

August 1998

A grainy, high-contrast photograph of two wolves. The wolf on the left is in the foreground, its head tilted back and mouth open in a howl. The wolf on the right is slightly behind and to the side, also looking upwards. The background is dark and indistinct.

London Wolves

London Wolves Official Club Magazine



WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS LONDON SUPPORTERS CLUB

Founded 1966

Honorary Life President:	<i>Derek Dougan</i>
Honorary President:	<i>John Richards</i>
Chairman:	<i>Stuart Earl</i>
Honorary Member:	<i>Sir Jack Hayward O.B.E.</i>
Secretary & Sales Officer:	<i>Dave Slape</i>
Treasurer:	<i>Dave Hodges</i>
Travel Secretary:	<i>Peter Woodifield</i>
Entertainments Officer:	<i>Tim Richards</i>
Minutes Secretary:	<i>Michael Jacobs</i>
Magazine Committee:	<i>Stefan Leonard (Editor)</i> <i>John Engleman</i> <i>Geoff Newbound</i>
Committee Members:	<i>Stan Armetti</i> <i>Stefan Leonard</i> <i>Geoff Newbound</i>

From the Chair



Stuart Earl

So, another season is over, a season that was full of highs and lows. A cup semi-final and high expectations, especially at the turn of the year when Wolves were unbeaten at home and sitting in an automatic promotion spot, and then, the last few weeks of the season, when we watched some of the most abysmal football I can remember for a long, long time.

As you saw, we were forced to cancel the "Meet the Players" function and the Dinner Dance due to reaching the semi-final, and subsequent timings did not fall into place for us to have a riverboat trip. As a result, the presentation of our Player of the Year trophy to Keith Curle has been postponed and I'll be contacting John Richards to organise something in the near future. Speaking of our Hon. Life President, congratulations to John and Pam on reaching their Silver Wedding anniversary. I hope they had a wonderful time in Hawaii.

I have been fortunate to have been invited to attend meetings with John Richards at Molineux, along with the Chairman of the five major supporters clubs, and these have involved informal discussions where John is finding out what is coming back from us, and also involving us with what is going on at Wolves, so if you have any questions which you would like me to put to John at the next get together, please let me know.

As you will have noticed, we are still having problems with the production of the magazine. The superb quality that was achieved in all areas of the last edition, was obtained at a higher cost than anticipated and as a result, Stefan has been trying to streamline the information reaching the printers, and this is where the problems lie at the moment. Progress was also hampered by Stef's hospitalisation for two knee operations. It was decided that this issue would be a bumper one wrapping up all the details of last season, and that normal features would resume in the next issue.

Some sad news during April, was that Mrs Slape passed away, and many of you will have spoken to her over the years, as she was Dave's answering service when he was out. I did send a card on behalf of the members, and our thoughts went out to Dave, Roy and their Father.

I would like to thank those of you who sold raffle tickets on behalf of the Club, the results of which are published later in this edition, for despite the 'do' being cancelled, the raffle went ahead, and although ticket sales were down, (a lot of tickets are usually sold at the actual dance), we did manage to just about break even.

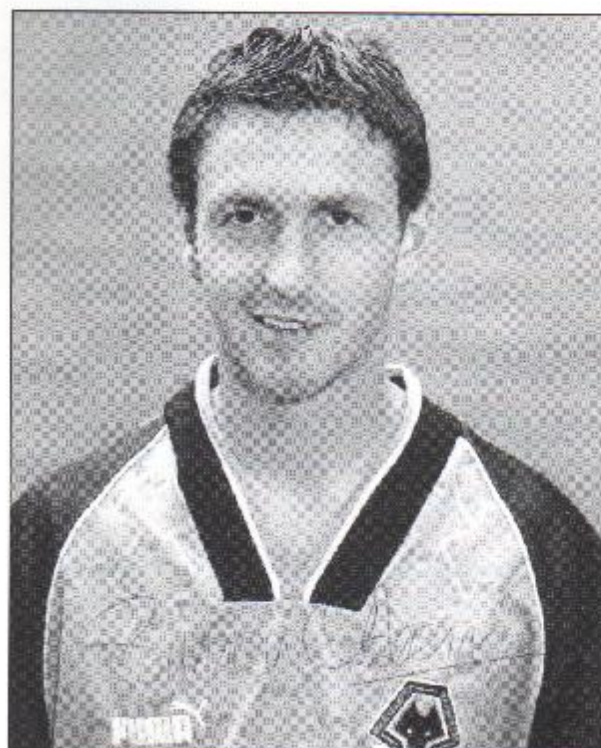
Here's looking forward to the new season. I hope it's a good one!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Earl', written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Stuart Earl, Chairman

Profile on Simon Osborn

Compiled by John Eagleman



Q1 What was your first game as a pro?
A Full debut against Liverpool at Anfield.

