



THE Gillingham team to play at Walsall tomorrow will be selected from these 14 players, who comprise the Gills' first team squad: Left to right, standing: Tony Weston, Charlie Crickmore, Ralph Miller, John Simpson, Derek Bellotti, Ray Bailey, Gordon Riddick (captain), John Arnott. Seated, left to right: Billy Brown, Brian Gibbs, Brian Yeo, Dennis Hunt, John Meredith, Mel Machin.

Gillingham F.C. 1967-68



THE first of many? Centre-forward Brian Yeo raises his arms in delight as he nets Gillingham's first goal of the season from a Charlie Crickmore corner in the 21st minute. Making a desperate effort to stop the ball is Northampton right-back John Mackin.

LATE BROWN GOAL MAKES IT SAFE

Gillingham 2 Northampton 0: by DOUGLAS HIRD

GILLINGHAM, a goal ahead by Brian Yeo after 21 minutes had to wait until almost the last kick of the game before Bill Brown made certain of victory against a Northampton side which always threatened to break through and get on top.

Northampton flourished more in the early stages and Frank Large hit but scored from close-range after Barry Lines had turned Gillingham's right flank. But for a while neither side could get the better of keen defences.

Gibbs and then Brown both finished ineffectively for Gillingham. A better effort for the Kent club was a Crickmore raid which saw Yeo just wide with his header.

FLATTERED

Gillingham were rather flattered to take the lead in the 21st minute Yeo shooting through at the second attempt from a Crickmore corner.

Northampton countered immediately and keeper Simpson, so often the club's mainstay, made a marvellous close-range save from Best who seemed certain to equalise.

Near half-time Gillingham stepped up the pressure. Brown broke through and forced keeper Harvey to go full length. Another swift Gillingham break-away ended in a Gibbs shot

that Walker kicked off the line with Harvey beaten.

Both attacks were well supported by their half-backs and Kurila went up to have a go himself to bring another save from Simpson.

The Gillingham keeper was there again to keep out a dangerous shot from Hall at full length.

The insistent Gibbs was only a shade too high for Gillingham when bravely going for a Meredith cross.

Further Northampton attempts to save the game were doggedly resisted by an admirably marshalled defence with plenty to show in cover and tackle.

Harvey made the save of the match to foil a brilliant Yeo effort and from the resultant corner the ball was scrambled away with Harvey beaten.

Harvey did well again to keep out a powerful drive from Weston, Gillingham's right back.

Then, in the last half minute Brown made sure of a Gillingham victory with a cleverly headed goal.

Round 1

FOOTBALL LEAGUE CUP

Gills through to the second round

no.1 H.T: 1-0 attend: 7,895

Orient 1, Gillingham 3

MY goodness what a thriller! Ninety minutes of soccer-on-tenterhooks with Gillingham dealing the knock-out blow in a storming second-half when they gave poor Orient a real roasting.

Gillingham took the lead after nine minutes, lost it to a penalty and then scored twice in a scintillating last 12 minutes to put them through to the second round of the League Cup.

It was not an easy victory. Orient, who drew away at Grimsby on Saturday, were a tough proposition and at one stage a replay at Priestfield looked quite probable.

Gillingham made a marvellous start in an otherwise disappointing first-half when Brian Yeo, running in onto an inswinging Charlie Crickmore corner, scored with a brilliant header after nine minutes.

Scrambles

Twenty minutes later there was pandemonium in the Orient defence when a Brian Gibbs shot was cleared off the line by full-back Eddie Werge.

Orient equalised in the 32nd

BY

ALAN COOPER

minute when centre-forward Cliff Holton netted a penalty after Terry Price had been brought down by Gills' skipper Gordon Riddick.

The game now began to get a little scrappy and shortly before the interval Ray Bailey had his name taken for a robust tackle on Price.

The second half opened with Orient sweeping into the attack but suddenly it was all Gillingham.

The scrambles in the Orient goal had to be seen to be believed — but incredibly that ball just would not go in.

Bill Brown hit the cross-bar; Brian Yeo had a certain goal kicked off the line; Brian Gibbs hit the bar and several other attempts either rebounded of defenders or were saved by goalie, Ron Willis.

A goal had to come—and in the 78th minute it did.

Charlie Crickmore pushed the ball through to Riddick who sent over a good cross which the persistent Gibbs nodded into the net—and nobody deserved a goal more than he did.

And in the last minute Gillingham put things beyond doubt when Crickmore prodded the ball into an open net after a shot from Gibbs had rebounded off keeper Willis.

Teams

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Arnott, Bailey; Crickmore, Gibbs, Yeo, Brown, Meredith.

Orient: Willis, Werge, Howe; Sneddon, Wood, Allen; Slater, Anderson, Holton, Price, Fry.

Attendance: 4,830.

● Gillingham have been drawn at home to either Torquay or Exeter in the second round on Wednesday September 13.

No.2 H.T: 1-1
attend: 4,830

HOOLIGANS hurled stones and dirt at a coachload of Gillingham supporters as they left the Orient ground on Tuesday night after the Gills had beaten the London club 3-1 in the first round of the Football League Cup.

Gillingham supporters attacked

BUS WINDOW SMASHED BY HOOLIGANS

A window in the coach was smashed, but fortunately no one was hurt.

Glass was spattered over a number of seats and Gillingham manager Basil Hayward gave the dozen or so youngsters on the damaged vehicle a lift back in the team coach and then gave them supper.

The coach had been specially hired for supporters by the club's Blue and Whites Association.

The organiser, Mr. John Leeds, told me: "It was disgusting. We were just moving out of the car park near the ground when suddenly this bunch of hooligans began throwing missiles at the coach."

"Dirt and a brick came sailing through a window and ended up on the other side of the coach in the luggage rack."

When the coach stopped the youths ran off, unsuccessfully pursued by police.

The incident was reported to the Orient Supporters' Association, who were extremely disturbed and promised to try to get the culprits banned from the ground if they were found.

Police took a statement from Mr. Ron Blake, of Rainham, the coach driver.

Apparently there were about eight youths involved in the stone throwing.

Chairman of the Blue and Whites Association, Mr. Harold France, commented: "This sort of thing must be stamped out."

Gills' manager Mr. Hayward, was extremely concerned.

"These stupid louts are just a fringe element and I feel very sorry for Orient," he said.

A spokesman at the Orient ground said yesterday that to their knowledge none of the hooligans had been caught.

It was learned yesterday that the Orient Supporters' Association are going to pay for the damage to the coach.



GOAL number two . . . 78 minutes. Inside-right Brian Gibbs watches his header from a Crickmore centre whip into the Orient net.



GOAL number one . . . after nine minutes. Brian Yeo's brilliant header from a Charlie Crickmore corner flashes into the net beating the diving Orient full-back Eddie Werge. Yeo is unsighted.



GOAL number three . . . 89 minutes. Charlie Crickmore prods the ball into an open net after a shot from Gibbs had rebounded off the Orient keeper Ron Willis.



SPECIAL TRIPS WINTER 1967/68

GILLINGHAM FOOTBALL (Away Matches)

Gill.	Time	Chat.		Fare
Saturday, 18th November	1000	1010	COLCHESTER v. GILLINGHAM	2-2 14/-
Wednesday, 6th December	1630	1640	WEMBLEY—ENGLAND v. RUSSIA	2-2 8/9
Tuesday, 26th December	1030	1040	BRIGHTON v. GILLINGHAM	3-0 12/-
Saturday, 27th January			ORIENT v. GILLINGHAM	0-4 9/3
Saturday, 3rd February	0930	0940	READING v. GILLINGHAM	3-1 15/6
Saturday, 23rd March	0900	0910	OXFORD v. GILLINGHAM	3-0 16/-
Saturday, 6th April	0730	0740	BOURNEMOUTH v. GILLINGHAM	4-0 23/6
Saturday, 20th April	0500	0810	PETERBOROUGH v. GILLINGHAM	3-0 19/9
Saturday, 4th May	1030	1040	WATFORD v. GILLINGHAM	3-0 10/9

Super Simpson saves Gillingham from rout

Walsall 3 Gillingham 0: by HENRY COPE

GILLINGHAM, completely outplayed by a fast and stylish Walsall side, have only goalkeeper John Simpson to thank for the fact that their inevitable defeat was not turned into a humiliating rout.

Walsall took command right from the start and soon forced Simpson to show his paces. He saved from Allan Baker and Harry Middleton but was given no chance when Walsall took the lead in the 30th minute.

Hampered by his own defenders, he could only push away a cross from Jimmy Murray, and the ball ran to Baker on the edge of the penalty box. Without hesitation Baker lobbed the ball into goal off the far post.

Simpson kept up his efforts as Walsall struggled to increase their lead, but he was beaten again three minutes after the interval by a brilliant move.

It was begun by Baker, who ran down the right wing across to the left wing, where Colin Taylor returned the ball almost

at once low into the goalmouth, and Murray slid the ball home from close range.

The third goal came in the 74th minute from another piece of brilliant football. Taylor sent the ball through the middle for Middleton to send the defence the wrong way and round Simpson before planting the ball into the empty net.

Now Walsall toyed with the opposition, and Simpson brought off a further string of saves.

Poor Gillingham did not put in one worthwhile shot throughout the game, and the only time that home goalkeeper Keith Ball was troubled was five minutes from the end when he was forced to push over a header from Billy Brown.

No.3 H.T. 1-0. attend: 8,288

Slow Gillingham out of touch

Gillingham 1 Southport 4: by DOUGLAS HIRD

A SLOW, pathetic Gillingham side paid the price for their many failings. Southport, clearly the better side, had little to beat despite the fact that Gillingham were in with a chance until the last 25 minutes.

Then Southport scored three times although it was unusual to see goalkeeper Simpson at fault with two of the goals.

If a drastic Gillingham team overhaul is to follow this battle it would be hard to single out exceptions on this sorry display. After a leisurely start and elementary moves on both sides there was some excitement. Gillingham's Reddick headed on

to his own crossbar from a Shaw free-kick and another Reddick header to check a Spence free-kick was just over the home woodwork.

Neither team could strike effectively until the 26th minute when Harkin came through for Southport and with Simpson out of his goal he found the net from nearly 30 yards.

This was a bolt from the blue. And a further setback to Gillingham followed when centre forward Machin was carried off in the 37th minute with a leg injury. Hunt substituted.

Gibbs missed a sitter for Gillingham soon after the restart after keeper Armstrong had only partially cleared, but Gillingham finally got on terms in the 49th minute when Crickmore headed in low from a Meredith corner.

Gillingham followed this up with some strong attacks, and Armstrong kept out headers from Brown and Gibbs. But, slightly against the run of play, Southport regained the lead in the 59th minute.

Shaw dribbled through cleverly, beat three men, and then deceived Simpson with a low-ground shot. Rare opportunism had again paid off handsomely for the visitors.

Two brave Reddick attempts for Gillingham drew a blank and Gillingham's rate was sealed in the 78th minute when Shaw, the No. 1 raider, struck again. Simpson parried his centre but Spence gained possession and drove home Southport's third goal.

Another sweeping Southport movement caught Gillingham on the hop in the closing minutes and leader Andrews finally aaced mthrough to score the fourth.

No.4 H.T. 0-1
attend: 5,211

Crickmore's penalty is winner

Gillingham 1 Grimsby 0: by DOUGLAS HIRD

AFTER THREE successive defeats Gillingham lifted themselves out of their depression and had little in hand over the dogged and workmanlike Grimsby, who brought out the best in the Kent club's defence.

For their narrow success Gillingham had to depend on a 66-minute penalty, converted by Crickmore after Rathbone had unluckily handled during a scramble that followed Crickmore's corner kick.

And it was a 35-yard drive by full back Weston that led to the flag kick.

Wainman did well to fingertip the shot behind but could only get a touch to a strong, well-placed penalty.

In the end, Gillingham showed rather more penetration and had the balance of play to justify the verdict.

Gibbs himself could have had a hat-trick. A running header from Howard Moore's good work early on was a remarkable miss and in the second half Wainman and Post kept out other Gibbs attempts with only the goalkeeper to beat.

A pleasing aspect of Gillingham's improved game, though there is still some way to go for better results, was the successful debut of Howard Moore the former Coventry winger.

He produced clever footwork and had the constructive flair which should have led to more on Gillingham's account.

ANXIOUS

Grimsby's best work was in attack, and there were plenty of anxious moments for the Gillingham defence, usually caused by Collins, Garrymore, and Wilson, a determined trio.

One of the best moves of the match was a Wilson rush and cross which Garrymore brilliantly volleyed only to miss the bar by inches. Then came a volley by the energetic Riddick for Gillingham.

Gillingham's goalkeeper Simpson had his work cut out to deny Collins, Bobby Smith, and Rudd in other Grimsby attacks which were skilfully and speedily launched.

On this showing Grimsby will surely be a force to be reckoned with for League honours. They are a well-balanced side and only need a little more thrust to score goals.

Gillingham were well-served by Weston and Hunt, and Arnott was a most useful stopper at centre half. Billy Brown did a good job as leader of the attack and Meredith was again a useful link man. Crickmore had his moments in some fast raids although his finishing could have been better.

No.6 H.T. 0-0
attend: 4,568

Tranmere 2, Gillingham 1

GILLINGHAM boss Basil Hayward made team changes for the visit to Prenton Park, Tranmere, on Monday evening but saw the Gills concede their second defeat in three days to promoted clubs. Bob Ryder was at left back in place of Dennis Hunt—forward reshuffle saw John Furie at outside right, Ray Bailey was at centre half in place of John Arnott, who was substitute, and Ralph Miller at left back.

With less than 60 seconds to go, skipper Gordon Riddick, a polished tactician all through, sent in a scorching 20-yards drive which looked all set for a dramatic late equalizer, but the ball swung narrowly wide of the far post. This was the concluding incident of Gillingham's strong late rally to save a point against Rovers.

During the last ten minutes Charlie Crickmore and his colleagues were constantly threatening the home goal, and Tranmere's 2-0 lead was repeatedly in the balance, especially when John Meredith released a terrific left-foot drive which flashed across the goal face and the ever-alert Cumbe made a superb full-length save from Brian Gibbs' dead-on-the target cross-shot.

CLOSING CHALLENGE

Time and again Crickmore, Gibbs and Meredith broke through the shaky and anxious home defence, as Gillingham stepped up their closing challenge, and at the 88th minute they reduced the arrears.

The inrunning Gibbs was fouled by Casey in the fatal area, and CRICKMORE coolly slotted home a perfectly placed shot from the penalty spot. The last two minutes found Gillingham besieging the Rovers' goalmouth.

Gills fought desperately hard for an equalizer, and Tranmere's worried defence, following the unsettling effect of the penalty award, was obviously relieved when skipper Riddick's last shot, indeed the last kick of the match, swerved wide of the woodwork.

Nevertheless, it was an extremely close call for Tranmere, and clearly emphasized that a game is never won or lost until the final whistle.

Gillingham might easily have wiped out Tranmere's lead with a little luck, particularly when Billy Brown twice headed inches outside a post from Crickmore's neat lob and Meredith's nicely judged free-kick. Moreover, Gillingham's rousing finish took Tranmere out of their confident stride, and Cumbe, a cool and reliable goalkeeper, Alan King and Johnny King (no relation), with prompt covering, steadied them at a crucial stage.

Nevertheless, Tranmere cannot be too happy of their chances when they visit Gillingham for the return league match on Wednesday, 27 September. They were mainly indebted to Joe Pritchard's double and their extra punch and drive at close-quarters for this—their first league victory in five games.

But it was not a convincing clear-cut victory against a more skilful, better-balanced and progressive team.

Despite five changes, with Ray Bailey switching to centre-half, Gillingham were the more impressive outfit, especially in the first half, when they dominated the exchanges, but failed to finish with the necessary power and accuracy to match some de-

lightful approach work.

Several fine openings were also wasted through the half-backs overkicking the forwards and relieving Cumbe's task in goal.

Stern and incisive tackling also upset the scheming inside trio of Gibbs, Crickmore and Brown, but Gillingham set a lively pace, with Furie blazing over the bar in the first minute.

Brown later brought Cumbe to his knees with a rasping low shot, and seconds later again Johnny King, with a desperate last-ditch tackle, just prevented Brown from turning Furie's centre beyond Cumbe in a hectic goalmouth scramble.

