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Interviewer: Can we ask you to say your name and your connections with the club?

Neil Trebble: Okay. My name is Neil Trebble. I played for Stevenage in 1992 to 1993. I came back in '95 to '96 and stayed until 2000.

Interviewer: Okay. When you came to Stevenage originally, was that the beginning of your career? Was that your first club?

Neil Trebble: Yes. I'm a Stevenage lad. I was born in Stevenage. I used to come and support Stevenage when I was just young. I used to sneak into the ground and watch the old team that used to play in the United County's League, I think. Then at the age of 18 I joined the Army and went away from the town for a few years. It was whilst I was playing for the Army that I came here. Just turned up at training one night for a trial. Paul Fairclough took a look at me and said, "Okay. We'll give you a go." That was that.

I played one season here as a semi professional while still in the Army. Then on the back of that season I was a bought out

of the Army by Scunthorpe United and turned professional for a few years before coming back.

Interviewer: Right. Okay. When you came in '92/'93, you said you turned up for a trial. That was just literally off your own back? You contacted them and said, "Give me a look."

Neil Trebble: No. I didn't contact them. I knew, from friends, the days that they trained. So I turned up in my shorts, vest and my socks and my boots in my rucksack. I did get a funny look from Paul, I remember that day. He said, "Okay. I've seen worse." That was it really and I just joined in the training.

Interviewer: What position were you playing?

Neil Trebble: I played up front, forward. I was a wide player as well.

Interviewer: You were playing as semi pro, so what were you doing at the same time?

Neil Trebble: I was in the Army.

Interviewer: And you could actually combine the Army and playing?

Neil Trebble: I could yes, just. It was quite difficult. I was in the Grenadier Guards. At that time we were on ceremonial duties in London. I

used to come off a Buckingham Palace guard, come down here, play football and then go back to the palace that evening to carry on the guard duty. It was quite hard work that first year. I was a physical training instructor in the Army so I had a lot more flexibility around my time.

I; Right. Were the Army understanding about it? Were they pleased that you were doing it?

Neil Trebble: They were supportive because I was representing the Army and the combined services football teams as well. So I was given a bit of a free rein. A little bit more than maybe some. I took advantage of that.

Interviewer: This side you joined in '92/'93, was a pretty special side if I've understood the history correct.

Neil Trebble: No. The '92/'93 was in the old Diadora Premier League. I think we finished seventh. It was special with the characters that were in it. That was my first experience of this level of football and it was much different to what it is now.

Interviewer: Tell us a bit about that. Tell us about the characters.

Neil Trebble: The physical nature of the game was much different then. It was very physical and there weren't all these rules about tackling etc. It was quite a tough group of players that we had. People like Martin Gittings, Paul Bowgett and Sean

Debenham. They were guys that really handle themselves physically. That was the kind of games that we had. We were known for that.

It was a real introduction to football for me. An enlightening period. It was a good side. It was probably underachieved a little bit that year, but it was a good team. I think the better teams came a little bit later on in my second spell. I joined at the backend of the Conference winning season and it was that period, I would say that was one of the special periods.

Interviewer: What was the difference between those two teams? That the second one was..?

Neil Trebble: I just think the skill factor was slightly higher. That's certainly not saying anything that team of '92 because, like I say, it was much more of a physical league as well. The team that I came back to, players like Barry Hayles and Peter Sodje; there were a lot higher skill levels. The game was a bit more about the ball on the floor rather than just the physicality. Although it was a physical team as well.

Paul had changed his style, I think, a little bit in terms of his management of team and the style of play.

Interviewer: How did you see that change?

Neil Trebble: It was noticeable because I've been away for a few years. There was a lot more emphasis on the ball rub rather than just the physical side. He still demanded strong players, but it was much more about the way that we played and the passing. And

had the players to so that as well. There were some really good players at that time.

Interviewer: Did the training change at all? Can you tell us about the training because you're a bit of an expert in training?

Neil Trebble: The training didn't change a lot. Our pre season was always over Fairlands Valley. It involved three stalls, if you like. There was a 12 minute run around the track that had been marked out. There were shuttle runs up a slight incline and then there was... I don't know if you know Fairlands Valley, but there is the big hill over there. That was the third part, up and down that hill.

