

'An incredible era to play in and a fabulous account of what happened.'

Clive Allen

GARETH DACE



SPURS IN
THE 80s

HOT SHOT

TOTTENHAM

HODDLE, HUMMEL
AND HAZARDS



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79/80 – THE EMERGENCE OF A GHOD

DAINES
PERRYMAN MILLER McALLISTER HUGHTON
YORATH
HODDLE ARDILES
VILLA
ARMSTRONG JONES

THE PREVIOUS season had its ups and downs but, having returned to the First Division after a one-year hiatus, Spurs had consolidated in mid-table and went into the 1979 off-season hopeful – but not expectant – that better times were coming. Spurs fan Paul Malshinger sets the scene:

After the euphoria of Ardiles and Villa in 1978, it all went very flat. That first season had been disappointing and we hoped that 79/80 would see more signings of that calibre – but we didn't! Other than the Argentines, Hoddle and Perryman, our squad was short on quality, even though we had a few good youngsters about. The likes of Pratt and Naylor were coming to the end of their careers and we had not successfully replaced Pat Jennings.

Heavy defeats in the first half of 78/79 against Liverpool and Arsenal encouraged Burkinshaw to turn to the exceptional talent coming through the youth team, nurtured by Peter Shreeve.

The best example was defender Paul 'Maxi' Miller, who was given his debut at Arsenal in April 1979. Though Spurs

narrowly lost 1-0, Miller impressed and kept his place for the remainder of the season. Mark Falco and Stuart Beavon had also made their first-team debuts. Terry Gibson had signed as an apprentice in the summer of 1979. He and his peers benefitted from Keith Burkinshaw's insistence on creating an under-15s team, as Terry explains:

By the mid-70s, there was no youth system as such. You signed at 14 as a 'schoolboy', which meant training twice a week at the ball court at White Hart Lane with coaches Ron Henry and Robbie Stepney. There was no games programme until Keith decided the under-15s should play matches on Sunday mornings at the training ground. Peter Shreeve was the manager but Keith was always there watching and would give input to team talks. He knew us all by first name and it's no surprise that so many of us got into the first team.

As for the first team, after the customary post-season international tour – Spurs travelled to Kuwait, Malaysia, Japan and, finally, Bermuda between mid-May and early June – summer saw no new immediate arrivals.

Appearing frequently was Tony Galvin, who had enjoyed a dramatic rise to prominence. The Yorkshire-born Irishman had been playing non-league football for Goole Town while also on a teacher training programme (he had already completed a degree in Russian Studies). Bill Nicholson, by now the club's chief scout, had watched Galvin and recommended that Keith Burkinshaw sign the 21-year-old in the summer of 1978.

Galvin spent much of the 78/79 season in the reserves and was encouraged, by Burkinshaw, to complete his teacher training, so spent his weekdays in Nottingham, returning to London at the weekend to play in reserve-team games, also making one appearance for the first team. With his course completed, Galvin joined the first-team squad on a full-time basis in the summer of 1979.

Galvin was a winger and added to the abundance of creative players who could make goals. He may not have possessed the flair or natural skill of Hoddle, Ardiles or Villa but his energy and hard work provided a balance in midfield.

The problem for Spurs hadn't been lack of creativity. It was a failure to take the chances created. In 78/79, only Peter Taylor, a winger, had hit double figures in the league. Gerry Armstrong (1), Chris Jones (five), Colin Lee (seven) and Ian Moores (0) scored just 13 goals between them. The 18-year-old Mark Falco had scored on his debut at the end of the season but wasn't yet considered a senior player.

Spurs' first acquisition of the summer was 29-year-old Terry Yorath, the captain of Wales, from Coventry and he brought leadership qualities to strengthen the starting XI.

Aside from Yorath, the team for the opening day of the season at home to Middlesbrough was virtually identical to that which finished the previous season, with Colin Lee still playing out of his natural position as right-back. John Lacy, Perryman and Gordon Smith made up the rest of the defence. John Pratt and Yorath provided the balance for the creative trio of Ardiles, Hoddle and Villa in midfield, with Falco selected for just his second start as a lone striker. Chris Jones was the substitute.