Although challenged by Robertson, Crickmore was most unlucky with a clever hook shot which grazed the bar after Cumbe had missed the ball in a fantastic backward leap.

Shortly afterwards, Gibbs headed narrowly over the bar from Crickmore's deft lob, and Gillingham's slick moving attack were certainly shaping for goals even if they did not come their way. But the vital spark of crisp, effective finishing was often missing.

Consequently, after Gillingham had dictated the keen exchanges, Tranmere raced away to snatch the lead after 22 minutes, through PRITCHARD, who cleverly headed past John Simpson

BETTER CHANGES

It was an undeserved setback for Gillingham, who had created the better chances, but Cumbe twice came to Tranmere's rescue with smart saves from the ever-forceful Brian Gibbs.

Tranmere's second goal came at the 47th minute, when PRITCHARD rammed home Yardley's side-flick from Williams' swerving corner-kick. Ray Bailey and his backs were caught napping by split-second strategy, and later underwent heavy pressure.

The elusive Crickmore almost pulled one out of the bag when Cumbe misjudged Meredith's close-up centre, and Crickmore, jumping up alongside a post, just failed to reach the ball with his head and turn it into the gaping net.

At the other end both Casey and Sinclair struck the bar indicate Tranmere's deadly finishing, and Simpson had several gruelling spells! He finished limping with knee and back injuries.

Ray Bailey was temporarily knocked out in stopping a pile-driver from Parry, and Crickmore suffered a painful face injury in collision with Johnny King.

Gillingham's shooting luck was undoubtedly well out in this match.

TRANMERE ROVERS: Cumbe; King (J.), Robertson; Casey, Martin, King (A.), Parry, Pritchard, Yardley, Sinclair, Williams. Sub: Storton (S.).

GILLINGHAM: Simpson; Weston, Ryder, Riddick, Bailey Miller, Furie, Gibbs, Crickmore, Brown, Meredith. Sub: Arnott.

Attendance: 5,604.



GRIMSBY 'keeper Harry Wainman leaps to save in a tussle with Gills' attackers Bill Brown and Gordon Riddick at Priestfield on Saturday.

Loyal Gills were so tired

ELEVEN weary youngsters paid the price of loyalty when they slumped to a 17-3 soccer defeat on Sunday.

They were members of the Gillingham Supporters' Club boys' team which had travelled to support the parent club at Torquay on the previous day.

The journey to Devon began at midnight on Friday. The boys trudged round the resort before watching the Gills' game at Plainmoor in the evening and then travelled through the night to reach home in time for breakfast on Sunday morning.

The erstwhile soccer enthusiasts snatched a few hours' sleep before battling vainly to stem the tide of attacks by Medway Boys in the afternoon.

Soccer devotion, indeed. Such loyalty just about deserves free passes at Priestfield Stadium for the rest of the season. Over to you, Mr. Hayward.

Football League Cup

Round 2

Riddick and Meredith superb but Torquay

escape beating

UNCHANGED Gillingham surrendered a two-goal lead and a victory they had earned by an avalanche of attacks in the Football League Cup second round tie at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday night (writes ALAN HILL).

Torquay, fragile and uncertain in defence, were swept back on their heels by the non-stop Gills in a one-sided first half.

Skipper Gordon Riddick and John Meredith, irresistible in midfield, repeatedly tangled the Seaside's defence and must have despaired at the feeble response from their goal-shy colleagues.

Crickmore and Gibbs were both guilty of appalling lapses near goal, but right-winger Howard Moore, who spoilt much

against the high-ranking visitors, took the lead after 10 minutes.

GILLINGHAM (2) 2

TORQUAY (1) 2

good work by over-elaboration, had cruel luck when he blazed narrowly over the bar in the closing stages.

Tigerish Gillingham, working like beavers

Another penalty

Charlie Crickmore crashed home his third penalty goal in successive games when Torquay left-half Dunne handled in the area.

Riddick, showing splendid anticipation, raced on to a Brown through ball and hooked the ball wide from near the penalty spot.

In an isolated Torquay attack a Burgess lob from far out on the touch line caused Simpson to fumble, but the ball ran safely behind for a goal kick.

Riddick increased the Gillingham lead when Meredith and Gibbs opened up the visitors' defence in the 31st minute.

Fryatt goal

Within a minute Torquay unexpectedly reduced the arrears when bearded leader Jimmy Fryatt beat Arnott's challenge to head into the net.

Gillingham lost a great chance to clinch a date in the third round on the restart. A left-wing burst by Bill Brown produced awful con-

fusion in the Torquay goal-mouth, and Crickmore shot feebly with the net yawning before him.

Brown was also slow to spot a chance created by the industrious Meredith before Torquay hit back against the tiring Gills.

A Simpson lapse led to the Torquay equaliser in the 55th minute. Fryatt lashed the ball into the roof of the net when the Gills' keeper failed to cut out a left-wing corner.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Arnott, Miller; Moore, Gibbs, Brown. Meredith, Crickmore. Sub.: Yeo.

Torquay: Dunn; Burgess, Baxter; Bond, Brown (K.), Dunne; Barnes, Clarke, Fryatt, Stubbs, Smith. Sub.: Docker.

Referee: Mr. D. Smith (Stonehouse, Glos.). Attendance: 5,823.



TOP: John Dunn, the Torquay keeper, dives but is beaten by this Charlie Crickmore's spot kick. Above: Gills' skipper, Gordon Riddick (left) and Torquay's centre-half, Ken Brown, in a heading duel following a corner. Torquay right-half Bond is in close attendance.

HT: 2-1

attend: 5,823



TORQUAY 2, GILLINGHAM 0

GILLINGHAM made a fighting exit from the second round of the Football League Cup when they clashed with Torquay for the third time in a week in the replay at Plainmoor on Wednesday night.

They buzzed around the Torquay goalmouth for the opening 45 minutes—without success—then a goal seconds before the interval knocked all fight out of them.

The Stadium boys, who showed one change from the side which lost 2-1 at Torquay on Saturday, brought in Ray Bailey at centre-half.

Gillingham were rarely troubled by Torquay in the first half, although they had one anxious moment after only three minutes.

Full-back Dennis Hunt miscued a clearance and the ball ran loose to Torquay left-winger Ron Barnes, who shot towards the empty net.

Ralph Miller was on the spot to clear and send away Howard Moore on the right and the Gills' offensive had begun.

Charlie Crickmore connected forcefully, but saw his header deflected over the bar. From the flag-kick Gordon Riddick had another header saved by goalkeeper John Dunn.

Gillingham were easily the best team in the first half and caused Torquay plenty of trouble. Moore, in particular, was a continual threat with his accurate centres.

It was a pity that the Gills had nobody in the middle to take advantage of his crosses. Bill Brown and Brian Gibbs were both guilty of poor finishing.

In the 25th minute Gibbs at last found the net when he headed home from a Hunt centre, but he was judged to be in an offside position.

Then, one minute from the interval, came a cruel blow for the Gills. Torquay's Burgess floated a free-kick into the penalty area and Robin Stubbs put the Devon side ahead with a spectacular goal—his first of the season.

Gillingham fell back on defence in the second half and goalkeeper John Simpson and full-back Hunt both made goal-line saves.

Torquay scored again with only seconds left through Jim Fryatt after John Meredith had only partially cleared a Bobby Baxter centre.

Arnett substituted for Gibbs late in the game.

Torquay: Dunn; Burgess;

Baxter; Bond, Brown (K.), Dunne; Clarke, Smith, Fryatt, Stubbs, Barnes.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Bailey, Miller; Moore, Gibbs, Brown (W.), Meredith, Crickmore.

Referee: Mr. M. V. Sinclair (Guildford). Attendance: 6,281.

Torquay (0) 2 Gillingham (1) 1

TWO fluke second half goals by Torquay left winger Ron Barnes sealed Gillingham's fate in a fast, attacking game at Plainmoor on Saturday night.

This was the second time the clubs had met in four days, and as they had done in the League Cup at Priestfield last Wednesday, Gillingham scored first.

Centre-forward **Bill Brown** seized on a shocking defensive error by United and former West Ham centre-half Ken Brown and coolly chipped the ball over the head of the advancing goalkeeper John Dunn.

The game developed into a nightmare for the Torquay pivot, but his opposite number, Bill Williams, signed for £8,000 from Mansfield on the previous day, also had an unhappy night.

Only four minutes after his side had taken the lead, Williams limped from the field and Yeo substituted.

This was a blow from which Gillingham never really recovered. Their defence was hastily re-arranged, but the splendidly resolute Riddick and Miller were left to do too much work.

Almost on half-time, Barnes streaked down his wing and was blatantly fouled by the desperate Hunt. The Gills' back earned a stern lecture from the referee and jeers from the crowd as he left the pitch at the interval.

Torquay resumed the second half full of determination and the overworked Gills' defence came under fierce pressure. They had some lucky escapes as shots grazed the woodwork or were cleared from the line.

In the 57th minute Barnes centred from the right wing, the ball seemed to be going behind, but instead floated just under the Gillingham crossbar. Nobody looked more surprised than Barnes.

Another ludicrous incident followed five minutes later. Torquay left-back Baxter let fly with a speculative shot which seemed to be destined for the far corner flag.

The ball struck the foot of Barnes and ricocheted into the net, with Simpson hopelessly positioned.

Torquay, encouraged by their luck, continued to bear down on the Gillingham goal, but staunch defence and poor

finishing by the home side prevented any further goals.

Torquay: Dunn; Burgess, Baxter; Bond, Brown (K.), Dunne; Clarke, Smith, Fryatt, Stubbs, Barnes. Sub.: Docker.

Gillingham: Simpson;

Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Miller; Moore, Gibbs, Brown (W.), Meredith, Crickmore. Sub.: Yeo.

Referee: Mr. D. R. G. Nippard (Bournemouth). Attendance: 8,433.

HT. 0-1
attend: 8,433

HT. 1-0
attend: 6,281

HAYWARD PLAN NEEDS CASH

Gillingham 3 Reading 0

MORE than one disillusioned football manager, fretful at lack of success, has worried and driven himself to a state of near collapse.

Undaunted Gillingham manager Basil Hayward still keeps faith with his policy of attacking soccer. The demolition of Reading's much vaunted 4-2-4 plan on Saturday he thought a "satisfactory result," but he did not disguise his concern at a predictably meagre gate.

"I must have support at the turnstiles if I am to put the Priestfield house in order. And I shudder to think what would have happened if we had not won today," he told me.

Pointers

This was indeed a crucial game for Gillingham after the League Cup knock-out at the second attempt by Torquay and wayward marksmanship which had produced only six goals in six league games.

But the 5,790 devotees at Priestfield on Saturday could see welcome pointers for the future in a razor-sharp display by the Gills which reduced stylish Reading to a team of shreds and patches long before the end.

Gillingham "whipping boy," centre-forward **Bill Brown** silenced his critics by hustling his side into a fourth minute lead.

He brushed aside the challenge of Reading keeper Arthur Wilkie to squeeze the ball into the net from Howard Moore's centre.

A minute later he ambled into the open space on the left wing to loft a cross into the goalmouth where the unmarked **Charlie Crickmore** deliberately aimed his header into the roof of the net.

The deceptively casual Brown continued to exert a quiet influence on the game. His mastery in the air and adroit sorties out to both wings must surely have exacted a better reward with more alert co-operation from his colleagues.

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM PRIESTFIELD

Brian Gibbs, sadly lacking in confidence, again failed to profit from the promptings of Brown and the non-stop Riddick.

Flurry

After the opening goal flurry, the Gills were fortunate to retain the initiative against the methodical visitors, with former Spurs starlet John Sainty and Dennis Allen marshalling a succession of raids.

Reading were perhaps too thoughtful, too dazzled by their own skills. Gillingham tackled ferociously in massed defence as the visitors floundered near goal.

Gills right-winger Howard Moore in a heading duel with visitors' left-back Eddie Robertson.

(1 448 39 67)

But the Gills escaped by the skin of their teeth in one frantic goalmouth scramble in which a nervously hesitant John Simpson and Tony Weston fell in a heap to present Sainty with a gift chance.

The Reading inside-forward miscued his shot and then Allen picked up an attempted clearance to poleaxe colleague Collins standing between him and the gaping goal.

Harris also dallied fatally to allow Simpson to rush out and block his close range drive. Gillingham were flattered by their interval lead.

It was a different story in the second half. The Gills weathered a brief attacking spurt by Reading before John Meredith pounced to score in the 59th minute after a Gibbs shot had been charged down.

Temper

Reading showed their desperation by flashes of temper which must have produced more than finger-wagging by a less lenient referee.

Wilkie saved magnificently and acrobatically from a furious Meredith volley and less certainly from Crickmore as Gillingham cruised to a welcome victory.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Bailey, Miller; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore.

Reading: Wilkie; Bayliss, Spiers, Meldrum, Chapman; Yard, Allen; Scarrott, Collins; Sainty, Harris.

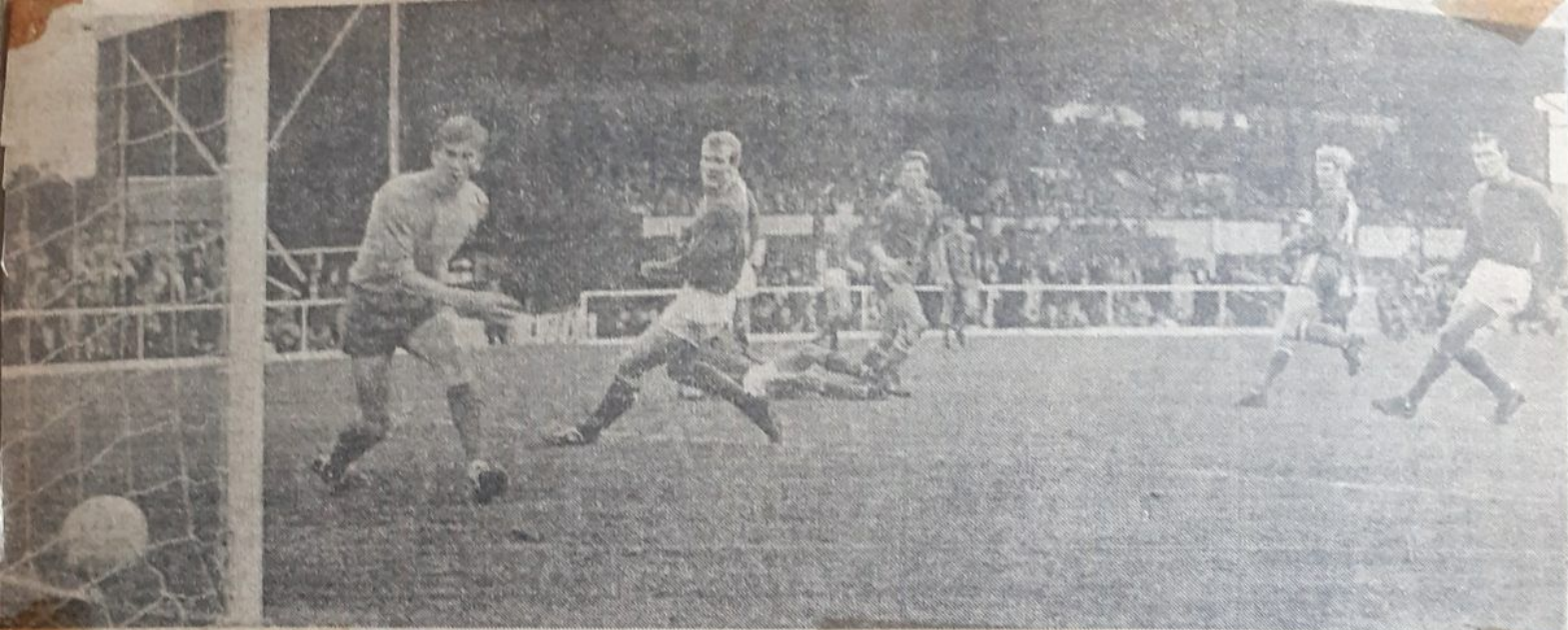
Referee: Mr. P. Bye (Bedford).



No 10

M.T. 2-0

attend: 5,790



JOHN MEREDITH (second from right) scores Gillingham's third goal following a free kick on the right.

(12 439 39 67)



THE Gills' first goal . . . It looks as though Reading 'keeper Arthur Wilkie has got a firm grasp on the ball, but Bill Brown forced it away and headed it into the net.