I do remember my first couple of sessions in '92, I came, I arrived, and I was a physical training instructor. I was strong and physically fit. We used to do sets of five of each of these things and I notice that I was winning quite a lot. I was winning the first four. I was thinking, "Blimey, these guys are not that fit." But what they were actually saving themselves for was the fifth one was timed. So I was left a little bit more knackered than them and suddenly they had this fantastic energy. So that was a bit of an experience as well.

The training was quite tough. Paul was very hard on the physical side...

Interviewer: Once you were actually playing in the season, what would you do in training? Would that then be just trying to work on what the plan would be?

Neil Trebble: No. It was always a bit of both. Tuesdays and Thursdays we would train and, again, still kept up the physical side. But yes, a lot more. You're into the games; your match fitness is much higher, so we were working on different things. Different patterns of play were the main thing when Paul was there.

Interviewer: Would you try and change your pattern of play that much for different teams or did you really try and impose your own?

Neil Trebble: Not really because the team was good enough to have other teams worry about how we played. We always gave mind to the other team. We always knew about them. We had certain things to look out for, but mainly it was about us.

Interviewer: Right. I suppose you've got tough questions. How much players socialise outside? Is it just a job for you guys? Do you see what I mean? Are they your bunch of mates or are they people that you meet at work, as it were?

Neil Trebble: Football is one of those trades where there are a lot of acquaintances. You pass through different clubs and you meet different people. It's a coming and going business, isn't it? Sometimes you have an experience with a group of players that will bind you together, I suppose, for a longer period. For us, we played Newcastle in the FA Cup in '98. I think it was, over two games. That group of players had a special bond and we still keep in touch now. That's quite rare.

I've played for a few clubs and that doesn't happen that often. So there are times when, in the course of your football career,

you are bound together. Socially, yes, when you're in the club, when you're in the team, you go out together and you do things together. But often, when you leave, you go your separate ways. It's very rare you stay in touch.

Interviewer: I think we have to ask you about the Newcastle game. I know why it's a legend to the supporters, but you're saying almost, for the team, it's a big binding moment as well. Can you tell us about that?

Neil Trebble: It was crazy a few weeks. It really was. We'd just beaten Swindon, I think, away in the third round. The draw was made... I used to manage the Stevenage youth teams as well. I used to manage the Under 18s. I was on my way back from a game in Luton on a Sunday, when the draw was being made.

Of course we got Newcastle, and it was just fantastic. That was a Newcastle team full of legendary players. The immediate talk was getting the game switched from here to St James's Park, which the players favoured because a chance to play there. You give yourself a chance at home, but you are playing against £60m worth of talent. Anyway, they fought to keep the game here and we got a draw in the first game.

So we got our wish to play at St James's Park anyway, but the right way. For me, personally, I'm a Stevenage lad. I remember I lived just over in Shephall. I used to walk to every home game. I walked that day, to the game, and it was just incredible. There were flags on every house and people hanging out their windows wishing you luck. It was a special time. A special time.

Then the replay was surreal to see Stevenage Borough supporters in St James's Park. It was a very weird moment. I had family up there as well. They were special times. We played a very, very exceptional team, Newcastle side, and we more than matched them. We possibly could have won here. We didn't get humiliated in the replay either, we lost 2 - 1. There was a lot of media. Our lives, I appeared on the Bog Breakfast Show, I don't know if you remember that.

Interviewer: I do. I think Jo probably doesn't.

Joe: I think I do.

Neil Trebble: Noel Edmund's House Party was another one. We were just everywhere. It was crazy. I took my kids to school and I was being followed by Sky News. But the day after the replay it all ended and was just back to reality. It was a great experience.

Interviewer: Walking into the ground, that must be really interesting to actually be walking among the supporters when you're going to be playing.

Neil Trebble: I always did that. It never felt odd to me because I'd done that from a youngster coming to watch Stevenage. Walking to the ground that was part of my own personal build up as well. Most people that came to watch Stevenage in those times, I knew many of them.



Interviewer: Yes. I was going to say, would they be talking to you as you go in?

Neil Trebble: Yes. Just different conversations. The club has changed in that respect now because I don't think there are any local players. But at that stage there were quite a few. There was probably six or seven of us, which was great when you were winning. But when you lost, you'd take the other end of that, the other side of that coin. But that's just part and parcel of it.

Interviewer: Did you find if you went out in the town when you'd lost then, people coming up and telling you what you'd done wrong?

