

Signing off and looking forward to a new age



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PARKLIFE

I WOULD like to kick off by thanking all the fans who stayed behind after last week's match against Wrexham to make my last league game at Adams Park such a memorable occasion.

I'm sorry I couldn't stay out there to thank you all but my emotions got the better of me and I had to disappear with a few tears in my eyes.

It really was a moment I will never forget. Adams Park has been a second home to me over the past ten years and it really hit home on Saturday.

I'm still going to be around the place for a bit though and coming up on Friday May 28 I've got my testimonial cricket match against the Wycombe Warriors at London Road.

It should be a good evening and I've even managed to drag my former teammates Martin Taylor and Jamie Bates out of retirement for that one.

Talking of retirement, I've got no plans to do that just yet and I'm still hoping to be able to play somewhere in the Football League next season.

To that end I'm having an operation to clean up my right knee on Tuesday. There's nothing seriously wrong, but I want to be in tip-top shape for pre-season.

When I do finally hang up my playing boots I must admit I would love to have a crack at management.

I am taking my UEFA B coaching badge on Monday and would like to do my A licence in the future. But I look around and think the odds are stacked against me becoming a manager.

I don't think my colour helps. I can only think of two black managers in the league, Leroy Rosenoir at Torquay and Keith Alexander at Lincoln.

That is an incredibly low percentage when you think of how many black players are in the game.

The FA does an awful lot of work on its Kick Racism out campaign but maybe they should direct it as much at the people in the boardrooms as they do at Joe Bloggs on the terraces.

Hopefully the situation will change soon. I thought it was going to happen when Chelsea appointed Ruud Gullitt as manager. They really went up in my estimation then and I think if he had gone on and been really successful at Chelsea in the way that Arsene Wenger has been at Arsenal then maybe it would have opened the door for more black managers.

As this will be my final column for the Bucks Free Press I would like to sign off by thanking you all for reading it over the last few years.

It has been a pleasure writing and playing for you and I hope that next season is a better one all round and that you the supporters have plenty to cheer about.