

FA CUP / West Bromwich Albion will not relish their manager's reaction if they lose to another non-League side

Gould's fearsome bark surpassed by his bite

"IT'S A volatile game," says Bobby Gould and ponders the statement's truth for a mere moment. "But then I am volatile."

For that reason he is probably well suited to the FA Cup, with its diversity of appeal in quality of teams, geography and range of emotions. Indeed, he helped build the Coventry side which went on to win the 1987 competition after he had been sacked, then won it in 1988 with Wimbledon.

One senses that the West Bromwich Albion team he now manages is unlikely to repeat against Marlow today the crime of last January, when they lost in the third round at home to another Diadora League team, Woking, a result which led to Mr Gould replacing Brian Talbot. One senses that they dare not make the same mistake again.

For Mr Gould's looks can deceive. When anger creases that boyish face, he can be fearsome. Those who know him and have tasted what he terms "my bark"—such as the Birmingham journalist with whom he is currently feuding—will probably see the description of volatile as a euphemism.

But it is possible to forgive Mr Gould much, for everything he does, he does it for the love of football. It was probably his enthusiasm as much as any technical ability that persuaded the directors of a depressed club to hire him.



Ian Ridley meets the seasoned Cup campaigner for whom life is just another word for football

There have been two great motivations in his life, the first coming at the age of 15 when he was told he would not be good enough to be a League footballer. Being the type who sees setbacks as opportunities to grow, he made his debut for Coventry City at the age of 17.

"I only ever wanted to be a footballer," he says. Now he finds himself having to work on ways to stretch players lacking the same drive. "I just don't see people loving the game as we used to. I don't see players with that pleasure and desire. That upsets and disappoints me."

The other watershed in his life was the death of his father—"he was my mate," he says wistfully—in 1986. Two years later, as Wimbledon won the Cup at Wembley, he would tearfully dedicate his own part in it to his father.

But before that, it was a difficult period for Mr Gould, who had become a window cleaner for a few months—learning, he says, some humility in the process—after being sacked by Coventry.

He returned to Bristol Rovers, who had given him his first job, before Wimbledon's managing director, Sam Hammam, imaginatively chose him to succeed Dave Bassett.

He revealed himself a remarkable spotter of talent during this period, signing, among others, Stuart Pearce for Coventry from Wealdstone and Keith Curle for Wimbledon from Bristol Rovers.

He even persuaded the erudite but then unemployed Don Howe to join Wimbledon as a coach. "It was like nobody asking Miss World for a dance," he said charmingly at the time.

Matters soured at Plough Lane, however, and in the summer of 1990 Mr Gould left a job he would have liked to have kept for life because he was unable to accept some of Mr Hammam's conditions.

Therein surfaced some of Mr Gould's stubbornness. "He wouldn't back down and I wouldn't back down," he admits.

It is a character trait that has resurfaced at Albion, with his refusal to talk to a critical local reporter. But it is a situation that also points up the contradictions that make up the man, for Mr Gould is one of the game's most open per-

sonalities and, indeed, the Albion dressing room is available to the media within 20 minutes of the final whistle.

"The dressing room should be the strongest room in the club," says Mr Gould and, typically, he took draconian measures to strengthen one that "didn't smell right" when he took over. He sent the squad to an army barracks for pre-season training and motivated them with threats of transfers.

He has made mistakes, he admits, but is prepared to risk making them. "Life is not a rehearsal," he says.

He has also brought in Ronnie Allen—twice a manager of the club and Cup-winning player for them in 1954—to help with coaching and advice.

"He said he didn't realise how much he had missed it all until he came back," says Mr Gould by way of a response to the question of why he keeps drawing at football's well.

Together they have guided Albion to the upper echelons of the Third Division they grace for the first time in their history.

Today, meanwhile, there could be a family Cup treble, with his brother Trevor watching over Aylesbury as they take on Kidderminster and son Jonathan possibly keeping goal for Halifax against Witton Albion.

Compared to Bobby, though, their reaction to their respective results is unlikely to be as, shall we say, volatile.



