

CHAMPIONS



YEOVIL TOWN F.C.



A PICTORIAL REVIEW OF YEOVIL TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB'S HISTORIC CHAMPIONSHIP WINNING SEASON IN THE NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE

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I am very proud to be asked to write the foreword to this celebration of our Championship winning season.

It's been a wonderful experience for us all, culminating in winning the Nationwide Conference championship, which takes us into Division Three of the Football League.

We have tried to put together the story in pictures of our 2002/2003 season, hopefully capturing the atmosphere, drama and passion of a memorable campaign.

I hope the book will constantly rekindle the memories and feelings you experienced throughout last season and act as a constant memory after 108 years of waiting for this special moment.

I'd like to thank everybody connected with this wonderful club for helping to create such a marvellous adventure for us all but my final comment is to congratulate my very professional group of players who have achieved everything they set out to achieve in such a short space of time.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

AUGUST 2002

Yeovil Town opened their season playing at Dorchester's Avenue Stadium to facilitate the new pitch construction at Huish Park.

Their first game against Gravesend was certainly not the opening supporters wished for with Gravesend going two nil up and then Adam Stansfield being carried off with a broken leg. Fortunately Nick Crittenden and skipper Terry Skiverton scored to scrape a draw.

Barnet away saw more gloom with a 2-1 defeat with Lee Johnson scoring the Yeovil goal and manager Johnson suggesting Yeovil were a million miles away from the title.

The visit to Morecambe brought the first win of the season with Carl Alford and sub Howard Forinton scoring on his re-appearance for Yeovil.

Another victory, this time a 3-2 defeat of Nuneaton Borough saw the Glovers move up to eighth place in the League. Goals from Adam Lockwood, Gavin Williams and Michael McIndoe sealed Yeovil's second victory in a row.

Whilst half of Somerset made their way to Lords for the Cheltenham & Gloucester Cup Final, Yeovil were at Kettering with the other half! A last minute Terry Skiverton goal saw Yeovil home and up a further place in the league to seventh.

Things were improving after a disastrous start but the loss of Adam Stansfield was to be a major blow to Gary Johnson's plans as the news that he would be out for the entire season was confirmed.

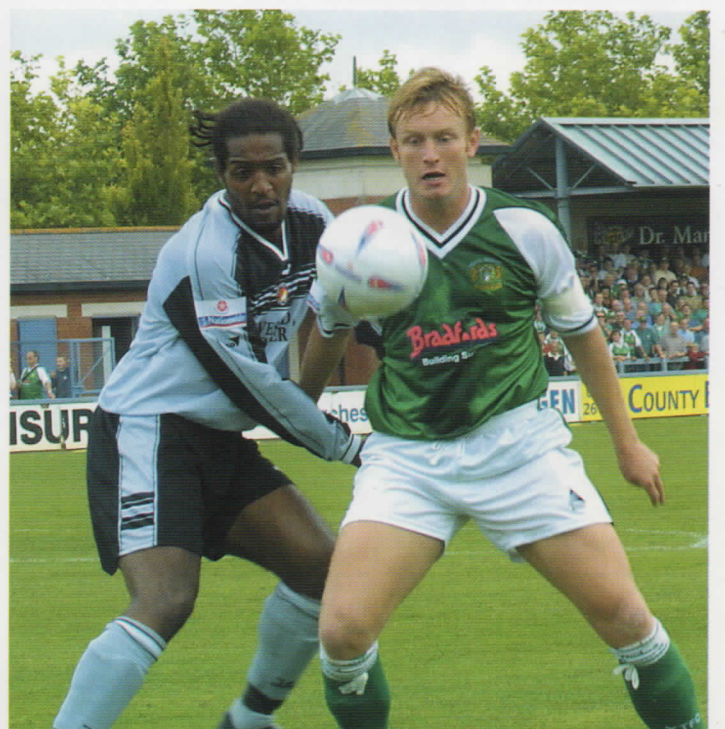
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SEPTEMBER 2002

With Yeovil up to 4th place in the Conference, September started full of expectation and a 2-0 victory over Farnborough with goals from Lee Johnson and Nick Crittenden made for a good start.

The game was overshadowed though by Farnborough manager Graham Westley being ejected by police from the ground.

Next up came Northwich Victoria and a fifth victory on the trot was forthcoming as Yeovil ran out 2-1 victors with goals from Terry Skiverton and Kim Grant.

