

## No.82 Stephen James Biggins

Few players have had more immediate success than Steve Biggins who, after just two reserve games netted a hat-trick on his Hednesford debut, 17 April 1976, leading us to a 4-1 victory at Hinckley.

Steve, born in Lichfield 20 June 1954, attended the Shire Oak School in Brownhills and, setting his sights on a career in teaching, continued his education in Sunderland.

The young striker had ended the 1976-77 season in super form with four goals in the final three games during the space of a week, kicked-off the 1977-78 campaign in even more prolific form with a hat-trick against Gornal. A 4-1 FACup victory over Telford, with Steve banging-in all four goals, warmed our hearts as winter approached, bringing also the interest of Football League scouts.

Surprisingly, Shrewsbury won the chase who, on the recommendation of former international Arthur Rowley, signed Steve 1 December 1977, with £6,000 taking him to Gay Meadow and putting his teaching career on hold. Hednesford Town went on to win the Premier League of the West Midland League at the end of that season. Steve meanwhile, began his Christmas move by netting for Shrewsbury reserves on New Year's Eve and again on his Football League debut two days later, ending the season with seven goals in nine games.

Continuing his habit of debut goals, Steve got another in his first FACup-tie at Mansfield in November 1978 and played a key role in his club's progress to within a whisker of the semi-final when the 'Shrews' went down 3-1 in a sixth round replay at home to Wolves. He scored 12 goals that campaign, including two against Aldershot in the round before the Wolves' game, to help Shrewsbury win the 1978-79 Third Division Championship.

Within weeks of the start of 1979-80, Steve snatched his first League Football hat-trick against Wrexham and following 47 goals in 163 outings in all competitions, Steve was sold to Third Division Oxford United, 1 July 1982 for £8,000 where, a season later, he again won promotion to Division Two, leading United's goal scoring chart with 24 strikes.

Steve would not reap the benefits however as Derby County swooped to take him to the Baseball ground, 1 October 1984. However, unable to hold down a place in their first-team, Derby sent him out on loan to Wolves, from 1 March 1985 where he played four games and to Port Vale a year later, where he was given only one game.

Steve had a short spell with Trelleborg in Sweden before returning to England to join Exeter City, 1 October 1986, playing out his career at Telford and Worcester. His teaching career flourished and he also became coach of Shrewsbury Schools' football team.



From the Dave Shaw archive.



Steve and his Shrewsbury team-mates in 1978.



From a set of 24 by Dave Shaw.