Q2 Who had the biggest influence on your career?
A I owe all my football to my Dad.

Q3 What has been your most memorable game as a player?
A The play-off final for Reading at Wembley.

Q4 Have you ever been turned down by other clubs?
A No, I've been lucky with all my clubs.

Q5 Did you as a child ever model yourself on a great player? If so, who was it and why did you choose that player?
A Glen Hoddle. I liked the way he passed the ball, so accurate, he made it easy for the strikers.

Q6 Who do you regard as the finest footballer/s you have seen live and on the box?
A Michael Platini (live) and, of course, Pele (on the box).

Q7 Besides Wolves players, which present-day players do you admire the most and why?

A Alan Shearer. For being a great player and a gentleman.

Q8 Who do you regard as the toughest opponents you have faced?

A Paul Ince and Bryan Robson

Q9 What team did you support as a boy?

A Tottenham Hotspur.

Q10 What do you consider to be the worst and best grounds around excluding Molineux?

A Darlington the worst and Old Trafford the best.

Q11 What do you think of the press in their coverage of Nationwide League?

A Local papers are good but National ones could do better.

Q12 What unusual piece of training have you had to face?

A Passing without a ball.

Q13 Away from football, what other sports do you do or like?

A Golf and fishing.

Q14 If you were given the choice in sport, what would you have liked to achieve as a player (not football)?

To win the British Open Golf Championship.

Q15 Who do you regard as the model sportsman or sportswoman?

A It must be Alan Shearer (See question 7).

Q16 What is your most prized possession in sport and why?

A My League Division 1 winners medal, because it's the only one I have.

Continued on page 10

Wolves Diary

compiled by Peter Woodfield



Jan 21 Wolves renew interest in Celtic full back Tosh McKinlay. They are thought to be interested in signing him on a three month loan, although Mark McGhee says that reports that he is about to sign the player are pure speculation.

Jan 22 A fee of £250,000 is believed to have been agreed for Tosh McKinlay, although the player has still to travel down to Wolverhampton.

Jan 23 Wolves refuse permission for Sky TV to switch the match at Ipswich to Monday 23rd March, because of possible international call-ups.

Jan 24 CHARLTON ATHLETIC (Away) F.A. Cup 4th round 1-1 (Richards) A good defensive performance by Wolves as they deservedly end Charlton's eight match winning home run to earn a replay at Molineux.

Jan 25 In the draw for the F.A.Cup 5th round, Wolves will visit Wimbledon if they beat Charlton in their 4th round replay.

Jan 26 Tosh McKinlay rejects move to Wolves and has instead joined Stoke on loan.

Jan 27 BURY (Away) 3-1 (Keane, Simpson 2) Robbie Keane celebrates his call-up for Republic of Ireland B team with a fine goal. Two second half goals by Paul Simpson sink Bury and put

Wolves back on course for promotion. Wolves set to offer Dean Richards a 4-year contract.

Jan 29 Liverpool and Arsenal are reportedly both ready to bid £4 million for Dean Richards. Richard Leadbeater's loan to Hereford is extended by a month.

Jan 31 W.B.A.(Home) 0-1. Despite late pressure Wolves are disappointing against a disciplined Albion, who end Wolves' long unbeaten home run. Prior to the match, Wolves and Goodyear sign a new sponsorship deal, lasting until 2002, with Wolves receiving £1 million per year.

Feb 3 CHARLTON ATHLETIC (Home) F.A.Cup 4th round replay 3-0 (Curle pen., Naylor, Paatelainen). After some early Charlton pressure, Wolves comfortably progress into the 5th round and an away tie at Wimbledon.

Feb 6 Charlton player Matt Holmes, who broke his leg in the F.A.Cup replay after a tackle by Kevin Muscat, is seeking legal advice. Wolves' home match with Birmingham will now kick off at 1 p.m. on police advice.

