

FOOTBALL

Yeovil striker eager to fill his boots

Warren Patmore seeks to erase the memory of two-time rejection. David Powell reports

Alec Stock's boots, the pair with which he scored in one of the biggest FA Cup shocks of them all, are mounted on the wall in a glass case at Yeovil Town. Not that Warren Patmore has noticed. Nor was Patmore aware, until it was mentioned to him on Wednesday evening, that this is the fiftieth anniversary season of Yeovil's greatest Cup run.

Patmore has incentive enough, without needing to be reminded of what happened 50 winters ago, for wanting to bury Northampton Town in the second round tomorrow. Ian Atkins, the Northampton manager, sent him packing — twice.

If Yeovil are to strengthen their position as the non-League club with the greatest number of League scalps — 17 to date — Patmore is the player on whom they most depend. This is the same Warren Patmore, Yeovil's leading goalscorer, whom Atkins transferred when he was manager of Cambridge United, and again when he moved on to Northampton.

"He had a job to do and I did not fit in," Patmore said. "I was a late developer. In my younger years, I was knocked off the ball too easily. As a centre forward, you cannot allow that and I think that is why I got released. I wish I was in the position back then that I am in now, strength-wise, height-wise and build-wise."

Patmore, 27, has scored in each of the three rounds in which Yeovil has appeared and he believes that Northampton, from near the bottom of the Nationwide League second division, are set to become League scalp No 18. "They are not playing particularly well," he said.

Surviving the first round bore testimony to Yeovil's resilience, a recovery against West Auckland Town that spared a 16-year-old trainee on the local newspaper an awkward introduction to the world of journalism. Steve Cotton was reporting for the *Western Gazette*, while his father, Terry, was in the dugout as assistant coach. "We were 2-0 down and I thought I was going to have to

slate my Dad," Cotton Jr said. Cotton runs through the fabric of Yeovil: son in the press box; father on the bench; mother Jean, the club secretary.

"It is the same sort of atmosphere here we had 20 years ago, when Terry played," Jean Cotton said. "The dressing-room is brilliant." This is the work of Colin Lippiatt, appointed in succession to Graham Roberts, who vacated the manager's chair in February. Lippiatt works under the title of head coach and, of the 16-man first-team squad, ten are his signings. Within striking distance of the Football Conference leaders and having raised Yeovil's FA Cup profile again after four successive fourth qualifying-

round defeats, Lippiatt is enjoying his first season as a boss. At 57, though, it is probably too late for him to become the eighteenth manager from Yeovil to go on to manage in the English or Scottish Football Leagues, Stock and Ron Saunders being the best-known.

"I started at Windsor and Eton, went to Farnborough, Woking and Kingstonian, always working under



Warren peace: Patmore has plenty to smile about as he contemplates FA Cup success over his old club

a manager," Lippiatt said. "I felt I owed it to myself to give it a go."

Unbeaten in 14 competitive matches — Lippiatt disregards the defeat by Woking in the Endsleigh Challenge Trophy on Tuesday, because he fielded a reserve team — Yeovil's only concern about the visit of Northampton

is their home form. Still to lose away this season, they have lost four times at Huish Park. The famous slope, on which Sunderland were dispatched 2-1 in the fourth round 50 seasons ago, has given way to development and the club resides in a new out-of-town stadium.

"It is a beautiful stadium, but it nearly killed us," Bryan Moore, club director and historian, said. "Far too much money was spent on it. We were £750,000 in debt and we nearly went out of business." The financial slope has been conquered, helped by £48,000 from their last FA Cup match with a League club, against Fulham five years ago.

Even 50 years ago, Yeovil's Cup run rescued them from going bust. After beating Sunderland, they lost 8-0 to Manchester United in front of 81,565 at Maine Road.

Stock, who was player-manager at the time, still attends home games and the omens are good for Yeovil. They had their luck against West Auckland, as they did against Lovells Athletic half a century ago. "We won 3-2 and the winning goal was a 30-yard back pass," Moore recalled. "That was how we got off on our cup run."

Yeovil's recent Cup form has left Moore out of practice at answering questions. "I used to have all these things in my head, but I am a bit rusty at it," he said.

If Yeovil beat Northampton and draw Sunderland in the third round, Moore had better search out the de-ruster. Patmore might even take a look at those boots on the wall.



Dyke, the Yeovil goalkeeper, safely keeps the Sunderland attack at bay during the famous victory in 1949



FA CUP