Bobby Gould... looks can be deceiving. When anger creases that boyish face, he can be quite fearsome

Bridlington's boy from the black stuff

By John Ley

MOST players' preferred way of preparing for an important game is a cup of cocoa, a quiet night in front of the television and early to bed.

For Lee Harvey, the night before today's FA Cup first round tie between Bridlington Town and York City was spent down a Barnsley pit shaft.

Harvey, 27, the Bridlington midfielder, clocked on at the Barnsley Main Colliery at 6.30 last night for a gruelling six-and-a-quarter hour shift before crawling back to bed in the middle of the night.

That is a tale that epitomises the continuing romance of the FA Cup.

The tiring working routine does not seem to bother Harvey, who has spent 10 years as a miner after failing to impress in trials with Huddersfield and Barnsley.

The crowd at Bridlington's Queensgate ground for today's game between the Yorkshire/Humberside rivals has been limited to 1,700.

But according to Gary Wat-

son, the former Bradford player turned self-employed carpet-fitter, and Bridlington manager, those present won't believe that Harvey has spent the night working.

"He goes home, has a few hours' sleep, puts his boots on and plays as if he has prepared normally."

"Professionals just don't know what life-style some part-timers have to endure, but we all have mouths to feed."

If Bridlington, of the HFS Loans First Division, are confident of victory over York, Crawley believe they deserve a win against Northampton after spending £33,000 on ground improvements at Town Mead just to stage the game.

The West Sussex side are negotiating for grants from the Football Trust and the local council to cover the costs, but at the moment the money is coming from their own hard-earned funds.

Crawley, of the Beazer Homes League, play Fourth Division Northampton, who lost to Barnet in last season's



Lee Harvey at Barnsley Main Colliery

second round and went out to non-League opposition four times in the 1970s.

Memories of a famous Cup run 12 seasons ago will be revived when Harlow travel to Peterborough. In the 1979-80 season Harlow swept aside the challenge of Southend and Leicester City before losing 4-3 to Graham Taylor's Watford in the fourth round.

In sweeper Gary Armstrong, 35, Harlow possess a player whose Cup experience could prove invaluable.

By his own admission, the highlight of an otherwise unfruitful League career with Gillingham, Crewe, Wimbledon and Barnet came in 1984 when he was part of the Gillingham side that held Everton to two goalless draws in

the fourth round of the competition, before being ousted in a second replay.

However, although his Cup aspirations ended in disappointment that year, Armstrong did eventually fulfil every footballer's dream of playing in a cup final—in the unlikely location of Finland.

In 1987 he played for premier division side Kemi in their 2-0 defeat at the hands of Rovaniemi in front of 15,000 fans in the Helsinki National Stadium.

Slough will attract a crowd of 3,500 for their Berkshire derby against Third Division Reading and have welcomed back into their ranks coach Mickey Walsh, the former FC Porto striker, who travelled to Portugal to advise Spurs in their recent European Cup Winners' Cup victory.

Yeovil, the GM Vauxhall Conference's bottom club, attempt to maintain a glorious Cup tradition when they meet Walsall.

The Somerset side, making their 43rd appearance in the first round—a non-League record—will also attempt to

equal the Conference record of 14 victories against League opposition, which is held by Altrincham.

Lincoln United, who visit Huddersfield, will use the proceeds from their Cup run to finance the completion of new dressing rooms at their Ashby Avenue ground. Yet, ironically, they nearly missed out on the cash because the directors were reluctant to pay the £75 Cup entry fee.

Runcorn, who switched their home tie against Second Division Tranmere from Canal Street to Prenton Park, will be hoping that John Aldridge fails in his quest to score his 500th League and Cup goal.

Mike McCartney will enjoy a fair share of memories this afternoon when FA Cup action crosses the border into Scotland.

Today Mr McCartney, who played alongside Kevin Keegan, Alan Ball, Mike Channon and Charlie George at Southampton, leads Scottish side Gretna out on to their 2,000-capacity ground to face Fourth Division Rochdale.