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Delvin Stevens: My name is Delvin Stevens, I'm 63. My connection with Stevenage, well, I started to play for them when I was 18 in 1966. I continued playing for them until such time as they went into liquidation. From then, obviously, I went with another team. After that, when they resurfaced, I started the youth team down here and we had a very successful youth team. Also, I managed the reserves and also the first team as well. So, I've actually played for the first team. I've played for the reserves, I've played for the youth team. I've managed the first team, I've managed the reserves and I've managed the youth team.

Interviewer: Okay.

Delvin Stevens: And I still come down and watch them. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Let's do each bit one by one, okay? You said you started by playing for them, and you started it, what, 18, did you say?

Delvin Stevens: George Curtis was the manager at the time, and he signed me when I was 18. I was basically a centre-half. At the time,

John Mills was centre-half here, a very popular player, a very good player as well. George Curtis signed me and he dropped John Mills and put me in the team, which obviously caused quite a stir certainly amongst the supporters. After that, as we progressed, me and John played together and I think we formed a very good partnership.

Interviewer: When you came at 18, were you a local lad?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, I actually lived in Knebworth at the time. I played for, which was Stevenage Youths [Barcavians 0:01:49] at the time. I'd play for them. Then I say, George Curtis signed me on when I was 18.

Interviewer: Right. Was that signing you as full-pro or semi-pro?

Delvin Stevens: No. To start with, I was just an amateur. He signed me as an amateur player, which meant I could get expenses but that is all I was paid.

Interviewer: So, what were you doing to get yourself money at the time?

Delvin Stevens: My father had his own building company, so I worked there during the day, basically. That was my basic living. I had an apprenticeship which I served. So, the football was only sort of in the background, basically.

Interviewer: Right, and you played from '63 through to '66 to-

Delvin Stevens: 1966. I'm not quite sure when they went into liquidation, certainly-

Interviewer: I've got in my head '76. Is that right, or is that too long?

Delvin Stevens: That's too long, I think. It wasn't that many years... When I actually signed for Barnet when I was, I think, probably 21, when the club went into liquidation, you know.

Interviewer: Right, yes. Okay. So, tell me first about during that time in your first paying career, what were the highlights? What was the league that you were playing in games [Crosstalk 0:03:15]?

Delvin Stevens: Every game is a highlight to me, to be quite honest. I suppose what stands in my mind as much as anything, A, the Monday night football down here. Obviously, there wasn't so much to do then as there is now, and they got a very good crowd, a very passionate crowd. It was quite a thing to be playing down here on a Monday night. The atmosphere was brilliant.

Also, I suppose, I found it very interesting. George Curtis was the manager at the time. He was a very good manager. I think he actually went on to manage the Norway national team, but I can always remember going away and when we used to go and have a meal, may it only be egg on toast of a lunchtime before a match, he used to get the pepper pots out and the salt pots out, and everybody used to be one or the other, like,

you know. He was very thorough in what he did. For me at 18, to be playing here was brilliant.

Interviewer: What was the training like? Did you do a pre-season?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, there always used to be a pre-season which was obviously very hard, but at 18, I was reasonably fit anyway. We used to train on a Tuesday and a Thursday as well. Yes, the training was basically second nature to me.

Interviewer: And during the season, would you concentrate on- [You're saying he's doing 0:04:39] the pepper pots and everything, did he give you quite a lot of game plans, or was it more like, "Go out, play your game?"

Delvin Stevens: No, George was very thorough. He had a game plan for every game, basically. I can remember going to Hillingdon Borough one evening, where we played with one person upfront and that was Johnny Brooks. We defended for 90 minutes and we won 1-0. That was his game plan. That's what he did. He was a brilliant coach, there's no doubt about it.

Interviewer: Okay. What were the team that you were playing at that stage? Did any stand out as...

Delvin Stevens: Yeovil obviously, were one of the top teams. There was Cambridge, was another one, I suppose. Barnet were in the league. I can't... Chelmsford, I think were in-

Interviewer: I'm just wondering if they were, like, particularly tasty games, as it were, that everyone would say, "Oh, that's the Derby game or that's the-"

Delvin Stevens: I suppose the Barnet one was always the Derby game, you know. I suppose there wasn't that many round here that were that standard of football, basically.