Barry Daines was selected in goal, despite the fact that Milija Aleksic had started in each of the pre-season matches. This continued a pattern, since Pat Jennings had left in 1977, of never quite knowing who was Spurs' best goalkeeper. Mark Kendall had been selected most frequently the previous season, with 23 league appearances, while Daines – long-term understudy to Jennings – had started the season before featuring just twice after October. Aleksic ended the season as first-choice custodian.

It proved to be a hugely disappointing start to the season, as Middlesbrough won 3-1 at White Hart Lane, with Hoddle's late consolation the only moment of joy for the home crowd.

The mood didn't improve; Spurs were thumped 4-0 at Norwich and then lost 3-1 at Stoke, where the Potters' quick forward, Garth Crooks, impressed with two goals.

The League Cup, the last trophy Spurs had won back in 1973, paired Spurs with Manchester United in the second round, with the first leg taking place at White Hart Lane on 29 August. Spurs had met United in the FA Cup quarter-finals the previous season and were knocked out following a 2-0 replay defeat at Old Trafford.

In many ways, United and Spurs were kindred spirits. Both were synonymous with playing attractive football and had done so successfully, winning league championships, cup competitions and being victorious in Europe during the 60s. Both clubs went into decline during the 70s, each suffering the ignominy of relegation before coming straight back up.

By the end of the 70s, United had established themselves as 'cup specialists' – they may only have won one of the three FA Cup Finals they appeared in between 1976 and 1979 but had used those experiences to build a team that was expected to finally challenge Liverpool for the league title.

Under the lights at White Hart Lane, Burkinshaw brought Paul Miller back for the first time that season and, due to injuries in the full-back position, selected Chris Hughton, who had graduated through the club's youth system. Hughton, a right-footer, would play on the left side. He had joined Spurs as a 13-year-old and only turned professional in the summer of 1979, having completed an apprenticeship as a lift engineer.

Spurs secured their first win of the season, courtesy of a 2-1 victory in which the much-maligned John Pratt scored early and then Hoddle added a memorable second. Yorath played a quick free kick forwards to Hoddle, who played an instinctive one-two with Ardiles on the edge of the area. This element alone spoke volumes of the chemistry which had developed between the two. Ardiles's lay-off presented an opportunity for Hoddle, who duly obliged with a sublime strike. With both feet off the ground, his volley cannoned off the stanchion.

Sadly, the goal counted for little in the context of the tie when United pulled one back – a valuable away goal. United would go on to win the second leg 3-1, knocking Spurs out of the League Cup.

In between the cup ties, Spurs did finally record their first league victory of the season with a 2-1 win against Manchester City. Hughton and Miller retained their places in the starting XI but it was Hoddle, again, who earned the plaudits, scoring one of the goals. One win became two the following weekend when Brighton were beaten, Gerry Armstrong scoring his first goal in more than a year. The game was a memorable one for Peter Southey, another young full-back who made what turned out to be his only first-team appearance.

Southey's story is the most tragic of the decade. He played the rest of the season in the reserves but during the following summer's pre-season, he struggled during cross-country runs. Encouraged to seek medical advice, blood tests revealed that he had leukaemia and he sadly passed away in December 1983.

September began with a heavy 5-2 defeat at Southampton but Spurs then embarked on a nine-game unbeaten streak that included four consecutive league wins. In one of the most incident-packed games of the decade, Spurs won 2-1 at Leeds, despite having to replace injured goalkeeper Barry Daines in the 13th minute, with Hoddle taking over between the sticks.

It wasn't the first time an outfield player had 'donned' the green jersey for Spurs mid-game but the last known incident occurred in 1937 when Les Howe replaced Jack Hall in goal. Hoddle recalls in his 2021 book *Playmaker* that when it became clear Daines couldn't continue, Steve Perryman and Don McAllister were holding an inquest to decide who should play in goal. Hoddle, one of the tallest players, was asked if he fancied it. In his youthful naivety, he replied that he used to play in goal 'over the park'. Instantly regretting it, Hoddle was thrown the gloves and goalkeeper's jersey. Hoddle wrote:

I had no idea what I was doing. Although I loved going in goal, I had no idea where to stand in an actual game. I was like a cat on a hot tin roof. It was total panic.

By half-time, the score was 1-1 but Spurs were now also down to ten men after Paul Miller was sent off.

