

A Tale From The Vicarage

MARTIN McCONACHIE SPEAKS TO SKY SPORTS NEWS PRESENTER AND WATFORD FAN ADAM LEVENTHAL

Following today's visitors Watford has never been dull. Let's face it, any side that enjoys the astonishing rise through the Football League is going to have some fantastic memories along the way. Three promotions in five seasons leading to a second place finish in what is now the Premier League makes Yeovil's ascent look positively sluggish. But for Adam Leventhal, his favourite memory of watching his beloved Hornets comes from just a few months ago.

"It has to be the play-off semi final second leg at home against Leicester City," the Sky Sports News presenter confirms. "We were a goal down from the first leg and heading out when Leicester got a last minute penalty. I was in the ground and surrounded by complete resignation. Then Anthony Knockaert missed the spot kick and 20 seconds later, Troy Deeney scored at the other end to put us into the final. It was astounding, there was absolute delirium."

Although Watford went on to lose at Wembley, Adam's choice of

'best memory' isn't a surprising one as he explained. "I was too young to remember the rise up through the divisions and most of the team had gone by the time I went to my first match in 1986. I remember standing on the terraces aged seven and not particularly taking to the Everton keeper Neville Southall. My dad wasn't into football so I went with my granddad in those days."

Adam's media career has mirrored Watford's on the field back then, fast and furious. Initially starting behind the scenes at Capital Radio and after studying broadcast journalism at Nottingham Trent University, the Hornets nut then spent a year working on the media side at Premier League giants Arsenal. Then after joining Sky Sports News in 2003 as a reporter, he worked his way via a role as Sky's cricket correspondent to today where he is one of the sports news channels most recognisable faces.



DAY JOB: Adam on Sky Sports News



And being close to the club he loves has also brought some fringe benefits. A book called *Tales From The Vicarage*, containing a collection of stories from Watford's media fans, was produced and subsequently sold out, leading to a second volume released recently. In the first book, Adam's piece on Brendan Rodgers and Malky Mackay entitled 'A Question Of Loyalty' was a fascinating look at two managers who cut their teeth at



interview treatment with the likes of Luther Blissett, Marlon King, Danny Graham and modern day hot shot Troy Deeney all under the microscope.

Speaking from personal experience, it will be a labour of love for him, for sure. Being able to look back through 27 seasons of following your club and being able to write about it is a quality feeling. So apart from that brief moment in time last May, what other top memories does Adam have? "Obviously both play-off final victories stand out, probably because we weren't

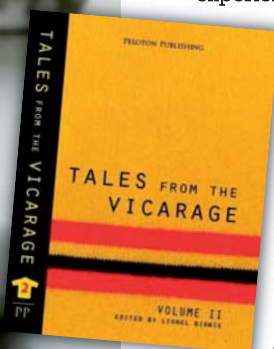
expected to win either game. Against Bolton at Wembley, they were the bigger club and at Cardiff against Leeds United, again they were more fashionable and had the richer history yet we won again."

As far as bad times go, it's not been that bad compared to some teams. "We had some barren years in the 1990's of course and obviously the play-off final last season against Crystal Palace. But with the new owners wanting to stay in the background, and I believe they have the best interest of the club at heart, the future looks bright.

"I watched the first training session taken by Giuseppe Sannino and I can see he won't be the sort to stand there with his arms crossed. He was getting in there amongst the players."

He's quick to praise the Glovers today too. "The vibe that I get is that your club is run in the right way and that the club and the fans are together, united in the right way. If one day you ever got to the Premier League, that would be sensational."

Although football has changed so much since Watford's meteoric rise through the Football League, Yeovil's steadier climb proves that in football, nothing is impossible. ■



Vicarage Road. And Adam's quick to praise the present Liverpool manager despite his short tenure at Watford.

"Brendan wasn't there long enough to really get the team playing in his style. It was a shame that he left so quick; we were lucky to have him and he was beginning to show that he is going to be a top manager. I also interviewed Malky and he stuck with us when we were on the brink of going into administration."

Volume 2 of the book sees Adam look at the art of goal scoring and those who get paid for it. The Hornets have seen some great strikers paraded at Vicarage Road and they get the Leventhal

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