Interviewer: In that period, did you have any particularly good seasons? Was there one season where the team did particularly well?

Delvin Stevens: I think the first season, I think we finished second or third. It was what was the Southern League then. There were different divisions, Division 1, Division 2. I think we went up from Division 2 up to Division 1, which was in our first season, which was very good. Then, you play the better sides i.e. the Yeovils and Barnets and those sort of teams.

Interviewer: What was the pitch like at that time?

Delvin Stevens: Oh, you don't want to know. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Sadly, I do.

Delvin Stevens: I'm sitting here [looking at this now 0:06:36]. It was unbelievable, it really was. If I say you used to plough through six inches of mud, I wouldn't be exaggerating, I really wouldn't. There was sand on it to try to take the water away.

Interviewer: Was it particularly bad, even in the context of the other teams that you were playing?

Delvin Stevens: Yes. I wouldn't say it brought everybody down to our level, because that's not very true, but everybody, I think, found it difficult to come and play on here. It was something different, you know. I mean, I look at this one now and it's immaculate. Yes, obviously, it was quite stressful trying to play. You know, you knock a ball and it would go two or three yards, as much as- But you learn to play on it after a while. Although we couldn't train on it, you learnt to play on it and you learnt, I suppose, what you could do and what you couldn't do on it.

Interviewer: What was the facilities, the changing room and stuff like in those days?

Delvin Stevens: Very basic, I think.

Interviewer: Were you all in the communal bath?

Delvin Stevens: No, no. We progressed a little bit from then, but it was very basic. The actual bar facilities and the changing facilities are obviously down at the end there now, and they were very

basic. I suppose, to be fair, [the team has 0:08:10] progressed a lot since then. I mean, look around these facilities here now. They're superb. But you accept them then, in the '60s.

Interviewer: Yes, absolutely. What about relationship with the supporters?

Delvin Stevens: Brilliant. It really was, yes. I suppose, to be fair, they're very similar to what they are now. They're very biased. Nothing was ever your fault, it was always somebody else's fault, you know, referees or the [lines 0:08:42]. But no, the supporters were superb. I mean, they get quite good crowds now, but when I look back, there wasn't so much to do in those days, was there? Particularly as I said before, the Monday night football was always a brilliant atmosphere under the floodlights, you know.

Interviewer: And did you actually also meet the supporters after the game or around the town? I mean, were you able to sort of socialise?

Delvin Stevens: Yes. It's very different now because you can't sort of walk around. When I played, you could walk around after the game. You could meet the supporters. You would go and have a drink in Stevenage Old Town after the game, as many of us did. The supporters would come up there, and they would have a drink with you. They would buy you a drink, you know. Yes, it was a very good relationship, I would have said.

I don't suppose it's much different now, to be quite honest. It's just that the players probably now are further afield. Once they've done their training, they go off home and nobody ever

sees them until the following game. Whereas a lot of the players round here lived around this way, or had digs around this way.

Interviewer: Would you socialise a lot, also with yourselves as players? Did you go out?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, we used to go out. I mean, there was a lot of us. There was Colin Powell, who went on to play at Charlton and Dickie England was another one. All of around about the same sort of age, that on a Saturday night, we would have a game of football on a Saturday afternoon and then go out for a few drinks, something to eat on a Saturday night. Yes, it was very good. Obviously, there was a few that were married that couldn't. I mean, I don't know whether you interviewed Ray Peacock, did you?

Interviewer: Not me. Somebody else has, I think.

Delvin Stevens: Yes, well Ray was in goal at the time. He was obviously one of the married ones that couldn't come out, but no, it was brilliant. It really was.

Interviewer: Sorry, I lost my thread there, because I'm suddenly realising that Colin Powell is Paddy Powell who I used to also see play for Barnet.



Delvin Stevens: Yes. Well, Paddy and me went to Barnet together. Then I got transferred to Cambridge after that, and he stayed on at Barnet.