Two away draws were to follow as Yeovil had to twice come from behind against Stevenage with goals from Terry Skiverton and Abdoulay Demba. A hard fought 0-0 draw followed at Hereford but with Yeovil up to third in the table things were definitely on the up.

A 3-0 victory over Halifax in the club's last game at Dorchester took the team up to second as Gavin Williams and Nick Crittenden (2) scored the goals.

A memorable return to Huish Park was next up as Sky TV and the nation got the first glimpse of the Glovers' new pitch. Yeovil turned on the style for the watching cameras with a resounding 4-0 victory. Once again Terry Skiverton was on the score sheet making him top scorer at the time whilst other goals from Howard Forinton, Michael McIndoe and Abdoulay Demba secured an easy victory.

September 28th was Gary Johnson's birthday and the team responded with another four goals to take Yeovil to the top of the Conference for the first time in the memorable season beating Leigh R.M.I. 4-2.

Skipper Skiverton scored again as did Michael McIndoe, Nick Crittenden and Carl Alford.

From the depths of despair at Barnet to top of the Conference in just over a month.

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OCTOBER 2002

The month opened with another goal feast as third placed Southport were walloped 6-0 at Huish Park.

Clearly the new surface was having an effect on play as Abdoulay Demba knocked in a hat-trick aided by goals from Gavin Williams, Nick Crittenden and another newcomer to the team Abdelhalim El Kholti. Demba had been celebrating the birth of his second child Abdoulay Jnr. and was clearly in the mood!

El Kholti or Abdoo, as he became affectionately known, had been spotted by Gary Johnson in a trial game against Torquay and quickly signed up by Yeovil.

Three more points were there for the taking at Burton Albion when Demba scored again mid way through the second half but a last minute equaliser gave Burton a share of the points.

The trip to Telford saw Yeovil again go on a goal scoring feast. A 5-0 victory to the Glovers as they brushed the Midlands aside after both Colin Pluck and Telford keeper Edwards were both sent off. The goals came from Lockwood, Williams, Forinton, Crittenden and Lindegaard.

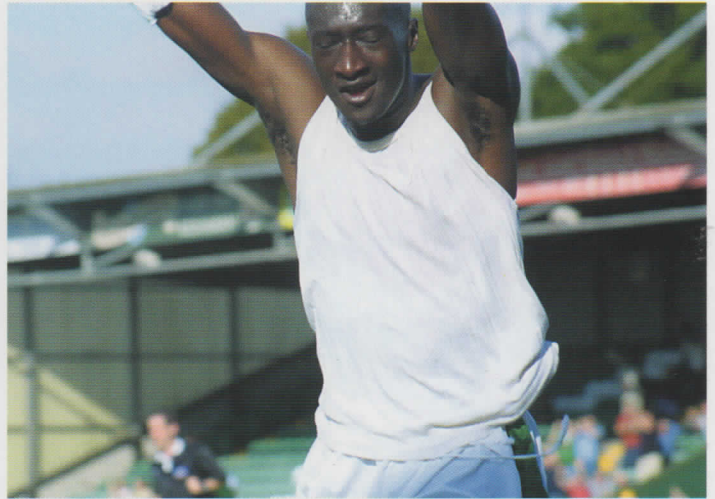
Joint title favourites Doncaster were the next visitors to Huish Park and after Doncaster went into a shock 1-0 lead Yeovil showed their metal by coming back with a Gavin Williams goal. Roared on by a 6,674 crowd the Glovers really had a go but were unable to pinch a winner.

A disappointing exit, 4-2 to Boston United, from the LDV Vans Trophy saw Carl Alford score what was to be his last goal for Yeovil plus yet another for Terry Skiverton but the former Conference club were too strong.

A rather lack lustre display in the F.A.Cup 1st Round saw Yeovil lucky to escape with a 1-1 draw at Twerton Park against Bath City. Adam Lockwood scored the all important equaliser after Bath took a shock lead.

It was much the same in the replay in the first half but second half goals from Michael McIndoe and Abdoulay Demba (2) saw Yeovil through to meet Cheltenham in the next round.







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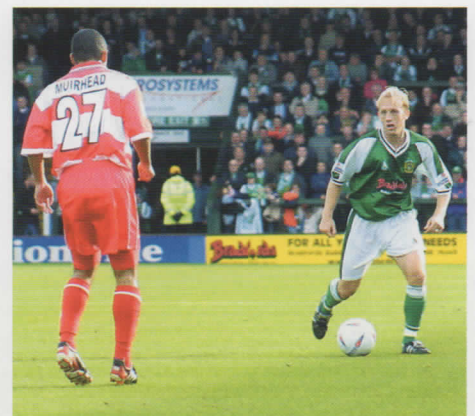
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NOVEMBER 2002

As winter bore down on us Yeovil were still top of the Conference and unbeaten in fourteen games and supporters were even daring to think of promotion! Another last minute equaliser again robbed Yeovil of all the points at high flying Chester.

