

File: BMG Dave Robertson.MP3

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START AUDIO

Interviewer: First of all, I want your name please.

David Robertson: David Robertson, known as Robbo.

Interviewer: How long have you been supporting Stevenage?

David Robertson: Over 30 years.

Interviewer: So, Spurs comes out of the hat. What are your thoughts?

David Robertson: Why didn't we get Arsenal.

Interviewer: Really?

David Robertson: Yes. My first football team was Arsenal. I used to go and watch Arsenal up to the '80's a lot. Then started coming here in the '80's really. I used to come before and watch the important cup

matches from interest really. I used to go and watch the Arsenal up to the '80's till they knocked the north bank down.

Interviewer: But you got over that shock, that it wasn't Arsenal. What did you then think?

David Robertson: Great. We're sold, they'll get them. Good money earner. A full house.

Interviewer: So as you got closer to the game it gets sort of more exciting?

David Robertson: Very exciting. Can't sleep.

Interviewer: It really, you can't sleep?

David Robertson: No, can't sleep.

Interviewer: Is that how it works? What are you thinking about while you can't sleep?

David Robertson: Everything. How many goals they're going to beat us by?

Interviewer: Is that your first thought?

David Robertson: Yes. 3-0, would it be 3-0 or 4-0?

Interviewer: But did anywhere in the back of your mind do you think, "Well we could do this?"

David Robertson: Well I knew that we were capable of holding them at least. But I didn't think we'd ever really get the draw. Terrific result really.

Interviewer: So what about the build up to the game? What things do you remember as being the sort of big features of the build up?

David Robertson: Big features was the crowd really coming in.

Interviewer: Do you like to follow all the newspapers and the television and the radio? That sort of thing?

David Robertson: No, no. Don't listen to that. Too much hype.

Interviewer: Did you buy any special merchandise?

David Robertson: No.

Interviewer: So you're not somebody who rushes out to buy merchandise on famous occasions like that?

David Robertson: No, no. All I've got is a couple of programmes.

Interviewer: Do you have any rituals on match days that you put into operation then?

David Robertson: No, never.

Interviewer: Did you arrive early?

David Robertson: Always arrive early because I'm normally here about 12 o'clock for home games.

Interviewer: Do you park your car close by?

David Robertson: What's a car?

Interviewer: Right so you walk to the ground?

David Robertson: I walk. I get the bus.

Interviewer: Where does the bus stop?

David Robertson: Outside. Broadhall Way. A number 3, a number 5 or a number 8.

Interviewer: As you're travelling by bus were there any signs of the build up to the game?

David Robertson: Not really. A few people walking from town but because I arrive early you don't really see it early on. But there were quite a few people here by 12 o'clock queueing and hanging around.

Interviewer: So the atmosphere that afternoon as it developed, what was it like? As if I wasn't here. Pretend I wasn't here and tell me about it.

David Robertson: Electrifying.

Interviewer: Electrifying?

David Robertson: Tension was...

Interviewer: What's going on inside you?

David Robertson: Upset tummy, rumble oh.

Interviewer: Why?

David Robertson: Why? Because you get tense. You do as well surely?

Interviewer: And there was still this fear that we were going to get whipped?

David Robertson: Yes. Really I think so. But as the game went on we played, we kept tight to them and nullified their wingers really.

Interviewer: Right so I was going to say, "How did Boro cope with the threat?"

David Robertson: Well we kept tight and we kept their two wingers under pressure. A lot of pressure on them. And they couldn't get good balls in. And we broke up defensively. Ashton and Robbo were brilliant. Well all of them played out their skins really.

Interviewer: How did the crowd respond do you think? Was it a good day as far as the crowd were concerned?

David Robertson: It was a good response from all of the crowd.

Interviewer: Because it's not always a great response from the crowd at the big games is it?

David Robertson: No. The crowd, the east terrace are great but the main stand can be very fickle. They will get behind them occasionally especially if the boys are playing well and they get some nice goals. And they get all excited but then they tend not to, when it goes a bit dull they tend to be quiet and nothing coming from them much.

Interviewer: They like to be entertained. When they feel they're being entertained they'll make some noise.

David Robertson: Yes.

Interviewer: It's a bit like that? So your feelings, the final whistle goes, what are your feelings then?

David Robertson: Brilliant. Get a ticket. Off to Tottenham. Haven't been there for over 30 years since Arsenal won the double, won the first part of the double in '71. That's my last memory of going to Tottenham before going to Tottenham.

Interviewer: Did you have any problems getting a ticket?

David Robertson: No. No as a season ticket holder I had no problem.

Interviewer: So you didn't have to queue or anything like that?

David Robertson: No.

Interviewer: Yes.

David Robertson: I'm retired so I'm able to get along in the daytime.

Interviewer: So, you were having sleepless nights. Your tummy was rumbling before the first game. But surely the worry now is that you go to White Hart Lane and you get massacred? Is that what you were fearing then?