Interviewer: What was the story with that, that you said they go into administration here? Did you see it coming?

Delvin Stevens: Not really, I don't suppose, no.

Interviewer: So, it must have been a bit of a shock.

Delvin Stevens: Yes, it was. It was a big shock, because I say, everybody enjoyed the football here. At the time, Tommy Bickerstaff was manager, and he got offered the job at Cambridge City. So, he took a lot of the players from here up to Cambridge City. Then Paddy went to Barnet. So, yes, it was a shock. There wasn't any sort of formal notice, you know.

Interviewer: Did you just go or were you sold?

Delvin Stevens: No, nobody was sold. Actually, once they went into liquidation, because we were all semi-pros then, you went into liquidation and your contracts were void. So, obviously, then you could do what you like. I say, Tommy was manager here then, and he took a lot of players up to Cambridge. I can't think of the Barnet manager's name now, who approached me and Paddy, but we went up to there for a season. From then on, Paddy went to Charlton and...

Interviewer: And you went up to Cambridge?

Delvin Stevens: I went to Cambridge, yes.

Interviewer: So, you've left and you've gone to Cambridge. How did you get back to Stevenage?

Delvin Stevens: Well, I've always been a Stevenage lad, basically. So, I can't remember... Well, yes I can. When I was, I think probably about 23, 24, I decided that I'd had enough of semi-pro footballer. I'd got young children, and it was difficult to be in two places at once. So, I decided that I'd finish at Cambridge and they withheld my contract for a year so I couldn't play for anybody else. I used to come down here and I used to know [Frank Cornwall 0:12:49] was down here, Paul Peterson was the coach down here. I sort of got to know them. I came and played again when they reformed as Stevenage Athletic.

Interviewer: That was presumably at a lot lower level in terms of the leagues, was it?

Delvin Stevens: It was a lot lower level, yes.

Interviewer: I mean, how did you find coping with that?

Delvin Stevens: Quite easy. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Well, I was going to say, yes, in one sense I was thinking it would be quite easy skill wise, but in terms of for your enjoyment of the game, as it were.

Delvin Stevens: Well, as I say, I had young children and they were, I suppose, more a priority at the time. To be playing five minutes away at probably an easier standard, it was quite satisfying really, to be quite honest. I quite enjoyed it.

Interviewer: And were you still, as you were semi-pro, still doing the work with your Dad?

Delvin Stevens: Well, I wasn't when I finished with Cambridge and I wasn't semi-pro anymore. I wasn't getting paid or anything, so I just contracted on my father's business, basically, in the building industry.

Interviewer: Yes. When you were working for your father... I'm just trying to think about this, were you actually doing building or were you working in the office?

Delvin Stevens: No, I served an apprenticeship as a carpenter. So, I did five years of that and then I went back, basically running the jobs for him. He had quite a big firm in Stevenage, a local firm, Stevenage Borough. So, yes.

Interviewer: I'm just wondering if it wouldn't get rather knackered to sort of be working and playing.

Delvin Stevens: Well, I wasn't very old, so it didn't. No, I don't suppose it did. It was second nature to me, I suppose. At 22, 23, you should be reasonably fit, shouldn't you, to be quite honest?

Interviewer: Yes, sure. I was going to ask you a bit about fitness as well. Did they- Compared with today when we have all the stuff about diet and what have you, do you think it was-

Delvin Stevens: No.

Interviewer: Nothing like that?

Delvin Stevens: No, nothing at all.

Interviewer: Did they have any rules on drinking?

Delvin Stevens: No, not at all. I mean, Tommy probably won't mind me saying this, but after the game, he was a very good manager, but after the game he did like a drop of scotch. He was a Scottish person; he likes a drop of scotch. I suppose, if you say, done the business on the pitch on a Saturday afternoon, then you were entitled to a few drinks of an evening. I don't think

anyone went out and got themselves really bad, but you would have a few beers and a meal.

Interviewer: Talk me through what would happen on a match day, in terms of when would you arrive. You know, assuming we've got the classic three o'clock kick off. When would you arrive, what would you do?

