

# FRY SAYS 'I'M NO VILLAIN'

## D-day for Glovers over boss Roberts

Report by ZENA O'ROURKE

YEovil Town manager Graham Roberts met with the Huish Park board of directors last night (Wednesday) to discuss his future with the club.

It followed hot on the heels of Town's outstanding 0-3 victory away at Boreham Wood in the ICIS League on Tuesday night.

The crucial meeting is as a result of reports that the 37-year-old has been offered the manager's job at Conference League club Kettering.

It has been reported the ex-England international is seeking a longer contract than his present one with Yeovil which runs out at the end of the season.

Speaking on Tuesday, Yeovil Town chief executive John Fry said he was aware of rumours but had heard nothing officially from Roberts.

"I am a little bit bemused because only two months ago he accepted a player and manager's contract which will take him through to the end of the season, May 31 1997 and yet now it is being said Mr Roberts did not want a contract with this club," said Mr Fry.

"I have not spoken with Mr Roberts about this so I cannot comment further but I will say we are not going to get drawn into a Dutch auction situation with another club."

He said it was likely a statement would be issued this morning (Thursday) following the meeting.

Roberts was unavailable for comment.

If Roberts accepts the Kettering offer he will certainly be leaving a side that is capable of pulling off the league title.

On Tuesday night Roberts played a dominant role in the heart of the Yeovil defence.

Drama struck the Glovers before the start of the game at Boreham Wood. For they lost goalkeeper Tony Pennock, an ever present for two seasons, who was rushed into hospital with appendicitis.

And with Yeovil travelling without a second keeper, central defender Chris Seymour donned the jersey.

He did a great job, especially in the second half, when the mid-table home team put him under pressure by forcing 12 corners.

Jerry Gill put Yeovil ahead in the 11th minute and added a second after 66 minutes. On both occasions the midfielder took on the defence and finished superbly.

Graham Kemp added Yeovil's third right on time.

Yeovil suffered a 3-0 defeat at Enfield on Saturday in an ICIS Premier League game.

Two controversial penalties given by referee Richard Styles upset the Glovers.

The Yeovil players considered that the penalties were both for innocuous challenges and should never have been given.

Paul Moran scored from both spot kicks and Martin St Hilaire, who spent last season at Yeovil, volleyed the other goal between the penalties.

JOHN Fry, cast as the villain in the recent Yeovil Town "soap" by the majority of supporters, said yesterday that he was as delighted as anyone that Graham Roberts was staying on as manager rather than move to Kettering.

But following the events of last Thursday, Chairman Fry is planning to have a closer working relationship with the manager. And that means that Bryan Moore has been elbowed out as Director of Football.

Mr Fry denied that he was taking a higher profile than Moore in this area because, in the words of one insider, "he is worried that Moore is getting too pally with the manager".

The Chairman told me: "I am not a dictator - that is not my style of management. I believe in delegation and I want to see everyone working to their full potential for the good of Yeovil Town. That includes Graham Roberts, Bryan Moore and myself.

"I was planning to retire to Tenerife when I was asked to come here to sort things out. Since then I have been working about 16 unpaid hours most days for the club. I am quite proud of the way the finances have improved, although we still have a long, long way to go.

"And I have no intention of outstaying my welcome. When the time is right, I shall go. And I shall know when that time is. There will be no blood spilt on the boardroom carpet. I will shake everyone by the hand, wish them well, and carrying on supporting the club in other ways.

"But I don't allow my heart to rule my head. We have a plan for this club and I am working towards its fulfilment. We have spent the past two years putting in the footings, now we want to build the house.

"I have to have vision and I am not merely looking forward to the Conference. I am looking beyond to the Nationwide League and planning in that direction".

The chairman said it was "cobblers" to suggest he had Tony Ricketts lined up to take over from Roberts had the boss decided to accept Kettering's offer.

But he agreed he had had conversations with Ricketts, and others, from time to time about the west country soccer scene. He added: "There cannot be a long-term future in players making round trips of 300 miles for playing and training here