Feb 7 SUNDERLAND (Home) 0-1. Sunderland grab last minute winner after Wolves miss a number of good chances. Wolves will back Kevin Muscat in any legal action against him.

claim against Wolves.

Hans Segers denies Leeds with a spectacular last minute penalty save.

Feb 28 BIRMINGHAM CITY (Home) 1-3 (Freedman) A tremendous early goal by Dougie Freedman fails to lift Wolves in another nightmare local derby. Wolves guilty of missing a number of good opportunities and poor defending, which puts serious question marks against them reaching the play-offs. Wolves's allocation of 5200 tickets for the Leeds cup-tie is sold in just over 2 hours. Richard Leadbeater's loan to Hereford is extended to a third month.

Mar 8 In the F.A. Cup semi-final draw Wolves are drawn against Arsenal or West Ham.

Mar 9 Wolves semi-final tie against Arsenal or West Ham will be played at Villa Park with a 12 noon kick off. Wolves have been allocated 18,000 tickets. Adrian Williams selected in the Welsh squad to play Jamaica at Ninian Park on 25th March.

Mar 2 Carl Robinson included in the Welsh B squad to play Scotland B.

Mar 10 Mark McGhee denies that he is about to sign Spurs full back Justin Edinburgh after transfer speculation in the London press.

Mar 3 Dariusz Kubicki joins Tranmere on loan for the rest of the season with Wolves having a recall option in the first month.

Mar 11 Robbie Keane selected in the Republic of Ireland squad for the friendly v Czech Republic in Olomouc on 25th March. Glen Crowe is in the Under 21 squad playing the previous night. The away match at Q.P.R. has been brought forward to 1st April because of Wolves' F.A. Cup involvement.

Mar 4 STOKE CITY (Home) 1-1 (Freedman). Wolves, looking ill at ease and jaded, are booed off the field after conceding an injury-time equaliser. Hans Segers makes his Wolves debut after Mike Stowell pulls out of the team through illness. The Leeds cup-tie is confirmed as a sell-out, possibly topping 40,000.

Mar 12 More transfer speculation about a possible swap deal involving Don Goodman and Bolton's Jamie Pollock.

Mar 6 Wolves recall Jason Roberts from his loan spell at Torquay as Mixu Paatelainen is suspended for the next two games and Don Goodman is still doubtful for the Leeds cup-tie.

Mar 13 Mark McGhee again dismisses any transfer rumours as entirely without foundation, blaming player's agents for the speculation.

Mar 7 LEEDS UTD (Away) F.A.Cup 6th round 1-0 (Goodman). A magnificent team performance earns Wolves a place in the F.A. Cup semi-finals for the first time in 17 years.

Mar 14 CREWE ALEXANDRA (Home) 1-0 (Keane). Hans Segers is Wolves' hero again with another dramatic penalty save. Wolves, in control for much of the game, cling on for a narrow victory after failing to create the openings to make the game comfortable.

Robbie Dennison's testimonial is likely to be against Blackburn in July.

Mar 17 Kevin Muscat is fined £500 and banned for two games by the F.A., for reaching 11 cautions, after a disciplinary hearing at Lancaster Gate. He will, however, be available for the F.A. Cup semi-final. Wolves' semi-final opponents will be Arsenal who beat West Ham after a penalty shoot-out.

Mar 18 SWINDON TOWN (Away) 0-0. Wolves' play-off hopes take another knock with two more precious points dropped, although they are twice denied clear penalties for fouls on Steve Bull. Mark McGhee is looking to sign three new players before the transfer deadline. Dougie Freedman is in the Scotland B squad to play Wales.

Mar 20 Sir Jack Hayward is recovering in a Los Angeles hospital after a triple heart-bypass operation. Wolves sign Rangers full back Stephen Wright on loan until the end of the season.

Mar 21 IPSWICH TOWN (Away) 0-3. A brilliant 2nd half onslaught by in-form Ipswich sees Wolves well beaten, and their hopes of reaching the play-offs are vanishing fast. Simon Osborn is sent-off for two bookable offences and will miss the F.A.Cup semi-final v Arsenal. Stephen Wright makes debut.

Mar 22 Sir Jack is out of hospital and hopes to be at the Villa Park semi-final.