Hodde was able to seek advice from assistant manager Pat Welton – a former professional goalkeeper – at half-time, with Welton lecturing him about positioning and how to organise the defence. After the break, not only did the Spurs defence protect Hoddle and avoid conceding, they also managed to score the decisive goal through Chris Jones.

Three further wins followed the heroics in West Yorkshire. The third of those wins – 1-0 against reigning European champions Nottingham Forest – was decided by another exquisite goal from Hoddle. Aleksic's long kick was headed on by Chris Jones to Gerry Armstrong, who, in turn, nodded the ball into the path of Hoddle. What happened next lives long in the memory for all of the 49,038 who were honoured to have witnessed it live. The ball dropped just inside the right corner of the Forest penalty area and Hoddle acrobatically thumped a volley past Peter Shilton in front of the Park Lane End.

The ball hadn't touched the floor but Hoddle's technique to strike a moving ball in mid-air made the headlines on that weekend's TV highlights packages and helped to alert the nation about this precocious talent. The goal was scored from almost the same blade of grass that he'd scored the incredible goal against Manchester United in the League Cup just eight weeks prior.

Spurs were momentarily up into fifth going into a tough run of fixtures against Liverpool, Everton and Manchester United. With Spurs still seeking a first win at Anfield since way back in 1912, the year the Titanic sank, Liverpool were too strong for them and won by the narrow margin of 2-1. A week later, Spurs returned to Merseyside, drawing 1-1 with Everton.

Manchester United came back to White Hart Lane on 1 December. Hoddle scored again but United maintained their position at the top of Division One with a 2-1 victory.

It was a great period for Hoddle. He'd finally been given a long-awaited full England debut in the Euro 1980 qualifier against Bulgaria at Wembley in November. His wait was extended by an additional 24 hours when the game was

postponed due to heavy fog. When it took place the following evening, Hoddle didn't disappoint, scoring a sumptuous goal as England won 2-0.

Hoddle became the first Spurs player since Martin Peters, in 1974, to represent England and the lack of full internationals reflected the turmoil Spurs had suffered on the field during the mid-70s. Now, Hoddle being selected for England symbolised the rebirth of Spurs as a serious club in English football.

For anyone of a Spurs persuasion, it was baffling that Hoddle had to wait so long before making his full debut. There was something of a clamour in the press for his inclusion but he had also developed an unfair reputation, particularly among northern club supporters, for being something of a luxury player – or a 'southern softie' – which earned him the nickname 'Glenda'.

Despite his goal and impressive performance against Bulgaria, Hoddle lost his place to Terry McDermott for the next match. It was a sign of things to come for Hoddle's England career.

Back in Spurs' lilywhite, Hoddle scored twice at Bristol City in a 3-1 win, with Miller netting his first-ever goal for the club, but it would be the last victory before a run of three successive defeats over Christmas – the last of these coming away at Arsenal on Boxing Day. It was a fourth successive north London derby defeat – the first time since 1953 that either club had enjoyed such a prolonged spell of success over the other.

Spurs' final game of the 70s was a home match against Stoke City at White Hart Lane on 29 December. John Pratt scored the only goal of the game but the afternoon was most memorable for young striker Terry Gibson, who made his senior debut. Born just around the north circular in Walthamstow, Gibson had only turned 17 the week beforehand.

Gibson recalls the circumstances around his debut:

I'd only signed as an apprentice that summer and had been playing in the youth team and reserves but I remember being asked to train with the first team the day before. I had no expectation of being named in the first-team squad until

Keith called me into his office back at White Hart Lane and told me he was thinking of playing me. Only three months ago I'd been on the terrace myself. It was really surreal because Steve Perryman, my hero, then walked in and Keith asked him whether he thought I was ready!

On the day of the game, I arrived at the stadium and it wasn't until I sheepishly walked into the changing room to see my boots laid out and my name against the No.9 on the team sheet. I was excited rather than nervous. This was all my dreams coming true! Keith told me he wanted me to be 'spiky' – this was an instruction I'd never been given before. It stuck with me and I was far more provocative than I'd ever been as a youth-team player. I committed a horrendous challenge on their keeper early on. It would definitely be a red card nowadays but I got my comeuppance when their centre-half, Mike Doyle, stamped all over me in the aftermath. It was a real battle but I think it helped endear me to the crowd – many of whom I'd been standing alongside months earlier!

