

Hayter aims to shoot Yeovil into Championship

DAVID DAVIES

The West Country team hope for a fairytale finish at Wembley today. By **Andrew Longmore**

LEAGUE ONE PLAYOFF FINAL

JAMES HAYTER holds a footballing record that will probably never be broken and of which he is justifiably proud. Playing for Bournemouth against Wrexham one Tuesday night in February 2004 he scored a hat-trick in two minutes and 20 seconds. Think of that — not even time enough to boil an egg properly or run the Derby. Barely time to kick off and start again. It beat the previous Football League record set by Gillingham's Jimmy Scarth against Leyton Orient in 1952.

"I told a few of the lads about it this year and they said, 'What? How did you do that?'" he says. "The answer is that I don't really know. I said I'd bring in the DVD and show them." Even more remarkably, Hayter was on the subs' bench until the 84th minute.

His parents, despairing that their boy would ever get on the field, had left the ground early to catch the ferry back to the Isle of Wight, before he first struck. They listened on the radio. "The first was a header and the next two were right-foot shots," Hayter adds. "I've got the ball at home, signed by the players and

framed. I'm proud of that achievement."

He's prouder, though, of scoring the winner for Doncaster Rovers against Leeds in the League One playoff final in 2008 and says helping to lift Yeovil Town into the Championship by beating Brentford at Wembley today would outshine both his other claims to fame. After Bradford City defeated three Premier League teams to reach the final of the Capital One Cup and Wigan beat Manchester City to lift the FA Cup, Yeovil Town's bid to defy average home gates of 4,000 and an annual budget of just £1m has set the seal on the season of the underdog.

In an age of increasing economic division, Gary Johnson's rejects, loanees and tyros have provided a reminder of some fundamental footballing truths. "Being the underdogs all the time is something we've used all season," says Hayter. "We were second-favourites for relegation and we've proved people wrong. There have been times this season where we only had three or four substitutes, that's all we could name. But it keeps everyone involved and we've got some quality. We've a real good work ethic, good team spirit, some good characters and a never-say-die attitude.

Everyone wants to do well." There's Ed Upson, Ipswich born and bred but released from his hometown club by Roy Keane, his boyhood hero. Upson scored the late winner in the semi-final against Sheffield United. Marek Stech, the giant keeper, came through the same youth system as Petr Cech at Sparta Prague and didn't make the grade at West Ham. Then there's Paddy Madden, an irrepressible Irishman from Dublin who scored a hatful of goals for Shelbourne, went to try his luck across the sea in Carlisle and couldn't get a game. He arrived at Huish Park with a tattoo on his forearm

ROSLER'S FINAL MISSION

Germany will take over Wembley for the Champions League final but the advance guard arrives today when Brentford, managed by Uwe Rösler, meet Yeovil in the League One playoff final. Brentford's record in finals is not good.

- 1985** Lost Football League Trophy (FLT) final to Wigan 3-1
- 1997** Lost Division Two playoff final to Crewe 1-0
- 2001** Lost FLT final to Port Vale 2-1
- 2002** Lost Division Two playoff final to Stoke 2-0
- 2011** Lost FLT final to Carlisle 1-0

that reads "Every success begins with a dream" and unleashed his frustration on League One defenders, scoring 22 goals in 30-odd games. His partnership with Hayter, the Teddy Sheringham to Madden's Alan Shearer, has been at the heart of Yeovil's unlikely push for promotion.

Sam Foley, one of three Irishmen in the side, suffered from osteitis pubis, essentially a long-term groin strain, as a teenager and arrived at Yeovil via Cheltenham Town, Kidderminster Harriers and Newport County.

Madden says: "A lot of the players are hungry to prove people wrong. They've been let go by other clubs and this is their chance to succeed."

No less than his teammates, Hayter deserves his chance to succeed. Still revered at Dean Court in Bournemouth, he followed Sean O'Driscoll to Doncaster Rovers for £200,000, breaking the club's record transfer fee and helping them into the Championship. At the end of his contract last summer he had other offers but knew the sort of football Johnson wanted to play. With most of his family settled in the south he happily signed for a club with a long and distinguished history, all bar a decade of it outside the Football League.

"I thought I had a chance to do well here and score some goals," he says. "I didn't come down here just to pick up a bit of money. Look at the wage bills of some clubs in the Championship. Some of their players earn more in a year than our total budget. But we



Marked man: James Hayter, above, could upset Brentford

enjoy ourselves, we've got a decent team and we've got a chance of beating anyone in this league."

Brentford need no reminding of that. They've been beaten twice by the West Country side, 3-0 and 3-1, in the league and, with history beckoning them equally, would much prefer not to play the role of giants in the fairytale.

At 34, Hayter knows there will not be many more big days before his yeoman's career finally runs down. Having been to two playoff finals and won both, he has no intention

of letting down the 20,000 or so travelling green-and-white army from Yeovil (pop: 45,000) who will head to London for the grandest day out in the club's 118-year history.

"To do what we've done already is good but we want to go to Wembley and finish it off. Both my old clubs, Bournemouth and Doncaster, have gone up so it would be brilliant to make it a hat-trick." Another one for the record.

ON TV TODAY

Brentford v Yeovil

1pm Sky Sports 2, kick-off 1.30pm