David Robertson: Well no I didn't. After that game I didn't think... I thought, "We might lose again" but I thought, "After the way we played against them we'd play as well as that again, against them." Because I know the boys will pick their game up. Big game. Their biggest game of their careers.

Interviewer: So...

David Robertson: Especially with Chris Day and Ronnie, ex-players.

Interviewer: Ex Spurs connection.

David Robertson: Yes.

Interviewer: So the game's hardly started and there's a penalty. Where were you actually sitting in the ground?

David Robertson: Well in the away end so I didn't have a great view of the penalty.

Interviewer: So the penalty's given and what goes on inside you then?

David Robertson: Excitement. Jumping up and down like a madman, mad thing.

Interviewer: But.

David Robertson: But. Well I thought we had a great start. We had a great 20 minute's start.

Interviewer: But before he actually took the kick what's going through your mind?

David Robertson: Oh I hope he can score. I hope he can send the keeper the wrong way.

Interviewer: And if you were describing the game as a whole to somebody, how did Boro perform?

David Robertson: Out of their skins again. Excellent. Really proved that this level of football it can, on the day, be as good as a premiership side.

Interviewer: Were they unlucky to lose?

David Robertson: I think they were unlucky. We had the header, one off the bar and two blocks with Bale's feet by the keeper. We gave Spurs a really run for their money and I've got a few friends who are Spurs' supporters said, "We played very well."

Interviewer: So how did the fans do on that day?

David Robertson: The fans were great.

Interviewer: What was great about it?

David Robertson: Well the atmosphere.

Interviewer: How did they create that?

David Robertson: By chanting and clapping and that. Boro songs.

Interviewer: But they do that often at the Lamex for five minutes and then it goes quiet. Was it any different at White Hart Lane?

David Robertson: Oh it was much more, much more. Because everybody's in the same spot aren't they, they're not all spread around the ground. We were all boxed in one end, 4000 of us. There were 4000 supporters there and all together so it's a much better atmosphere when you're all together. When you're around the Lamex, it's quite good the east stand with the acoustics. But when it's quiet you can't hear too much.

Interviewer: So how did you get down to White Hart Lane?

David Robertson: I went by train. I drove to Cockfosters and then went by tube to Finsbury Park and then bus up to the ground.

Interviewer: Were you on your own?

David Robertson: No I went with a friend.

Interviewer: And around you were there lots of Boro supporters as you travelled?

David Robertson: Not particularly on the ground. When you get up to White Hart Lane area there were many. You're going up on the bus you see people walking down to the pub for whatever.

Interviewer: You didn't go to the pub beforehand?

David Robertson: Oh that is a no. No I stood in Bill Nicholson Way and watched people going in because I'm an autograph collector.

Interviewer: And who did you get that night?

David Robertson: I got one. He used to play for Spurs. Sherwood, Steve Sherwood. He went in. But of course it's very, all the players have gone in early in the coaches and you can't get near them.

Interviewer: Yes. So you're on your way home. Presumably there are a lot of Boro supporters then on the train, are there?

David Robertson: No because I went by bus and then tube so I didn't see many.

Interviewer: Yes. Now look, let's talk about the season as a whole briefly. Start of the season what were your expectations?

David Robertson: To get in the play-offs.

Interviewer: That's an expectation?

David Robertson: Yes. Hope we get in the...

Interviewer: Is that a hope or an expectation?

David Robertson: Expectation.

Interviewer: You really thought now why did you think that?

David Robertson: Because I thought we'd put... Because our record in cup matches and the way we played. We're good enough, we're a good team.

Interviewer: What did you mean by our record in cup matches?

David Robertson: Well we played well against high... Newcastle and other cup matches. We always play well. But over a whole season, yes I was hoping that we can get into the... It would be a great achievement to get into the play-offs.

Interviewer: So the real highlights of the season, your summary that goes home and away. If I said to you, "Choose me three absolute highlights of the season?"

David Robertson: I can name you two highlights which I didn't attend.

Interviewer: You've got to have been there.

David Robertson: I've got to have been there?

Interviewer: You must have been there. You've got to have been there.

David Robertson: Obviously Yeovil last week. When we won 6-0 which was our highest ever win.

Interviewer: Were you surprised by that?

David Robertson: Not after we- they lost that. After we got the second goal, no. Because they were down to 10 men and it was.

Interviewer: Was it a freak result or was it deserved?

David Robertson: Well we were always the better side so yes it was deserved. Even though they lost a man.

Interviewer: What made us the better side would you say?

David Robertson: We actually passed the ball for a change. We didn't put long balls up. We have been knocking long balls to Patrick and he's not a great jumper.

Interviewer: So Yeovil's one. There weren't many supporters there, 150 odd?

David Robertson: Was there only 150? A long way to go, long way to go. A lot of our supporters are a bit fickle.

Interviewer: How much does it cost you to travel to all these away games in a season?