Chester had taken an early lead through big money signing Daryl Clare but two quick goals from Nick Crittenden and Howard Forinton put Yeovil back in front. But debut boy Clare had the last word with a goal in the last minute to even the score.

A 2-2 draw with Dagenham and Redbridge in front of another 4,000+ crowd at Huish Park kept up the unbeaten run with a goal from McIndoe and an own goal from Dagenham's Smith being the scorers.

Yeovil's first defeat on their new pitch came in the F.A. Cup 2nd Round against Cheltenham. In front of a massive 6,455 the Glovers were unable to match their second division opponents as they progressed through to the next round as 2-0 victors.

A Michael McIndoe goal was enough to secure all three points against Northwich as Yeovil immediately bounced back from the disappointment of their F.A. Cup exit but it was a tense affair a Jimmy Quinn's Northwich pushed to the end.

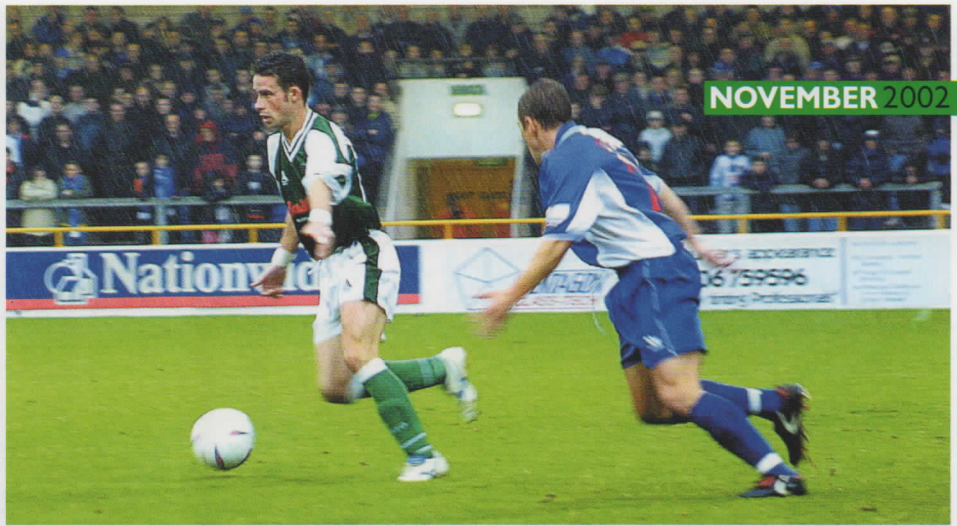
Yet another 4,000+ crowd filled Huish Park for the visit of Margate as The Seaside were despatched 2-1 with goals from Nick Crittenden and Abdelhalim El Kholti.

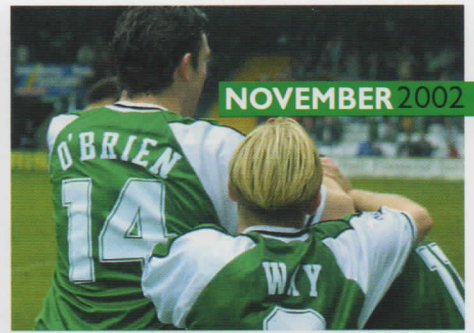
Suddenly with the team on an unbeaten run of 18 league games and still sitting proudly on top of the table the Holy Grail of promotion was just beginning to look a possibility.

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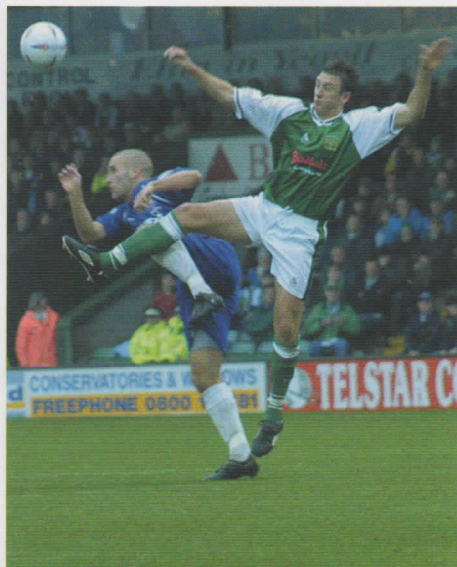
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DECEMBER 2002

The feelings of euphoria that had been building at Huish Park around Yeovil's magnificent 18 match unbeaten run were brought rudely crashing down when the team went to Scarborough.