I finished the game with a ripped shirt. I used the image on the front of my autobiography, *Giant Killer*. When I got back to the dressing room, I asked Jonny Wallis whether I could keep it. He told me in no uncertain terms that I couldn't, as it would be needed for the next game. A few days later, he threw it at me and said that the rip was too big to fix. They didn't change shirts from season to season back then, let alone game by game, so I'd never have been allowed to keep it otherwise. It's in a frame on my wall now.

One of the final acts of the 70s was for Spurs to be handed another tough FA Cup draw, with Manchester United once again pulled out as their opponents. The tie at White Hart Lane on 5 January was Spurs' first game of the new decade. Ardiles gave Spurs a second-half lead but United were quickly level through a Sammy McIlroy penalty. No further goals were scored, meaning a replay at Old Trafford four days later.

United were favourites to progress, as they were enjoying a great league season, sitting second behind Liverpool. They had won 11 of their 13 home games and hadn't lost at Old Trafford all season. It was the ninth occasion that the two teams had met in little over a year, with Spurs having won just once.

With an hour played, the game remained goalless, with the home side having created marginally the better chances but finding Milija Aleksic in good form. A deep cross from United's right saw Aleksic come out bravely but, in an era where it was still game for forwards to crash into goalkeepers, Joe Jordan (who would join Spurs as an assistant coach in 2008) clattered into Aleksic.

It soon became apparent that the Spurs goalkeeper was in significant pain and would not be able to continue. After a seven-minute delay, he was carried off the pitch on a stretcher.

This was the second time in three months that Spurs' goalkeeper had had to be replaced. It was still well over a decade before teams were allowed a substitute goalkeeper. Just as he had at Elland Road, Hoddle took the gloves and played in goal. The Spurs defence, marshalled by Perryman, managed to protect the stand-in goalkeeper.

Hoddle wrote in *Playmaker*: 'My nerves were on edge when they won a corner. "Hod, you know where this is going," Ray Wilkins said as he ran across to take it ... United were trying to crowd me. Joe [Jordan] was in the six-yard box and Gordon McQueen, their big centre-back, was nearby. "Joe!" Gordon barked. "Do you want me to do him or are you okay? You've done the other one."'

Indeed, the corner was lofted high into the six-yard box and McQueen threw himself, elbows flying, towards Hoddle and loosely in the direction of the ball. Somehow, he failed to make contact with either and Spurs, and Hoddle, survived. Though he had to do so by often standing outside his penalty area as missiles, including a snooker ball, were thrown at him from the Stretford End crowd!

With no goals scored by the time the final whistle blew, it meant extra time. With just four minutes remaining of extra

time and the prospect of a second replay looming, Spurs finally got the reward they deserved. Villa retrieved the ball on the left-hand side of the penalty area, looked up and spotted his fellow Argentine, Ardiles, free on the edge of the penalty area. Ardiles described in his autobiography, *Ossie's Dream*, what would become the winning goal and one that would go down in Spurs' folklore:

I'm positioned just to his [Villa's] right, so Ricky gives me the ball and I trap it. I have a fraction of a second to decide what to do with it. I just haven't got the energy to whack it, so I decide to try to aim at an angle, to slot it in at the edge of the goal. Pum! In it went.

Ardiles barely had the energy to celebrate the goal in front of more than 3,000 delirious travelling fans. It was not over yet, though. Spurs still had a few minutes to see out. But, despite having not won an FA Cup tie away at a Division One opponent since 1972, Spurs managed the final stages expertly, with Ardiles and Yorath, in particular, doing well to run down the final seconds.

Hodde kept a remarkable clean sheet, though the collateral of this bizarre occurrence was that Aleksic had lost five teeth and suffered a fractured cheekbone. His place would go to Barry Daines, who remained as first-choice custodian for the remainder of the season.

Steve Perryman explains the significance of this victory:

We'd always been associated with entertaining football but this was as much about digging in, working incredibly hard and getting over the line. It was our first really big result against top opposition since we'd returned to Division One but the fixture attracted a lot of media attention and was featured on that night's *Sportsnight* [on BBC], which was still something of a novelty. I've no doubt that prospective players would have watched that and taken notice.