Delvin Stevens: Obviously, I mean a lot depends on whether you're at home and away. If you're at home, they would expect you, if it's a three o'clock kick off, to be in by half past one. You would go for your training techniques. I mean, it was very basic then. You don't have what you have now, I don't think. Things have obviously progressed now. I mean, I dare say they come in for a meal here before the game, which we used to have away, although may only be egg on toast. Then I can always remember making us walk to the- They would park the coach about a mile from the ground, wherever you were playing. You used to walk then from the-

Interviewer: As your kind of start warm-up, as it were.

Delvin Stevens: That's right. Basically, yes. So, it was very basic. It's not like it is now at all. Whether that's good or bad, I don't know.

Interviewer: Yes. So, take me through the rest of your playing career, then. Once you got back here, you're playing with Stevenage again, you go up the league. So, you were back here by about twenty-four, did you say?

Delvin Stevens: Twenty-four, twenty-five.

Interviewer: Twenty-four, twenty-five. So, how many more years were you playing?

Delvin Stevens: I probably played for another three or four years down here, with Stevenage Athletic, with Frank Cornwall and Paul Peterson. After that, I suppose I just drifted out. I had a very successful youth team in Stevenage that I started, which I spent a lot of time with them.

Interviewer: And that was the youth team attached to the club?

Delvin Stevens: It's one we got attached to the club, that's right. We had a very successful team. We won the East Anglian Cup, we won the [Herts County Cup. We went to Millwall, when they were in the old First Division, and we only lost 2-1 to them in the FA Youth Cup, which was quite a prestigious cup at the time. So, I spent a lot of time with the youth team, basically. From then on, I can remember when I was down here with the youth team, they sacked... I can't remember the manager's name, but they sacked somebody and asked me to take over the first team, which I did.

Interviewer: And that was when? What year is that?

Delvin Stevens: I can't remember. It could have been... Let's have a think now. My boy now is... It could be 15, 20 odd years ago now. So, it could have been '85, something like that, 1985. I took over the first team for six games and we never lost a game. Not that that was probably down to me so much, but the players played for me and I knew a lot of them. Then they got a new manager after that.

Interviewer: Who was the manager that came?

Delvin Stevens: I can't remember. He came from Cambridge, but I can remember him going and Paul Fairclough then came, and I was running the youth team then when Paul was here.

Interviewer: Yes. And that seemed to be a period, under Fairclough, is the period when they seemed to start playing-

Delvin Stevens: It took off.

Interviewer: It really takes off.

Delvin Stevens: It did, yes. I mean, Paul is a very good manager. He's proved it. He's gone on to, I wouldn't necessarily say better things, but he's been very successful. He's a very good organiser, you know, and I think everybody's impressed with him down here.

Interviewer: Does he give you much collaboration between himself and yourself in terms of coming and looking at the youth, and seeing the players he wants to develop and things?

Delvin Stevens: That's right. I mean, I say at the time, we had a very good youth side and Paul used to come down quite regularly and have a look. He would come to training nights, because obviously that was the idea then of these. They were, I suppose 17 or 18, and the idea was to bring these players on through to the first team. I can remember two of them that probably came and got games down here, not necessarily in the league, but played games for the Athletic, or the Borough then. It didn't prove as successful as I suppose as we had hoped, but that happened, I suppose.

Interviewer: Which bit didn't prove successful, sorry?

Delvin Stevens: Well, the players coming through, the youth team players coming through. I suppose the idea was to get as many as possible to come through, but that didn't quite materialise. As I said, we had got a couple come through, but then they weren't regular first teamers.

Interviewer: Do you think it was just that they weren't quite of the level?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, I think it was. I think the problem is now, then what it is now, really. There's too much pressure on managers to get success, and to actually try to bring a 17 or 18-year-old into a team is a bit of a chance. It didn't materialise, but we had



some good times down here. We had some good games, and the club treated us very well.