A 2-1 defeat at Scarborough, where Abdelhalim El Kholti was again on the score sheet, might have shattered the confidence of some teams but not Yeovil Town. Manager Gary Johnson quickly got the lads buzzing again and they quickly went 2-0 up away at Northwich. Two goals from Michael McIndoe and new signing Kirk Jackson, his first for the club, saw Yeovil cruising at half time but a spirited fight back from the home side made Yeovil work for a well earned three points.

As Christmas approached last season's Trophy Final opponents Stevenage Borough arrived at Huish Park with Jackson determined to score against his old side.

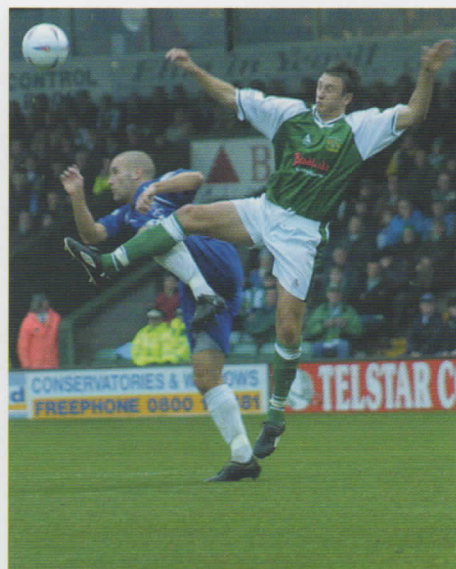
He did, along with Colin Pluck, and although Borough pulled a goal back it was another three points for Yeovil.

There were no Christmas presents from former manager Colin Addison though as near neighbours Forest Green inflicted Yeovil's second defeat of the month with a 2-1 victory. Terry Skiverton scored a late consolation goal for Yeovil who deserved more after battering their opponents in the second half.

Things didn't get that much better when Barnet visited Huish Park and put ten men behind the ball for whole game.

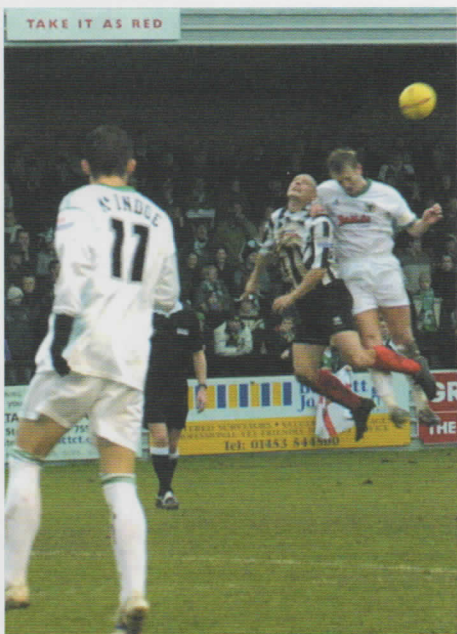
Try as they might Yeovil just couldn't break through and it was a very frustrated crowd that went home for some cold turkey. Perhaps though the most significant things about December was that despite, by Yeovil's standards, a mediocre month they were still top.





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JANUARY 2003

Revenge was duly exacted on New Year's Day as Yeovil beat Forest Green 1-0 with a goal from Kirk Jackson to start off 2003 in a positive vein.

An Andy Lindegaard hat-trick at Gravesend & Northfleet again saw Yeovil triumph 4-2 with another goal coming from Kirk Jackson, his fourth in eight games.

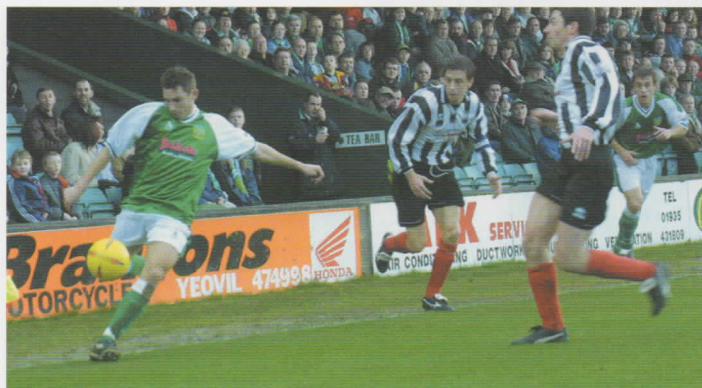
Suddenly that old swagger was back as Yeovil's early season form seemed to be returning and a 2-1 away win at Hereford in the F.A. Trophy kept the morale high. Two goals in the first four minutes from Adam Lockwood and Colin Pluck did the damage and despite a goal from former Glover Ben Smith, Hereford were never in the hunt.

