



My 10 Most Memorable Matches by Bob Owen

1. v Newham 3-2 Southern Counties Cup Final, 1993

Fearful tales of Newham's giant centre forward, 'Amos', proved to be completely correct. After 'Jack' Drew had put us 2-0 up early on, Amos created havoc, scoring twice and forcing two more players to retire injured. With the roar of 'Glawster', 'Glawster', ringing in the team's ears, a great move down the right ended with 'Kes' Rogers appearing out of the top left corner of the video screen to score the winner with four minutes left. If you could bottle the complete and absolute joy of that moment and the next 30 minutes (or was it days?), you could sell it for a million. Utter delirium.

2. v St Albans 2-1 Southern Counties Cup Final, 2003

This game is second only because I fear time might be playing tricks when recollecting 1993. Having already been beaten by St Albans in the Witney Cup semi final and having to make the long trip to Clarence Park to play the game, the omens were maybe against us. But winning the toss to use the 'palatial' home changing room was the beginning of our change of luck. After a goalless first half, captain Scott Montgomery gave us the lead eight minutes after the break, but the soaking up of relentless St Albans pressure showed this team at its resilient best. A minute into injury time - Campbell's save, Dean's set up and Twyman's finish brought bedlam to the Gloucester ranks and the host's consolation with the last kick of the game took not one bit of gloss off a magnificent day. Glorious, just glorious.

3. v Jersey 2-1, Play-Off 2005

Both Gloucester and Jersey had come through 5 days of group games with 100% records and lined up on the island's answer to Wembley in front of a large and expectant crowd. The hosts took the lead on 12 minutes, but Gloucester came roaring back to first equalise through Niall Wellington and then go in front with a fantastic 'on the full' volley from Ben Wasley just before the interval. Jersey had more of the possession after the break, but with the city team working manfully to limit the islanders' direct scoring opportunities and Luke Foran in inspired form in goal, we ended up 2-1 winners. The weather had been great all week - but that afternoon the sun really did shine. Absolutely fab.

4. v Swindon 5-1 Southern Counties Cup Final, 2009

The last game of a glorious season ended, for once, just as the script said it should. Two years previously a very good Gloucester side had gone down 0-1 to Wandsworth in the final on the very same Thatcham Town pitch, but this day was different. Ryan Williams put the city team ahead and Edjidja Mbunga added a second. Four minutes after the break a great finish from Karnell Chambers made it three before Swindon reduced the arrears following a free kick. Chambers however grabbed his second after Mbunga's shot had been saved and Lewis Fogg wrapped things up four minutes from time. As Lou Reed once sang, 'It's just a perfect day'. And it was.

5. v Oxford City 2-2 Southern Counties Cup Semi Final, 1991

Four days after returning from an exhausting Jersey week we found ourselves 2-1 down and on our way out of the Southern Counties Cup. With 2 minutes left we switched Shayne Bradley from left midfield to right wing. Sixty seconds later he cut inside and from just outside the corner of the penalty area, struck an exocet into the the top far corner, provoking our one and only (minor) spectator /substitutes pitch invasion. Rumour has it they were trying to avoid Lin Harvey charging down the touchline at the time. Likely story! Exhaustion.

6. v Liverpool FC 1-6, 2009

How can a 6-1 defeat be in your top ten? Well, it wasn't just the game, it was the day. Firstly, for the team to be thought good enough to be invited to play Liverpool FC; secondly, to just be there; thirdly, to deserve to be there; fourthly....how long have we got? We had a tour round the academy, we had a tour round Anfield, we played the game - we had 7 chances to their 9....they took theirs; we were rarely outplayed and the team did themselves proud. Liverpool v Gloucester? Awesome, just awesome.

7. v Deeside 1-0, 1989

A promising opening to the season really bore fruit with our first ever victory over a Deeside team with Michael Owen as their rampaging centre forward - and the only time we ever beat them on their own ground. The previous season our visit to Queensferry had resulted in a six goal thrashing, so for goalkeeper Matthew Gregg who had played in that particular defeat, this was a very sweet moment. Richard Hayward grabbed the winner midway through the second half, thus making himself the subject of one of my favourite photographs. Utter Joy.