(4/439 39 67)

Gills in grip of hysteria

By ALAN HILL

Gillingham 1, Tranmere 1

BEWILDERED Gillingham reeled drunkenly on the brink of defeat in an hysterical last quarter at the Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday night.

The hurricane which had threatened throughout the game finally broke in the closing stages and the Gills survived a series of goalmouth squalls before Tranmere wing-half Alan King slotted home an 86th minute equaliser.

Newly-promoted Tranmere, with Roy Sinclair a clever schemer, began with a rush of attacks, but Gillingham shook off their lethargy to take the lead with a goal which should earn a place in the season's scrapbook of memories.

Gills' leader Bill Brown stopped in his tracks to steer the ball into a defensive tunnel and the alert John Meredith darted into the gap to send his shot sneaking inside the upright.

Anxious Gillingham could not find the passing accuracy which shattered Reading on Saturday, but Gibbs had cruel luck with a diving header after a Brown-Riddick duet had released Moore on the right.

Sagging morale led to desperate penalty area scrambles. Simpson saved at full stretch from King and Ray Bailey saved the Gills with

a headed clearance near the line.

An incredible situation developed after Simpson had failed to gather a back pass from Crickmore.

Former Blackpool winger, Mandy Hill swept in to intercept the pass and the panic-stricken Miller was perilously close to putting the ball through his own goal as he lashed the winger's cross against the post.

On the evidence of this display the Gills desperately need the guiding influence of new signing Bill Williams. Cooler heads are needed in the battle for revival points.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Hunt; Riddick, Bailey, Miller; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore. Sub.: Arnett.

Referee: Mr. G. D. Roper (Stowmarket). Attendance: 6,711.

No 11
H.T. 1
attend.
6,711



SCARE FOR THE GILLS—Skipper Gordon Riddick and Howard Moore look on anxiously as full-back Tony Weston heads behind in a Swindon attack at the County Ground on Saturday. Gills' 'keeper John Simpson lies injured on the ground.



ABOVE: Jimmy Cumbes, the Tranmere goalkeeper, plucks the ball from the head of Gills' inside-forward Brian Gibbs, following a free-kick. (3/448/39/67)

Floodlight triumph

GILLINGHAM beat Tamworth 2-1 in a celebration game marking the switch-on of the West Midlands club's new £5,000 floodlights at Tamworth on Monday night. The visit of the Gills attracted a crowd of 4,500.

Leyton Orient Supporters' Club has agreed to meet the cost of damage to the Gillingham club coach following the regrettable incident after the Gills' League Cup-tie at Leyton last month.

A programme note at Priestfield on Saturday commented: "This at least brings some sanity and goodwill into an affair that did the image of the game no good at all."

BADGE OF COURAGE

Heroic Simpson defies pain in snarling duel

Swindon 2, Gillingham 2

THE irony of John Simpson's martyrdom at Swindon on Saturday was that Gillingham were forced to adopt safety first tactics and deny themselves the spoils of victory.

A pre-match back injury, unique in my experience, painfully immobilised Simpson, who was constantly on the verge of collapse and once dismissed ambulance men as they hurried on to the field with a stretcher.

The Gills' keeper told me after the match: "It happened in the kickabout. I felt my back go as I stretched for a shot from Brian Gibbs."

The heroics of this snarling, bitter match belonged to Simpson, who somehow contrived to hurtle across his goal to fust away a Penman header at point-blank range as Swindon staged desperate attacks in the second half.

Blanket defence by Gillingham, with newly-signed Bill Williams almost literally crushing the challenge of home leader, Pat Terry, eased the work of Simpson.

Laboured Swindon could not respond to the urgent appeals of a 12,808 crowd dumb-founded and crestfallen at their team's failure to master the handicapped visitors.

Gillingham almost wrote a defiant success story and Bill Brown's brace of goals, one in each half, made nonsense of the buffoon image with which he is unjustly labelled at Priestfield.

A tenacious right-wing burst by Brian Gibbs, who showed improved form, provided the opening for Brown to put the Gills ahead in the 10th minute.

And he was perfectly positioned to climb high above the Swindon defence and head crisply into the net from a precision cross by Riddick to the far post.

This was a vintage centre-forward goal — the sort of enterprise as displayed by Tony Hateley which makes the Liverpool Spion Kop fans croon with ecstasy.

The 58th minute score was a shot in the arm for the beleaguered Gills whose defeat seemed certain after a blatant Ray Bailey had steered the ball through his own goal.

Indulgent refereeing contributed to this herculean struggle in which the Williams-Terry feud evoked memories of the old-time blood and glory battles.

Nostalgia apart it sparked off a chain reaction of anger which teetered on the edge of an explosion. The Gills pivot was lucky to escape with a lecture; Terry was not so fortunate and was booked for arguing with a decision.

Soccer magnet Don Rogers, the sole survivor of the galaxy of talent which won Second Division promotion for the Wiltshire club, saved Swindon's blushes with an 83rd minute equaliser after the Gills' defence had loitered upfield to leave Simpson at the winger's mercy.

Gillingham survived a final onslaught, Simpson again collapsed after punching a Rogers free-kick over the bar.



JOHN SIMPSON — Constantly on the verge of collapse



JOHN SIMPSON, the "Gills" goalkeeper, won his fight for fitness against Stockport on Wednesday thanks to the efforts of Kent County Cricket Club masseur George Preston who treated John before the game. Mr. Preston was formerly masseur with Peterborough United. (8/435/40/67)

No 12

H.T. 0-1

Hand 12,800

Division 3 placings

	P	W	D	F	A	W	D	P	A	Pts
Walsall	11	4	1	17	4	3	1	10	10	16
Torquay	11	4	2	9	3	2	2	5	5	16
P'boro	11	5	2	12	4	2	0	5	8	16
Reading	11	4	2	14	5	2	0	5	9	14
Bury	11	4	1	17	7	1	2	7	8	13
Barrow	11	2	3	7	4	2	0	2	6	13
Colchester	11	2	4	6	4	3	1	9	11	13
Oxford	11	5	0	15	8	0	3	3	8	12
Gillingham	11	4	1	11	6	1	1	5	9	12
N'hampton	11	2	2	9	6	2	1	7	10	11
Stockport	11	3	0	7	6	2	1	11	12	11
Tranmere	11	4	0	13	2	1	1	6	12	11
B'mouth	11	4	1	12	6	0	2	3	11	11
Olembury	11	4	2	13	5	0	1	2	11	10
Watford	11	4	1	16	4	0	1	2	11	10
Swindon	11	2	1	11	3	0	3	8	9	10
Brighton	11	3	0	6	3	1	2	6	10	10
Stockport	11	4	1	10	2	0	1	3	13	10
Bristol R.	11	2	2	8	3	1	1	5	13	9
Sh'wbury	11	2	2	4	4	0	3	4	13	9
South'pore	11	1	3	8	10	1	1	0	13	8
Mansfield	11	2	2	10	11	0	2	4	10	8
Orient	11	1	1	3	4	0	3	8	16	6
Oldham	11	1	0	6	9	0	2	4	20	4

OVER THE TOP WITH RIDDICK

SKIPPER Gordon Riddick twice stepped up into the firing line to pierce Stockport's wavering "Magenot Line" defence at Priestfield Stadium on Wednesday night.

Stockport had scarcely time to get their bearings after arriving at the ground on kick-off time before

GILLINGHAM 3, STOCKPORT 1

they were engulfed by scintillating wing play.

An astonishing series of lapses by inside-forward Brian Gibbs put the brake on the Gills' helter-skelter progress against a defence apparently determined to scuttle itself by slack covering and marking.

Gibbs squandered four chances in 11 minutes, the

first, unluckily when his close-range header rebounded out after hitting the underside of the bar.

A cunning low cross by the roving Brown was hastily headed wide and the goal-mouth indiscretions continued when Gibbs blazed off target following a delightful Moore-Brown duet which led to the Gills' leader streaking up the by-line to tee up the goal chance.

minutes later he gave a repeat performance with a flashing header after Crickmore had released Moore with a surprise crossfield pass.

Moore and Crickmore were quicksilver raiders as the Gills nonchalantly strode to victory and Brown moved commandingly between them—an immaculate provider of openings.

Centre-half Bill Williams had an uneasy home debut and the Gills were indebted to the sterling work of Bailey and Miller in defence.

Brown sealed the Gills' victory in the 63rd minute, rushing the ball into the net after Ogley had fumbled a Crickmore free-kick under pressure from Gibbs.

Atkins scored an 81st minute goal for Stockport as the Gills sat back on their lead and East missed a sitter right on time.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore. Sub: Hunt.

Stockport: Ogley; Haydock, Gallagher; Parry, Woods, Goodwin; Price, Atkins, East, Kevan, Hartle. Sub: Jones.

Referee: Mr. H. G. New (Portsmouth). Attendance: 6,292.

Confidence

Gibbs shook his fists in dismay, but he could expect little sympathy when he next headed wide from an inch-perfect Crickmore centre.

Gills' keeper John Simpson handled well and confidently to show his powers of recovery after the nightmare game at Swindon on Saturday.

But anxious trainer Jim Boswell once raced out to treat him after burly former England man Derek Kevan had sent Simpson sprawling with an over-vigorous charge.

Riddick swooped to score from a Crickmore free-kick in the 22nd minute and 24

P	W	D	L	F	-A	Pts
10	4	2	4	16	16	10

average
attend.

home:
6,078

away:
8,783



GILLINGHAM full-back Weston (centre) robs Barrow's David Storf in the match at Holker Street on Saturday.

GIBBS BACK ON THE GOAL TRAIL

Gillingham hand out lesson to Oldham babes

OLDHAM 0, GILLINGHAM 1

GILLINGHAM, without ever looking impressive, were full value for their two points at Oldham Saturday and the only real surprise was that won by such a narrow margin.

The scoreline points to a closely contested game, the visitors just having the edge, but nothing would be further from the truth.

Apart from the first 10 minutes Gillingham dominated the game and only failed to score four or five goals because of some wayward finishing by Bill Brown and Brian Gibbs.

In a dull game Gillingham set the pattern early on as wingers Howard Moore and Charlie Crickmore showed they had the beating of Oldham's two 17-year-old full-backs.

Crickmore, in particular, was in devastating form, leading Joe Makin trailing in his wake, and Moore enjoyed a similar advantage over Mike Nolan.

Advantage

Crickmore used his advantage well and fired over a succession of accurate crosses which should have tested the Gills' goal average.

Oldham escaped, thanks to a string of bad misses and some intelligent interceptions by home centre-half Ian Hunter.

In fact, it began to look as if Gillingham had given up hope of scoring until skipper Gordon Riddick started field operations with some exciting bursts down the middle.

Riddick, the most inventive and imaginative player on the field, spotted the defensive weaknesses that Oldham's over-worked half-back line were forced to leave.

Bob Ledger and the remainder of the home forward line, which included three teenagers, faded badly.

Scramble

Brian Gibbs, with his first goal in 11 games, ended the deadlock when he scrambled the ball home from a Meredith cross.

Oldham: Best; Makin, Nolan; Joyce, Hunter, Knighton; Quinn, Foster, Ledger, Doyle, Bebbington. Sub: Magee.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore. Sub: Hunt.

Referee: Mr. D. Pugh (Chester).

Attendance: 4,604.

Command

And he exploited them superbly to restore Gillingham's command when it looked as though they had lost interest.

It was Riddick who went closest to scoring in the first half with a shot that swerved just outside a post and a header from a Crickmore corner that was fractionally wide of target.

Gillingham's defence had little to do and Simpson was called upon only once to make a worthwhile save, pushing a shot from Quinn round the post.

Gills' centre-half Bill Williams blotted out the threat of Oldham's leading scorer.

BRIAN GIBBS, Gillingham inside-right in a heading duel with Bristol Rovers' John Williams. (1/447/42/67)



BILL BROWN, the Gillingham centre-forward in a tussle with Matt Woods, the Stockport County centre-half during one of the many Gills' raids on the County goal.

Half HT: 0-0

Attendance: 4,604

JINX CHAINS SPEARHEAD

Gillingham 0, Bristol Rovers 0

GILLINGHAM'S fumbling striker-in-chief Brian Gibbs loitered unhappily in the gloom of rain-swept Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

Plainly speaking and for his own good a rest sentence becomes increasingly urgent as his tally of missed chances reaches mammoth proportions.

With the season already two months old, the reluctant goal fast continues and Gibbs has failed to score in seven home outings.

Manager Basil Hayward has loyally and commendably upheld Gibbs' ability to seek out the open spaces and shooting positions.

But he still refused to be drawn on possible team changes after Saturday's disjointed display which resembled a Chekhovian situation of despair, panic, futility and hopelessness.

Mr. Hayward commented: "Conditions were all against good football. And it is easy for the watcher to condemn the player who misses an apparently easy chance in front of goal."

Polite

Nevertheless, both goalkeepers, Gillingham's John Simpson and Bristol's Ron Briggs must have found the drenching rain a greater cross to bear than the polite sniping in the respective penalty areas.

Gillingham missed a great chance to consolidate their recent revival with a resounding victory over the Rovers.

The discords were in mid-field where skipper Gordon Riddick lacked his usual mastery and his partner John Meredith struggled in vain to find accuracy of pass.

Touch-line foray by Charles Crickmore who worked splendidly in little room in a promising first-half and Howard Moore, vigorously marked by the balding Munro, should have unlocked the door to victory before the interval.

But Bill Brown on one of his lazy, frustrating afternoons, was quietly blotted out of the game by the formidable Rovers' pivot Stuart Taylor.

In the first half Gibbs and Brown both missed glaring chances from a precision Crickmore centre and Meredith ballooned the ball over the bar from a square pass by Riddick.

Flattering

Gibbs, flat-footed in the area, could only deflect the ball over the bar from point-blank range, and again close on half-time he hoisted his shot into the crowd after Riddick had headed to his feet over a wall of defenders.

Increasingly dominant Bristol might have gained a flattering win in a spate of attacks on the restart.

Ronaldson, released in one of Rovers' few penetrative raids, blazed yards wide after taking careful aim, and the sprawling Simpson had to save from Bobby Jones and Wayne Jones before the Gills weathered the storm.

Gibbs had cruel luck after one sparkling run, his shot striking the keeper before ricocheting to safety.

Resource

Both teams had obviously settled for a point long before the end of a tedious affair. The resource of Ray Bailey in defence was perhaps the happiest feature of a game the Gills will want to forget is a sorry.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore.

Bristol Rovers: Briggs; Hillard, Munro, Williams, Taylor, Barney (Stone substituted); Jarman, Ronaldson, Biggs, W. Jones, R. Jones.

Referee: J. R. Osborne (Ipswich).

Attendance: 6,138.

Third Division table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Walsall	13	8	2	3	30	15	18
Peterborough	12	7	3	2	23	14	17
Torquay	11	6	4	1	34	8	16
Bury	12	6	3	3	28	18	15
Barrow	12	6	3	3	15	10	15
Reading	12	6	2	4	22	16	14
Northampton	12	5	3	4	17	13	13
Gillingham	12	5	3	4	16	13	13
Colchester	11	4	5	3	25	13	13
Swindon	12	4	4	4	20	14	12
Watford	12	5	3	4	18	16	12
Oxford U.	11	5	3	3	14	15	12
Stockport	12	5	3	4	20	21	11
Tranmere	12	5	3	4	13	14	11
Brighton	12	5	3	4	16	21	11
Southport	12	4	3	5	15	21	11
Bournemouth	12	4	3	5	14	17	11
Grimsby	12	4	3	5	13	18	10
Bristol R.	11	4	3	4	10	17	9
Shrewsbury	11	4	3	4	17	26	9
Scunthorpe	12	4	3	5	14	22	9
Mansfield	12	4	3	5	12	20	9
Orient	12	4	3	5	11	22	9
Oldham	12	4	3	5	11	22	9



ABOVE: Ron Briggs the Bristol Rovers goalkeeper, gathers the ball at full stretch in a tussle with Gills' insistent Brian Gibbs at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

(4 447 42 67)

Gibbs bounces back to snatch

Gillingham strike for the top

Stockport 1, Gillingham 1

GILLINGHAM hoisted themselves within striking distance of the division leaders with a three-point haul from their weekend visit to the No. 1 West. But the success story was again marred by woeful marksmanship as Brian Gibbs as the dominant Gills failed to record a double over Stockport at Edgeley Park on Monday night.