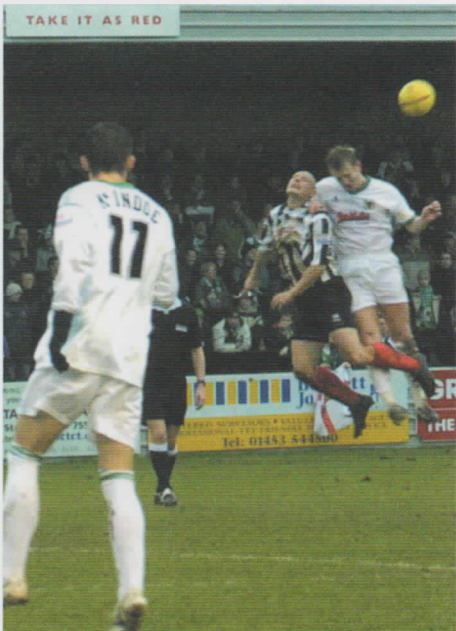
Morecambe were next up at Huish Park and another goal from Jackson and Lindegaard saw a new striker partnership beginning to blend nicely.

Yeovil's brand of exciting one touch football was also drawing the crowds to Huish Park with well in excess of four thousand being the norm not the exception.

A meeting with Carl Alford's new club Nuneaton ended the month on what can only be described as a bog of a pitch in the Midlands. Yeovil though took it in their stride and were soon a goal up when Andy Lindegaard got his fifth goal of the month. In the second half though Yeovil tended to sit back and the home side grabbed an equaliser through Ricketts.

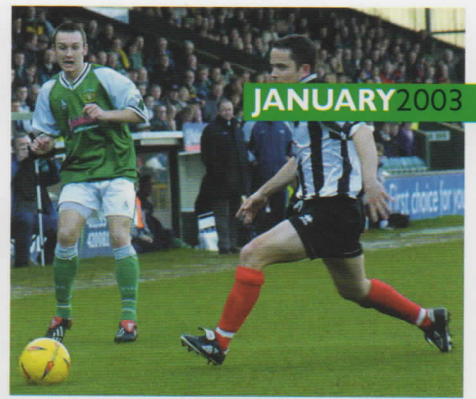
An unbeaten month though and still top of the pile. The dreams were getting more vivid every day.





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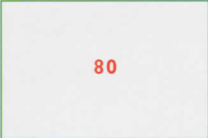






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FEBRUARY 2003

February was to prove to be another cracking month for the Glovers with progress in the F.A. Trophy and Somerset Premier Cup as well as that relentless march to the title continuing.

Morecambe were back again after only a week away in the Trophy but the result was still a victory for Yeovil 2-1. Yeovil went in front just before half time when Kirk Jackson again found the net.

The goal prompted a sympathetic response from the players who paraded a t-shirt with "That ones for Brian and George" on it as a tribute to director George Smith and loyal fan Brian Kynaston who had both tragically died that week.

The gesture certainly brought a tear to a few eyes. Morecambe equalised in the second half but skipper Terry Skiverton secured the victory with a goal five minutes from the end.

Carl Shutt's Kettering were the next for the slaughter and that's certainly what it turned out to be as the Glovers put four goals past the hapless bottom of the table side.

The match saw the introduction of another new signing for the Glovers in the shape of Kevin Gall from Bristol Rovers.

He marked his debut with the fourth goal to add to goals from Colin Pluck, Michael McIndoe and another for Kirk Jackson. Jackson was on fire taking his tally to seven goals from thirteen appearances. Gary Johnson knows a good striker when he sees one and Jackson was benefiting greatly from full time training and a confident side.

Another four goals followed, this time away to Farnborough, where former Yeovil keeper Tony Pennock could do nothing to halt the rampant Glovers.

Jackson added two more to his tally, making that 15 goals, with the others coming from McIndoe and Lee Johnson.

Progress in the Somerset Premier Cup continued over Odd Down, who were despatched 2-0, and was followed by further progress in the F.A. Trophy with a 2-1 defeat for Northwich.

