



Finishing power

I was a bit miffed when last August, Joe Lovejoy of the Sunday Times tipped Boro for the second relegation spot - in front of Bolton and behind West Ham.

I should have realised he was only going for soft options when I saw he had tipped Liverpool for the League. How predictable.

Villa were tipped to miss relegation by one place and actually finished fourth.

So it was interesting that at the beginning of April, Lennie Lawrence was asked for his relegation tips by the Daily Mail, and as it turned out scored two out of three, missing a full house by tipping Coventry to go down, with

QPR beating them on goal difference.

In the accompanying article, he pointed out the problems faced by under capitalised teams in the top flight by referring back to his time there with the Boro. Said Lennie: "When I was at Middlesbrough, I had £750,000 to spend in my first season, and gates averaged 16-17,000. We had no chance. Now they have spent £14m, and have a new stadium and have only recently ensured their survival."

How Leicester are going to survive, given their final League position last season and their Chairmen's notorious stinginess beggars belief. We won't mention Sunderland, although I did hear the joke circulating on Tyneside, which told of the Geordie fan saying to his Mackem mate that he thought Sunderland were good enough to last three seasons in the top division. "Aye, autumn, winter and spring!"

I hope that the Brazilian Emerson has a more memorable career than his two namesakes who have passed through the Boro.

George Emmerson played 7 games from 1928-30 as an outside right, scoring three goals, which obviously upset someone because he was then farmed out to Cardiff City.

Morris Emmerson played in goal for the ten games Boro played between 17 November 1962 to 9 March 1963. We won 5 and only lost two of those games, (even though Emmerson conceded 19 goals) but in true 'Unlucky Alf' style, these games were during the coldest winter on record (*Ohhh... bugger, Ed*). What a time to make your goalkeeping debut!

Anyway, Bob Dennison clearly hated poor old Morris because his next stop was Peterborough - who then as now (let's face it) were part-timers.

I see that Celtic have been left licking their wounds over John Collins. You will remember that Robbo offered about £2m for him, and when I interviewed Tony Mowbray for this magazine, he said that Collins would sign for Boro "soon". Collins was having trouble getting away because Celtic wanted to sign his replacement first.

Well now Collins is out of contract, and as per the Bosman ruling is a free agent. By the time you read this he will have signed a deal with Monaco, said to be worth £2.5m over three years.

A tad more than he would have earned at the Boro, eh?

I made a return journey to my local clairvoyant Madam Zaza the other week to demand a refund from my last visit in July last year. She said 'I knew you were going to say that' but I told her not to be clever.

It was on her advice I can reveal, that I put a tenner on Boro for the championship last season. I guess that this is another example of how we should not listen to what people are saying, but to take note of what they are not saying.

I did not have a leg to stand on really, because her prediction that I will be delighted to see the Premier League trophy lifted triumphantly at the Riverside on the last day of the season was actually spot on. Of course, I was not delighted that Boro lost the game that day, but it was great that the trophy did not go 30 miles north.

I t's getting a bit spooky when you read the names of the MSS ruling Junta... whoops...er, I mean committee.

Having a Vickers and now an Emerson playing in our red and white confirms for me that:

(a) Robbo reads this magazine and (b) makes his decisions on who to buy next by glancing through the MSS committee members names on page two.

Therefore, I can now exclusively reveal that Robbo is about to bid on the following hot up and comers:

Chris Lightfoot - Chester Midfielder, Gareth Whalley - Crewe Midfielder, Peter Beadle (a spelling mistake, obviously) - Watford Forward, Alan Johnston - Hearts forward and Shaun Smith - Crewe defender.

Nominations for next season's committee will be considered only from those whose name is Fowler, Cantona, and Neville.

Persons named Cole, Gascoigne and Kernaghan need not apply...

B limey. There I was, browsing in the bath through the Sunday Times 500 richest people in Britain, and who should be in there at joint 212th but our very own Steve Gibson!

How much is he worth? Oh, only 70 million squiddies. In the football world he is 14th, behind Jack Walker (but only by £430m), David Sullivan (by £170m) and Alan Sugar (by £82m).

However, he's in a better position than the likes of Owen Oysten (but then who isn't?) by £30m and surprisingly, Martin Edwards, by £35m.

And there was I worrying whether he could really afford to fill in the Riverside corners...

Keogh's Korker

Which old Boro favourite played right the way through managers Bob Dennison, Raich Carter, Stan Anderson and Jack Charlton? Answer on page 23. (It will be this time Shaun, honest! Ed)



STEVE GIBSON 38
Transport and football

£70m ★

● If Sir John Hall (qv) is king of the Tyne, Gibson, chairman of Middlesbrough football club, must be lord of the Tees. The son of a welder from one of the town's toughest areas, Gibson founded Bulkhaul, a chemical haulage business, at the age of 22. Thoughtful and youthful-looking, he thrived in the 1980s. Today Bulkhaul is easily worth £60m, with a £3.5m profit and £29.3m sales in 1994. Gibson owns 80%. We also understand he has substantial assets in the Far East not incorporated into Bulkhaul. Gibson has supported Middlesbrough since he was seven and as chairman has built the impressive £20m Riverside stadium, which attracts capacity crowds paying homage to Juninho, the Brazilian star signed last year for nearly £5m. His presence in the side has doubled the club's turnover to about £15m.

Joint 212th

JOHN HARRIS 63 and FAMILY

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