Neil Trebble: Yes. We just didn't go out when we lost. That was the basic rule. No, we did. It's football, isn't it? There are a million experts that watch football every week, but those that play have a different view. There was never any silliness. You can look at it two ways. Footballers can be very dismissive of supporters. You need to be careful because, at the end of the day, they do pay their money. I'm not saying they pay their money and they should be able to abuse players or anything like that. I think that's totally wrong.

But they do pay their money and they're entitled to their views and you should respect that. Sometimes they see things that maybe you don't see. I always listened to people, I never dismissed them. But at the end of the day, it's my job and how I want to play is how I play.

Interviewer: It must be particularly special though for you to have grown up in Stevenage and then play for the team.

Neil Trebble: Yes. When I first came to watch Stevenage, when I was probably 12 or 13, that was my ambition at that stage, was just purely to play for Stevenage and to do that. To do that in a successful side and be part of big moments of history with the club. For me, that's wonderful and for my family as well. They've benefited from has as well in many respects. Yes, it was one thing I wanted to do, for sure.

Interviewer: Did you actually also play for them at youth level or were you involved in that at all?

Neil Trebble: No. The Stevenage set up, when I was a youngster, was not that great. I think they just hadn't long reformed and they'd been working their way through the leagues. I was at Watford as a schoolboy and then I had to stop because I had knee problems. I think they call it Osgood Schlatters now, but in those days they didn't have a name for it, it was just growing pains. So I stopped playing for quite a few years.

I didn't actually start playing again until I joined the Army, which was when I was 18. Like I say, I came here in '93, so I was 23 when I turned up on the doorstep here.

Interviewer: Right. You also said by the time you were back here in '96 or whatever, you were also managing one of the youth side.

Neil Trebble: Yes. That was one of the reasons I came back was Paul offered me a role working at North Herts College, as one of the coaches on a new football scholarships scheme. It was the first of its kind actually, a football education programme. I was involved in that for about five years. I had a dual role here. It was side, community development as well, plus playing for the club. So I was very ingrained in the whole set up.

The youth side, I really enjoyed. I worked with some good players, brought a few players through to the first team. Again, another enjoyable part of the role here.

Interviewer: Is that something, I'm not sure what you're actually doing now, because you've obviously stopped playing. Are you still in the game at Stevenage?

Neil Trebble: No. The club has changed, and that's good. It's a good thing. It's not a League club, which it should have been years ago, but it is now. I don't, necessarily, lend myself to the way that things are now. I think it's more of a business now than it is a club. That's my personal view. I have no involvement with the club whatsoever. In general terms, football, I had my good years and enjoyed it, but it's quite a narrow business. Foot ball is quite small minded and very short term in every aspect of it.

I moved on and I do completely different things now. Nothing to do with football.

Interviewer: What do you do now then?

Neil Trebble: I do construction training and I build houses abroad. I've just come back from Belize where I built a house.

Interviewer: That's why you're looking so healthy.

Neil Trebble: That's very kind. Yes, just different things. You can spend too much time in football and lose sight of things. I look back and I had a fantastic time here, in football in general. I still come down from time to time and watch Stevenage. I sneak in the stand over there with the Borough madness and I do enjoy watching the games.

Joe: While you're talking about your playing career, were you a regular team starter?

Neil Trebble: Yes and periods of no. I played, I can't remember how many appearances I had for Stevenage, I think about 100. I scored about 40 goals, I think, in that time. Something around that, I can't remember exactly. I'm sure some statistician will tell you the exact numbers. I had good times and not so good times, and that's football in general.

Joe: Was there a particularly good season you had at Stevenage?

Neil Trebble: I think the first season I had, it was my first ever season, I played pretty much every game. Martin Gittens and I were the front runners in that team. Then the '97 season I played a lot of games when we finished third. I played quite a few games at

the back end of the season that we won the Conference. But then, a bit in and out and not so good spells. I was one of those players, it's like Marmite really.

Joe: Was there a special striking partnership that you at the club?

Neil Trebble: Martin and Gary Crawshaw were the two players that I particularly enjoyed playing with, being forwards. They suited my style of play, so we worked well together. Barry Hayles, a really good forward, but often the ball went to him and you never saw it again. Yes, I enjoyed... We had some really good forwards down here.

Joe: What was your style of play? Were you a centre forward?

Neil Trebble: No. I was my most happiest when we played three up front, as we did against Newcastle. I was given a bit of license to play out wide. I like to find space, I didn't like to be on that regimented role. That was my happiest when I was playing in a wider role.