Jimmy Quinn's side had the audacity to go in front with a Gregg Blundell goal but Adam Lockwood levelled and Kevin Gall scored Yeovil's second in the 85th minute.

Still top of the league and progressing nicely in the F.A. Trophy, it had been a good month.

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MARCH 2003

Over six thousand fans piled into Huish Park for the first match in March with "Title Fever" very much in the air. In fact even the odd mention of the "Double" was being uttered around the ground.

Hereford were never in it as The Glovers swept them aside 4-0 with goals from Adam Lockwood, Michael McIndoe, Kirk Jackson and Kevin Gall.

Jackson and Gall were quickly turning into the ideal striking partnership and after being stunned by Halifax going into a 2-0 lead in the next match at The Shay, Gall scored a hat-trick in what many say was the defining moment of the season.

Gall's pace was frightening and he ran Halifax ragged in the second half as Yeovil turned what looked like a certain defeat into a brilliant victory.

An away trip to Woking was next for The Glovers but again they went a goal behind. This time Kirk Jackson was on hand to level things up for a rather disappointing 1-1 draw.

Back home for the visit of Leigh R.M.I. and over five thousand saw the Gall/Jackson partnership strike again with two for Kirk and one for Kevin being more than enough to see off Leigh despite a consolation goal for them.

Perhaps the lowest point in Yeovil's season was to follow when UniBond side Burscough somehow beat Yeovil 2-0 in the F.A. Trophy at Huish Park to end all dreams of a "Double".

Quite how it happened is still a mystery, but Shaun Teale's team had threatened to build a brick wall around their goal and they certainly did. Yeovil battered them but were caught with two breakaway goals, which stunned Huish Park.

A trip to Margate, heavily disguised as Dover, saw another rather subdued start by the Glovers who went a goal down in the first half. The half time tea certainly worked though as two more goals from Kirk Jackson was enough to see Yeovil home.

Title talk was now quite open and when Yeovil beat Scarborough at Huish Park 1-0 the bookies were fearing the worst. Again it was Kirk Jackson, who was by now after that Golden Boot, who scored and Yeovil were almost there.

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MARCH 2003



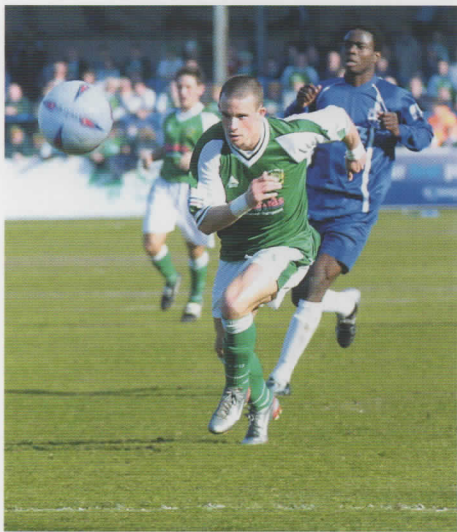


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APRIL 2003

Telford were the visitors to Huish Park for the first match in April for a match that could, if results went correctly, see Yeovil finally clinch the Holy Grail of Football League football.

Huish Park was packed to the rafters with seven and a half thousand people their willing on that victory. It came with some ease as goals from McIndoe (2) and Kirk Jackson sealed the win but Chester's success at Gravesend meant Yeovil would have to wait just a little while longer.

They celebrated anyway though and why not. They were more or less there.

Clevedon were despatched 2-0 in the Somerset Premier Cup to set up a final with Taunton Town and then thousands of Yeovil fans travelled to Doncaster for what they hoped would be "The Day".

Along with thousands of Sky viewers just before the start of the match Yeovil learnt it was to be "The Day" as Chester drew with Woking to guarantee them The Championship.

A 4-0 clinical display with goals from Darren Way (his first of the season), Lee Johnson, Michael McIndoe and Kevin Gall saw Doncaster blown away and then it was party time.

Burton Albion were like lambs to the slaughter as they were swept aside 6-1 with four goals for Kevin Gall and one each for Chris Giles and Gavin Williams. Now it was a question of going for records and it certainly kept the level of performance up as the visit to Dagenham was to prove on Easter Monday.

