

I won't make Hoddle's mistakes

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EXCLUSIVE

A MONTH into his new job and Tony Adams freely admits he's made mistakes and this management mullarkey "ain't easy" - but he's absolutely loving life at the bottom.

The former Arsenal and England captain knew nothing but success as a player.

But he has deliberately avoided what may be termed the "Glenn Hoddle approach" to coaching by learning his trade with a struggling Second Division outfit.

"I'm having a ball," says the new Wycombe boss. "I'm trying to learn from the mistakes made by George Graham, Arsene Wenger and Terry Venables. I haven't called any of them to ask advice but I'm always thinking how George, Arsene or Terry would have dealt with things."

"I'm still glad I haven't gone in at the top. There would have been more pressure, more responsibility. I would have had to learn instantly."

Which brings us to the man he believes made the biggest mistake of all his ex-gaffers.

"I think Glenn is a very good coach," he says. "But I think he was too young, and that he didn't have enough experience."

"He started coaching at 33 I think, so by the time he's 39 he's got the bloody England job. I think we needed someone a little bit experienced at that level. We were going for a World Cup. I think that, and other experiences he's had, killed one of our best coaches. I really do."

Hoddle might have been sacked by Spurs, but his managerial career is hardly dead. Still, Adams appears haunted by Hod's failure at national level and is determined not to become another victim of "too-much-too-young syndrome."

His charges might be in awe of the Highbury legend's achievements but all his caps and medals count for nought right now. "I've won nothing as a manager. The days when I played are gone. I've done it, it's over."

He sees no reason why great players should make great managers. Among the biographies and sports psychology tomes on his shelves is an analysis of his hero Wenger, a fairly average player, and he often quotes the urbane Frenchman during the interview.

But trying to emulate Wenger's relaxed-but-scientific approach is just not on at Wycombe. "I can't do what Arsene does because I haven't got the resources. I can't give them massages or bring them in for a jacuzzi because we ain't got a jacuzzi. So, instead, I'll give them a day off and they'll go and eat fish and chips down the road and go bowling."



HOD MAN OUT: Adams (left) and Hoddle

"I'm not Arsene. If I see something wrong I say something. And I do raise my voice. The other night my right-winger hadn't put a cross in for 45 minutes and I told him he'd be off after 15 minutes if that happened in the second half."

"Arsene didn't really teach anything. George was more of a teacher. So, at this level, I'm more of a Graham than a Wenger."

Being admirably self-critical, Adams admits that his treatment of the right-winger was wrong. "He turned into a frightened rabbit. He kept looking over his shoulder at me."

"I've made other mistakes. Against Brentford, who are very physical, I couldn't decide whether to bring on a centre-half. Then they get a set-play and score. Mind you, I had John Gorman in my ear and someone else in my other ear - but I ended up doing nothing."

Gorman, a long-time Hoddle assistant, has now left the club. The former England No 2 took over as caretaker after Lawrie Sanchez was sacked and at first it looked like he would work happily alongside Adams at Wycombe.

"It was just awkward," admits Adams. "We'd come to the same conclusion, John more than me. He felt he was getting in my way, and I felt it. There was a possibility of Glenn getting something and John joining him. But there were no rows."

Having Gorman around would stop him making his own mark on the club. He wants to succeed or fail on his own merits. Which is why he hasn't given Arsene a bell.

"I have to live or die by my own decisions. I have to be myself. I'd rather die on my feet than survive on my knees. You can't take a coat off when you come through the door here at this club and be a manager - and then put on another coat when you go out. I think Glenn tried to do that at times, to keep it separate."

"We've talked about Arsene, Terry and George but at the end of the day I'm Tony Adams. And I'm trying to do it my way here."