Joe: Would you come down the wing if you had to put in a few balls into the box?

Neil Trebble: Yes. I set up a lot of goals. I was two footed so I could cross with either foot. I could drift on either side, either wing. I enjoyed that. I enjoyed setting up goals.

Joe: Did you happen to be the set piece taker?

Neil Trebble: No. I was rubbish. We had some players, there was one guy, Kenny Webster, and he was our right back. He could hit a ball as hard as I've ever seen anybody hit a ball. So it wasn't easy getting the ball off him at three kicks.

Joe: Was there ever a time you had to take a penalty?

Neil Trebble: No, I don't think I did. No for Stevenage. When I finished my career, I played for Arelsey, which was a local side here. I took every penalty in that season and never missed. But I wasn't a penalty taker here.

Joe: Was there a time that you had long spells out with injury?

Neil Trebble: I was terrible with injury. I had ankles like glass. When I played professionally I had two very bad injuries on either ankle, both broken. So I was prone to ankle injuries. The physio here, a guy called Keith Allinson, he used to be dumbfounded because I could be carried off on a Saturday with an ankle like that, and then by Tuesday it had gone down and I'd be fit to play. It was just one of those, my ligaments are so stretched.

Joe: How did that affect your position in the squad?

Neil Trebble: It's going to be because, if you're injured, you lose your spot and somebody comes in and does well, you've got to wait for your time to get back in. It's just one of those things.

Joe: Were there often periods you'd spend a long time sitting on the bench?

Neil Trebble: Yes, sometimes on the bench. It's frustrating. The worst thing is to get an injury when you're actually in good form, when you've really started to hit a patch and then you getting an injury and it's frustrating. But it's all part and parcel of playing football.

Joe: How would you, technically, hit the ball into goal? Were you good at headers, good at shooting?

Neil Trebble: No, I was rubbish at heading. Good at shooting. That was my...

Joe: Straight power or just placing the ball in the net?

Neil Trebble: I like curling. That was my favourite. I scored and won the goals and mis-sitters. That was my style. I liked the finesse finishes, that kind of...

Joe: Is there a particular goal that stands out?

Neil Trebble: Blimey. I scored a cracking volley against Dover. Stuck it, left foot, on the turn, on the volley and stuck it in the top corner. A few good goals. I scored a header against Woking when we beat them 4 - 0 here on Boxing Day. That was a really good goal because of the build up. There were about five or six players involved in the build up. I just finished it off with a far post header. That was the title winning game, basically.

Yes. Every goal is special. I don't care if I toe poke it in from a yard, it doesn't matter.

Joe: Did you ever sense a difference in play when you played away and at home?

Neil Trebble: Yes. When you're at home, the onus is on you to attack and be on the front foot. You've got to expect, when you go away from home that that team is going to have the same view on the game. What they're going to do is come at you, so you're playing a more counterattacking game. Counterattacking suited us as well because we had some really quick players and a very strong midfield. It enabled us to hit teams quite hard. The title winning season, the team had a magnificent away record.

Joe: Okay. Were there particular players in midfield who you enjoyed playing with as well?

Neil Trebble: Steve Berry and Paul Barrowcliff, they were players in the title side. Simon Stapleton, a good player. Jason Solomon. A lot of good midfield players they've had here down the years. I just



like a midfield player that can spot a pass. If I make a run and the midfield player can see that and put a good ball through to you, that's all I ask. That's all I ask.

Joe: You mentioned earlier that you played under Paul Fairclough. How exactly did he help your career whilst you were at the club?

Neil Trebble: He gave me my break. Simple as that you. Like I said, I turned up, a skinny 23 year old and didn't really look the part, but he took a chance and developed my football. I was very raw. I was a bit like Forrest Gump of football. I could run and run and run, but not necessarily in the right direction. He took real care in developing my skills. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have played professional football. Simple as that.

Joe: Was there anyone else at the club that you would say also helped you to become a better player?

Neil Trebble: Yes. His assistant was Paul Petersen. They were a lovely combination because Paul was very much your best friend, Paul Petersen that is. Paul Fairclough was more of the task master. So they were a good combination. Yes, they helped enormously.

Joe: What factors led to you leaving the club?