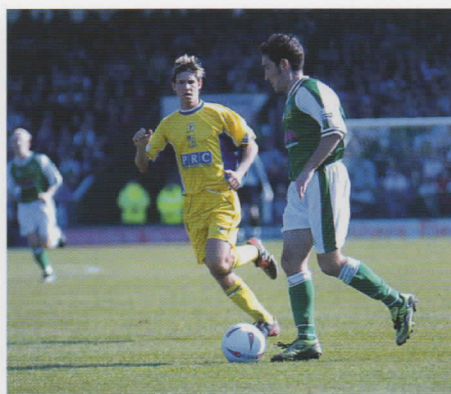
Another four goals including a hat-trick for Kirk Jackson and one for Kevin Gall left Yeovil needing only one more goal for the 100 goal mark. It was quality stuff as Yeovil destroyed play-off candidates Dagenham and Redbridge.

The one hundredth goal came against Chester from Kevin Gall but Mark Wright's side spoilt the party slightly by nicking a late equaliser. But it didn't matter as yet another party was about to start as Yeovil Town, after waiting 108 years, were finally crowned Champions of The Nationwide Conference.

The Holy Grail had at last been achieved and Gary Johnson and his team could rightly take their places in the Yeovil Town Hall of Fame.

Thousands lined the streets of Yeovil as their heroes paraded around the town in an open top bus when the inconvenience of a little rain scarcely seemed to matter.

2003 had indeed been Yeovil's date with destiny and they had come through with flying colours.





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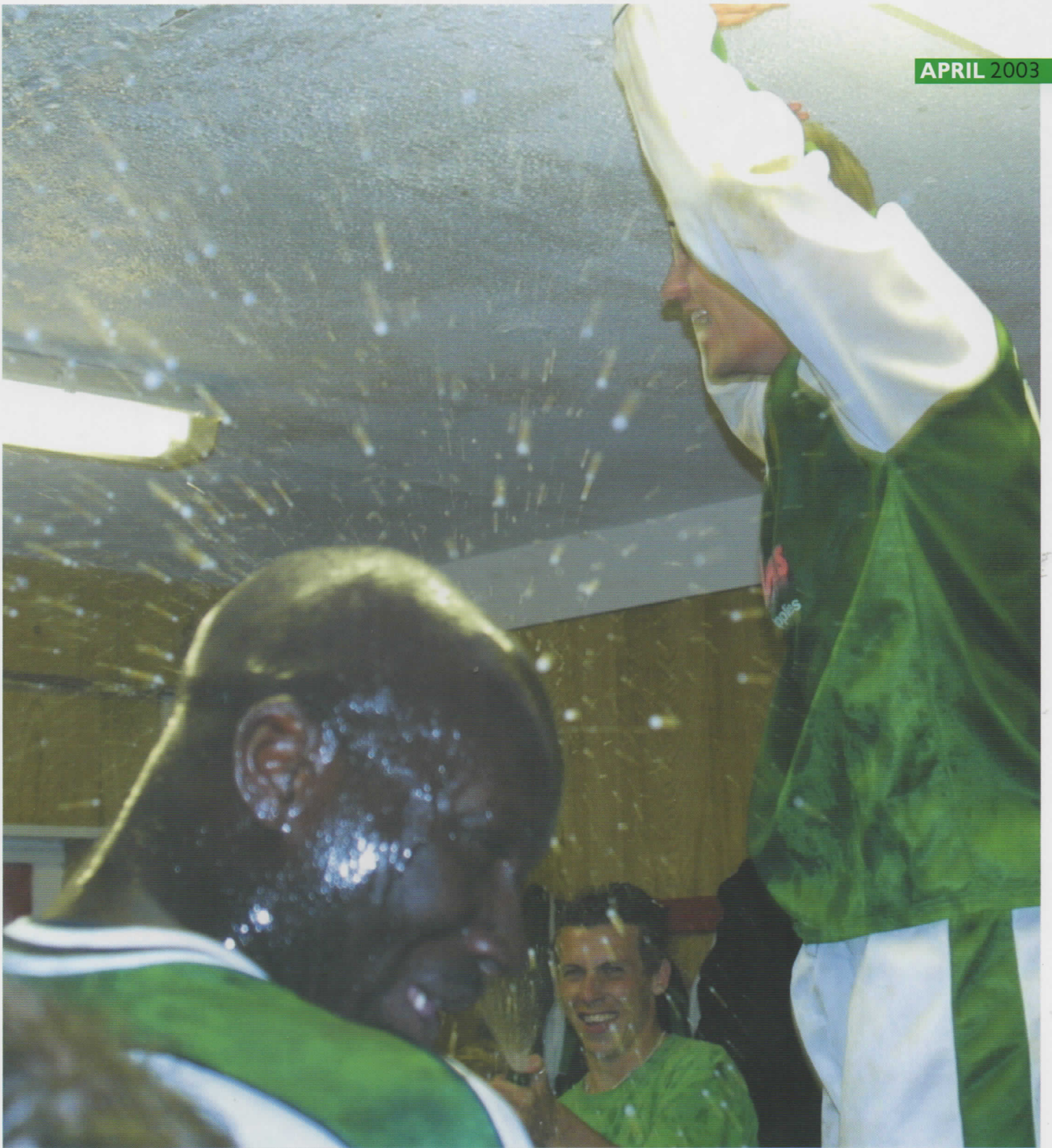