Indeed, the points should have been parcelled up, sealed and on their way to Gillingham half-an-hour after the kick-off. Even in that short spell the visitors could have had a three-goal lead.

It was not until early in the second half that Stockport, showing obvious signs of the trouncing they received at Watford, figuratively pinched themselves to make sure they were not dreaming of their 1-1 equality with a Gills' side, which was faster on the ball and playing with confidence of a team unbeaten in eight games.

Great start

Stockport, who dropped their skipper and centre-half Matt Woods, and made half-

dozen positional changes, finished by hammering the Gills, who were forced to retreat in the closing stages.

The visitors were off to a great start with wing-halves Gordon Riddick and Ray Bailey on the look-out for openings and using the long ball to good effect against the too-square County defence.

Gibbs, Brown and Crickmore used their speed to cause alarm and confusion in Stockport's reshuffled defence.

Gibbs showed his disbelief after two astonishing misses. He twice raced through the

home defence only to fire wildly from close range wide of Alan Ogley in the Stockport goal.

Gillingham opened the scoring from a penalty which Crickmore smashed over Ogley's head at unstoppable pace. The award came after Bill Brown had raced through another gap only to be pulled back by County defender John Prentis.

The reason for Stockport's penalty 10 minutes later was far more obscure. The referee, on the spot when a bunch of players went up for a high ball in the Gills' six-yard area, ruled that Keith East had been obstructed.

Gills protest

He ignored Gillingham protests and left-winger Johnny Price scored from the spot.

In the second half the home crowd began to slow hand-clap and booed a substitution when Keith East went off with a cut head after one of several rough episodes.

Gillingham were forced back and were indebted to keeper John Simpson for a magnificent one-handed save from Derek Kevan, and Ray Bailey, who managed to push the ball round the post with his keeper beaten.

Even so, Gills had had their chances after the interval when Gibbs and Crickmore were the culprits.

Stockport: Ogley; Haydock, Prentis; Parry, Stuart, Morrin; Allchurch, Atkins, East, Kevan, Price.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore.

Referee: Mr. G. W. Jones (Lancaster). Attendance: 7,059.

No. 17
M.T. 1-1
attend: 7,059

BRIAN GIBBS, who got the Gills' vital goal on Saturday.

winner at Holker Street

Barrow 0, Gillingham 1

ABANDONING the usual policy of "Anything other than defeat" adopted by most away teams, Gillingham pulled off a surprise win at Holker Street on Saturday.

They withstood a tremendous battering in the second half as Barrow piled on the pressure, and it seemed the Gills would not dare to break out and show their attacking paces in case they lost the point they had fought so hard to retain.

They withstood a tremendous battering in the second half as Barrow piled on the pressure, and it seemed the Gills would not dare to break out and show their attacking paces in case they lost the point they had fought so hard to retain.

But they shook newly promoted Barrow by launching some late raids, and three minutes from time an in-swinging corner by Charlie Crickmore was bustled into the net by **Brian Gibbs**.

One way

Victory for the Gills had never seemed on the cards earlier, for it was almost one-way traffic throughout the



second half. Gillingham pulled their men back efficiently and Barrow were allowed a few clear-cut chances.

Goalkeeper John Simpson had to cut out several high crosses, but he might have expected a more hectic time considering the amount of play that went on in and around his penalty area.

Gillingham channelled their men back so well that at times the Barrow forwards were outnumbered five to two and had little chance of a breakthrough.

They relied mainly on long-range shots, but wing-half Ray Bailey was always on hand to provide cover for his keeper.

Gillingham showed their striking power in the early stages, with John Meredith providing the midfield craft. But once Barrow had mastered the threat of Gibbs and Billy Brown they settled down to an easier time.

The Gills should have taken the lead through Moore, but the right-winger blazed over the bar from one opening and then misjudged a chip as keeper Else came out to challenge.

Pounding

A goalless draw seemed certain after Gillingham had survived a heavy pounding, but just in time they broke away from Gibbs to snatch the winner.

Barrow's defence protested that Else had been obstructed as he attempted to gather the ball, but the referee was on the spot and ignored their appeals.

Barrow: Else; Mallon, Edwards; Harrison, Arrowsmith, Appleton; McCarthy, Hartland, McAdams, Mulholland, Storr.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore.

Referee: G. Singleton (Houghton). Attendance: 6,479.

Reminder from Devon

THE overheard comment of a cock-a-hoop Torquay supporter after his team's narrow League Cup win over the Gills at Plainmoor last week still leaves Priestfield boss Basil Hayward wincing at the memory.

"We were terrible," said the Devonian. "But we won and that's all that matters."

The end justifies the means in the eyes of the average soccer fan, but one can understand Mr. Hayward's simmering annoyance as his team struggles to find the recovery path.

Supporters in these days of diverse entertainments demand instant success. They have always been fickle, but now discontent at a drab performance can linger long after the Saturday-teatime post-mortem.

The Gillingham chief declares that he needs support at the turnstiles to put the Priestfield house in order and is impatient at the apathy of the Medway Towns' fans.

Time, of course, is never on a football manager's side. All too frequently he is disillusioned by his task, especially if he inherits a legacy of boredom among supporters.

And the inevitable happens. Uncaring directors often with scant knowledge

of the game, join the bandwagon of critics and toss him out on to the scrap-heap.

Unquestionably a suicidal pursuit for all but the gifted leader. Managers like Matt Busby, Bill Shankly and Don Revie, operating in the soccer strongholds of Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, have the Midas touch, but one can also point to the bravely won success of Ron Ashman in the outpost of Carlisle.

I am convinced that promotion, even bizarre gimmickry, can create a climate for success. Super P.R.O.'s like Jimmy Hill at Coventry and Victor Barnard at Stock-

port have shown that the trappings of publicity can rekindle enthusiasm and woo disbelievers into embracing long-term plans.

Bingo trains to away matches, pre-match record entertainment introduced by personality disc jockeys can help to make soccer a family affair.

But even more important is keeping people "in the picture." Managers ignore supporters at their peril.

Alan Hill



TOP: BRIAN GIBBS and Bill Brown in a heading duel with Oxford centre-half Maurice Kyle on Saturday. ABOVE: Gibbs again in action beating keeper Jim Barron in a goalmouth tussle. (4/422/44/67) (10/422/44/67)



GILLS' keeper John Simpson dives across his goal as Storf heads inches wide in a Barrow attack.

August:	
19 — Northampton	(H)
23 — F.L. Cup (1);	
26 — Walsall	(A)
September:	
2 — Southport	(H)
4 — Tranmere	(A)
9 — Grimsby	(H)
16 — Torquay	(A)
20 — F.L. Cup (2);	
23 — Reading	(H)
27 — Tranmere	(H)
30 — Swindon	(A)
October:	
4 — Stockport	(H)
7 — Oldham	(A)
14 — Bristol Rov.	(H)
21 — Barrow	(A)
23 — Stockport	(H)
28 — Oxford	(H)
November:	
4 — Bury	(A)
11 — Bournemouth	(H)
13 — Southport	(A)
18 — Colchester	(A)
25 — Peterborough	(H)
December:	
2 — Mansfield	(A)
9 — F.A. Cup (1);	
16 — Northampton	(A)
23 — Walsall	(H)
26 — Brighton	(A)
30 — Brighton	(H)

January:	
6 — F.A. Cup (2);	(A)
13 — Grimsby	(H)
20 — Torquay	(A)
27 — Orient	(A)
February:	
3 — Reading	(A)
10 — Swindon	(H)
17 — Shrewsbury	(A)
24 — Oldham	(H)
March:	
2 — Bristol Rov.	(A)
9 — Orient	(H)
16 — Barrow	(H)
23 — Oxford	(A)
30 — Bury	(H)
April:	
6 — Bournemouth	(A)
13 — Colchester	(H)
15 — Scunthorpe	(H)
16 — Scunthorpe	(A)
20 — Peterborough	(A)
24 — Watford	(H)
27 — Mansfield	(H)
May:	
4 — Watford	(A)
11 — Shrewsbury	(H)
18 — Cup Final	
Copyright — The Football League.	

A Gills' season ticket that cost 10s.

SOME of the oddest, intriguing and informative finds can be found in old trunks at times and recently Mr. E. Taylor, of Ingram Road, Gillingham, discovered something that should interest Gillingham football fans — a season ticket over 71 years old!

It is entitled the New Brompton Football Club which, as any local historian will agree, refers to the old name the club went under before Gillingham became a borough.

And the most noticeable difference between it and the present-day season ticket, is that it cost the then owner, Mr. Taylor's father Mr. Fred Taylor, a

W. Ironsides Groombridge, financial secretary.

The ticket also includes a full programme of the club's fixtures and, among them, fans may be interested to know how Southampton gained their nickname of "Saints"—it appears that they were known in 1896 as Southampton St. Mary's.

Other teams the club met were Sheppey, Chatham, Royal Ordnance, Gravesend, Northfleet, a team called Wolverton and another going under the banner of Clapton which, I am informed, was the name used by the now Orient.

The last page of the booklet refers to a sport that's hardly ever heard of around Priestfield Stadium these days. It says: "Tennis and other summer games during the season."

A close link with the present-day, however, comes from the name of the printers—W. and J. Mackay who then operated their business from New Brompton.



471

Not Transferable.

NEW BROMPTON FOOTBALL CLUB.
Season Ticket, 1896-7 (Football Only)

This is to Certify that Mr. F. Taylor is a Season Ticket Holder of this Club, subject to its Rules and Regulations.

(Signed) A. CORBETT, Secretary.

Signature of Holder F. Taylor

Address / Spring Rd.

NOT AVAILABLE FOR CUP TIES
Price (including Fixture List) 10/-

NEW BROMPTON Football Club

GROUND:
Gordon Road, New Brompton.

President:
THE HIGH CONSTABLE OF GILLINGHAM.

Committee:

Dr. E. C. WARREN, C.C. (Chairman).

Mr. J. BARNES.

Mr. J. DRAZILL.

Mr. W. H. CHECKFIELD.

Mr. J. EVANS.

Mr. A. GRIGGS.

Mr. A. W. PARKER.

Mr. H. A. WATCHURST.

Mr. P. WATSON.

Hon. Treasurer:

Mr. H. A. WATCHURST.

Financial Secretary:

Mr. W. I. GROOMBRIDGE.

Secretary:

JNO. ASH CORBETT,

Gillingham Road, New Brompton.

mere 10s. whereas today the same ticket will cost you up to £8 10s.

"I was looking for some old papers for my daughter when, right at the bottom of the trunk, I came across this," said Mr. Taylor. "I knew it was there somewhere but had forgotten all about it."

And, strangely enough, the old ticket is in remarkably good condition.

As you can see, the president at the time was the High Constable of Gillingham and the committee list included Dr. E. C. Warren (Chairman) with Jno. Ash Corbett, secretary.

NEWMAN BANNED

FORMER Gillingham player Ron Newman, who left the club last season to join Atlanta in the "rebel" American League, has been told by the F.A. he will be banned from playing in this country for 12 months when he returns.

Newman previously assisted Portsmouth, Orient and Crystal Palace.



BILL WILLIAMS, of Gillingham F.C., receiving treatment on Tuesday. (1/445/39/67)

IT'S A BLEAK HOMECOMING FOR GILLS

GILLINGHAM (0) 2, OXFORD UNITED (0) 1

TORRENTIAL rain cruelly muted the cheers and soured a happy homecoming for the proud Gills at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

Gillingham's star is still ascendant—nine games unbeaten and the team tenaciously hanging on bumper to bumper with the Third Division pacemakers.

No wonder that crestfallen manager Basil Hayward was again dumbfounded by the response of the Medway Towns' sporting public and the meagre gate of 5,793 fans to welcome the Gills home.

"Too disappointing for words," he told me after the match. "Here we are fourth in the table and this is our reward."

Outcry

Mr. Hayward could find no excuse in the dismal conditions. "I was at Southend on Friday and 12,000 fans turned up in weather just as bad."

He added grimly: "I can imagine the outcry if we were forced to sell any of our key players."

Twelve hours of savage rain turned the pitch on Saturday into a quagmire which quickly claimed as its victims Gillingham's Tony Weston and Oxford linkman Ken Hale, both replaced by substitutes within 14 minutes of the start.

Weston, injured in an innocent-looking touchline tussle, was carried off in great pain after five minutes and it was reported after the match that he had broken an ankle.

The solace of victory—Gillingham have now taken 14 points from their last nine games—was achieved in a tigerish burst of raids on the resumpta.

Brian Gibbs broke his Priestfield goal famine when he put the Gills ahead with an alert header in the 46th minute.

Wasted

But this splendidly-taken goal from Crickmore corner must be weighed alongside two more wasted opportunities by the Gills' inside-forward, who was twice released by glorious through passes from Bill Brown and Gordon Riddick.

They could have been fatal errors if Oxford had been able to profit from the tireless promptings of skipper Ron Atkinson.

Brown, displaying remarkable ball control in the atrocious conditions, and Riddick prospered as the Gills cut loose in the second half.

Brown increased the Gills' lead, busting the ball into the net at the second attempt, with a trio of Oxford defenders measuring their length in the mud.

Charlie Crickmore, notably, and Howard Moore revelled in this 15-minute purple patch, and a sobering thought was that the Gills ought to have built up an unassailable lead in this period.

As it was they had to withstand a late Oxford rally and Graham Atkinson grabbed a consolation goal in the 80th minute with a glancing header which eluded John Simpson's dive.



BRIAN GIBBS, the Gills' inside-right, tries a shot during a goalmouth scramble at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. Oxford 'keeper Jim Barrow is stranded out of position and half-backs Ron Atkinson and Maurice Kyle make desperate attempts to block the challenge. (11/422/44 67)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Walsall	15	10	3	3	37	19	22
Preston	15	8	4	3	28	17	20
Torquay	15	7	5	3	18	17	18
Gillingham	15	7	4	4	20	17	18
Bury	15	7	3	5	35	25	17
Shrewsbury	15	6	5	4	22	21	17
Brighton	15	7	3	5	20	16	17
Reading	15	7	2	6	24	25	16
Colchester	15	5	6	4	18	22	15
Swindon	15	5	5	5	26	17	15
Watford	15	6	3	6	26	18	15
Tranmere	15	7	1	7	24	23	15
Northampton	15	6	3	6	24	24	15
Oxford	15	6	3	6	23	23	15
Barrow	15	6	2	7	13	10	15
Southport	14	6	2	6	21	22	14
Bristol R.	15	5	4	6	21	25	14
Barnsley	15	5	4	6	19	25	14
Grimsby	15	6	3	7	19	23	13
Stockport	14	5	3	7	15	21	13
Scunthorpe	15	3	5	7	21	20	11
Oldham	15	4	2	9	18	23	10
Oxford	15	3	5	7	14	26	9
Mansfield	15	2	4	9	18	30	8

Gillingham goal scorers—League: Brown (7), Crickmore (5), Gibbs (3), Meredith (2), Riddick (2), Yeo (1). League Cup: Crickmore (2), Gibbs, Riddick, Yeo.

Dependable

In the reshuffled home defence John Meredith defended stoutly at left-back and the always dependable Ray Bailey bolstered an uncertain Ralph Miller with some alert covering.

Bill Williams, a tower of strength in the box, had probably his best game since joining Gillingham.

Gillingham: Simpson; Weston (Yeo substituted), Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Crickmore.

No. 13

HT. 0-0

attend: 5,793

PROMOTION SETBACK

Careless Gills falter, lose two-goal lead and run ends at Bury

BURY 3. GILLINGHAM 2

A SHORTAGE of ideas in attack cost Gillingham one point, and possibly two, against Bury at Gigg Lane on Saturday. This was the Gills' first reverse since their 2-1 defeat at Torquay in mid-September.

Leading by two goals after only half-an-hour, the Gills were unable to push home their advantage and fell back on defence to concede the initiative to Bury.

The Lancashire side were helped by Gillingham's defence, which was far too slow and at times careless and tentative in the tackle.

Had it not been for a well-drilled middle line, in which Gordon Riddick and Bill Williams were outstanding, Gillingham would have suffered a bigger setback.