Neil Trebble: The first time around it was simply because I turned professional and so I left Stevenage for Scunthorpe. The second time around, it was just that Paul decided to have a clear out one year. It was the year after the Newcastle games. I think about eight players left that year. He offered me a chance to come back a couple years later to play a few games, but I didn't take that. I was doing other things then.

Yes, it was time. Again, that's football life. You can reach the end of the road with clubs and you've got to move on.

Joe: Okay. Just tell me about the Newcastle games. How would you assess your performance in the first game?

Neil Trebble: Bloody good. It was good. I had a big impact on that game, as we all did. I wasn't singled out, it was a team performance. I always found, when I played against players at a higher level, that I was able to perform better because you just had a little bit more time, believe it or not. It was more about the football, again, rather than the physicality. I really enjoyed that first game and played well in the second game as well.

But again, as I say, the whole team did. It wasn't just me.

Interviewer: Were you up against a full back there?

Neil Trebble: I was up against my heroes. Stuart Pearce was playing. There was Steve Howie and Watson. The reason why that time was so special was we were on Sky Sports. That game was live on Sky. We could have feared an absolute mauling. They had the capability of beating us 8 or 9 or 10 - 1. We have a really good

strong session on the night before with a psychologist. It wasn't too deep, it was just like setting out that, actually they're just eleven players, eleven men.

When we looked at their back four, they were actually quite old. So we played three up front, which was unheard of. We really had a go at them. It was me, Grazioli and Crawshaw. We were really close that day, really close. We had some good chances. I was good that day.

Joe: When you went to the return, the cup rematch, how did it feel coming out at St James's Park? Was it the biggest ground you'd ever played at?

Neil Trebble: Yes, it was. I'd played in a few big FA Cup games when I was professional, but that was biggest crowd. Because the whole event had been turned into a David and Goliath, but with Goliath being very much the baddie in all this. From a Newcastle point of view, they wanted to thumps us. They wanted to give us a hiding. The fans were, it was a full house.

I remember taking the kick off and Gary Crawshaw said something to me and I couldn't hear him. He was three yards away. I couldn't hear a word he said. It was like that. But, actually, once you're into the game, all you hear is just the drone. It's not like you can hear individual shouts or anything like that. But, again, we rose to that challenge and they couldn't put us away. They struggled.

Joe: Do you think this affected your performance in the game?

Neil Trebble: In a positive way?

Joe: Either way.

Neil Trebble: Yes, in a positive way. Yes, definitely. If you can't enjoy that... There's no pressure, for us as players, because nobody expects you to win or do well. It's exciting. It was great.

Joe: Am I right in believing this was the game when Alan Shearer scored a bogus goal?

Neil Trebble: Yes. The goal that never was. I think it was Mark Smith that cleared it off the line. Every expert has looked at it and it wasn't in. That rocked us a bit. I think they went 2 - 0 up and then we scored in the 75th minute, so it was 2 - 1. There was real panic in their team. But we didn't quite pull it off. He was the difference. He had just come back from injury as well, for the first game. That was his first game back after about three months out.

He scored after two minutes here and everyone was like, "Oh God, here we go." He was the difference and he scored the three goals in the two games.

Joe: Okay. Just moving on. As a local, how do you think the club integrates itself into the community?

Neil Trebble: I'm really honest, I think it's lost its way a little bit. I think years ago the club was very, very community based. Everybody that was here was local and had some strong involvement with the club. I think it's turned into more of a business at the moment, which you can say is a good or bad thing. The club is in the Football League now and doing well in League One. I think, when you look at the attendances, they can always tell you how well a club is integrated into the community.

I think the attendances are no higher now than what they were when we played. That, for me, would say that, bearing in mind that they're at a much higher level, they've still got a little way to go there. They've put up some fantastic facilities around the town, the place up the road. But, yes, I think there's an attitude here which is not embracing the community in the right way, I don't think.

Joe: Does the club have any particular rivalries?

Neil Trebble: It did, with Woking, was the main rivalry for years. I think they have a St Woking's Day. Unfortunately, Woking has gone one way and Stevenage have gone the other, so those don't really take place. I think Barnet is still a rivalry as such. It should be because it's the closest, but they're in different divisions now. Woking will always be, I think, for most supporters here, would always be a standout rivalry. I don't know why because it's in Surrey. I think it was just because they were the two big guns of non League football at the time.

We used to have cracking games with them. Real cracking matches. St Alban's, when I played the first time around, was a local derby and there was big rivalry. I don't know who they would say is now, to be honest. Do you know?