Terry Gibson started both cup ties against United:

To make my home debut against Stoke was one thing but to then be thrust into two intense cup games against Manchester United was incredible. I'd played at Old Trafford in the youth cup but this was with a crowd of over 50,000. I was really struggling with cramp but just kept running for 120 minutes. It was a great victory and one that set us up nicely for the cup runs in the years to come.

We stayed in Manchester for the rest of the week, as we were playing City on the Saturday. We all went to see Milija in hospital. He was in real agony but the worse thing was that everyone assumed it was his jaw. He still couldn't open his mouth to speak and kept pointing at his knee. No-one realised that he'd ruptured his cruciate ligament and he was trying to tell us.

The replay at Old Trafford proved to be Gibson's last first-team appearance until March 1982.

It was a really frustrating time for me. I was 13th man for that Man City game but just didn't feature after that. No one spoke to me and I just ended up back in the youth team. In May 1981, I was given the chance to go on loan to GAIS Gothenburg, as they played a summer league. I even missed the FA Cup replay, as I couldn't find it on TV in Sweden!

Spurs' reward was a fourth-round trip to third-tier Swindon. It was the first time Spurs had faced the Wiltshire outfit since an FA Cup tie in 1910 that Swindon had won 3-2.

Swindon were a formidable cup outfit, despite their Division Three status. In the League Cup, they had already knocked out Arsenal and Stoke and, going into the FA Cup match with Spurs, had beaten Wolves, another Division One side, 2-1 in the semi-final first leg. 'Cup fever' engulfed Swindon and the County Ground was sold out, with the terraces bursting at the seams.

In team news, the suspended Don McAllister was replaced by Naylor, who made his first appearance in nine months. He

had made his Spurs debut in 1969 and only Perryman and Pratt had been at Spurs for longer.

The home side shaded the first-half chances but Spurs grew into the game in the second half. In a game played against a backdrop of black smoke from a fire in a building just behind the stadium, Spurs had the better chances after the break but Chris Jones couldn't find the target from two decent opportunities. As a result, the game ended goalless and the two teams reconvened in north London.

Spurs were given an almighty scare when Swindon deservedly scored in the second half. There was obvious anxiety in the crowd as the game progressed and substitute Peter Taylor's name was chanted in expectation that the former England winger, who had missed much of the past nine months through injury, would be introduced. When he was brought on it was, to the dismay of the home crowd, for Chris Jones and not Gerry Armstrong, who'd had a particularly difficult evening up until that point. Having not scored in 11 games since the win at Leeds in October, Armstrong would go on to enjoy one of his best nights as a Spurs player.

With only seven minutes remaining, Armstrong volleyed Spurs level but the finale was yet to come. Four minutes later, Taylor's free kick was glanced in by Armstrong, giving Spurs what had felt an unlikely last-gasp victory. By his own admission, Armstrong hadn't played well on the night.

Between them, Armstrong and usual strike partner Jones had scored just 12 goals in 49 games. Falco, who had been selected at the start of the season, had been injured since August and Gibson, at just 17, was still raw potential. Spurs' profligacy in front of goal, especially with such a creative midfield, was palpable and hadn't gone unnoticed by Keith Burkinshaw.

The fifth round paired Spurs with Birmingham of Division Two. Just like Swindon, Birmingham had enjoyed an enviable cup campaign, having knocked out two Division One sides – Middlesbrough and Southampton – to reach the last 16 of the FA Cup. A crowd just shy of 50,000 – considerably more than

Spurs were attracting for league games – filled White Hart Lane to see Hoddle score twice in a 3-1 victory.

The win saw Spurs into the quarter-finals for a second successive season but, once again, they were given the most difficult draw possible, with Liverpool pulled out of the velvet bag. At least the tie would be at White Hart Lane.

League form was mixed, though there was an enjoyable game at home to Coventry in the final week of February. Spurs won 4-3, with Hoddle (who else?) stealing the headlines with what proved to be his only Spurs hat-trick. Tottenham led 2-0 inside 20 minutes, only for Coventry to score twice in the space of 90 seconds before half-time. With the game looking to be heading to a 2-2 draw, Hoddle completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot – only for the visitors to equalise immediately. However, just 60 seconds later, Falco scored his first goal of the season and only his second for the club.

