

Q & A session with Danny Graham

February 2011

Q. Does you prefer playing lone striker or as part of a duo up front?

A. Don't mind either, I've done both in my career and they're different challenges.

Q. What do you consider to be your strengths as a striker and which areas need further improvement?

A. Everything can be improved, you never stop learning. My hold-up play, work rate and finishing are probably my biggest three assets currently.

Q. Which centre back(s) have you found toughest to play against in the Championship?

A. Wes Morgan is an absolute man-mountain. Ashley Williams, at Swansea, is one the better ones as well. He reads the game and is strong and quick with it.

Q. Technically, as a footballer, what skill do you find the hardest and why? What have you done to improve this particular skill? Who is the best exponent of this skill in the current squad?

A. I haven't got any skills! Rob Kiernan is naturally both-footed. He's right-footed but he can play off either so that's something I'd like to develop.

Q. What are your favourite and least favourite drills to do in training?

A. Love the shooting, of course. Finishing work is always something strikers enjoy. I don't like pre-season, I've got to be honest, especially the bleep test.

Q. What car do you drive?

A. Range Rover, but I get a lift in off Mapps - he's my chauffeur.

Q. If you were offered an extension on your contract before the end of this season would you sign it without giving it a second thought?

A. I only signed a new contract in September so that's a bit unfair!

Q. As a player, what is the first and most important thing that any prospective new owners should do when they take over the club?

A. Sort the pitch out first and foremost, and then sort out the East Stand. It's strange playing on a three-sided ground every other week.

Q. Do you get a sense that Watford is 'different' and a bit more 'special' than other clubs with its work in the community, the academy etc?

A. Yes definitely. We do a lot more than other clubs, but we accept that as players here at Watford that the emphasis is on the club being big in the community.

Q. Does it concern you that the Watford home support can be quite quiet during games?

A. When it's 60 or 70 minutes into a game and it's still tight, we could really do with some volume then. I do notice it's quiet sometimes. Although having said that, it's important we as players play our part and get the fans going right from the start.

Q. How strict is the diet that the club put you on and what is your favourite meal from it?

A. Part and parcel of the game is to have a great diet, that's being professional, simple as that. Chicken fajitas all day, for the favourite meal.

Q. I get the sense that you have a deep affection for the club, more so than perhaps the average player at the average club, is that true?

A. Everyone feels the same, when you pull on a shirt at a football club. You feel that responsibility to do well for everyone - particularly the supporters because you know how much they spend coming to support you. I'm not going to say I've got a deep affection for Watford, but I definitely want the club to do well, no question about that.

Q. Who are your footballing idols?

A. Alan Shearer, I can't believe I'm even being asked that question! The most complete striker the Premier League has ever seen. I was born in Gateshead so I'm not going to give any other answer than that.

Q. Who is the best player you have played against and why?

A. Rio Ferdinand at Manchester United, when I made my Boro debut. He's got everything; the way he reads the game, on the ball, everything. A world-class defender.

Q. How did you become so good at table tennis?

A. Just through sheer practice! We had a table at Boro in the dressing-room areas so I've probably played every day I've been at training at a football club!

Q. Were there any other clubs in for you when you moved to us and if so, why did you ultimately choose Watford?

A. There was, but nothing really serious before Watford came in – and nothing that appealed like this move. A chance to play at a higher level was the biggest factor behind coming here, but I've loved every minute of it.

Q. Was it a wrench to move down South and do you miss the North?

A. I don't miss home. That might sound funny to say that, but I like to be able to concentrate on football without any distractions. All my family is still up there, and they come down and visit. The country's not that big that we can't feel like we're in touch.

Q. Do you ever think about transfer fees paid for you and if so, what are your thoughts?

A. Well I've only had one in my career, and that was when I came to Watford. I don't think about the transfer fee side of it, no.

Q. In your opinion, who are the Watford youngsters to look out for in the next few years and how good are they?

A. There's loads - I don't know how I'm going to narrow this down! Marvin, obviously, because of how's he done this season. Then there's Lee Hodson and Ross Jenkins, who've both played 50-odd games in the Championship. And the lads who've come through this year, like Matt Whichelow, Piero Mingoa and Adam Thompson - who was superb on Saturday for his first League start.

Q. Do you help teach and advise the academy players?

A. I don't coach the Academy sides, but I'm always ready to have a chat on the training ground with the younger lads. We talk all the time, to be honest. It's little bits of advice you give them that make the most difference - stuff they can go away and think about for themselves then apply it in their own way.

Q. Does Malky give you specific duties at set plays etc (ours and the oppositions) and if so, can you tell us what they are? Also, are they the same duties week on week and game on game or does it vary depending on the opposition?

A. Mainly, I have a specific player to mark at set-pieces, which most players are allocated before the game. The other way, it's about finding space and making the most danger we can.

Q. What do you do in your spare time away from football (and table tennis!)?

A. It depends, to be honest. If there's Saturday and then Tuesday you've got to let yourself recover. But if it's Saturday to Saturday, then pictures, shopping. All the stuff everyone does, really.

Q. Who are your closest mates in the Watford squad?

A. Probably not really close mates - I get on well with everyone. It's not that sort of group. All the lads get on really well so you don't feel like you need a close mate, individually.

Q. Do players ever recommend individuals who they played with or against for other teams to the management team if they believe they are good enough for us and would perhaps be available to sign?

A. Not really, no. Unless the gaffer specifically asks about it. I don't think I'd ever go to the manager and recommend an individual.

Q. Can you convince Andrew Taylor to join us in the summer please?!!

A. I'll try my best!

Q. Are you aware of your pending influence on the market for home and garden gnomes?

A. I didn't know about the gnomes! I've got a garden so, who knows, perhaps one day there'll be a spot for another Danny Gra-gnome!

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