Joe: I'm surprised they don't have a rivalry with Watford.

Neil Trebble: Yes. I suppose, rivalry has been over the years, about how many times you play each other as well. Stevenage/Woking was every season and twice a season and then in a cup or whatever. To build up a rivalry with Watford would mean Stevenage being in the Championship, wouldn't it? Or Watford being relegated and having a few seasons together. I don't think they've been able to establish a real rivalry, is my view at the moment.

Joe: Okay.

Neil Trebble: Not through anyone's fault.

Joe: It could happen soon.

Neil Trebble: Yes, it could do. It will be interesting. Are you a Watford supporter?

Joe: I'm from Watford.

Neil Trebble: You are from Watford? Okay.

Neil Trebble: I was part of the Watford school boys. That was when Watford was in the old Division One, leading Division One. That team of players, Blissett and Barnes and all that. That was when I was at Watford. It was a fantastic club to be around at that time.

Joe: When you came to Stevenage, I think you said they were in the Diadora Premiership.

Neil Trebble: Yes. The Diadora League.

Joe: How far down the league system is that?

Neil Trebble: Now that would be equivalent to the Conference South. There were always three leagues that sat below the Conference. The Diadora Premier was one of those. It was one off of the Conference at that time. I think two years after I left, they got promoted to the Conference, that first time around.

Joe: How do you find the move from Conference or South Conference football to, I think you say Tranmere?

Neil Trebble: No, Scunthorpe.

Joe: Scunthorpe, sorry.

Neil Trebble: Yes, I turned professional. Just the quality of players, over a period of games, is higher. There's no team that can't beat another team on their day. The non League teams, when they play in the FA Cup, on their day have got just as many good players. There are lots of players that play non League, like Martin Gittens is a prime example. He was earning good money here, and he was working as a BT engineer.

For a lower League football League club, to match what he was earning in his dual thing, they couldn't get anywhere near that. There are a lot of players that play outside of the Football League who are more than good enough to play in the Football League, but they just choose not to for whatever reasons. I was fortunate, I never played for money. I never earned big sums of money from football. I didn't do it for that. Yes, there are a lot of good players outside that could easily play.

Joe: When you move club, how do you find integrating yourself into a team? I imagine, here at Stevenage, it was quite local based. You knew many of the people, the fans and the players.

Neil Trebble: Yes. It's difficult. I moved from here to Scunthorpe and I didn't know anyone. I suppose, again, you just bonded by your love of football. All the players that are playing have got that passion and you just get to know each other. I was fortunate I knew some good people. Graham Alexander, who went on to play for \_\_\_[0:34:53] in Scotland. He used to babysit for my kids. Matt Elliott. A number of players that I played with went on to have good famous careers.

I played with David Boyes at Preston, who is now Everton manager, a good guy. You just get to know people and just be yourself. It's all you can do, isn't it? It's like that in life, isn't it?



Joe: When you came back, was one of the reasons you can back was to be part of this team again? The good old days.

Neil Trebble: Yes. No. To have the opportunity to get involved in the coaching side was a big lure. Paul had told me about all the plans for the club. It had changed a lot in the four years that I'd been away. I missed home. It was nice to come back and be part of something that was the next stage, if you like, of Stevenage's development. It was still a very young team. It had been reformed, I think, in '73 or something, I can't remember.

It was still very young in its history. To be part of it and contribute to that was a big lure.

Interviewer: Are you married? Do you have family?

Neil Trebble: Yes.

Interviewer: Is your wife also from around here?

Neil Trebble: Yes.

Interviewer: So it's really strong roots?

Neil Trebble: Yes. My wife, I have three children with her. They all grew up in the town and went to the school in town. I went to school in the town. It wasn't a difficult decision to come back at all.

Interviewer: I'm wondering if it gave you an extra impetuosity that you're saying, "Yes, let's go back."

Neil Trebble: Yes, it does. I go back to the question about supporters. I didn't want my kids going into school on the Monday having their dad cost them the game. It's always in your mind. It's not in your mind when you're on the pitch, but it does give you that little bit of extra...

Interviewer: Did that happen?

Neil Trebble: No. Not particularly. Most of the supporters here were good to me. You always get a few that, like I say, I was a little bit like Marmite when I played. Some people loved you, some didn't. No, it never got to that stage. But it's just, as a father anyway, you're caring of your kids. But as a father that's maybe a little bit more in the spotlight than others, then you have to be mindful of it.

