

= John Wark =

John Wark ( born 4 August 1957 ) is a Scottish former footballer who spent most of his playing time with Ipswich Town . He won a record four Player of the Year awards before becoming one of the four inaugural members of the club 's Hall of Fame . Wark had long spells at the club , which bookended his career , and a third , brief interlude dividing his briefer periods at Liverpool and Middlesbrough . A versatile player , Wark played most of his professional games as a midfielder , although he sometimes played as a central defender and on occasion as a striker .

Born in Glasgow , Wark represented Scotland in international football , winning 29 caps and scoring seven goals . This included selection for Scotland in the 1982 FIFA World Cup in which he made three appearances and scored twice .

During his playing career , Wark appeared in the film *Escape to Victory* . Since retiring as a professional player in 1996 , he has continued to work for Ipswich Town ? since April 2009 in the corporate hospitality department . His autobiography , *Wark On* , was published in 2009 .

= = Early life = =

Wark was born on 4 August 1957 , in Glasgow Royal Maternity Hospital to parents Alex and Helen . The third of four children , he has an older sister Wilma , older brother Alex and younger brother Andrew . The family lived in a four @-@ storey tenement block in Partick . The family was impoverished : Wark 's parents could not afford a cot and as a small child , he slept in a drawer from a sideboard . Although christened John , Wark was soon referred to by his family as Johnny , a diminutive that stuck throughout his footballing career .

In the early 1960s , the family moved to another tenement block , this time in Scotstoun , and Wark 's father secured employment at nearby Albion Motors . The new home accommodated a back yard in which Wark played football from the age of six . He said " [ f ] ootball seemed to occupy 99 per cent of my time as a youngster " as he tried to emulate his brother Alex , who had become a professional at St Mirren . Wark attended Scotstoun Primary School , where he became captain of the football team . On moving to secondary school , he was selected for the Glasgow Schools representative team . He also played for Drumchapel Amateurs at the under @-@ 14 level , where he was , for a period , managed by David Moyes ' father , also named David .

During Wark 's time at Drumchapel , he attracted the attention of Celtic . He trained with the club at their Parkhead ground , before receiving an invitation to sign schoolboy forms for the club . As a lifelong Rangers fan ( with whom Celtic have a notable rivalry ) and with interest from " several English clubs " , including Bristol City , Manchester City and Ipswich Town , Wark stalled on the offer . He trialled with both Ipswich Town and Manchester City , and selected Ipswich when the latter remained non @-@ committal . On arrival at Portman Road , Town manager Bobby Robson , later described by Wark as the person in football " who had the single biggest influence on [ him ] " , personally welcomed him and Wark signed with the club as an apprentice .

= = Domestic playing career = =

= = = First spell at Ipswich = = =

Wark started his career at Ipswich in the youth team , initially playing at left back before moving to the centre of defence and occasionally occupying the right back position . He signed up as a professional for the club on his 17th birthday . Selected for the senior squad as a replacement for the injured Kevin Beattie , Wark made his first @-@ team debut on 27 March 1975 in the 3 ? 2 FA Cup 6th round ( 3rd replay ) victory over Leeds United ; the game was played at Leicester City 's Filbert Street . A nervous and homesick Wark was reassured by manager Robson :

" My debut was in the quarter @-@ final of the FA Cup against the Leeds team of Giles and Bremner . He [ Robson ] said , ' I wouldn 't put you in the team if I didn 't think you were good

enough ' . He was a father figure as well because I was homesick . If it hadn 't been for the boss I would have been straight back to Glasgow . "

Making four more first @-@ team appearances in place of injured regulars , Wark ended the season still on the youth team , and experienced success in the final of the FA Youth Cup , defeating West Ham United 5 ? 1 . He spent much of the 1975 ? 76 season playing for the reserves , and was presented with the club 's Young Player of the Year award , despite making just four appearances for the senior team . Moving into midfield , Wark made over 30 appearances in the 1976 ? 77 season , scoring his first goals for the club , ( 10 , in all ) taking over penalty kicking duty ; he also received his first red card .

In the June 1977 , Wark was selected for the Scotland squad for the first time , for a friendly match against East Germany ; however , a torn hamstring sustained in pre @-@ season training ended any chance of an international debut . The injury also kept him out of first @-@ team football until January 1978 , when he returned for a match against Cardiff City in the third round of the 1977 ? 78 FA Cup .

Indifferent league performances that season meant that Ipswich finished just three points above the relegation zone , but the season ended in success in the FA Cup . Wark scored in a 3 ? 1 victory over West Bromwich Albion in the semi @-@ final , and appeared in the final at Wembley as part of a side that surprised favourites Arsenal , winning the game 1 ? 0 . Wark remarked , " We were underdogs but on the day we hammered them . " Wark did not touch the ball for the first 18 minutes of the match , and as the players left the pitch at half @-@ time , David Geddis said to Wark , " Make sure you hit it between the posts in the second @-@ half . Avoid the white bits . " In the second half of the game , Wark " ignored Geddis ' advice and hit Pat Jennings ' right post twice with almost identical swerving right @-@ foot shots from outside the penalty area " .