The FA Cup game against Liverpool was season-defining for Spurs but they were knocked out by one of the greatest opposition goals scored at White Hart Lane. Terry McDermott, who was keeping Hoddle out of the England team, teed up a volley for himself from outside the penalty area. His shot had dip and swerve and sailed past Barry Daines. It was in front of the Park Lane End, the same end at which Hoddle had scored his superb efforts against Manchester United and Nottingham Forest earlier that season. Spurs played well but found Liverpool and England goalkeeper Ray Clemence in inspired form.

McDermott's goal proved to be decisive and, so, Spurs' interest in the FA Cup ended at the quarter-final stage.

Feeling sorry for themselves, Spurs were thumped 4-0 at Nottingham Forest the following midweek. Miller was sent off for the second time that season and all four goals were scored within a 14-minute spell in the second half.

Spurs' inability to score cost them further points when a third successive game without a goal – a 0-0 draw with Crystal Palace – drew frustration from the home crowd. Chris Jones finally broke Spurs' 369-minute blank with a goal at Bolton, though it didn't prevent a 2-1 defeat.

The team was set up around the midfield qualities of Hoddle, Villa and Ardiles. While virtually every Division One side played an orthodox 4-4-2, Spurs occasionally played with only one striker but their diamond-shaped midfield – with Villa at the head and Hoddle and Ardiles nominally on either side – was fluid.

March had been miserable but it did end well with an unexpected 2-0 home victory against Liverpool – three weeks after the cup defeat. Liverpool would go on to record back-to-back league championships and it was further evidence that this was a Spurs team in progress, as Steve Perryman recalls:

We could feel that something was happening. Earlier in the season, the win at Manchester United proved that we could beat the best teams, even in the most challenging of circumstances. We'd learned some lessons from that FA Cup defeat to Liverpool and were able to correct them for the league game. To beat them gave us greater encouragement that we could compete with anyone on our day.

After Hoddle scored Spurs' first against Liverpool, John Pratt found the net for what proved to be his final goal in lilywhite. A stalwart of the Spurs team since his debut in 1970, Pratt had often been unpopular with sections of the home crowd but nobody could doubt his commitment to the cause. He would go on to make five more appearances before departing for Portland Timbers in the NASL.

Lifelong fan and contemporary Spurs blogger Alan Fisher, who also co-wrote *A People's History of Tottenham Hotspur*, summarises the way many Spurs fans felt about Pratt:

I'm grateful for this opportunity to make a public apology to John Pratt. In 1973, I went up to Derby to watch Spurs draw 1-1 in the cup. On a mudheap of a pitch, in the second half Pratt sprinted 35 yards from the edge of his box to close down the opposing winger. Right in front of me, he missed the tackle and I shouted with the full force of

teenage desperation, ‘Get up John!’ He gave me such a look, a mixture of incredulity and contempt.

So, John, I’m sorry. You had run your heart out for the team and all I could do was moan. A reaction which was wrong, yet it says something about his relationship with the fans. Supposedly, before his first game at Old Trafford, John asked Bill Nicholson what to expect. He replied, ‘It would be like playing at Spurs, except 55,000 people will hate you, whereas at Spurs it’s only 45,000’. There’s so often been a Spurs scapegoat in the stands – I hate to admit it – and John took the brunt of it.

Every side needs an unsung hero, a player committed to the cause and who works hard, without whom the team would be diminished. That sums up John Pratt and we should be eternally grateful. What he lacked in finesse on the ball, he made up for in blood, sweat and toil, all for the sake of the team, without getting the credit he deserved. The players knew. His contemporaries, like Glenn Hoddle and Steve Perryman, understood that his graft gave them the space and time to play. His career at Spurs, his only British club, spanned 15 years and he held his post under Billy Nick and Keith Burkinshaw, mostly as a midfielder but he played in every outfield position at one time or another. Not known for his goalscoring, I remember a couple of long-range blasters against Wolves and Liverpool.

He sat behind us at Wembley for a cup semi-final a few years back, complaining about people standing in front of him. His knees had gone and he had to sit. That’s the pain dedication brings. Cheers John.