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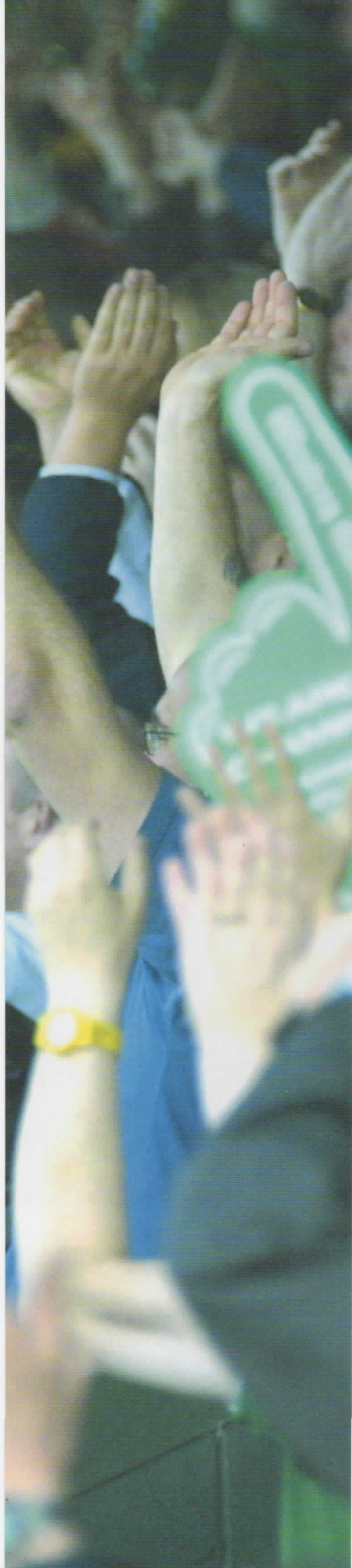


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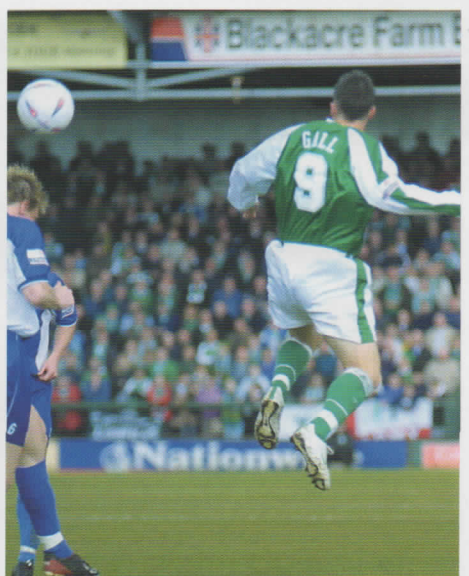


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APRIL 2003





 **Nationwide**



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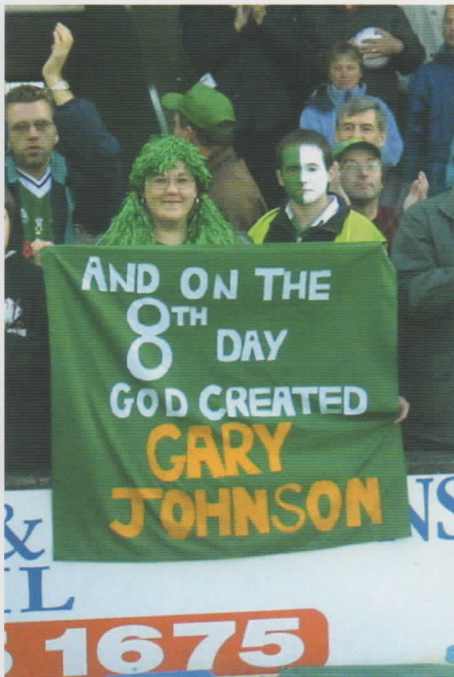








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