8. v Bristol 5-4 Cotswold League, 2007

One of the most unlikely and amazing comebacks effectively won us the 2006/07 Cotswold League. Bristol was the opposition and Clifton College the venue, as Zack Kotwica gave Gloucester, playing down the slope, an early advantage. Back came the home side however to lead 3-1 at the interval and soon afterwards they made it 4-1. It would have been five but for a great tackle from Matt Williams, but with 12 minutes remaining Kotwica reduced the arrears and Niall Morgan made it 4-3. Kotwica completed his hat trick with two minutes remaining to seemingly give us a share of the points, but with barely 10 seconds left on the clock the star striker converted Niall's cross to complete an amazing recovery. Breathless.

9. v High Wycombe 2-0 Southern Counties Cup Final, 1991

After another last minute equaliser in the replay of game number 5 above - we eventually qualified for our first Southern Counties Final. It wasn't spectacular - more a case of an extremely good side winning well. Will Steadman gave us an early lead, but Colin Russell's clincher was a great goal, starting with Sammy Harris at full back. The game completed 2 years of unprecedented success - and well and truly put us on the Schools' Football map! Justice.

10. v Deeside, 1987

Deeside's first ever visit to Gloucester. To cut a long story short, we were two down in front of a big crowd within 58 seconds to the quickest and most professional looking side we had ever come across. Quick calculations revealed a final score of 122-0 if that scoring rate was maintained, but we settled down and were level by half time thanks to Jason Merrett and a Neil Mustoe free kick. With eight minutes remaining, Chris Leek amazingly put us ahead, but Deeside equalised with four minutes left to tie up a game which had just about everything. Sales of Grecian 2000 doubled over the next few days and if we had known what the next twenty odd years would have in store, we'd have invested heavily in the grey hair share market immediately. Exhilarating.

Great comebacks

Game number 8 (above) was without doubt our greatest fightback of the last 20-odd years. But here are 5 more that are worth recounting:

1. v St Albans 2004. Very similar to the Bristol game above. 1-0 up, 1-4 down, 2 great saves from Luke Foran with 15 minutes left before Tom Warren, Jamie Edge, Jake Mills and a bullet header from Niall Wellington following Jon Blackwell's corner with 2 minutes remaining gave us a 5-4 victory.
2. v Brent 2009. 0-1 down after 2 minutes, 2-1 up through Ashley Bird and Tyrese Sutherland, 2-2 at half time. 54 seconds remaining, Brent go 3-2 up but with 18 seconds left, Rory Wilkinson converts Mike Assheton's cross for 3-3. Extra time and a double from Bird to complete his hat trick and a last minute effort from Walker gave us a scarcely believable 6-3 victory.
3. v Bristol 2008. 0-2 down with 12 minutes remaining, Dan Webb gave us a lifeline with a fine finish before finding the top corner for a second time to tie matters up. With 2 minutes to go, Lee Marshall's pass and Jamal Lawrence's cool finish saw Gloucester run out 3-2 winners.
4. v Redbridge 1998. The last game of the Jersey Festival. Redbridge roared into a 3-goal lead inside the opening quarter and looked likely to score a hatful. However, some resolute defensive work ensured there were no further goals before half time. Midway through the second period Jamie Storrie pulled a goal back, Aaron Fowke's brace brought us level and Stuart Griffith's late effort won it at 4-3. 'Good effort mate,' said the New Zealand ref at the end. And good effort it was.
5. v Shrewsbury 1998. Two goals down at half time, Aaron Fowke set up Ryan Duggan to grab Gloucester's first 10 minutes after the interval. Mike Noakes gave Stuart Griffith the opportunity to chip an equaliser into the top corner, before Fowke laid on Duggan's match winner with 2 minutes left. And the Shrewsbury goalkeeper on the end of this fine comeback was....Joe Hart.