJAS
- 12 ALAN McCORMACK
- 13 OLIVER RISSER
- 15 NATHAN THOMPSON
- 16 LEE COX
- 17 ALAN CONNELL
- 19 LUKE ROONEY
- 21 LANDER GABILONDO
- 22 LEE HOLMES
- 23 RAFFAELE DE VITA
- 24 JONATHAN SMITH
- 25 JONATHAN TEHOUE
- 26 PHIL SMITH
- 27 ALESSANDRO CIBOCCHI
- 28 MILES STOREY
- 30 LEIGH BEDWELL
- 31 BILLY BODIN
- 32 CHRIS SMITH
- 34 RONAN MURRAY
- 35 WES FODERINGHAM
- 37 LOUIS THOMPSON

WEMBLEY STADIUM EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Please respect your fellow spectators by refraining from persistent standing. Please note that smoking is not permitted anywhere within Wembley Stadium. In the event of an emergency, you will hear a message over the public address system. 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 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. The following acts are offences under the Football (Offences) Act 1991, as amended: the throwing of any object within the ground without lawful authority or excuse; the chanting of anything indecent, racist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, homophobic or transphobic in nature; the entry onto the playing area or any adjacent area to which spectators are not generally admitted without lawful authority or excuse. Remember that drinking alcohol in view of the pitch is a criminal offence, as is being drunk anywhere on the premises. CCTV cameras are in use around the ground and WNSL may itself use, or pass to the police or any event organiser or other relevant authority, any recordings for use in proceedings. Please visit www.wembleystadium.com for full terms and conditions.

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