Interviewer: Was it a good advantage for the club in the community, that it had that kind of youth set up? Was that a good thing for it?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, I think it was. I'm sure it was. We used to have some good crowds down here. I say good crowds, of 2, 3 or 400 that used to come down. We used to play under the floodlights and they used to come down and watch. It was quite a good community spirit, to be quite honest.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay, so you've done the youth team with Paul. What happened after that? What happens to you next?

Delvin Stevens: Well, I did carry on playing. I went to Arlesey and played for them for a little while, and I played for Stotfold when I was probably about 35, I suppose, coming to the end of my career. That's it, basically.

I've always been interested in youth football. I've got grandchildren now that play and I go and watch them. I've been this morning and watch one of them play in the district. So, I'm involved. I come down here. I pick my games, if I'm honest. Well, not necessarily being involved. I still come down, and I still like to think I'm part of the... I know a lot of the people here that were here when I was here, basically, that matured with the club. I mean, Lloyd, obviously is one of them and there's other people down here.

Interviewer: Are they friendly? Do they give you a role?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, it's very good. It's a lovely club. It's nice to see that they have progressed, and they have. Graham Westley now, he's done a brilliant job to take them where they are. Just hope from here that they can go on to better things.

Interviewer: Do you think they can?

Delvin Stevens: I think the only stumbling point is the crowd. They get, an average sort of game of 3000, and they are your staunch Stevenage supporters. The biggest problem is living too close to London, where you can jump on a train and be at the Emirates. You can be at White Hart Lane, you can be at Stamford Bridge in half an hour, basically. Because it's mainly a London town, basically, that people still support their local teams. I think the only stumbling block could be the crowds, because you need people to come in to pay for better things, I suppose, really.

Interviewer: Right, yes. So, give it some financial backing that you need, yes. Can I ask you a bit about the players in your career, the players you played with? Which ones stand out for you as, A, as players, but then maybe also if there are some who stand out as characters, if you see what I mean. So, who would be the great players for you that you played with?

Delvin Stevens: Johnny Brooks, I suppose. He is the most famous. Are we talking about down here, or anywhere?

Interviewer: Well, talking about down here, really. For Stevenage is really what I'm interested in.

Delvin Stevens: Johnny Brooks was probably the- I mean, he was ex-England international. He was a lovely guy, John. You couldn't meet a nicer chap.

Interviewer: What position did he play?

Delvin Stevens: Well, it was inside-right then, which you probably won't remember. (Laughter) I mean, he came down here. I think George Curtis signed him and that was a coup, it really was, to bring him down here. John lived in the town for many years afterwards. I think he actually lives down in Bournemouth now. Colin Powell was another one. Colin's gone on to greater things.

I suppose the only person I can say that was probably a little bit disappointing was a very good friend of mine, was Dickie England. He used to play on the left wing and he was a little bit of a fiery character, but he was a very good player. He didn't go on to anything different when they went into liquidation. He just went home because he lived in Doncaster. He just went home and drifted into local football.

But there were some good characters. There was then, it was different then. You could have a lot of banter. You know, there was banter with the referee and the linesman. Now, if you open your mouth or you say anything, you're in the book.

Then, it was different. I mean, John Mills, Ray Peacock's another one. We used to have some great times, you know.

Interviewer: I'm interested in what you say about banter with the referees and stuff.

Delvin Stevens: Well, you used to say, "Oh, come on ref," and you got to know them, funnily enough. You could probably call them by their first name, and they would know you. They would make it their job to know you. I just feel now, referees, if anybody they know has got a bad reputation, they will jump on them. Whereas then, I mean some of the tackles that used to go about then, you could tackle from behind in the '60s, where now you're off straight away. It was a lot more physical, it really was. There were some very hard games, but there were some good ones.

Interviewer: In the side, would you have people designated to do the enforcing, as it were?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, I was probably one of them, to be quite honest.

Interviewer: I was thinking that. Centre-half, you might well have been in that role.

Delvin Stevens: Well, I didn't- John Mills went back to centre-half and I went to right-half, which was when I used to play alongside him. Yes, Ray Freeman was probably another one. He was quite a hard player, but that was part and parcel of the game then. That

was what it was all about. That's what you could do and get away with. I mean, those players now, and me alone, you just wouldn't be able to survive in today's game, you know. Yes, there were some real characters.

