

A few pertinent questions for... Mark Gill

Mark Gill, or Gilly as he prefers to be known joined Wealdstone as a Coach in 2006, after a decent long career in local football. He was a Pro at Brentford until being 'released' at 19 having been there from the age of 12. Dropping down to the non-league ranks, he spent a short time in a very good Hendon side but a new job got in the way, so he joined Hampton, staying for 2 years. Thereon he moved to Uxbridge where, he stayed (in his own words "stupidly, despite numerous good offers") for 16 years in all, with the last 7 as player/coach. He picked up a few honours along the way including Player and Players Player of the year awards, 3 London Senior Cups, a Middlesex Senior and a Charity Cup win and a couple of runners up in the County Cups as well. He played around 650 games and scored something like 175 times – but will happily state he didn't care too much for the defending bit!!

Gilly is married to Jacky whom he met in March 1988, marrying two years later and they have 4 children Hayley, Andy, Kristie and Jessica.

The day job is as a Security Officer for Heathrow Airport Ltd (a division of the BAA) in Terminal 3. He says I went there on a 6 month contract in March '93 and haven't yet got round to leaving 23 years later!

What brought you to Wealdstone? I left Uxbridge under a cloud. They'd sacked



the manager, George Talbot, but hadn't had the decency to contact either myself or the Assistant Manager, Sean Dawson, as to whether we were still required. A few days later, after Tony Choules had been appointed Manager, the local paper reported that Gary Farrell had been installed as 1st Team Coach. Naturally I assumed I'd been let go although no-one from the club had ever tried to make any contact with me. Gordon called and offered me the job as coach and I was on board immediately.

Latterly, over time, I've been asked by some of the Uxbridge board and the Manager himself as to why did you leave because they wanted you to stay - really? - pick up the phone - a classless way to treat someone who'd given 16 years' service and since George's passing (RIP) a couple of years ago it still bugs and annoys me; the way we were treated, it's a wrong that, in my eyes, can never be righted.

Rant Over !!

First impressions? Even though we were at Northwood the size, potential and professionalism of the club and its' people were what struck me first. My first pre-season session was with about 76 players - it was then I knew I had a big job on my hands.

Does anyone still call you Mark (and does that generally mean you're in trouble?) A few do. Mainly my parents and the wife and yes it normally means I'm in a spot of bother.

You've seen many players come and go, some successful, some not so. Was there one that you would say was the one that got away? No, not really although someone can probably come up with a name to counter that. Generally, I think we got most calls right.

Sometimes players, even if they do go on to better things having been let go by us, are at a stage of their development/career where they weren't necessarily right for us at that

A few pertinent questions..... cont.

particular time. Combine that with budget constraints even if you think a player will 'come good' eventually we don't always have the ability to keep them at the club and wait. Sometimes they need to go and play games and develop. That's Football I suppose.

You were with the club through a couple of poor almost relegated seasons, and also a couple of seasons where The Stones just missed out on promotion.

How did that affect you?

And did you change your methods or thoughts with those experiences? Those experiences, at both ends of the table, affected me massively - probably more than I could ever explain. I guess it's borne out of the expectations and pressure you put on yourself.

I can remember a game we had to win vs Corby Town in my first season. I don't think I slept all week leading up to the game and was expecting a notification from the divorce courts at any time. I was a nightmare to live with at times and could never not take my football home with me - good or bad. I never learned how to have that separation. I don't really think I ever changed my methods or techniques to any great degree. You have to believe in what you believe in and back yourself.

Even the best at the highest level don't always get it right



BY ROGER SLATER

every time. The main variable is the way you deal with players. Different players need different things. Recognising and implementing those skills to get the best out of them is as important as any coaching technique or drill.

How good was winning the League a couple of years ago? As good as it gets. Happy days and great memories.

You're in the bath with.....

Rubber ducks, Boats, submarines or your partner?

Honestly? None of those. The only thing I ever take into the bathroom with me is my phone. I'll YouTube a different live gig every time and listen to that.

Ten years as a coach with one club is a long time, yet we have a Manager who has done 22. Were there thoughts and times when enough was nearly enough or there was a better offer on the table? Is there a 'what might have been....'

There was never a better offer on the table and to be honest I wouldn't have taken it even if there was. Sometimes you find yourself at a place with people and you just click. That kind of happened with me, Gordon and Leo and then Micky (who I've known since I was 14). We share similar

views on the game and we all kind of 'got' each other.

As for there being a time when I felt enough was enough, yes definitely there was one. We'd lost at Barking in a Cup (4-1 I think) on a Tuesday night and Gordon, Leo and I had travelled together. On the journey home I'd say the 3 of us were at our lowest ebb at that point and couldn't see a way forward and seriously talked about resigning. Thankfully we didn't and eventually reaped our rewards. The 'what might have been' would definitely be the FA Trophy Semi Final. To get that close to playing at Wembley on a national stage was hard to take. It still is - but the run to the Semi's holds lots of special memories for me.

Over your time with the club, what would you're best starting XI and a couple of subs be and why? My best starting 11 is easy. It'd be the side that won the league. Add to it Fergus Moore, Marvin McCoy, Alan Massey, Alex Dyer and a fit Steve Hughes and you've got yourself a pretty good team. The reason, because it's a results based game predominantly and that team achieved.