Mar 23 More transfer speculation as Mark McGhee

is linked with moves for ex-Watford striker David Connolly now playing for Feyenoord, Robbie Slater (Southampton) and Steve Claridge (Leicester). Colin Lee emerges as the front runner for the Reading manager's job. Dominic Foley's loan move to Watford extended until the end of the season.

Mar 24 Glen Crowe plays in Republic of Ireland's U21 match v Czech Republic.

Mar 25 Wolves have sold all tickets for the F.A. Cup semi-final v Arsenal at Villa Park. Wolves sign Robbie Slater for £50,000 and also resign Neil Emblen for an undisclosed fee from Crystal Palace. Robbie Keane appears as a second half substitute for Republic of Ireland v Czech Republic. Adrian Williams plays for Wales in the 0-0 draw v Jamaica. Jason Roberts joins Bristol City on loan until the end of the season.

Mar 26 Steve Claridge joins Wolves for £400,000 in transfer deadline-day move. Wolves also register the signing of David Connolly moments before the deadline of 5p.m. He still has to resolve things with Feyenoord, but Wolves are hoping to tie the signing up in time for him to make his debut v Portsmouth on Sunday. Mark McGhee is confident this will happen. Wolves are likely to have five players making home debuts in Sunday's televised match.

Mar 27 David Connolly has failed to get clearance from Feyenoord in time to make his debut v Portsmouth.

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- Mar 29 **PORTSMOUTH** (Home) 2-0 (Goodman, Osborn). Wolves struggle to overcome a poor Pompey side, to keep alive their slim chances of making the play-offs. Slater, Emblen and Claridge make debuts.
- Mar 30 Wolves hope to complete the David Connolly deal in time for him to play against Q.P.R. on Wednesday.
- Mar 31 Mixu Paatelainen turns down move to Hibernian.
- Apr 1 Q.P.R. (Away) 0-0. A scrappy match with Wolves seeming to have their minds on Saturday's semi-final. Feyenoord have blocked David Connolly's loan move.
- Apr 5 **ARSENAL** (Villa Park) F.A.Cup Semi-Final 0-1. Arsenal's extra class tells as Wolves' Wembley dream is ended for another year, despite a fighting second half performance.
- Apr 6 Robbie Keane selected in the PFA Division One side.
- Apr 7 **CHARLTON ATHLETIC** (Away) 0-1. Wolves need a miracle to make the play-offs after another disappointing defeat.
- Apr 11 **MANCHESTER CITY** (Home) 2-2 (own goal, Simpson). Ten-man Wolves battle back for a point after Steve Sedgley is sent off for the second time this season. Jason Roberts' loan move to Bristol City is cut short as he is called up by Grenada to play in the Shell Caribbean Cup this month.
- Apr 13 **NOTTINGHAM FOREST** (Away) 0-3. Wolves chances of qualifying for the play-offs are all but ended as Forest take a step closer to automatic promotion.
- Apr 14 Mark McGhee hopes to complete the on-of transfer of David Connolly from Feyenoord in the summer.
- Apr 17 Youth player Ryan Green called into Welsh U21 squad.
- Apr 18 **READING** (Home) 3-1 (Muscat, Goodman 2). Don Goodman, told he will be leaving Wolves on a free transfer in the summer, rescues Wolves with two late goals against bottom club Reading, to give Mark McGhee his first win over his former club.
- Apr 20 Sir Jack Hayward reassures fans that he has no intention of quitting the club. Wolves Youth team beat Notts County 2-0 in the Midland Youth Cup Final to complete a league and cup double.
- Apr 22 Robbie Keane impresses on his full debut for the Republic of Ireland in their defeat by Argentina in Dublin.
- Apr 25 **STOCKPORT COUNTY** (Home) 3-4 (Keane 2, Atkins). In a bizarre match Wolves take the lead three times, miss a penalty and then concede two goals in the last seven minutes. David Connolly says he is ready to take a pay cut in order to join Wolves.
- Apr 29 **MIDDLESBROUGH** (Away) 1-1 (Atkins). A fine performance by Wolves with outstanding displays by Mike Stowell on his return to the side, and Robbie Keane.
- May 3 **TRANMERE ROVERS** (Away) 1-2 (Goodman).

A disappointing end to the season with both goals conceded at set-pieces. Final league position is 9th.