They had obviously come prepared to play for a point, and could not adapt their style after taking the lead. Instead of following up their advantage with sustained pressure, they relied on breakaway attacks using the long ball.

Gillingham's first goal when his powerful drive, hit on the run, was deflected into his own net by Bury pivot Brian Turner.

The Gills' newcomer had an easier passage than he might have expected for he faced an off-form Vincent Leech, who was deputising for regular full-back Roy Parnell.

QUALITIES

Hall has the right qualities, but Howard Moore, on the other wing, met with little success against Hugh Tinney, and inside-forwards Brian Gibbs and John Meredith contributed little in the goal-mouth.

Brown carried the major threat to the Bury defence, and was unlucky with two fine efforts in the first half.

The Gills' leader was brought down by keeper Ramsbottom in the area to earn a penalty in the 30th minute. Mel Machin, who replaced the injured Tony Weston at right-back, scored from the spot to put the Kent club two up.

They clearly needed an opportunist goal-poacher to snap up the half-chance. Brown was not the only culprit—the disease also spread to half-backs Riddick and Williams.

REPUTATION

Riddick twice blazed over the bar from good positions before the break, and Williams fumbled an easy chance to level the scores in the closing stages.

In fact, only keeper John Simpson came out of the game with an enhanced reputation. He made a series of superb saves to keep the Bury forwards at bay after the interval.

Left-winger Greg Farrell was Bury's man of the match. He scored from the penalty spot after centre-forward George Jones had been fouled by Williams, and took the free-kicks which led to right-winger Bobby Owen and Jones scoring Bury's other goals.

Bury: Ramsbottom; Leech, Tinney; Kerr, Turner, Lindsay; Owen, Anderson, Jones, Collins, Farrell. Substitute: Parry.

Gillingham: Simpson; Machin, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Hall. Substitute: Yeo.

Referee: Mr. K. Howley (Bellingham).

Attendance: 6,004



THE ball rockets skywards and out of the picture as the leaping John Simpson fists away in a goal-mouth melee at Gigg Lane on Saturday. Bury inside forward, Phil Anderson, is the slightly apprehensive challenger and Gills' defenders Ray Bailey and Bill Williams race up to support their keeper.

Home debut



PETER HALL—Gills new signing from Bedford is expected to make his home debut against Bournemouth at Priestfield Stadium tomorrow.

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	16	10	2	4	27	22	22
Torquay	15	8	3	3	23	23	21
P'borough	15	8	4	4	28	20	20
Bury	15	8	3	5	27	19	19
Gillingham	16	7	4	5	22	20	18
Reading	15	8	2	6	27	21	18
Brighton	16	7	3	6	23	17	17
Oxford Utd.	16	7	3	6	27	23	17
Walsford	16	7	3	6	28	19	17
Barrow	16	7	3	6	19	16	17
Shrewsbury	16	6	5	5	32	20	17
Stockport	16	7	3	6	21	24	17
Swindon	16	6	6	5	28	19	16
Southport	16	7	2	7	25	26	16
Bournemouth	16	6	4	6	20	24	16
Colchester	16	6	5	5	21	27	16
Tranmere	16	7	1	8	23	25	15
N'hampton	16	6	3	7	24	28	15
Bristol Rovers	15	6	4	6	21	23	14
Grimsby	16	6	3	7	19	24	13
Oldham	16	5	3	8	20	23	13
Southampton	16	3	3	9	21	32	11
Manfield	16	2	3	11	20	32	9
Oswestry	13	2	3	8	21	25	7

No. 19

H.T 2-2

attend: 6,004



Gills can make it best out of three in F.A. cup

NOTHING is certain in the F.A. Cup was the reaction of Gillingham manager Basil Hayward after hearing that his team had been drawn away to Fourth Division Newport County in the first round of the F.A. Cup on Saturday December 9 (writes Alan Hill).

"Naturally we hope to get through, at the first attempt if possible, but every game away from home is tough in the Cup," said the Gills' chief.

"There's something about the Cup that stirs the blood. I wish it was the same every week," added Mr. Hayward.

Newport and Gillingham have previously met each other twice in the F.A. Cup. The Gills beat the Monmouthshire club in 1952, but four years later Newport obtained their revenge.

Newport at present hold a middle of the table position in the Fourth Division and they are clearly a force to contend with at home. They have won four games and lost only once in seven outings at Somerton Park this season.

Mr. Hayward also confirmed that Rotherham had made an offer for left-winger Charlie Crickmore. Reports indicate that this was a substantial bid, between £12,000 and £20,000, and other clubs have made inquiries about the Gills' player.

Crickmore is certainly not for sale at present," said Mr. Hayward. "And I hope we don't have to consider selling him."

Not for sale

Gillingham beat Newport to clinch the Fourth Division championship in April, 1964.

Hayward: 'Offer was too good'

THE transfer of Gillingham left-winger Charlie Crickmore to Rotherham for a club record fee of approaching £20,000 on Friday, came as a surprise after manager Basil Hayward had earlier maintained that the player would not be leaving Priestfield Stadium (writes ALAN HILL).

The signing was completed in a London hotel on Friday morning after the Millmoor club had stepped up their bid for Crickmore.

Hard on the heels of the Crickmore transfer came the news of the signing by Gillingham of Bedford striker 26-year-old Peter Hall. Only a small fee was involved.

Hall made his debut on the left wing at Bury and celebrated the occasion by scoring the Gills' first goal.

Mr. Hayward said yesterday "We just couldn't refuse the Rotherham offer for Crickmore. Clubs like ourselves must sell at times to keep on an even keel."

The Gills' chief insisted that there was no intention of selling other key players. "We hope now to settle down again and

keep up our promotion challenge," he said.

Crickmore was signed from Bournemouth in an exchange deal also involving David Stocks and Tommy Taylor in July 1966. He has scored seven League and League Cup goals for the Gills this season and was the club's penalty taker.

Hall, who is a native of Stoke-on-Trent, joins the growing contingent of former Bedford players at Priestfield Stadium.

Signed

Goalkeeper Derek Bellotti, Bill Brown, Ray Bailey, David Quirke and David Peach all played for the Southern League club.

New recruit Hall was signed from Bournemouth by Mr. Hayward when he was manager at Yeovil. He later joined the Gills' chief at Bedford.

Mr. Hayward told me: "I have signed Hall to do a similar job to the one carried out by Crickmore."

"At Bury, Hall found the pace much quicker than he is used to. But he is a strong player, likes going forward and will get some goals for us."

Mr. Hayward said they should have won comfortably at Bury on Saturday. "The referee gave some strange decisions against us and they finally counted in the end."



CHARLIE CRICKMORE

Soccer thugs will drive away fans

Gillingham 0, Bournemouth 0

SOCCER'S battered reputation took another pounding in a snarling, ill-tempered battle at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

Here was a blatant example of inexcusable provocation and strong-arm tactics which reduced the game to the level of a street corner brawl and

can only drive the fans away to more sporting pastimes.

Some managers must shoulder the blame for such skulduggery. They put the game in the hands of unprincipled thugs and football is the poorer.

After Saturday's undistinguished scramble Gillingham manager Basil Hayward sympathised with referee C.

Thomas, who booked Bournemouth's Ronnie Bolton and Gills' skipper Gordon Riddick and diplomatically shared the free-kicks between both sides.

Frustration

"What more could he have done other than send someone off," said Mr. Hayward. The Gills' chief voiced the

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM PRIESTFIELD

frustration of the 7,419 crowd—the second biggest gate of the season—when he said: "We weren't allowed to play football. If we made a break, we were hacked down."

Disorganised Gillingham were all too easily thrown out of their stride by rugged Bournemouth, managed by former Gills' boss Freddie Cox, and rarely eluded the clutches of the dominant visitors' defence in which skipper Jimmy White hand-cuffed Bill Brown in a vice-like grip.

Gills' newcomer Peter Hall, making his home debut, was starved of service in the first half, but later showed an alert eye for an opening which promises well for the future.

Howard Moore and Brian Gibbs, repeatedly mown down by fierce tackling, would not heed the lesson—the counter was first-time passing—and the Gills, like boxers choosing to mix it, came off second best in this mauling contest.

Confident

I do not condone Bournemouth's tactics when I say that they were worth their point.

Cowed Gillingham could never match their work-rate and the busy visitors must have snatched a win had it not been for a goal-line save by Ralph Miller from Roy Gater and the supremely confident handling of Gills' keeper John Simpson.

Bournemouth were so much in command at one stage that I made full-backs Terry Gulliver and David Stocks the pick of their attack.

Gulliver, racing up in support, blazed a cross-shot narrowly wide of an upright and Simpson had to sprawl in his area to save at the feet of the Cherries' back.

A Hall-inspired move broke the tedium of the first half. The former Bedford player released Moore, called for a return pass, and White thankfully headed clear as Hall hooked the ball back from the by-line.

Gillingham mounted desperate attacks in the second half and Hall vainly appealed for a penalty when he toppled over an opponent's legs in the area.

Bournemouth were nearer giving away a penalty when Moore was poleaxed fractionally outside the box.

Harsh

Bournemouth's "kick it if it moves" policy produced a spate of free-kicks but Gillingham were not blameless and the normally placid Riddick was somewhat harshly booked by the referee. It seemed for arguing with a decision.

The booking of Riddick, a fair-minded player of flair and imagination, was the final ironic twist in an unsavoury affair. Football had been well and truly dragged down in the mire.

WESTON INJURY HALTS RUN

GILLINGHAM full-back Tony Weston, who broke an ankle in the game against Oxford at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday, is likely to be out of action for the rest of the season.

The injury breaks a sequence of 150 games for the club. Weston has missed only one other game during this period owing to a family illness.

The Gills' back spent the weekend at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, but he was allowed to go home on Monday.



TONY WESTON

No. 20
H.T. 0-0
attend: 7,419

Gillingham: Simpson, Machin, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Hall. Bournemouth: Jones; Gulliver, Stocks; Gater, White, Naylor; Pound, Bumstead, Hold, Bolton, Taylor (Hall substituted in the 69th min).

GILLS' ERRORS AID SOUTHPORT

SOUTHPORT 4, GILLINGHAM 1

GILLINGHAM were let down by their defence at Southport on Monday night. Two bad blunders resulted in goals and enabled the home side to complete their first double of the season.

The first half was the duller and more boring exhibition seen at Haig Avenue for a very long time. Neither side showed any idea how to break down the respective defences except by booting the ball high down the middle.

Two chances fell to Southport and Gills' leader Bill Brown headed narrowly wide, but these summed up the goal-mouth incidents until Southport took the lead with the last kick of the half.

Left-back Cairns was brought down by Machin on the left of the penalty area. Shaw lofted his free-kick over the defensive wall and over the outstretched arms of Simpson for Redrobe to force the ball home from close range.

The turning point in the game came in the 60th minute as the result of a tragic mistake by right-winger Howard Moore.

Moore, operating on the left flank, raced back to rob Shaw and passed back to his keeper without realising that Simpson had left his line. The ball went across to unmarked Harkin, who had only to tap it into the net.

Best of the match

From this point onwards Southport's attack began to click and Williams and his fellow defenders had a tough task to keep them at bay.

The third goal and the best of the match came in the 64th minute when Peat darted down the left and centred high into the middle for Andrews to head a brilliant goal.

It was a bad error by Williams, marring an otherwise competent display, that led to Southport's fourth goal in the 76th minute.

Danger man Shaw, this time over on the left, pulled back a low centre, but the Gills' pivot completely missed his kick and the ball went straight to Harkin who hammered it home.

Gibbs tried hard to rally Gillingham but while the visitors never gave up they produced little to cause Reeves, in the home goal, much trouble.

Gillingham's consolation goal came nine minutes from the end. Moore provided the centre and for once Brown

got the better of Molyneux to head past Reeves.

Southport: Reeves; Pearson, Cairns; Peat Molyneux, Clarke; Shaw, Andrews, Harkin, Ally, Redrobe.

Gillingham: Simpson; Machin, Miller; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Brown, Meredith, Hall.

Referee: Mr. G. C. Kew (Leeds).

Attendance: 5,758.



WATCH it, mate! Gillingham centre-forward Bill Brown (right) seems to be the recipient of a hefty blow in the back of the neck as Bournemouth 'keeper Roger Jones punches clear in the goalless game at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. Also air-bound is Brian Gibbs.

(2,422,46,52)

New boy Hall not to blame

NEWCOMER Peter Hall is the only Gills forward exempted from blame after an "inept and spineless display" in a letter received from Mr. S. V. Knights, of 16, Blaker Avenue, Rochester.

Mr. Knights, who attended the game against Bournemouth, on Saturday, com-



PETER HALL

ments: "The second half, in particular, was largely spoiled by the referee, but I feel sure that Gills' manager Mr. Hayward doesn't need anybody to tell him why the gates are so small.

"I left the ground with the impression that Gillingham had only one forward, Peter Hall. The outside-left can be exonerated, there was no attempt to bring him into the game at all.

"To me it is a travesty of justice to label this match 'Football League.' It had nearly everything except foot-

Hayward tells Gills: Work harder

FOUR mistakes and four goals — this was Gillingham manager Basil Hayward's explanation of the 4-1 defeat at Southport on Monday night. Newly-promoted Southport recorded a double over the Gills after their shock win at Priestfield Stadium in September (writes Alan Hill).

Mr. Hayward said a Simpson error which led to Southport's first goal in the closing stages of the first half was the turning point in the game.

The Gills' chief described tomorrow's game at Colchester as a "decision day" for his team. He admitted: "During the last two or three games the lads have not been working hard enough."

"In this game you have to make the breaks if you want to sustain a promotion challenge," he added.

Full-back Ralph Miller (face injury), and inside-forward John Meredith (leg injury), are doubtful for the game at Colchester and will have fitness tests today.

Subject to satisfactory tests, Mr. Hayward will probably select an unchanged team encouraged by the fact that they took 14 points from nine games before the narrow defeat at Bury a fortnight ago.

It seems certain, however,

that changes would follow another mediocre display at Colchester.



JOHN MEREDITH — Doubtful for tomorrow's game at Colchester.

Transfer hat-trick

THAT goal that Gillingham's "new boy," Peter Hall, got on his debut at Bury means that he carried on where he left off for the Stadium club's boss, Basil Hayward (writes QUES-TOR).

Hall scored in the last game which Bedford played under the management of Mr. Hayward and he scored consistently for the Gills' chief when he was in charge at Bedford and Yeovil.

Mr. Hayward signed Hall when he was manager of Bedford — from Bournemouth — and later signed him when

he moved to Bedford. So his signing of Hall again means he has pulled off a unique transfer hat-trick. Hall incidentally began his soccer career at Port Vale where manager Hayward started his playing days.

Crickmore goal

FORMER Gillingham winger Charlie Crickmore was on target for his new club Rotherham who were beaten 2-1 by Norwich at Millmoor last Saturday.

No. 21

Ht. 1-0

attend: 5,758

Gibbs rescues Gills after Bailey boob

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM COLCHESTER

GETTING to know the new-look Gills was an infuriating business at Layer Road, Colchester, on Saturday. The gleaming currency of a disciplined first half display was sadly devalued in the fumbles and anxiety after the interval and Brian Gibbs' late equaliser in the gloom was an unexpected blessing.

The severest critics at Priestfield Stadium would have been charmed by the earlier tenacity of the Gills who nobly answered the call of manager Basil Hayward for increased effort.

Baffled Colchester were shocked by a fifth-minute goal by Brian Gibbs and



BRIAN GIBBS... Two opportunist goal.

keeled over like so many frail blue and white skittles against the Gills' rock-hard defensive barrier.

High curling centres were superbly caught by John Simpson or headed away by penalty area king Bill Williams and long before the end of the half Colchester were reduced to forlorn long-range shooting.

Ominous

Then came a second-half transformation scene beyond the dreams of the most inventive pantomime impresario as the Gills relaxed fatally and were engulfed by a tide of home attacks.

Ominous gaps appeared and tentative tackles were exploited by a rejuvenated Colchester who touched a peak of attacking frenzy and forced a dreadful blunder by the normally dependable Ray Bailey in the 50th minute.

Bailey, perhaps expecting keeper Simpson to gather an innocuous-looking cross, delayed his clearance and Reg Stratton dragged the ball away to pick his spot and score with monumental calm. Skipper Gordon Riddick, deposited by a tendon injury aggravated in training, gave his version of the incident.