Interviewer: What about once you came back, when you were playing in those sides in the later years? Obviously, not the same level, but in terms of players, were there people who stood out?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, I suppose, again, was probably another disappointment really was Danny Dance.

Interviewer: Oh, yes. Okay, tell me about Danny Dance.

Delvin Stevens: Well, Danny was a very gifted player, but unfortunately, he only wanted to play when he wanted to play. I mean, he had a lot of talent but he didn't get anywhere. Unfortunately, whether that was his fault or nobody pushed him hard enough, I'll never know. Or perhaps he just might have been happy to play at this level. He's probably the one that stands out as far as I'm concerned.

Interviewer: What sort of position and role did he play?

Delvin Stevens: He was a right winger.

Interviewer: Right wing, and what was his sort of assets?

Delvin Stevens: He had a lot of pace, and he had a lot of ball control. He was very good with his ball control. Unfortunately, he just never went on from- He never stepped up a level. Perhaps some people are like that. Perhaps he was quite happy just playing at the level, he was comfortable, he didn't feel any pressure. I mean, I still see Danny in the town now. He's a Stevenage lad. I don't know whether he plays for the... What do they call them? The under 50s or the over 50s. I think he still might play for them.

Interviewer: I've heard earlier in the day, people telling me about him, like he was their hero player and they came to watch him. What about since the team has sort of taken off, you've been watching them go up through the levels?

Delvin Stevens: What, now?

Interviewer: Yes. Well, I'm thinking sort of the last ten years or so. Have there been been particular players you've admired?

Delvin Stevens: Obviously, there are a number of players that they have actually signed- George Boyd, I suppose, is a player that's done brilliant. He's now playing at Peterborough and he started off down here. Steve Morison's another one. So, there is a number of players that have progressed and are now playing a very good level of football. I mean, George Boyd's in the Championship. Steve Morison plays for Norwich now in the Premiership.

So, yes, there's quite a few players that have gone on from there. I think the football has changed considerably. I don't think there is the flair players that there used to be. I think it's become a more physical game as far as running and working. I mean, I can remember years ago when I played when Johnny Brooks played, and he stood in the middle of what we called a park, and he didn't move no more than- But that was John, you know. He could hit a ball 40 yards and he would pick out a player.

John wouldn't live in this sort of football. It is more physical. Although the tackling isn't so fierce as probably it was then, it's certainly very- I mean, you see the players now, they all look like athletes. You know, they're all very big, strong, and they run for 90 minutes and don't stop. That's what I see at Stevenage, basically. To be fair, they have done ever so well to get where they have done. They are fit. That sums it all up, basically.

Interviewer: Yes. With your career, is there any particular game that stands out where you thought, "I came off, I really- That was my game?"

Delvin Stevens: [I wouldn't say 0:30:58] my game, but I can remember playing Port Vale down here. Stanley Matthews brought his Port Vale down. I think we won 4-3, and I scored the fourth goal.

Interviewer: Oh, right. Tell me how you did it.

Delvin Stevens: I just run... I suppose I run with the ball, they all backed off and I just hit it.

Interviewer: Oh, fantastic.

Delvin Stevens: Well, it was at the time. I actually had a cutting that my mum kept for me, showing it. I mean, Stanley Matthews then was a household name as he is now. Port Vale, I can't remember what division they were in, but they were quite a good side he brought down.

Interviewer: And he was in his 50s, wasn't he, at that point?

Delvin Stevens: Yes.

Interviewer: Could he still play? I mean, was it, when you were watching him-

Delvin Stevens: You know what I was just saying to you about Johnny Brooks, Stanley Matthews was the same. I mean, he didn't chase back and retrieve the ball. He just stood on the right wing, they knock a ball to him. Yes, he could still do it at 50.

Interviewer: Still had a bit of pace \_\_\_\_ [0:31:56], and could control it still.