May 5 Wolves give free transfers to Tony Daley, Dariusz Kubicki, Chris Westwood and Richard Leadbeater. Decisions have been deferred on Hans Segers and Don Goodman who are both out of contract. Mark McGhee says he is also prepared to listen to offers for a number of other players.

May 6 Robbie Keane selected in Republic of Ireland squad for friendly international v Mexico in Dublin on May 23rd.

May 8 Wolves will play Barcelona in a pre-season friendly at Molineux on Saturday 1st August. Steve Claridge linked with a move to Portsmouth and Japanese club Hiroshima

are interested in signing Don Goodman.

May 11 Jonathan Hayward resigns his post as deputy Chairman.

May 15 Robbie Dennison's testimonial match v Blackburn will be played at Molineux on July 27th. Wolves have also arranged a friendly at Northampton on July 29th.

May 18 17-year old Ryan Green is in line to be the youngest ever Welsh International cap after being selected in the 18-man squad to play against Malta and Tunisia in June. Mark McGhee confirms he is prepared to listen to offers for Steve Claridge two months after signing him for £350,000. Bristol City reportedly interested in signing Don Goodman and Mixu Paatelainen.

Committee Profile



Stan Arnett

Stan is a long-standing member of the Committee, having joined the Club in 1973. Born in rural Staffordshire some 44 years ago, he now lives in NW London from where he travels to ALL of Wolves' 1st team competitive fixtures. Amazingly, he has not missed one since December

1979, some 950+ games! Being a total football nut, he has an extensive collection of over 4,000 programmes of different Wolves games from the early 1900's to the present day. He also enjoys watching non-league football and travelling to overseas matches. Away from football, Stan enjoys watching cricket (following Kent CCC) and a spot of folk music.

Back on the football front, Stan's first memory of seeing Wolves play was in the 1960 Cup Final on TV, whilst his first live match was against Aston Villa in the early 60's. So, if you want to know who played where and when for Wolves, Stan's your man.

Match Reports

By John Engleman

Wolves v Norwich City
10th January 1998

Scot gives Walker a giant headache



Dougie Freedman scores his first hat-trick for Wolves since his transfer from Crystal Palace, to set up an easy victory that keeps the Molineux men in the play-off zone.

Freedman, who had earlier seen a long-range effort blocked, set off on his own on a run into the area just before Wolves went in front in the 22nd minute.

Fuglested was penalised for a foul on KEANE, who then escaped his marker to glance in a delightful header from Osborn's free-kick 25 yards out. Gunn hardly moved a muscle as the ball looped into the far corner of his net.

Two minutes later and Wolves were two up. Norwich's defence was opened up like a can, as Ferguson bore down on them. The ball was switched sideways to Atkins and then to GOODMAN who saw a weak first effort blocked by Gunn before heading the rebound into an empty net.

Wolves were so much in command that Norwich didn't know what time of day it was, as the home side never really let the Canaries settle

into any sort of pattern. Then midfielder Carey was injured and he took no further part in the game.

Wolves punished the uneasy Norwich defence before the half-time whistle. First FREEDMAN performed heroics as he chested down a pass from his own half, brilliantly wrong-footed Scott and then produced a stunning 25-yarder with the outside of his right foot which beat a slow-moving Gunn low to his right.

Within seconds, it was 4-0 as Goodman escaped into yards of space on the right. His centre might have been turned in by Keane if it had been a touch lower, but FREEDMAN followed up at the far post to head into an empty net.

Half-time: Wolves 4 Norwich 0

Mike Walker was so incensed with his players, that he cut short their half-time interval by some 4 minutes, as punishment for a dismal showing. He later said he felt they were lucky not to be further behind. For part of the half, the players responded as Grant put substitute Llewellyn through with a sight of goal and forced Stowell

to race to the edge of his area and kick into touch.

Dean Richards, who had not been as impressive as in his two previous appearances, then suffered one of his occasional lapses of concentration when he left a backpass short of Stowell. Llewellyn was again lurking but Richards produced a good turn of speed and recovery to prevent the youngster getting in a shot with only Stowell to beat.

Norwich actually had most of the play and another opening came their way after Sutch had stolen a yard on Froggatt inside the area. The centre was half cleared to the edge of the area to Bellamy, who sliced well off target.