Another player on his way out was Terry Naylor, who played the last of his 306 Spurs appearances in the defeat to Ipswich at the start of April. Having made his debut in March 1970 – alongside such contemporaries as Jennings, Mullery, Knowles and Chivers – he, Perryman and Pratt appeared in each calendar year of the 70s. Naylor was awarded a testimonial at the end of the month, with Crystal Palace providing the opposition. Phil

Beal, Chivers and Joe Kinnear all returned to play. Naylor joined Charlton the next season.

The impending departures of Pratt and Naylor signified the changing of the guard from the Nicholson era. It left Daines and Perryman as the only squad members who had played under Nicholson. With just weeks of the season remaining, Keith Burkinshaw was keen to turn to youth again and gave young midfield protégé Micky Hazard the opportunity to make his first-team bow.

It was yet another youth team player making their way into the first team. It meant that Falco, Gibson, Hoddle, Hughton, Miller and Southey had all been selected in the first team – a tremendous vindication for Peter Shreeve and Ron Henry, who worked with the youth team and prepared them for first-team football. While the others listed were all London-born or bred, Hazard hailed from the north-east.

Hazard had been spotted playing schoolboy football in his native Sunderland and was first invited to train with Spurs' youth team as a 12-year-old, eventually being put up in digs near White Hart Lane. Hazard shared, on the official club podcast *Off The Shelf*, how he was incredibly homesick and on six occasions escaped his accommodation to return home. However, with support from the club, he overcame his concerns and signed professionally. Hazard was a very skilful midfielder who, despite his diminutive frame, could control youth team games from midfield. He idolised Hoddle, just a few years his senior, and was honoured to read in an interview with *Shoot!* magazine that Hoddle listed Hazard as the 'best up-and-coming star'.

Having trained regularly with the first team, Hazard was earmarked to make his debut at Old Trafford in April 1980. However, in the final training session of the week, held in the ball court at White Hart Lane, Hazard developed a blister on his toe. Reluctant to tell the physio in case he was deemed unfit to play, Hazard tried to deal with the injury himself but ended up causing an infection, making it impossible to walk or to hide it from the physio and manager!

Hazard believes fate played its part. Spurs were beaten 4-1 at Old Trafford, with Pratt in midfield. Instead, Hazard had to

wait a further week to make his debut – a home game against Everton. If he had been part of a team that suffered a heavy loss, he may not have been given another opportunity.

Never one to feel nerves, Hazard has said that any tension he felt was purely because of who he sat alongside in the changing room:

I looked to my right and there's Glenn Hoddle. Then I turned to my left and it's Ossie Ardiles. I was thinking to myself, 'What the heck do they need me for?'

Hazard played his part in a 3-0 victory and fondly remembers the reaction of John Pratt, who he'd effectively replaced. Hazard described how Pratt came up to him before the game to congratulate him and wish him well. After the game, Pratt was among the first to tell him how well he'd played. That humility shown by Pratt has never left Hazard.

The win against Everton proved to be Spurs' final one of the season – home draws with Wolves and Bristol City and defeat at Aston Villa meant they finished 14th, three places lower and with one point less than the previous season but this was a team which had a youthful core and potential and it would go on to serve the club extremely well over the coming years.

The defensive unit was beginning to take shape. Perryman and Hughton offered natural balance in the full-back positions and, in the centre, Miller established himself as first choice alongside McAllister.

Of the current squad there was no doubt that Hoddle was the star and he won the PFA young player of the season award, as well as being named, for the first time as a Division One player, in the team of the season. His season's haul of 22 goals in all competitions proved to be the best in his career and those goals were essential in keeping Spurs away from the relegation zone.

Hoddle also made the England squad that travelled to Euro 80 in Italy, though he was only selected once in three games as England went out at the group stage.

Spurs fan Jill Lewis remembers Hoddle at this stage of his career:

At the end of the 78/79 season, I remember saying to my father that I could see Hoddle scoring a lot of goals next year and, sure enough, he did! We could all see he was a special talent when he broke through but the instant understanding he had with Ossie and Ricky took him and the team up a level. I've been watching football for nearly 60 years. From the stand, you can see the passes that the players should make. Hoddle was different – he could see and make a game-changing pass that nobody else would have spotted, even from on high! Hoddle gave us a real sense of pride; he helped us to play football the right way, especially at a time when most other teams didn't – and that included England. After his first appearance for England, when he scored in the best England debut I've seen, Ron Greenwood then inexplicably told the press that he shouldn't expect to start regularly!