Delvin Stevens: Yes, and the tackles weren't going in... Obviously, everybody was told to hold off him, you know. But to play against him, was brilliant, really. Later on, when I came back, when Frank Cornwall was down here, we played Leeds. When Leeds then were a top notch side, you know, the Peter Lorimers and Billy Bremners and all them were down here. That's another one that stands out, I suppose.

Interviewer: How did you find it playing against- Were they as hard as they were reputed to be?

Delvin Stevens: No. It was difficult to get the ball, though. (Laughter) Once you lost the ball, it took a little while to get it back again. I mean, they were a very good side then. It was only like a... I can't think. Frank Cornwall knew them, knew someone involved at Leeds and he brought them down here. I can't remember why it was brought down, but it was a full house. I mean, they treat it like a testimonial, basically. [There's no tackles been flying in 0:33:02]. I can remember we got beaten, but no, it was good.

Interviewer: What was relationships like between players on the other sides? I mean, there's a sort of... I'm trying to think how to put it. I mean, would you also be friendly with them outside of the pitch or whatever? Would there be some respect? How was it?

Delvin Stevens: Yes. It depends who you were playing, I suppose. Yes, there was. You would go into the bar afterwards, I suppose, and you would buy each other a drink, basically. I mean, you could have knocked the hell out of each other on the pitch, but once

you got back in there, you had that respect for each other. I think that was in general, really.

Interviewer: Because I'm thinking that's a bit of the game that probably doesn't happen anymore, in terms of going to the bar afterwards or whatever.

Delvin Stevens: Well, I don't know to be quite honest. I mean, you could be true. But then, the bar we had, the supporters were in there, everybody was in there. I can imagine now the players perhaps drink on their own, and the supporters use the bar across there, which then, we only had the one bar.

So, the supporters used to come and have a drink, they would talk to you. They would buy you a drink. You would talk to the opposition because they were no more than a few feet away from you, you know. That was part and parcel of the game. I think it was good, that you could have this respect for each other, whatever happened out on the pitch.

Interviewer: Would you like to be playing for them now, if you were, you know, at the appropriate age, as it were? Would you fancy it?

Delvin Stevens: (Laughter) I'd like to be a lot younger. I'm not sure my legs would take it now. Yes, I don't know. I wouldn't ever swap what I've done. I've played with some good managers. I've enjoyed my football, I've played with some good team mates. I'm suffering a bit now, as everybody else is at 60 odd, you know, with your knees, your hips, your legs, but I wouldn't change it. It's the people that you get to know. I can walk around the

town now, and people will recognise me of my generation. I suppose, as well, [the beauty of it is 0:35:18], I had my 60th birthday three years ago. The whole of the youth team that I had when they were 18, bearing in mind that was quite a few years ago, they all turned up.

Interviewer: Oh, that's great.

Delvin Stevens: That was nice. A lot of them are all married now, got children of their own, but they all made the effort to turn up. I still see them in the town, and you talk to them. It's great. I just wouldn't swap it, I really wouldn't.

Interviewer: That's great. You said your son's obviously close to you, [he's going to see him 0:35:50]. Did you take him to games? How did you cope with the family and everything?

Delvin Stevens: Well, obviously, he used to come with me on a Saturday. He was old enough to come and be left on his own on a Saturday. Right the way through my career, I suppose, he used to follow me whether it was here, Cambridge or Arlesey. I mean, he still comes down now with his son. He brings his son down here.

Interviewer: So, it's kind of locked into the family line?

Delvin Stevens: Yes, I suppose so. I'd like to think that his son now will grow up to be a supporter of Stevenage. I mean, my son's a Chelsea supporter, but the grandson, because he was born down here

and he lives down here now, I would like to think that he will follow Stevenage. I'm sure he will.

Interviewer: Okay. I think we've done quite a bit there. I don't know, have I taken up your \_\_\_[0:36:52]? I don't quite know how long I've done, but probably quite enough. Great. I hope that wasn't too painful for you.

Delvin Stevens: No, not at all. It's nice to be able to talk about it again, I suppose. I've had a lot of very good years down here. Even now, I see people here. Jim Briscoe, I know very well. Jim, he's not very well at the moment. Yes, so it's nice to be back.

END AUDIO

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