Simon Osborn was in the wars when he landed heavily in the centre-circle and was replaced by Carl Robinson. As Norwich pushed forward trying anything to get on the score-sheet, Wolves hit them on the counter-attack, not a goal but close. A delightful touch by Goodman forced Gunn to race off his line and pounce on the ball at the feet of the in-rushing Freedman.

Tony Daley was introduced to the play as he took the place of Don Goodman, in a double

substitution, that saw Keane replaced by Mixu Paatelainen in the 72nd minute. Daley, lining up wide on the right drew a predictable show of support from a happy crowd when he got his first touch.

Wolves' fifth goal duly came after Daley had won a corner on the right with a fine pullback which was headed behind by a defender. Ferguson's inswinging kick brought a flap by Gunn, who was grounded as the ball went beyond the far post. FREEDMAN controlled and took careful aim from a narrow angle, his rising rightfoot drive ripping through a cluster of defenders and into the net.

Although Wolves at times struggled in the second half, the end result was never in doubt and set themselves up for the delayed F.A. Cup third round tie at Darlington on Wednesday.

Full-time: Wolves 5 Norwich 0

Wolves' man of the match:
Dougie Freedman. 8 goals since his move, not a bad return on his fee.

Att: 23,703

WOLVES TEAM: STOWELL, MUSCAT, FROGGATT, ATKINS, RICHARDS, CURLE, GOODMAN (DALEY), FERGUSON, KEANE (PAATELAINEN), FREEDMAN, OSBORN (ROBINSON).

Simon Osborn Profile from page 2

Q17 If you were not a footballer, what other career would you have chosen?

A Car salesman/golfer.

Q18 Away from sport, how do you relax. Hobbies, pastimes, etc.?

A Reading, driving and looking after my son.

Q19 After your playing days are over, what would you like to do?

A Go into business of some kind.

Q20 Finally, where do you see Wolves in the coming years?

A Everything here is set up for Premiership and that's where the Club will be very soon.

Thank you, Simon, for taking the time out to answer these questions on behalf of the London Wolves.

Darlington v Wolves (F.A. Cup 3rd round)
14th January 1998



Wolves flattered by F.A. Cup scoreline

Is there anything like a lucky four - nil away win? The answer is YES! Wolves took their chances, Darlington didn't and at the end of the day, its goals that count.

How is it that lowly based teams play so much good football in the cup competitions, but struggle in the bread and butter of the league? If Darlington had taken their chances, it would have been them in the next round, not Wolves.

To quote the Express and Star: If Mark McGhee's side had hung on to win 1-0, they would have been more than a touch thankful. Had they triumphed by two goals, they would have been flattered. But by finishing with four without reply, including two in injury time, they made a complete mockery of everything that had gone before.

This was an accident waiting to happen and, if Darlington had accepted any of the four gilt-edged chances that came their way while the teams were level, or only one goal apart, the emergency crews would have been on full alert.

Wolves didn't underestimate their opponents, but they couldn't have expected to run into such quality and intensity down at the Football League basement. The smooth running Wolves outfit of late couldn't even get out of the starting blocks as the Third Division side could only think of being giant-killers as they did everything but score. And, as in most of these cup-ties, the team doing all the attacking often fall

behind against the run of play. This was no different. After 19 minutes, Naylor was caught in possession by Robinson, who set up FREEDMAN to score with a cracking 22 yard right-footer.

This goal only spurred Darlington on as they dominated most of the play. Mike Stowell, who had earlier saved well from skipper Andy Crosby and Mario Dorner, and seen Michael Oliver's low drive thud back into play off his post, again spread himself superbly to block a free close-range shot from Naylor.

Half-time: Darlington 0 Wolves 1

Stowell must have thought his time was up in the 56th minute when former Wolves striker Darren Roberts released the outstanding Steven Gaughan on the right and latched on to the midfielder's pull back, only to balloon over the bar when given yards of space near the penalty spot.

There were other escapes too. In an opening flurry of four successive Darlington corners, Keith Curle cleared off the line from Dorner. And the skipper survived loud appeals for a penalty when he seemed to handle Robert's cross in the final 20 minutes. They needed something as Wolves had scored a second in the 65th minute. Darlington's keeper amazingly mis-handled Crosby's headed back-pass, and PAATELAINEN touched home. It was the Finn's first goal since he came on as substitute in

the Coca-Cola tie at Q.P.R. as long ago as August.

