

File: BMG Lee Evans and Greg Kett.mp3

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START AUDIO

Interviewer: Okay. I'm joined by Lee Evans and Greg Kett, and they're going to share their Borough memories with us on the Tottenham Hotspur FA Cup tie that happened some weeks ago.

We'll start with you, Lee. Beat Notts County in the fourth round. Everyone was a little disappointed with the draw. We wanted a big boy and we ended up with a team in our own league. How did you feel when you saw the Tottenham ball come out of the hat and realised we were going to be playing a Premiership team at Broadhall Way?

Lee Evans: Personally, for me, with my dad being a Spurs supporter, it was quite good to get them down here and try and beat them on our patch and bring my dad down here with me. He doesn't come down here very often. I miss going to football with him. So, personally, yes, it was good.

Interviewer: Excellent, and how about for you, Greg?

Greg Kett: Well, I think, for me, it was a decent draw, where obviously we were going to fill this place out and probably could have filled it

out two or three times over in the end. For me, I don't support Tottenham or have any sort of association. So, I was just looking forward to having a good shot at beating a really decent Premier League side.

Obviously, with the stuff going on with Harry Redknapp round the time, that was quite amusing as well. Yes. It was one of those to look forward to, without a doubt. In the end, getting a draw was, without a doubt, the best thing for us.

Interviewer: As you both alluded to there, it really split our fan base, didn't it? There are a lot of Spurs fans in the town, and it was a real test of people's loyalties in the end, but if you're a Stevenage boy, you're a Stevenage boy through and through.

So, in the lead-up to the game, what did you think? As Greg said there, Harry had been in court recently for his not guilty verdict, and then all the rumours about him being the England manager. How did you look forward to it, Lee?

Lee Evans: I didn't think there was going to be a better time that we could play them. Get them with Harry possibly going to England. He'd just come out of court, and I honestly thought that if we were going to beat them, it would be down here. I thought we could sneak a win, but unfortunately we had to go back to their place.

Interviewer: We'll come to the replay in just a moment, but how about for you, Greg? The week leading up to the game, there was lots of banter going around and lots of talk. How did you prepare yourself for it?

Greg Kett: I turned my phone off, with the amount of people asking for tickets.

Lee Evans: (Laughter)

Greg Kett: That was probably the first one.

Lee Evans: Yes.

Greg Kett: No. It was one of those ones. I very much wanted to concentrate on the league. So, it always seemed like it was going to be a bit of a distraction to it, but at the same time, I think it was the first game on everyone's minds. Everyone was looking forward to that game.

So, it was one of those ones where I think there was a lot of excitement around the town. There were a lot of half-and-half scarfs around the town, which was great for the club. Great to see the extra revenue coming in and the extra fans coming in, and obviously the TV appearance as well. So, there was massive excitement over the whole week leading up to the game.

Interviewer: Of course, we'd had the upheaval of changing our manager recently. So, Gary Smith, thrown straight into a cup tie. He got us through the Notts County tie, didn't he? Unfortunately, due to bad weather and lots of postponements, it was probably

only his third or fourth game in charge, wasn't it? It must have been a big thing for him to come in and, in his first month, manage a team against a Premiership side.

Lee Evans: I think it was probably a good game for him to come into, because I don't think the players are going to get up for a better game than that one. The players were buzzing, the fans were buzzing, the whole town was buzzing, and Gary came in and just joined in with it.

Interviewer: That's quite a lovely thing to arrive to, isn't it?

Lee Evans: Well, yes.

Interviewer: Most new managers come in and their team's at the bottom of the league. How about on the day, Greg, for you? How did it work and what did you do, and how did you get into the ground?

Greg Kett: Well, the good thing about these sorts of fixtures is that you're in a no-lose situation. Bookies were saying that we were going to get hammered, and I think a lot of people expected us to go and get beaten. So, anything extra was a bonus.

Obviously, being on TV was a bonus for the club, but the game itself was a bit of a non-event really. There weren't too many chances going through, but I think it was just the fact that we defended really, really well against [an attack 0:04:29], like [Saha and] Defoe. [We all saw], obviously with Defoe, finish

anything a lot of the time. So, it was good to see that.

And there were opportunities where we could have nicked it. I actually walked out of the game at the end thinking, “We could have won that.”

