

THE MARK LITTLE GOAL OF LAST SEASON

Let's not forget the *Little* moments from last season, the unremarkable but no less important, moments that might not otherwise receive the recognition they deserve, in a record-breaking season. So, Mark scored *two* goals, which one was best: the two footed lunging tackle on a dithering Doncaster defender, or the one-two with the Walsall keeper at Wembley and clinical finish with his knee?



Every Little goal helps.



Mark has a sit down after scoring against Donny with a sliding tackle

The one against Doncaster was a fine example of pressing high up the pitch and intelligent use of the two-footed sliding tackle (a risky thing these days). It was either death or glory, red card or goal. The one at Wembley, an attempted header that turned into a shoulder, a wall (or Wall-sall) pass with their keeper, then a knee and it was 2-nil. Mark's head, shoulder, knees and Freeman's twinkle-toes goal.

Who cares how they go in? More important, is determining which of the two was scored the furthest from goal? And will we see Mark notch one from outside the 6 yard box this season? Hopefully. Looking forward to seeing how he does it. *(post script: Mark scored in pre-season down in Portugal. A screamer, from a full 6 yards, he noted himself, with no little self-deprecation).*



DAVID RENNIE: The nothing wrong

Yes, above, that says: **DAVID RENNIE did nothing wrong. !**



Mark says David Rennie is outmanned by defenders as he jumps for a corner. Pictures: TONY MARSH.



At the top table: City's David Rennie (center) takes on West Ham's Steve Finnan (left) and Aaron Martin. Pictures: Richard Murnan.



89-90's PROMOTION TEAM GAVE US SEVERAL HEROES: TURNER 'n' TAYLOR, SHELTS, BIFF (strictly he was heroic already). **BUT WHAT ABOUT DAVID RENNIE, ASKS RUFUS T. FIREFLY** (second opposite. First oppoite)...



Last season, with nearly twenty feet in height between them, you could have forgiven Steve Cotterill for spending time on the training ground with Aden Flint, Aaron Wilbraham and Matt Smith practising a very old-skool corner routine, one to add to our successful list of set-pieces : the near-post **FLICK!**-on. With Luke Freeman's pinpoint delivery and a height advantage like this at the front post, we could have revived a ploy from the 89-90 season and the early 90s. Aim for the top of the bonce at the near-post, he **FLICKS!** it on, hopefully someone else is rushing in, timed to perfection, to bundle the ball past the keeper. The ability of your man at the near was crucial. Master of that was David Rennie.

FLICK!

There are far too many **FLICK!**-ons of his to mention (!) but one that does stand out was at St Andrews, Saturday 13 January 1990. It was a day of notables. We went top of the table. We scored four unanswered goals at a club who had previously only conceded five at home in half a season. And Mark Gavin was on the end of some positive fan behaviour. There **MUST** have been something in the Midlands cider.

4000+ steeped up the bank of terracing behind one goal, we won a corner right in front of us. Already winning comfortably (and this was a season with 12 away wins), the Cider Army serenaded Gavin as he brought the ball to the corner arc. He began conducting us à la Andre Previews (John Bailey as Eric Morecambe). Over sailed the pinpoint corner, on to Renns' bald patch, **FLICK!** and Bob Newman buries it at the far stick. Simple! 4-0 and another away win. Not even last season's spectacular form brought similar crushing away results.

Cotts' reply would be that we're doing very well with set pieces, cheers, no need to fix that. It could be argued we've ended up relying a little too heavily on set pieces over the past 12 months, finding hard to break down rear-guards from open play. This season teams are less likely to stack ten men behind the ball at the Gate, so we might have more success scoring goals from free play. Or will Cotts see the Championship's defences as tighter than Crawley, Notts and Vale and place even more emphasis on free-kicks and corners?

In which case, the near-post **FLICK!**-on could make a come-back! We have Freeman's perfect corners at the ready (will the Championship's defences have done their homework?!). All we need is a David Rennie. **FLICK!**