Alarming, Hoddle only had one year left on his contract and was attracting interest domestically and from across the continent. It was vital for both Hoddle and Spurs that the team could evolve to challenge for trophies. In Hoddle, Ardiles and Villa, Spurs had the most technically gifted midfield in the league. To take those next steps, it was essential that the board backed the manager – specifically to bring at least one new striker to the club.

Burkinshaw's attention had been drawn to the Scottish Premier Division where Aberdeen, under the management of a certain Alex Ferguson, were about to end 15 years of dominance by the 'Auld Firm'. The Dons' attack had been spearheaded by 23-year-old Steve Archibald, who had scored 22 goals and had also made his international debut, with a goal, for Scotland against Portugal in March.

Since the Victorian era, the best club sides in England had included Scottish internationals. The Spurs double team

contained Bill Brown, Dave Mackay and John White and later in the 60s, Alan Gilzean was dubbed the ‘King of White Hart Lane’. By the time the 1980s dawned, nothing had changed in this regard, with all the best club sides featuring a number of Scots. Liverpool had Dalglish, Souness and Hansen, Manchester United had Jordan and McQueen and Nottingham Forest had Gemmill and Robertson.

Archibald had been courted by Terry Venables at QPR. He discussed on *The Spurs Show* podcast in December 2019 how he was initially drawn towards a move to west London, knowing little of the history of both clubs. It was a team-mate, Ian Scanlon, who had previously played in England for Notts County and recognised the size and potential of the club, who implored Archibald to sign for Spurs.

Archibald had arrived in professional football relatively late. Prior to joining Aberdeen in 1977, he had been playing for Clyde on a part-time basis while running his own business, selling high-end motors. The maturity that comes from running a business in your early 20s no doubt aided the player’s personal development, making such a move more achievable.

A transfer for around £750,000 – a new club record – was done between the two clubs immediately following the end of the season. Ferguson described the deal as the most ‘painful experience of his football career’. It would not be the last time he’d trade centre-forwards with Tottenham Hotspur!

Mike Leigh, co-host of *The Spurs Show*, was, like many other Tottenham fans, not overly familiar with Archibald.

In England, you’d rarely hear much about Scottish league football but news of this Aberdeen team that had just taken the title away from the Auld Firm stronghold captured the imagination. It was so clear to us as fans that the team desperately needed two centre-forwards. We’d seen Archibald’s name mentioned, so his signing was quite exciting, even if we hadn’t seen him play. We hoped there was another forward to follow.

Archibald's signing may have dominated the back-page headlines but, around the same time, Spurs also completed another incoming transfer that would have a hugely important positive impact on the make-up of the team in the coming years.

Following the acquisition of Tony Galvin two years previously, Bill Nicholson pulled another non-league rabbit out of the hat when 19-year-old midfielder Graham Roberts joined the club from Weymouth. This outcome relied more on fate than perhaps any other deal in the club's modern history.

Having engaged in conversation with a non-league football anorak after a fruitless scouting mission in Swindon, Nicholson was encouraged to go and watch Weymouth, who it was suggested had two outstanding players – one of whom was young midfielder Graham Roberts. Nicholson took the advice and watched Roberts put in a commanding display, scoring twice. He recommended his signing to Burkinshaw.

Spurs had to fight off advances from West Brom, whose manager, Ron Atkinson, thought he had already agreed a deal. Such was the faith that Burkinshaw had in Nicholson's talent-spotting that his first question to Roberts, having signed him on a deal worth £20 per week (considerably less than Roberts was earning between his Weymouth salary and his full-time job), was: 'What position do you play?'

Roberts first appeared for Spurs in the post-season two-game tour to Austria. The shape of a formidable Spurs team was beginning to take shape.

League position	14th
Average league attendance	32,014
Most appearances	Hodde (49)
Top goalscorer	Hodde (22)
League winners	Liverpool
FA Cup winners	West Ham
League Cup winners	Wolves