Colchester 2 Gillingham 2

"It was a bad mistake. I think Ray intended to breast the ball down before clearing. But, of course, you haven't time for such luxuries in the goalmouth," he admitted.

Stratton pounced again to give Colchester the lead in the 76th minute with a rocketing header which Dennis Hunt, standing on the line, could only help into the net.

Gillingham survived a 30-yard drive from Brian Hall which hurtled just wide of an upright. Hunt flung himself in front of another goal-bound shot and a careless Simpson clearance went unpunished.

The aggressive running of Peter Hall whose precision centre produced the equaliser, was the one saving grace of a one-sided second half in which frankly the Gills escaped by the skin of their teeth.

The second-half collapse regrettably clouded the memories of the first 45 minutes when John Meredith, switched to the left wing, was the only misfit in the reshuffled Gills' line-up.

Exile

Manager Hayward made six changes, three positional and two caused by injuries to Miller and Riddick, in a bid to arrest the recent decline.

He must have been pleased by the poise of young John Furie in only his second senior game since joining the Gills from Watford. And Mel Machin, too, looked much happier in his midfield role and the hard-working Brian Yeo foraged purposefully in a tightly-knit team ensemble.

Priestfield "whipping boy" Gibbs was the Gills' saviour with two opportunist goals to boost his flagging confidence and reward the faith of his manager which has been stridently condemned by myself and other observers this season.

Gibbs has still a long way to go to make up for his erratic marksmanship, but there were signs on Saturday that he was emerging from the exile of self-doubt.

Colchester: Adams; Mochan, Hall; Trevis, Forbes, Blackwood; Price, McKechnie, Hodgson, Stratton, Martin, Sub.: Walker.

Gillingham: Simpson, Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Hall, Gibbs, Brown, Yeo, Meredith, Sub.: Moore.

Referee: A. Fussey (Retford).

Attendance: 4,100

Priestfield gate wager is lost

DARTFORD manager and former Gillingham player Mr. Ernie Morgan telephoned the "Observer" this week with a "where have the Gills' fans gone" query.

Mr. Morgan, who lives at Rainham, has twice lost wagers with his local fishmonger, an ardent "Gills" supporter, on the size of attendances at Priestfield Stadium.

Against Bristol three weeks ago he forecast a gate of 8,250 and lost. With even more confidence, he plumped for a similar crowd for the game against Oxford last Saturday and again lost. The attendances at both games more than 2,000 below Mr. Morgan's figure.

"I admit the weather was bad on both days, but a team that gets three points out of four away from home deserves better than this."

Mr. Morgan added: "A team which is in the top four in the Third Division warrants a gate of 10,000 at least."

The Dartford manager congratulated Mr. Hayward on keeping faith with his players. "They have proved him right and are playing some grand soccer."

Mr. Morgan recalled his playing days at Gillingham and cited an attendance of 10,000 when the team was below halfway in the table in the 1958 season.

"Times have changed, I know there are so many counter attractions on Saturday afternoons, but even so the Medway Towns fans should rally round the team in their bid for promotion," he said.

Mr. Morgan remains optimistic that the Stadium attendances will soon go up and plans another bet with his Rainham neighbour on the next home game against Bournemouth.

I should be interested to hear the views of other Gillingham supporters on low gates at home games. — Sports Editor.

Right kind of problem for John

LONG-SERVING Gillingham goalkeeper John Simpson, now in his 10th season at Priestfield Stadium, is staggered at the response of the Medway Towns to his testimonial appeal.

It is almost embarrassing the number of people who have come forward asking if there is anything they can do to help. My problem at the moment is finding jobs for them to do," said John on Saturday.

"Anything we can do" letters of acceptance have been received from patrons, television personality and former Gillingham Grammar School pupil David Frost, Kent and England cricket captain Colin Cowdrey, and Gillingham M.P. Mr. Freddie Burden.

Other testimonial patrons are Mr. G. Townsley, a specialist at the St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, and Mr. A. A. J. Anderson, chairman of the Medway Chamber of Commerce.

Negotiations are still proceeding for the midnight film matinee at a local cinema and the first batch of autographed footballs will be sent out to local public houses in the near future.



A FINE action study of Gills' centre-half Bill Williams winning a tussle with Colchester inside-forward Tom McKechnie at Layer Road on Saturday. Wing-half Ray Bailey stands by to complete the clearance.

No. 22

H.T. 0-1

offand: 4,190

VOTE OF THANKS BY LOYAL FANS

PRAISE for the efforts of Gillingham manager Basil Hayward and his team provides a ray of comfort among the avalanche of critical letters written to "Sports Mailbox" this week.

Supporter Mr. L. J. Boyes, of 22, Robson Drive, Hoo, writes: "The Rainham End Choir, who follow the Gills' everywhere, would like Mr. Hayward to know there are some supporters in the Medway Towns who believe in him."

Mr. Boyes comments that the reason why Gillingham do not get big crowds is because the Medway Towns' people are not football-minded. "We've got a winning team, but people still are not coming."

The Hoo supporter questions expenditure of big money on a name player when two or three just as good can be bought for the same amount.

Examples of these are: Bill Brown, Ray Bailey and Derek Bellotti. They cost a total of £9,000 and are all capable of Second Division football.

"One star player doesn't make a team. It is 11 players pulling together which makes a championship side," he adds.

In a postscript to his letter Mr. Boyes insists: "Why not

sell a player (Crickmore) for £20,000 when the club got him for nothing?"

Gillingham's lack of goal punch is the theme of Mr. D. A. Siggers, of 81, Oak Lane, Upchurch.

Mr. Siggers writes: "I do not think the missing supporters will go to watch Gillingham until they hear someone has been found to score goals regularly."

"All that they hear now is that chances are missed and the same player is being relied upon to score goals."

He adds: "With someone to finish off the good approach work and to capitalise on the good centre from the wingers, I think this will be the year for promotion."

Sports Mailbox

Shelter fans and gates will go up

GILLS manager Basil Hayward complains, with some justification, about the poor support accorded his team.

But it is not a one-sided situation by any manner of means. There are a number of things the Gills could do to bring about the bigger gates that Mr. Hayward calls for.

First and foremost they must improve conditions and amenities at the Stadium. Fans just won't stand out unprotected in the sort of teeming weather that marred the recent home game with Oxford.

Some form of covering must be introduced at the Gillingham end of the ground, and

the stand accommodation should be enlarged and improved on both sides of the ground.

Tip-up numbered seats should be introduced to enable fans to book seats for individual matches.

Crickmore cash

Secondly, manager Hayward should spend some of the Crickmore cash on a striking forward who will score goals instead of missing them.

The need for a forward of this calibre has been self-evident all season, but has been ignored. There is no substitute for goals when it comes to crowd appeal.

And dare I make the point to Mr. Hayward that there are other clubs than Bedford to which to look for new players!

So come on Gills take up those ground improvements where they seem to have been left off when Freddie Cox departed for Bournemouth. And let us have some goal-punch in the attack.

I am certain this will help to bring the fans flocking back — rain or shine. — "An Old Fan."

Entertain please!

GILLINGHAM'S top four place in the Third Division (they dropped to fifth position after the defeat at Bury) warrants home attendances of 16,000, says Mr. S. V. Knights, of 16, Blaker Avenue, Rochester.

But Mr. Knights recalls an unbeaten home run of 16 games by Gillingham a few seasons ago.

"The run was ended by Stockport County in one of the most dreary games I have seen and the gate was 6,500."

Mr. Knights adds: "The answer, I think, is simple, the hard core of the fans go to see the home side win, but there are others like myself who go to see entertaining soccer."

"Sad to say, the entertainment value has been lacking in the games I have seen in recent seasons. Last season I (and others) walked out of the match against Torquay and on other occasions when I could have gone I stayed away."

"This season my first visit was to the match against Bristol Rovers. Only one word could describe this game — rubbish."

No marksman

"The visitors did show some football, and had they had a marksman must have won by about three goals."

"The home team, forgetting the lack of a marksman, could not produce any entertaining or cohesive football during the whole of the game."

Mr. Knights ends his letter: "So once again I decided that I will not pay to watch such stuff and will stay away."

I have every sympathy with the fans who deplore the lack of protection from the weather at Priestfield Stadium, but I cannot agree with some of the charges made against the team. Wayward marksmanship is certainly a blot on the team's record, but against this it must be admitted that splendid approach work has created these chances. Bill Brown's ball control on a beast of a pitch against Oxford was remarkable and the Gills can also be proud of the consistency of skipper Gordon Riddick and Ray Bailey.

With a few exceptions the football has been entertaining. And any team that takes 14 points from nine games cannot be too bad. — Sports Editor.

CASH ROLLS IN FOR GILLS' IDOL

CONTRIBUTIONS to the John Simpson testimonial fund have topped £100, it was reported at a meeting of the fund committee on Tuesday.

"This will give us a financial basis for getting a number of things under way," said Mr. Harold France, chairman of the committee.

"The collection taken at the recent home match against Bournemouth gave us a boost, but the most remarkable response has come from people invited to become vice-presidents of the fund."

Mr. France said people in the Medway Towns had rallied round marvellously and public recognition would be given to these benefactors in a testimonial news bulletin to be released later in the season.

He added: "With this £100 behind us, we are going ahead with a number of functions in the coming months."

An entertainments sub-

committee was set up on Tuesday and it is planned to hold the first of a series of dances soon after Christmas.

The testimonial committee are looking for a suitable venue in the Towns and an approach has been made to the owners of the Aurora Hotel, Gillingham, who have staged a number of dances with great success in recent months.

Mr. France said: "We would like to find somewhere central for the first dance so that John's many supporters, including youngsters, can have a good time."

The entertainments committee will announce the date of the dance in the near future and there are high hopes of enlisting the services of one of the Town's leading groups for the function.

In the New Year raffles will be held in public houses and clubs in the area for special autographed footballs.

Last night John and teammates, skipper Gordon Riddick and full-back Dennis Hunt were guests at the Palmerston Road Working Men's Club where they presented a cheque for £250 on behalf of the club to the Guide Dog Association.

'Harder to beat' says Hayward

HEADELINE team and Third Division pacemakers Peterborough, visitors to Priestfield Stadium tomorrow, will be "harder to beat" says Gillingham manager Basil Hayward.

"This week's news means that the club is fighting for its future and it is going to be much harder for their opponents," said the Gills chief.

Fitness doubts concerning skipper Gordon Riddick and John Meredith delay the selection of the Gillingham team. Both players, who have been training this week, will have tests today.

All-out offensive but Posh leave gate open



YES, IT'S A GOAL—Peterborough skipper Frank Rankmore can hardly bear to look at the ball nestling in the back of the net for Gills' second goal on Saturday. Scorer Bill Brown (in the background) turns happily away after beating 'keeper Tony Millington's challenge. Colleague Brian Gibbs (right) roars his delight at the goal.

(4/26 48/67)

RICH BOOTY FOR GILLS' SNIPERS

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM PRIESTFIELD

THIS was a fascinating curio of the stranger than fiction variety.

Besieged Gillingham were inevitably the villains of the piece as they literally stole a three-goal lead in an astonishing coup-de-grace at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

The emotional atmosphere on this sporting stage decidedly favoured Peterborough whose fast and furious start reminded the onlooker of a certain Major-General Harrison who, according to diarist Samuel Pepys, went to the scaffold "looking remarkably cheerful in the circumstances."

Before an intrigued crowd and an even more curious battalion of journalists, which included Fleet Street column-

ist Jim Manning, defiant Posh had every right to appeal at a miscarriage of justice after a thrilling opening which threatened to demolish the Gills.

**Gillingham 3
Peterborough 2**

High-octane soccer, which stunned the senses after weeks of dour attrition, administered a shuddering douche to Gillingham and 'keeper John Simpson had to be at his superlative best to save from elusive raiders John Byrne and Stuart Brace

woefully late challenge with a murderously accurate low shot in the 23rd minute.

A comparatively simple goal, but the Gills' inside man has missed easier chances this season and the confidence was heartening.

Belated

Peterborough claimed a belated reward for their non-stop efforts when Brace swept the ball into the net from a Metchick centre in the 33rd minute.

The second half provided a remarkable contrast with the Gillingham taking a leaf out of the Posh attacking manual with a breath-taking assault on the visitors' goal.

Peterborough, strengthened by the substitution of Mike Maynard for John Linnell, were close to conceding another goal when Hall, released by a Gibbs pass, veered across the goalmouth and shot hurriedly past a post.

Fairbrother jolted the too complacent Gills with a 72nd minute goal—a glorious volley from a Brace cross—and Bill Williams, less commanding than in the first-half, nearly presented Posh with an equaliser with a casual pass to his 'keeper.

Gillingham, with John Furlie confirming his promise against the dangerous Metchick and the tireless John Meredith labouring mightily in midfield, were finally deserved winners and Peterborough will have to shore up their defences if they are to make merry in their plight.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furlie; Hunt; Machin, Williams; Bailey; Hall, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith. Sub.: Yes

Storm

Brace next hooked a shot narrowly wide from point-blank range and before the storm subsided the Gills were next to giving away a penalty when a Fairbrother drive was charged down.

Peterborough's emphasis on attack, delightful to watch but leaving perilous gaps in its wake, had a disastrous sequel.

Completely against the run of play Gillingham took the lead in the 11th minute when Bill Brown sliced through paper thin defence to chip the ball back to the unmarked Brian Gibbs, whose headed goal was a formality.

Five minutes later Brown, programme-listed at No. 10 but still occupying a striker role with Gibbs and Hall, nonchalantly headed home from a Peter Hall cross.

The heartbreaks continued for defenceless Posh and Gibbs raced on to a through ball to beat Tony Millington's

Why support is so meagre

I READ that Mr. Bash Hayward is dumbfounded and disappointed at the response of the Medway Towns' sporting public to Gillingham's recent run of success.

May I, with due respect, point out to Mr. Hayward several reasons why the response is so meagre.

Many of the sporting public in the Medway Towns are, like myself, "exiles" from London and continue to work in London; but by circumstances, mainly financial, are obliged to live in the Medway Towns. By virtue

of working in London, many of us are able to use our season tickets to good effect to watch top-class games in London, more so in my case as I find to watch my team, 'Spurs in action costs less entrance money than that charged by Gillingham.

Mr. Hayward cites the case of Southend, where 12,000 fans turned up in bad weather to watch their team in action. It may be, of course, that Southend fans are keener, but at least the directors of that club met the fans halfway by purchasing a "name" player, i.e. Chisnall, ex-Manchester United and Liverpool. Have Gillingham done anything in this respect?

To read on Friday that Crickmore, I quote "is certainly not for sale at present", and then to read in the national Press the next day that the player concerned has been sold to Rotherham is not, in my opinion, likely to inspire confidence in the management and will I fear make people stay away all the more.

In conclusion, while I appreciate Mr. Hayward's task is not an easy one, it is the public who decide whether they are going to

support a team, successful or otherwise, and the sad truth is that the "Gills" are never going to keep support because of the factors previously mentioned.—D. W. B. PIER, Mayville, 145, Hall Avenue, Rochester.



BILL BROWN... inspired breakthrough led to Gills' first goal. (7/47 42/67)

Third Division placings

P W D L F A Pts

Walsall	20	12	2	4	43	28
Turkey	20	10	5	5	37	25
Stokeport	20	9	5	6	34	23
Peterborough	20	9	4	7	28	22
Shrewsbury	20	8	6	6	31	22
Gillingham	20	8	6	6	28	22
Swindon	20	7	7	6	25	21
Bury	20	7	3	10	21	21
Barrow	20	7	3	10	21	21
Reading	20	6	3	11	22	21
Watford	20	6	3	11	22	21
Brighton	20	6	3	11	22	21
Southport	20	6	3	11	22	21
Southampton	20	6	3	11	22	21
Colchester	20	6	3	11	22	21
Tranmere	20	6	3	11	22	21
Oxford	20	6	3	11	22	21
Bristol R.	20	6	3	11	22	21
Bournemouth	20	6	3	11	22	21
Oxford	20	6	3	11	22	21
Grimsby	20	6	3	11	22	21
Doncaster	20	6	3	11	22	21
Sheff. Wed.	20	6	3	11	22	21

Ne 23
H.T. 3-1
attend:



POSH PLAY TO MAKE LEAGUE LOOK SILLY

by
J. L. MANNING

IT was the first time I had gone to Gillingham with an hypothesis. Still, that is what I am paid for.