Wolves' third and fourth goals came in the last minute. First FERGUSON slid home a low rightfoot shot after a defence splitting one-two with Freedman. The fourth came from PAATELAINEN with a looping far-post header to Muscat's centre from the byeline on the right.

So Wolves travel to the Valley in the fourth

round, and, if they have luck like they did at Feethams, it will be a HAPPY VALLEY!

Full-time: Darlington 0 Wolves 4

Wolves' Men of the Match: The Darlington forwards who missed so many chances.

Att: 5,018

WOLVES TEAM: STOWELL, MUSCAT, FROGGATT, ATKINS, RICHARDS, CURLE, GOODMAN (PAATELAINEN), FERGUSON, ROBINSON (DALEY), FREEDMAN, SEDGLEY. **Subs not used:** KEANE, SEGERS, NAYLOR.



SEMI FINAL ACTION: Steve froggatt and ray parlour tussle for the ball in the heat of the action.

Sheffield United v Wolves
17th January 1998



Dubious goal sinks Wolves

Wolves' defence was breached for the first time in just over a month, when a dubious goal was allowed to stand, and it cost Wolves a share of the points against a United side who, at times, struggled to breakdown the Wanderers' defence. The last side to beat Mike Stowell was Nottingham Forest in the dying minutes on December 14 at Molineux.

Robbie Keane was recalled to the strike force, which was also boosted when Don Goodman passed a late fitness test. And it was Keane who set the tone for a bright start as he twice outwitted Nilsen to win a right-wing corner, which was worked short for Ferguson to send over a cross which was cleared with difficulty.

As United hit back, the danger was looming, first when Marker drove powerfully over from long range after a good headed clearance by Steve Froggatt, and then when Katchouro went down in the area under a challenge by Muscat following the Australian's own sloppy work. Sheffield appealed for a penalty, but all they got from the ref was a booking for Katchouro for diving.

United had their second booking moments later, when Marker was shown the yellow card for his foul on Ferguson. And it was Ferguson who got in a shot from 25 yards, but the effort was well saved by Kelly, diving to his left.

Wolves were coming into the game more, but

they wasted what chances the United rear guard gave them, in particular Freedman who wasted a good opportunity from outside the area.

Wolves fell behind in the 38th minute, when a routine ball into the area was collected by MARCELO and the Brazilian held off a challenge by Richards to bobble a left-foot shot past the advancing Stowell and into the net. Richards should have done better, but Stowell made a heated protest to the linesman that Marcelo had handled before scoring.

After an impressive run in recent matches, Wolves were poor value in the first half.

Half-time: Sheffield 1 Wolves 0

Tony Daley came on in the second half, replacing Freedman who was limping towards the end of the first half. Sheffield resumed the more powerfull side, and a deep cross by Nilsen narrowly eluded Marcelo coming in at the far post. Then Marcelo found Stuart with a neat ball down the right and his cross was comfortably held by Stowell taking several strides backwards.

Wolves tried to inject more life into an uninspiring performance by sending on Robinson for Atkins. Robinson announced his arrival by shooting firmly wide, following a half-cleared corner by Ferguson, but a much better opening came Wolves' way shortly afterwards.

Froggatt, in keeping with his excellent form of late, sped down the right and curled over a dangerous centre which was volleyed over the bar by Daley only ten yards out.

Wolves were lucky not to fall further behind when Curle made an uncharacteristic error to let in Marcelo for a free shot, which Stowell bravely spread himself in the way of the shot. The ball ran clear to Katchouro, whose goal-bound effort was charged down by the quick covering of two defenders.

Wolves created and squandered their best chance so far in the 72nd minute. Goodman was played clean through by a ball from Robinson but steered wide of the far post with

his right foot as Kelly narrowed the angle.

So, Wolves lost for the first time since their mid-week defeat at Fratton Park on 9th December. How significant this defeat will become in May remains to be seen.

Full-time: Sheffield Utd 1 Wolves 0

Wolves' man of the match:
Steve Froggatt, so prone to injury
but gives his all.

Att:22,144

WOLVES TEAM: STOWELL, MUSCAT, FROGGATT, ATKINS, (ROBINSON), RICHARDS, CURLE, GOODMAN, FERGUSON, KEANE (PAATELAINEN), FREEDMAN (DALEY), SEDGLEY.



Heads I win: Don Goodman jumps high to score the opener in the home match against Portsmouth which Wolves won 2-0