It wasn't a foregone conclusion that it was going to end nil-nil or they were going to nick it themselves. We could have won the game. That was probably the big disappointment for me, which sounds a bit ridiculous, being a Stevenage fan, [saying 0:04:54] to draw at home against Tottenham was a disappointment. But that was the thing; I think we could have won it, and I think Byrom had a good chance. We could have won the game, without a doubt.

Interviewer: I have to say, I thought exactly the same. I went away from here and I went out for dinner with friends afterwards. They were saying, “Oh, great result,” and I was like, “I'm a little bit disappointed we didn't win it.”

Lee Evans: Yes. I totally agree. Yes. My dad, being a Spurs fan... He actually left here and he was kind of gutted for us. It was the best chance we could have had.

Interviewer: They were quite relieved with the replay.

Lee Evans: Yes. I think they were. I don't think we expected to do a lot when we went down to their place.

Interviewer: We'll move onto that now, because it was a great night, wasn't it?

Lee Evans: ____[0:05:35].

Interviewer: Absolutely. For me, it was one of the nights I'll remember forever more, going up to White Hart Lane. Ten seasons ago, we were playing Forest Green and Luton and places like that, and (Laughter) what a night. What do you remember of it, Greg?

Greg Kett: Well, I think the performance we put in on the night. I think we were giving a lot more space than we usually do in League games and we used the ball a lot better than I've seen for quite a while.

I just think the only difference on the night was the fact that they had someone like Jermain Defoe who could put the ball in the back of the net. Unfortunately, we didn't have anyone upfront who could do that.

Obviously, I think the big point for me was three minutes in when we got the penalty. I think the whole end just was shaking when Byrom went down and obviously when he stepped up to take it. So, to be one-nil up, albeit [very shortly 0:06:28], was just incredible. Absolutely incredible.

As I say, the only difference on the night was the fact that they had someone like Jermain Defoe who could finish, and a dodgy penalty. That was the only difference between the two teams on the night.

Interviewer: That was pretty much it, wasn't it? He got two chances in the whole 90 minutes and he finished both of them, but that's why he's an international, I suppose.

What about the support, Lee, that night? You were part of the Borough masses there. What great noise there was right from 10, 15 minutes before kick-off, all the way through, even at the final whistle. Great support.

Lee Evans: We can basically say that we went to White Hart Lane and we outsang the Spurs fans who pride themselves on outsinging most of the Premier League. It was just a fantastic atmosphere from start to finish.

Interviewer: We've spoken about the game and the result. What about at the final whistle? One thing that will live in my memory is the disappointment on Mark Roberts's face. He had his back to us, and up on that great big screen at the other end they were showing his miss that came down off the bar. There was another one where he stretched his leg out and didn't quite reach. The players were absolutely gutted that they'd lost to a Premiership side, and that just shows the spirit in our football club, I think.

Greg Kett: Yes. I think that pretty much showed exactly what the team was about and the team is still about. I think to go away from White Hart Lane that disappointed... I think, again, we had chances that hit the bar, as you mentioned, and Reid had a decent chance.

It was the fact that if we'd just been able to put one or two of those chances away at the right time then we could have been two- or three-nil up on the night. That just would have been dizzy heights. It would have been ridiculous.

It was, I think, yes, Roberts's reaction at the end, and I think he wasn't the only one. I think there were two or three other players who reacted in the same way. They pretty much showed what the team was about.

I think, looking at Stevenage away from home against Tottenham, to react in that way... I think every other team at our level would have probably just been like, "Oh, we've had a good day out," clapped the fans and gone away and counted their money.

Lee Evans: Yes.

Greg Kett: So, that was another good thing, obviously, with the replay, the money it brought into the club. I'm sure it will help with numerous ground improvements and hopefully bring in some more quality players.

Interviewer: Yes. Definitely. Disappointment, to get beaten by Spurs, but we've got a great FA Cup tradition, Lee, haven't we? We've played Newcastle. We competed with them twice. We beat them once. Looking forward to more?

Lee Evans: Well, it's every season now for us, isn't it? The FA Cup... We go into it expecting to do things now. We expect to get a Premier League side at some point, and we're not frightened of anyone. On our day, we can beat anyone.

Interviewer: I think that's right. This group of players... They're not afraid of anything, are they?

Lee Evans: No. They're not. No, and fair play to them. There's a real team spirit down here, and it's nice to see. Long may it carry on.

Interviewer: Absolutely.

END AUDIO

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