It proposed, for the sake of argument, that if the Football League should deal as unreasonably with Port Vale as they are with Peterborough, would Sir Stanley Matthews be recommended for demotion to Mr. 2?

This is not only an hypothesis but a ticklish one. His club already are in the Fourth Division and only two points from the bottom of it. Compulsory relegation in these circumstances would not carry the business very far.

But, back to Gillingham: it should not be assumed that my squire there to watch Peterborough play showed a lack of interest in League football. It was the only way to boycott the competition without staying away from it.

Inquiry

FOR while Gillingham, under the rules of the competition, were striving for promotion, Peterborough's players were left with only their bonuses to play for. I cannot think that this is in the rules.

Understandably, they were confused. They missed three goals in the first five minutes, and gave away three in the next 20. Just when we thought there would be a stewards' inquiry, they rallied so stoutly that an authorised bonus of £8 was nearly won—£4 for two points and another £4 for staying fourth.

That is the point. How can a club convicted of abusing the bonus system be asked to purge its influence by playing only for bonuses until the end of May?

So we watched more or less in silence, and I was not a bit surprised when the announcer thanked us several times for our attendance.

The team sentenced to play for money only did so cheerfully. Why not? They can add £13 per man to their punishment on Saturday by beating Walsall, the League leaders.

Incentive

ONLY one director went with the team. Mr. Geoffrey Woodcock was unwilling to discuss how many directors not emigrating to Australia were on speaking terms with one another, but he did say the players' morale was high.

How did that come about, I asked the acting manager, Norman Rigby.

Simply, he replied, by telling them that if they want to be transferred in order to qualify legitimately for a signing-on bonus, they should not play like clots.

They did not, and this showed that an important decision had been made. Of the many ways in which Peterborough can make the League look silly at the end of the season, finishing in the first two is by far the most satisfactory.

Then, as Mr. Hardaker so often puts it, a clear pattern of League football will emerge—up and five down. Any arrangement falsifying the competition.

Hayward backs discipline

Mansfield 0, Gillingham 1

THE disputed goal which led to the dismissal of Mansfield Welsh international goalkeeper, Dave Hollins, on Saturday, brought a rebuke for players who argue with decisions from Gills' manager, Basil Hayward, this week.

Hollins was sent off for protesting against Bill Brown's winning goal at Field Mill. Mr. Hayward said: "I have no sympathy with players who question decisions. They know the consequences if they carry on arguing."

The Gills' chief had no doubts about the referee's decision. "It was a perfectly good goal," he said.

Gillingham's win at Mansfield was a feat that had seemed virtually impossible. Until Bill Brown snatched the vital goal in the 70th minute when he hooked the ball past Hollins following a free-kick, they had been waging an unceasing defensive battle.

Brown's goal led to furious protests by Mansfield—notably Hollins, who was involved in an argument with the referee that led to the keeper being ordered off.

Only at this stage, with their opponents reduced to 10 men, did Gillingham begin to establish something of a hold on the game. Good work by home left-half Dick Edwards, who took over in goal and saved well from Peter Hall, prevented the visitors from gaining a more decisive win.

The first half consisted of a chapter of hair's breadth escapes as the Gillingham goal was under almost continuous pressure. Mansfield kept the agile John Simpson and his team mates at full stretch.

Mansfield striving to vacate their position at the foot of the table, and strengthened by the return of centre-forward Bill Curry after injury, stormed into the attack from the kick-off.

Appeal

Left-back Tom Stanton was soon up among the forwards, and after he had caused Simpson to leap high to clear a dangerous lob, Curry drove against the post and Terry Melling's return was only just stopped in the nick of time through a combined manoeuvre by Simpson and Hunt.

Mansfield skipper Peter Morris and Edwards saw shots rebound off defenders. Curry brought Simpson into action with a header and the keeper turned a stinging cross-shot from Tommy Knox round the post.

Mansfield unsuccessfully appealed for a penalty when John Furie appeared to handle as a header from Melling flew near the post.

Gillingham's attack was little in evidence, apart from two efforts by John Meredith. Stanton headed the first away, and next the

winger drove well wide.

Hollins whipped the ball away from the feet of Hall as the right-winger cut in to meet a long cross. This was only the second time that the Mansfield keeper had handled the ball in almost half-an-hour, but soon afterwards he had to be on the alert when Meredith let fly first time as Melling's headed clearance fell at his feet.

In another blitz, Simpson pushed a sizzling shot from Morris round the post. John Rowland cracked a shot against the woodwork—and when the ball rebounded it was promptly hit against the post by Melling, to be scrambled away.

Brian Yeo substituted in the second half for Gordon Riddick, who had been injured in the first minute of the half.

Containing

Meredith and Hall were the only Gillingham forwards who looked like breaking Mansfield's tightly-knit defence.

Bill Williams, playing against his old club, stuck gamely to his task of containing the lively Curry, while Furie and Dennis Hunt did yeoman work in repelling Mansfield's raids.

Mansfield: Hollins, Pate, Stanton, Morris, Beam, Edwards, Rowland, Melling, Curry, Frude, Knox, Sub: Glover.

Gillingham: Simpson, Furie, Hunt, Machin, Williams, Bailey, Hall, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith, Sub: Yeo.

Attendance: 5,400.

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	21	12	4	5	44	38	28
Torquay	21	11	5	5	39	27	27
Grimsby	21	9	9	3	36	29	24
Peterborough	21	10	4	7	21	24	24
Gillingham	21	9	6	6	29	28	24
Stockport	21	10	4	7	20	24	24
Swindon	21	8	7	6	27	23	23
Reading	21	10	3	8	32	24	23
Bury	20	9	4	7	43	24	22
Watford	21	9	4	8	41	23	22
Barrow	21	9	4	8	29	21	22
Shrewsbury	21	8	7	6	32	22	22
Colchester	21	7	8	6	28	22	21
Brigham	21	8	5	7	25	21	21
Tranmere	21	8	4	9	36	20	20
Southport	21	8	4	9	23	24	20
Bristol R.	20	7	6	7	31	33	20
Northampton	21	8	4	9	29	21	20
Bournemouth	21	6	7	8	27	29	19
Oldham	21	8	2	11	28	30	18
Oxford	21	5	6	10	20	30	16
Grimsby	21	5	4	12	23	34	14
Scunthorpe	21	2	7	11	24	44	13
Mansfield	21	2	5	14	22	46	12

Hurry up and catch Gills' Cup Special

A DECISION will be taken in the next 48 hours on the plan to run a special train for the F.A. Cup first round tie at Newport next Saturday (writes ALAN HILL).

Gillingham chairman, Dr. Clifford Grossmark, said yesterday: "The response has been poor so far and we will have to cancel the plan if we do not receive more support in the next two days."

He explained: "We are required to sign a £700 guarantee by British Rail and we certainly cannot do this at present."

Providing an additional incentive to Gills' supporters still undecided about the trip to Newport is the news that the players will travel on the special train.

If the train is cancelled, the Gills' party will travel to Newport on Friday.

The cup special would leave Gillingham at 9.45 a.m., arriving in Newport at 1.30 and returning soon after the match. The fare is 25s.

Tickets, priced 7s., are available for the tie and applications enclosing cheque or postal order and stamped addressed envelope should be addressed to the Secretary, Gillingham F.C., Priestfield Stadium, Gillingham.

Unchanged team

Gillingham have no injury doubts and are likely to be unchanged for the game against bottom-of-the-table Mansfield at Field Mill tomorrow. Probable team: Simpson; Furler, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Hall, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith.

Mansfield, who were among the Third Division pace-makers last season, are showing signs of a revival after a troubled beginning to the season. Gills' manager Basil Hayward is prepared for a tough struggle, and he told me earlier this week: "We shall do well to bring back a point."

Centre-half Bill Williams will be playing against his old club for the first time since joining the Gills.



FORMER Gills' player, Bob Ridley, and his wife Lorna.

Striker Ridley is a hit in South Africa

NEWS this week of a successful soccer season just completed by former Gillingham forward Bob Ridley, who has ended his first season in South African football (writes QUESTOR).

Bob, now living with his wife Lorna and baby in Port Elizabeth, has been playing for the First Division club Apollon F.C. in Port Elizabeth, and has been operating as a striker in a 4-2-4 formation.

He wrote to me this week describing how Charlton manager, Eddie Firmani, who comes from South Africa, had given him a good build-up before he arrived. As Bob scored 18 goals last season and was his club's top scorer, he has not let Firmani down.

He tells me that the soccer in South Africa is of a good standard, and most games are played in the evening when there are average gates of about 8,000.

After a month with the club Bob was made skipper, and he feels that next season his club may well increase their gates.

keeper Roy Bailey, and the ex-Arsenal and Scottish international wing-half Alex Forbes.

Writes Bob: "So at the time of writing I do not know if I will be staying or moving elsewhere."

He and Lorna have the local papers sent out from the Medway Towns, so they are able to follow the activities of Gillingham. Bob notes that a former Portsmouth colleague, Bill Williams, is now at the stadium.

Lorna is working in a boutique in Port Elizabeth, and Bob has also been engaged in coaching tennis at a country club.

He asked me to give his regards to all the lads at the Stadium—he is still in touch with some of them—and says that he hopes that it might be possible to come home for a holiday next year.

Spectacular header spurs title challenge

NORTHAMPTON 1, GILLINGHAM 1

GILLINGHAM were full value for their point at the County Ground, Northampton, on Saturday, and came near to completing a double over the Cobblers.

Manager Basil Hayward said after the game that he had impressed on his team that they must not allow the impending cup-tie at Newport to affect their bid for promotion points.

"Gillingham might have won this game. We had our chances to do so," he added.

The Priestfield club were strong in defence and held an unusually aggressive Northampton in a tight grip.

Full-length

Always dangerous in swift break-outs, Gillingham found four scoring gaps—two in each half—but only one was accepted.

They took the lead in the 54th minute following a move starting on the right wing. Brian Gibbs spotted the home defence was out of position and dived full-length to head the ball into the net.

Soon afterwards Ray Bailey, in action on the ground where he plays cricket in the summer, cut out an opening for skipper Gordon Riddick, who broke through the middle but mis-cued with only "keeper Bryan Harvey to beat.

This was an unfortunate miss for the Gills, who could have settled the issue with this goal.

Before the interval Peter Hall and Gibbs both squandered close-range chances of putting the Kent club ahead. Northampton's equaliser came 11 minutes from time.

Graham Felton crossed from the right, and Don Martin's speculative shot from 30 yards flashed into the net off a post with Simpson unable to do anything about it.

Earlier Martin went close with a similar effort from 25 yards. Simpson made his only serious error of the match as he fumbled the shot, but he was able to recover and clear the danger.

The only other time the Gillingham goal was threatened came just before the opening score. Roberts won a duel with Simpson, but headed inches wide of the far post.

Bill Williams started in defence, completely blotting out Welsh Under-23 leader Roberts. He received good support from John Furie and Dennis Hunt.

Hall was a persistent threat in attack, and Gibbs and Riddick were always dangerous on the break. Bill Brown and John Meredith completed a lively front line.

Northampton: Harvey; Faulkes, Walker; Mackin, Carr, Flowers; Felton, Martin, Roberts, Price, Hall. Substitute: Kiernan.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Hall, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith. Substitute: Thear.



GILLS' stranglehold . . . Centre-half Bill Williams rises to the occasion to win a tussle with Northampton leader John Roberts at the County Ground on Saturday.

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attend. 7,111

Third Division table

	P	W	D	L	P	A	Pts
Walsall	22	12	5	5	45	29	29
Torquay	22	12	5	5	32	29	29
Stockport	22	11	4	7	33	30	26
Oxford Utd.	22	9	7	6	35	31	25
Gillingham	22	9	7	6	29	29	25
Swindon	22	8	8	6	27	24	24
P'borough	22	10	4	8	38	32	24
Watford	22	9	5	8	40	24	23
Bury	22	9	5	7	46	25	23
Barrow	22	9	5	8	30	24	23
Shrewsbury	22	8	7	7	34	24	22
Reading	22	10	5	7	32	27	23
Brighton	22	8	6	7	25	23	22
Southport	22	9	4	9	36	35	22
Bristol R.	22	8	6	7	33	23	22
Colchester	22	7	8	7	29	29	22
N'hampton	22	8	5	9	30	35	21
Tranmere	22	8	4	10	38	29	20
Oldham	22	9	3	11	30	31	20
B'neath	22	6	7	9	23	31	19
Orient	22	6	6	9	21	30	18
Exeter City	22	4	7	11	26	41	15
Grimsby	22	5	4	13	23	39	14
Sheff. Wed.	22	5	6	11	24	29	13



Gillingham footballers get the bird as manager Basil Hayward presents each of the players with a turkey on behalf of the club. The players here are Brian Gibbs (left), John Simpson, Bill Williams, John Meredith, Gordon Riddick, Mel Machin and Denis Hunt.

Gills' blues after Cup upset

SHOCK CUP K.O. AS JINX STRIKES AGAIN

Newport 3, Gillingham 0

HISTORY repeated itself for Gills in the Somerton Park mud on Monday night. The Third Division title contenders were eliminated by struggling Newport County in their twice postponed F.A. Cup first round tie. So dismayed were the Kent men that manager Basil Hayward said after the final whistle: "I am too choked to comment constructively yet—and anyway we have a train to catch."

For the third time in 10 years Gills left Newport in the depths of depression. In the 1956-57 season they went out in an F.A. Cup second round tie there, and in the 1962-63 term they lost by the odd goal in the first round of the Football League Cup.

Nightmare match

This latest defeat was even more humiliating because the Fourth Division side had not won a home game for 10 weeks. In fact, they had gained only four points from their last 12 League games.

In addition, Newport had been involved in chaos on the field and in the boardroom, with injuries, transfers and the resignations of directors.

Newport's triumph in an exciting tussle proved yet again that the Cup and a heavy ground can be great levellers.

Gills' wing-half Ray Bailey had a nightmare match and like the other big visitors' defenders he was often beaten on the turn.

As the conditions worsened and Gills' early menace tailed off, Newport's nippy forwards became more difficult to hold.

Hill, Robinson and King were particularly troublesome. Bailey crash-tackled Hill to stop him scoring in the 38th minute and only a brilliant diving save by John Simpson prevented County from going ahead from the penalty spot.

Gillingham's rangy striker Bill Brown came nearest to breaking the deadlock. He had superb headers saved on the line after clever approach work by Brian Yeo and John Meredith.

Brown and Yeo were the Gills' danger men but centre-forward Gordon Riddick was compelled to fall back and assist his slithering defence.

Mel Machin made some valuable tackles, but young John Furie had a harrowing time against the elusive King.

Newport preferred to mount their attacks with short passes in defiance of the gluepot conditions. By contrast the Gills hit high passes upfield time and again with-

out response from their forwards.

Five minutes after the interval Newport went ahead when Alan Williams beat an unsighted Simpson with a header from 20 yards. Minutes later Bailey handled in the box and this time King scored from the spot.

Brian Gibbs and Meredith tried hard to put the Gills back in the game but the increasingly confident County clamped down on the revival bid.

In the 85th minute King rounded Furie and centred to the near post where the unmarked Hill was waiting to head past the helpless Simpson.

Newport: Timson; Wilson, Williams (D.); Wood, Williams (A.), Rowland; Robinson, Thomas, Stark, Hill, King. Sub.: Smith.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams (W.), Bailey; Yeo, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith. Sub.: Thear.

Attendance: 2,452.

● Newport now travel to Guildford in the second round on Saturday January 6. The Southern League club, twice unlucky not to beat Fourth Division Brentford, won 2-1 in the first round replay at Josephs Road on Monday night.

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GILLINGHAM'S humiliating F.A. Cup exit on the Somerton Park quagmire on Monday night was described as a "bitter disappointment to the club and players" by manager Basil Hayward yesterday (writes ALAN HILL).

"Tomorrow's game against the league leaders, Walsall, is more vital than ever to whip up support and interest in the club," said the Gills' chief.

Mr. Hayward said the game at Newport should never have been played. "We had a good first 20 minutes, Bill Brown had a header cleared off the line, but football became impossible as the pitch churned up and became a sea of mud."

