

No. 50 Samuel Smith

Sam Smith was a product of Hednesford Town's reserve team, gaining first-team status and making his debut in October 1923.

His opportunity came with the departure of five first-team players earlier that year: both full-backs, Bowen and Shaw; centre-half Talbot; right-half Clansey and right-winger Harrington, all to senior Midland clubs, Aston Villa, Wolverhampton Wanderers and West Bromwich Albion.

Sam was born in Tunstall in 1903, relocating to the Hednesford area in 1909 to spend his early years, along with six siblings, in Chapel Street, Hazel Slade. Always a keen footballer, he joined Hednesford Town's set-up in 1922 and although a left full-back, Sam was prepared to play in any position he was asked, including left-half and, on occasions, centre-forward.

Seven years after first signing for the Pitmen, the team captain was given a crack at League Football when Tottenham Hotspur acquired his services at the end of the 1930-31 season. Tottenham released Sam after just one season, without giving him a chance in their Second Division side, which finished in third place behind Albion and champions Everton.

Although not considered good enough for a top League Football side, Sam was more than good enough for Hednesford. On his return, he continued to clock-up the games and man-of-the-match performances.

28 April 1936 was a red-letter day for Sam when he received a Birmingham Senior Cup winner's medal following a 2-1 win at Burton Town (a Midland League side) with goals from Fereday and Terry after being one down. The team: Webster, Smith and Groves; Ike Galley, Blunt and Powell; Addis, Terry, Jackson, Fereday and Thacker. A month later, centre-forward, Jackson, would also receive a junior international cap, alongside former Hednesford man Jack Martin, as England beat Wales, in Dublin, 3-0.

Money problems almost caused Hednesford's extinction in 1938, but the club survived, and Sam was able to complete a record-breaking 528 games for the club before the outbreak of WWII finally halted his playing career.

By the 1950-51 season, Sam was trainer to manager Jack Martin's Birmingham Combination winning team: Peter Cooper, Lew Ross and Charlie Humphries; Dickie Brazier, Dickie Dew and Wilf Insley; Alan Nicholls, Denis Roberts, Harold Peace, Wilf Walsh and Phil Giles.

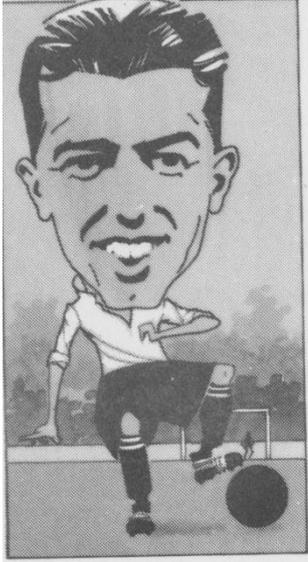
From the Dave Shaw archive.



Sam is standing to the left of our goalkeeper in 1924.



Sam is standing to the right of our goalkeeper in this 1929 photo.



From a set of 24 by Dave Shaw