David Robertson: A lot of money. I travel by train. We do try to book in advance to get the cheaper fare when we book trains. I think it's around £50 a journey really by the time you.

Interviewer: Have you got any other passions that you spend money on or is this it?

David Robertson: No, cricket.

Interviewer: Cricket?

David Robertson: Oh yes.

Interviewer: So who do you support?

David Robertson: Surrey.

Interviewer: Surrey?

David Robertson: I've just come back from Surrey today. I travelled back this morning but I've been watching Surrey for two days at the Oval in the rain.

Interviewer: I bet you have. Okay, we'll talk about that later. So you had one game, Yeovil. Now you've got two more to come.

David Robertson: Oh.

Interviewer: Games of the season.

David Robertson: I enjoyed our win at Hartlepool, in the cup. I suppose going to Stourbridge was.

Interviewer: But why Stourbridge?

David Robertson: Oh it's an old fashioned ground. It was really.

Interviewer: What was old fashioned about it?

David Robertson: Well it's also a cricket ground as well. They share it.

Interviewer: What does it look like?

David Robertson: Well like Boro used to look like. But there's a cricket ground, it's very quaint. Run down. Still needs a lot of work on it but.

Interviewer: Would you be saying it was a favourite game if Boro had lost?

David Robertson: You said remember, I didn't say about losing.

Interviewer: But again a very professional performance?

David Robertson: Yes.

Interviewer: So you've got one game left. You've got lots, you've got several more big scoring games. Are you going to go for a big scoring game?

David Robertson: Not really, I don't know. Milton Keynes away was quite good. No, we lost.

Interviewer: Yes? What was good about it if we lost then?

David Robertson: We competed. We were slightly unlucky to lose that game. And there's, off the 18 draws we've had this year we've really been unlucky. I mean the first game this season we lost at

Chesterfield. We conceded a goal in the 97th minute from the last ball.

Interviewer: If we don't make the play-offs will you be gutted?

David Robertson: No. You can't be really; you can't be gutted.

Interviewer: You won't be saying, "Oh we should have been there. Look at all those." Situations like that.

David Robertson: Well I can say that but no. We'll still have done well if we finish seventh.

Interviewer: Would you want to be in the Championship next season?

David Robertson: Yes.

Interviewer: Don't you think we really would be exposed then?

David Robertson: We ought to be exposed but there's many teams like Peterborough who are up there. There's small teams in that league that are still there. No, especially if we get the north stand built as well that would help. The attendance would go up to 8500 and it would look nice, the ground would like very nice the.

Interviewer: Do you think that might draw more supporters if the ground looks more?

David Robertson: Yes. More supporter friendly. If you look at the north stand now it's a bit Keith Robinson isn't it?

Interviewer: So the big event as it were off the field this season was the departure of Graham Westley? What were your feelings about that?

David Robertson: Gutted really, that it happened.

Interviewer: Why? Why gutted?

David Robertson: Well I thought to change horses in midstream is always going to be hard. I was hoping he wasn't going to go. I was hoping that it was only paper talk and he wouldn't leave. So we've gone through a bit of transition haven't we?

Interviewer: Did you question his decision at all?

David Robertson: Yes. Maybe he's gone because he's got a bigger squad and a bigger ground and everything's on a larger scale. Personally I don't know why. No he wouldn't say would he, why he went.

Interviewer: And if, come the end of the summer, you discover that say three Boro players have been signed by him at Preston what would the feeling then be?

David Robertson: As we've got nine players out of contract this year we could well lose three players to him.

Interviewer: Because he knows what the contract situation is. Your feelings then on Gary Smith. How's he done?

David Robertson: So-so. I'm a bit concerned that he brought in three players and one player was having a real bad time at the start. Do you want me to name a name or not?

Interviewer: You can if you like.

David Robertson: I think most people know who it was. But he's started improving, getting better in the last couple of games. Because we started to play, we're playing the ball to him and not over his head and where he doesn't jump that well for a big man.

Interviewer: You've still not named him, perhaps we won't. But you think the curve is upwards?

David Robertson: Yes. We're playing much, the last few games we've played much better. I mean last week, though it was 1-0 we had many chances and we didn't put them away.

Interviewer: So every fan is passionate about their club but why are you so passionate about this club? What's special about this club? What's different about this club?

David Robertson: Oh I don't think there's anything different. It's because they're fairly local to where I live. I live in Letchworth so it's the best football around this area.

Interviewer: And what's it meant to you to see Boro rise and rise and rise?

David Robertson: Well wonderful. Especially after missing out 16 years ago, 17 years ago when the FA were... Really upset then that we weren't allowed to go into the league. But there we are. We've done it and we've zoomed up. It's unbelievable really how we've acquired this status.

Interviewer: Well long may it last, fingers crossed.

David Robertson: Well I think we can hold onto it easily. We've got a very, I don't want to make his head a bit bigger but I think...

Interviewer: Here's the team coming onto the pitch.

David Robertson: Phil is very; he's doing well at the moment.

END AUDIO

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