Interviewer: Sorry I'm jumping in on your questions a bit here.

Joe: No, on you go.

Interviewer: I just wanted to ask you about the relationship with the community a bit more. You were saying you think they might have lost it a bit. I'm just wondering what you think makes that relationship work?

Neil Trebble: It's a good question. I think it's just how you treat people on a personal level, first of all, and then generally. I think it's how you maybe embrace the history of a football club. I don't personally believe the people that are involved at the highest level of this club appreciate the history of this club. I know that, even today, there's not been something that's been put forward by the club itself. It's by Andrew, who has been around for years.

People like him are the people that are the club, in my view. Managers come and go. Chairmen can come and go. I've had personal experience of the senior figures here and I think they've missed opportunities to show their compassion and their commitment to people, because it is a people business isn't it? Football is, from every level, it is people. If you haven't got the people skills then you're going to lose something somewhere.

That's my view, I'm not saying that's how it is. I've got lots of friends in Stevenage, and lots of people that used to come here religiously, don't come anymore. They'll even say, "I just don't like the people that are now. I don't like the way this is been done." It's very much money, money, money. That's the sense I get. It's how much more can we get out of people? That's football in general, isn't it?

Interviewer: It's the same as if I go to Chelsea, it feels just like that.

Neil Trebble: Yes, it does. I wonder how quick football would change if every supporter in the country just agreed not to turn up for one match. And every stand was empty in the country. I think that might be a wakeup call, just to who actually controls football. It is the fans and it should be remembered. But it's forgotten. The thing is, if 70,000 people didn't turn up at Old Trafford, there would be more than another 70,000 that would willingly take their place. That's the way it is.

Interviewer: It's interesting, from what you're saying you can just hear the drone of the crowd. When you're playing away, for example, can you ever work out it's your fans shouting for you? Do you see what I mean? Can you make that distinction?

Neil Trebble: Yes. When you play in front of 5,000 people, it's still a bit of a drone, especially if it's a good stadium that you're playing in. When you play in front of 50,000, you hear nothing but a wall of noise, if you like. When you're playing in front of maybe 1,000 people, you can hear everything. You can hear all the personal shout to you or your own supporters.

It is historic, I think, in all football that away supporters are always more vociferous isn't it, than home support. The people that go away to games are more passionate about their club, I would say. So they tend to do a lot more singing. Whereas, the home supporters are a lot more expectant and they just want to watch the game. Yes, you do hear a lot more and you definitely hear your away fans. You also want to hear them as well. You're on foreign territory, if you like, and you want to hear that they're there and they're with you.

The best wins I ever had were always away from home. I always enjoyed winning away from home because it was like you'd gone into someone's backyard and taken them. I know fans enjoy that as well.

Interviewer: Have you got any more questions?

Joe: Did you ever find when the atmosphere was particularly rocking in the ground, does that help your performance?

Neil Trebble: Yes. It's like a tide. You get whisked up and washed away with it. It does really help. Also, you can generate that as a player, as an individual player, doing something individually brilliant, you can almost provoke that in the crowd. As a team, if you're playing well, that can lift the crowd. Once you get on that roll it is difficult to stop. Everyone plays their part in that. If the team are down, you need the supporters to pick you up, and that doesn't always happen. Some fans, I think, are better at that than others.

Joe: Just going back to the community. How do you think the club reintegrates itself into the community more?

Neil Trebble: How can they?

Joe: Yes.

Neil Trebble: You don't want to know that answer. I think, just change in attitude towards people, is my advice.

Joe: It's simply a case of moving up the League and hoping to attract more fans in?

Neil Trebble: I think there's too much hope, I think there's too much emphasis on that. That's not a guarantee. You've still got to want to come to the club. You've still got to come and feel like you're being treated well and having a good experience. It's value for money. You can't guarantee, every supporter knows that if you pay to get into a football ground, you're not guaranteed entertainment. It's a sport, isn't it? Things can go well or can't.

But you do expect a certain level of service, I would say. If you're not getting that, you're not going to pay, are you? It's as simple as that. I wouldn't. I support Tottenham. I go and watch Tottenham. Of course it's a higher level and Tottenham have got fantastic players, but you still want to have a good experience otherwise you're not going to go. So they need to do more, is my view.

END AUDIO

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