

Yeovil goalkeeper's amazing recovery

BUT HE WON'T PLAY AGAIN

By David Solomons

THE back injury which blighted the footballing career four years ago of one of Yeovil's most promising players has now been put right amazingly—in a matter of hours.

The remarkable story is the return to fitness of 29-year-old Victor "Dickie" Dyke, who was a member of the famous Yeovil team that defeated Sunderland in the F.A. Cup in 1949.

Dyke played a full season after that, but in the following season, while making one of his spectacular dives, someone fell on him. He

wrenched his body round and, as he puts it, "something went."

He was laid up for several weeks. Then he contracted pneumonia and pleurisy on top of his injury—and that finished his so-promising football career.

KEPT PAIN AT BAY

Now, after four years of taking pills constantly to keep the pain at bay, he says he is completely cured.

"During those four years," he says, "I visited specialists and doctors and had about five X-rays. I was told I had arthritis. I got a bit better, and with the aid of the pills I had to take constantly, was able to keep up my gymnastic training. But I kept getting the pains and was never really fit."

Then he heard about the feats performed by a bone-setter in Cornwall.

"It was amazing," he said. "The man put back about 12 bones. My shoulder was out; there was something wrong with two pelvic bones; four bones in my spine needed attention, including two discs; and there were two more bones below the neck in the front that were displaced."

It was all over in a matter of hours. Dickie felt like a new man. "I am as fit now as I ever was," he said.

MOMENTS OF GLORY

Before he received his injury, his football career was filled with moments of glory and as many of despair.

He had one golden game—that was against Sunderland, and it was sheer luck that this 21-year-old solicitor's clerk as he was then, got into the Yeovil team. The regular goalkeeper, Stan Hall, had played brilliantly in all the rounds until then. Then he was injured and young Dyke, slim and without much experience was thrust into the glare of publicity against a First Division team.

It turned out to be his great day. Supporters who had been doubtful about his capabilities, cheered to the echo his many wonderful saves. The Sunderland players were astounded by his agility.

The teams were drawing 1—1 at full-time. In extra-time Dyke held firm—and Yeovil won 2—1.

After the match Col. Pryor,



DICKIE DYKE.

chairman of Sunderland, personally congratulated Dickie on his display and told him that if he ever considered taking up full-time professional football, there would be a place for him at Sunderland.

There was still a moment of disappointment to come. In the next round Yeovil were drawn against Manchester United, away. The team had not been selected, but, while practising, Dickie fell on a piece of glass, cutting his knee, and had to have six stitches. Stan Hall was picked. "I don't expect I would have been chosen, anyway," Dickie says modestly.

BAD KNOCKS

In the next season, Yeovil, with Dyke in a regular place again, had a great Cup run, eventually going out to Chesterfield. But during that time Dickie received some bad knocks.

The culmination came early in the following season, with his shoulder injury. When he recovered from pneumonia, still only 25 years old, he said: "I'm through with football."

He felt his back and shoulder would not stand up to the strain of goalkeeping every Saturday.

Now, a comparatively young man as far as football is concerned, he is fit enough to take up the game again.

"I am not going to, though," he said. "I am a junior instructor for St. John's Gym and that fills in my time sufficiently."

The reserved young solicitor's clerk has had his hour of triumph. He is content with his memories.