

No.71 Phillip Richard Giles

Phil was born in Walsall, 8 October 1929, signing for Walsall, 1 May 1948, to make only seven first-team appearances during the 1948-49 and 1949-50 seasons. However, He did gain two England Youth International caps whilst at Walsall.

Unable to obtain a regular first-team place in their Third Division squad, Phil joined Hednesford in the summer of 1950, as manager Jack Martin, and his scout Ron Brindley, gathered a team which would ultimately take the Birmingham Combination Championship.

True to the attacking style of 1950s football, Hednesford used a bustling, hard-working centre-forward and two fast, raiding wingers. The tricky, diminutive Alan Nicholls occupied the right birth and Phil, with his astonishing speed and powerful shooting on the angle, ran the left flank.

He made his debut, 19 August, in a 3-1 defeat away at eventual runners-up Nuneaton. The setback was only temporary, with a 4-0 reverse in the return fixture, 9 November. Together with other victories of 8-0 and 8-2, and a 6-1 hammering of Albion reserves, by Christmas the opening game at Nuneaton was the only blemish on our record in the first twenty games as the team went on to claim the title in the last game of the season, 7 May 1951, before a 6,180 gate.

Phil stayed just that one season, playing 39 games, as the Saddlers, realising the error of their ways, moved him back to Fellows Park where Phil immediately won a regular first-team place and went on to score 15 League and cup goals in 59 games during the 1951-52 and 1952-53 campaigns.

Phil later returned to non-league football with Burton, Wellington and Evesham before hanging up his boots, following injury, at the relatively early age of 29. He continued to play cricket in the Walsall area and died in 1999.



The 1950-51 Championship winning team: *Back row:* Les Williams (Chairman), Lew Ross, Denis Roberts, Reg Penlington (Secretary), Charlie Humphries, Peter Cooper, Jack Martin (Manager), Dickie Brazier, Wilf Insley and Sam Smith (Trainer). *Front row:* Bill Corbett (Assistant trainer), Alan Nicholls, Wilf Walsh, Dickie Dew, Harold Peace and Phil Giles.