Asked about the Newport boggy—this was the Gills' third successive Cup defeat at Somerton Park—Mr. Hayward replied: "Other teams would have lost in such appalling conditions."

Promotion bid

He added: "I know our supporters must be upset by the Cup defeat, but I would remind them that we are still very much in the running for promotion."

The Gills' chief has kept faith with his team and does not plan any changes other than the probable return of Peter Hall for the visit of Walsall to Priestfield Stadium.

Team: (from) Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Hill, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith. Yeo.

Gillingham are away to Brighton on Boxing Day and the return game at Priestfield Stadium will be played on Saturday, December 30.



BASIL HAYWARD



RAY BAILEY... Handling offence led to Newport's second goal.



GILLINGHAM right winger Brian Yeo slips past Newport right-back Wilson (on the ground) and left-half Wood but wasted the goal chance in the F.A. Cup first round tie at Somerton Park on Monday night.

GILLS FAIL PROMOTION CHALLENGE

ALAN HILL REPORTS FROM PRIESTFIELD

SCROOGE-LIKE Walsall, miserly unyielding in defence, clung to a precious breakaway goal to make this a joyless Yuletide pipe-opener at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday.

This was the vital test—a game in which to measure the strength of the Gills' promotion potential. Sadly, it must be admitted that they failed a searching examination despite heroic, non-stop attacks in a one-sided second half.

Pain-hearted marksman-ship—the catalogue of missed chances is beginning to make promotion an hypothetical question—cost the Gills dearly and this second home defeat following hard on the heels of the F.A. Cup reverse at Newport was a crushing setback.

Skipper Gordon Riddick toiled mightily in a losing cause and the shrewd promptings of Bill Brown deserved better reward in a match in which the Gills were worthy of at least a share of the spoils.

Third Division leaders Walsall, who had felted to squander a five-point lead over their nearest rivals, Torquay, survived a nervous first half on a pitch which had the texture of the soggiest of Yorkshire puddings.

Sluggish Gillingham should have capitalised on hesitant defence. Peter Hall, gloriously released by Brown and Riddick, delayed his centre with the visitors' defence in an awful tangle.

Then Riddick raced into the goalmouth to position himself perfectly for a Brown cross and headed the ball the wrong side of the post to his unconcealed chagrin.

The Saddlers looked happier in crisp counter-attacks, demonstrating their class with razor-sharp passing duets and an imaginative use of the cross-field ball.

Left-winger Colin Taylor fired in a shot just wide of

last drops of energy in a desperate attempt to prise an equaliser.

Dogged display

Sympathetic cheers greeted a dogged display at the final whistle, but they could not hide the grim truth that the Gills rarely looked like aspiring champions in a disappointing game.

In a mediocre division there is still hope for the Gills or any consistent team of average skills. But none seem remotely capable of emulating the deeds of Third Division predecessors, Q.P.R., Hull and Carlisle.

They were undeniably head and shoulders above their rivals in class and scurried up into the Second Division as fast as their legs would carry them.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Hall, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown, Meredith, Sub: Yeo.

Walsall: Wesson; Gregg, Evans; Simpson (T), Bennett, Atthey; Watson, Baker, Murray (Sissons substituted), Middleton, Taylor.

Referee: Mr. L. Gallagher (Merthyr Tydfil). Attendance: 8,012.

Gillingham 0 Walsall 1

an upright and Simpson had luck on his side when he parried a fierce drive from the wingman. Murray pounced to hit the rebounding ball on target, but Bill Williams was on hand to complete the clearance.

Middleton was close to putting the visitors ahead with a superb header as Walsall rallied towards the end of the half.

Massed defence

Massed defence and strong-arm tackles by the Midlanders threw back wave upon wave of attacks by the Gills on the resumption. Hall, persistently caught in possession in a lethargic display, powered his way through and was then overhauled and checked in his final burst on goal.

Wesson, under pressure from Riddick, was clearly deceived by a Meredith free-kick and Brown dived spectacularly but vainly in a bid to deflect the ball into the net when Gibbs sent a cunning cross into the goalmouth. Gibbs netted for the Gills, but the goal was disallowed because of a foul on the keeper.

Completely against the run of play, Walsall took the lead with a classic goal in the 70th minute. Machin might have prevented the score as Baker's pass sped across from the right.

Taylor crashed the ball goalwards and Middleton eluded two defenders to race through and stab the ball home.

This was cruel justice for the Gills, who summoned the

Alert Powney plunges Gills into doldrums

Brighton 3, Gillingham 0

ACROBATIC saves by Brighton's Brian Powney and a brace of goals by Goldstone marksman Kit Napier plunged uninspired Gillingham into the holiday doldrums at Brighton on Boxing Day (writes ALAN HILL).

A pointless Christmas confirmed the worst fears that a decline was imminent after the stunning cup defeat at Newport.

Ebbing confidence was reflected in the manner in which the Gills were out-manoeuvred in midfield by busy Brighton, who lost the services of newly-appointed club captain and link man Nobby Lawton after 19 minutes.

Cruel luck and string of superb saves by Powney from Riddick and Meredith denied the Gills the tonic of a goal in a brief second-half rally.

But defeat was always predictable and Gillingham collectively never achieved the zest for work which aroused our sympathy against Walsall.

Too many misfits has been the cry in some quarters this season. At Brighton an overburdened and ill-supported defence fought gallantly, but up front a disjointed attack often played as if they were strangers meeting for the first time.

Moore returns

Gillingham, who brought back Howard Moore on the left-wing, Riddick reverted to wing-half in place of Mel Machin were restricted to individual forays which all too frequently foundered against resolute defence.

Brighton survived a nervous start to take the lead in the 25th minute when Napier scored after Bailey had failed to clear a left-wing centre.

Ten minutes later Napier struck again. The Brighton leader tricked two defenders

before blasting the ball past Simpson.

Former Arsenal winger Brian Tawse replaced Lawton, who went off in the 19th minute after being injured in a clash with Gibbs.

Gibbs was inches away from an opportunist goal on the resumption when he hooked the ball just wide of the upright.

Livesey, unmarked in the box, drove casually wide before Wilkinson put Brighton further ahead in the 60th minute.

Simpson parried a low centre from Towse and a Napier shot was blocked before Wilkinson pounced to crash the ball into the net.

Powney saved brilliantly from Riddick and gave a repeat performance when Meredith rocketed another shot on target from the edge of the area.

Brighton: Powney; Templeman, Dalton; Gali, Napier (J), Hickman; Wilkinson, Lawton (Tawse substituted), Napier (K), Livesey, Gould.

Gillingham: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Riddick, Williams, Bailey; Hall, Gibbs, Meredith, Brown, Moore.

Referee: Mr. B. J. Home-wood (Sunbury-on-Thames). Attendance: 12,896

No 28

H.T. 2-0

attend: 12,896



GILLS' skipper Gordon Riddick leaps over diving Walsall keeper Bob Wesson in one of the many home raids on Saturday.

(29/428/52/67)

Third Division placings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	24	13	5	6	46	30	31
Torquay	23	12	6	5	33	30	30
Peterborough	24	12	4	8	43	26	28
Blackpool	24	10	4	8	34	32	26
Swindon	24	9	9	6	40	24	27
Oxford	24	9	9	6	40	24	27
Shrewsbury	24	9	8	7	37	36	26
Bury	23	9	7	7	49	38	25
Brighton	23	9	7	7	28	23	25
Southport	24	10	6	8	39	37	25
Watford	24	10	5	9	41	35	25
Reading	23	11	3	10	35	39	25
Gillingham	24	9	7	8	38	33	25
Bristol R.	23	9	6	8	31	33	24
Colchester	24	8	8	8	32	41	24
Barrow	24	9	3	10	31	30	23
Oldham	24	10	2	12	34	34	22
Tranmere	24	9	4	11	30	42	22
Northampton	23	8	6	10	30	36	22
Bournemouth	24	7	7	10	26	28	21
Oscott	23	8	6	10	33	31	18
Mansfield	24	5	6	13	29	40	16
Doncaster	24	4	8	12	27	45	16
Grimsby	24	5	5	14	25	42	14

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H.T. 0-0

attend: 8,012

Pointless Christmas confirms worst fears



GILLINGHAM inside-forward Bill Brown (right), races in to challenge as Walsall 'keeper Bob Wesson, dives to cut out a right-wing cross in the game at Priestfield Stadium on Saturday. (16/428 52/67)



A PANTOMIME-style escapade with a dog of uncertain parentage as the central character, delayed the start of the game against Third Division leaders Walsall on Saturday by almost five minutes. Right: International referee Mr. Leo Callaghan invites the dog to join him in the kick-off line-up. Far right: Gills' forward Bill Brown earned the first cheers of the afternoon with a sure tackle before carrying the struggling animal to the touchline. (11/428 52/67 and 12/428 52/67)

Pantomime
jinks at
Priestfield
as dog
keeps
crowd and
players
waiting



Charles Brian Gibbs of a scoring chance by grabbing the ball from his boots is Brighton 'keeper Brian Powney, while Bill Brown moves in to challenge. (12/428 52/67)

Cox still has eyes on Gibbs

GILLINGHAM'S manager, Mr. Basil Hayward, agreed after Saturday's close call with Brighton that the team still needs a forceful front runner plus a man with the staying power to bolster the defence.

He might solve the problem by drawing from his own ranks but the signs are that he could be using the two weeks lay-off (the Gills have no game on Saturday) to travel around matches in search of the right kind of player to fit in with the pattern he has in mind.

One change the fans might see, however, is at inside or outside forward. Howard Moore was not terribly impressive on Saturday and the Gills' former boss, Fred Cox, still has his sights set on inside man Brian Gibbs.

APPROACH

He confirmed yesterday (Monday) that he is still "keenly interested" in Gibbs and that he has approached Mr. Hayward about him going to Bourne-mouth.

Terms have not yet been talked about but it is fairly common knowledge that Mr. Cox has for some time felt that Gibbs would provide the experience he needs with the young team he has gathered since moving back to the seaside club.

Meanwhile Mr. Hayward is faced with the problem of either hoping his senior squad will hit their beginning of the season form or making changes. The team has not been quite the same since Charlie Crickmore went to Rotherham but new blood could make all the difference.

Peter Hall has shaped well since he came from Bedford but he was not fit on Saturday. And, while he has the strength to worry any defence, he is not the complete answer to the gap left with the absence of thrustful Crickmore who could cross a ball as well as any player in the Third Division.

FANTASTIC HUNT GOAL SAVES A POINT

Gillingham 1, Brighton 1

A FANTASTIC 40-yard shot in the last minute from full-back Dennis Hunt on Saturday saved Gillingham from what would have been their lowest spot in the table since Basil Hayward took over at Priestfield Stadium.

Confident Brighton had done enough to deserve the marginal lead they held but, as everything seemed set for Gillingham's fourth defeat on the trot, Hunt loomed up out of the defence.

Brighton predictably scurried back to their own penalty box, leaving the experienced HUNT unhindered to move over the half-way line where he decided to have a crack himself and sent in a chip-shot over the mass of jerseys into the bottom corner of the net, past a dumbfounded keeper, Brian Powney.

Later, the burly fullback, who last scored three seasons ago against Workington, agreed it was the finest goal he had bagged in the nine years he has been with the club. He did it, incidentally, only minutes after

ILL-LUCK

Gibbs' ill-luck still dogged him and he saw a tremendous effort go astray in Gillingham's first serious attempt in the 21st minute. Once again Brown laid it on for him with a finely-timed pass. Gibbs saw the opening and charged through, beating two defenders to take it out to the angle, but his desperate shot hit the side rigging.

The second glaring chance came after the change round when again Brown put him through but the ball hit Powney as he dived to save.

Brown, who had otherwise given a competent performance, made one bad mistake and here perhaps reflected the need for someone to have a go when, just after half-time, he had the chance to put Gillingham in front.

The ball came down to him from a high Gibbs' header but, although he was only two yards from the goal, instead of hitting it, he crouched to head back to Gibbs when he could quite easily have hooked it into the net.

Fresh from their 3-0 win over Gillingham on Boxing Day, Brighton were much quicker on and off the ball through Gillingham's experience at the rear kept them from taking an early lead.

The seaside club had their first chance in the seventh minute when dangerous Brian Tawse moved in to a weak Ray Bailey clearance and forced Simpson to dive full length with a hard shot.

Bailey made amends a minute later when he set up a good attack with an outpass to Meredith and picked up the return to hit it inches wide of the post.

Bill Williams did well to hold the midfield firm but he was forced to clear when Tawse put in a low cross.

Veteran Charlie Livesey also had his chance when he picked up a cross but he slipped as he squared to shoot.

Then Gillingham piled on the pressure with efforts from Brown and Gibbs that were followed up by a terrific 30-yard shot from incoming Bailey. And, just before the whistle, Riddick set up a chance for Gibbs to race in only to see his shot held at full length by Powney.

Brighton's only real contribution to the second half was the Napier goal, quickly followed up

by full-back John Templeman who raced into the attack unmarked but found Simpson in immaculate form when the big keeper flung himself at the defender's hook shot to clear from the edge of the box.

By now, however, Gillingham had regained their confidence—largely through the lead given them by Meredith who found some of the old fire to play havoc with the Brighton defenders.

With Templeman frequently out of position, Brighton found themselves funnelling back quickly to cut off the countless crosses put in by the tenacious Meredith.

He even tried a shot himself after Riddick missed a header.



Gillingham full-back, Dennis Hunt, saw out 1967 in style on Saturday with the finest goal of his career — a remarkable 40-yard dipping shot that pulled Gillingham level in the 89th minute. [M4974]

but Powney emulated his counterpart and pulled off a flying save.

Gould and Tawse continued to test the Gillingham defence but by now it was virtually all Gillingham, and Brown saw a good effort cleared off the line by Dalton.

In the dying minutes Powney again pulled off a save to cheat Gibbs of a goal but, although Gillingham came well within striking distance several times in the second half, it was painfully obvious that the front runners were in desperate need of the right kind of finisher to round off the undoubted superiority they had in approach.

GILLINGHAM: Simpson; Furie, Hunt; Machin, Williams, Bailey; Moore, Gibbs, Riddick, Brown and Meredith.

BRIGHTON: Powney; Templeman, Dalton; Gail, John Napier, Hickman; Wilkinson, Livesey, Kit Napier, Gould, Tawse.

Standards: 2 1/2



Gillingham striker Brian Gibbs clashes with centre-half Napier during one of Gillingham's frequent upfield bursts Saturday. Skipper Gordon Riddick is following through support.

By

M. Hitchings

taking a knock in the mouth which gave him a two inch gash inside his lip and made it almost impossible for him to talk.

Hunt's remarkable effort brought fans swarming onto the pitch but the Brighton supporters were just as elated with the goal their team chalked up in the 50th minute — for like Hunt's, it was one in a million.

A free-kick was awarded just outside the box. Inside left Wally Gould teed it up and, as Gillingham sewed up the chances of a cross coming off, KIT NAPIER roared in and smacked it just out of reach overhead and saw it sail into the far corner of the net past a helpless John Simpson.

MEMORABLE

Apart from these two memorable goals, however, the game was largely dominated by the defences. Although in the second half, Gillingham had the chances to pick up at least four goals.

But, once again, they fell down because of the frustrating absence of someone prepared to hustle in the penalty box.

Skipper Gordon Riddick went close to filling the gap but he frequently came unstuck by rushing in too much instead of either leaving it to the front runners or waiting to cash in on the hurried defensive tactics put up by the Brighton rear-guard.

He was, however, unlucky on two occasions when hard-working John Meredith laid on two perfect crosses for him.

The first came soon after Napier's goal when the blond flank-man sent in a high free kick. Riddick out-climbed the defence to get his head to it a yard from the line but he failed to connect properly and the ball went wide.

Then a low cross found him but all he could muster was a weak left-footed shot that was easily held by Powney.

Bill Brown worked well in the shadow of bustling centre half John Napier and time and again gave Brian Gibbs the kind of passes he likes to crash his way through. But both players were short of that extra bite needed to round off the often clever moves that put them within striking distance.

No. 29

H.T. 0-0

attend: 6,154



desperate effort by Gordon Riddick to rob full-back Dalton as he attempts to clear the danger with outside-left Howard Moore on hand. [P125]



Brighton keeper, Brian Powney, saves yet another dangerous situation as Gibbs, Moore and Brown all challenge in the penalty box.