Twice in the three seasons that followed , Ipswich came within one game of winning the League championship , but finished as runners @-@ up to Liverpool and Aston Villa , respectively . However , Ipswich did win the club 's only European trophy when they lifted the 1980 ? 81 UEFA Cup . Wark set a competition record by scoring 14 goals ? including two , one in each leg ? in the final as Ipswich overcame Dutch side AZ 67 Alkmaar 5 ? 4 on aggregate . Wark 's record equalled the long @-@ standing scoring record in a European competition , set by José Altafini of A.C. Milan in the 1962 ? 63 European Cup . Wark 's personal triumph that year was to win a European accolade , Young Player of the Year , and gain the acclaim of his fellow professionals in England to earn the PFA Player of the Year award . He ended the 1980 ? 81 season with 36 goals .

Wark continued to play for Ipswich , but after Robson left to become England manager in 1982 , the side was gradually broken up by new manager Bobby Ferguson . Following a rejected demand for a wage increase , Wark submitted a transfer request , which was accepted . He signed for Liverpool for £ 450 @,@ 000 on 10 March 1984 . At the time , Liverpool had won the league title six times , the European Cup three times and the League Cup three times in the preceding eight seasons .

Wark 's final full season at Portman Road , 1982 ? 83 , had seen him record the highest league goals tally of his career . He scored 20 goals in 42 league games , though it was not enough to prevent Ipswich from slipping to ninth place in the final table ? their lowest position since finishing 18th in 1978 .

= = = Liverpool = = =

The medical examination for Wark 's transfer somewhat surprised him :

" I was rather taken aback when the doctor entered the Anfield boot room " , Wark said . " He was small in stature and I could not help but detect the smell of alcohol on his breath as he introduced himself to me . I was even more surprised when he announced we would stay put to conduct the medical examination . " He took my blood pressure , looked at the reading and muttered ' that 's fine ' . Then something happened that to this day I still cannot get over . He asked me to bend down and touch my toes . " Trying not to show my surprise , I did exactly as he asked and as I lifted my head he spoke again , this time to announce ' you 've passed ' . That was it , my Liverpool medical . "

Wark made his debut for the club on 31 March 1984 in a 2 ? 0 league win against Watford at

Vicarage Road , and scored Liverpool 's opening goal in the 58th minute . Liverpool won the English league title that season , and Wark made sufficient appearances to earn himself a medal . His unusual ability as a goalscoring midfielder was on display when he finished the 1984 ? 85 season as the club 's top goalscorer , ahead of prolific striker Ian Rush , with a tally of 27 goals in 62 appearances ? a goal every 2 @.@ 3 games . Wark 's season included three hat @-@ tricks , one each in the League , the FA Cup and the European Cup . Liverpool qualified for the 1985 European Cup Final but the match was overshadowed by the Heysel Stadium Disaster , a tragedy Wark remembers as " a nightmare memory " .

In the 1985 ? 86 season , Wark made 18 appearances , scoring six times , but missed out on the club 's run @-@ in to their League and FA Cup " double " , due to a broken ankle suffered just after the turn of 1986 , followed by an Achilles tendon injury . He eventually regained his fitness but struggled to regain his place in the Liverpool team until injury to Steve McMahon allowed him back in . Wark came on as a late substitute ( but according to him , never touched the ball ) when Liverpool lost the 1987 League Cup Final to Arsenal . No longer a part of manager Kenny Dalglish 's plans following the arrival of new midfielders including John Barnes , Wark was sold back to Ipswich on 4 January 1988 for £ 100 @,@ 000 . In spite of more financially lucrative offers from both Watford and Coventry City , he followed Bobby Robson 's advice : " Money isn 't everything ? go where you will be happiest . " Wark left the Merseyside club with a record of 42 goals in 108 appearances , a goal every 2 @.@ 6 games .

= = = Second spell at Ipswich = = =

Ipswich had been relegated 18 months before Wark 's return to the club and were still playing in the second tier of English football . During this second spell at Ipswich , Wark was close to being an ever @-@ present in the side : he missed just two games in two seasons . He was the club 's equal top @-@ scorer in the 1988 ? 89 season , sharing the achievement with forwards Dalian Atkinson and Jason Dozzell .

Following three seasons of mid @-@ table finishes , manager John Duncan was sacked and replaced by John Lyall . With his contract expiring , Wark received what he considered to be a " derisory " offer from Lyall , which he declined . Once he became a free agent , Wark signed on a free transfer for Second Division rivals Middlesbrough in August 1990 . In his two additional seasons with Ipswich , Wark had scored 20 goals , and won the club 's Player of the Year award in both seasons .

= = = Middlesbrough = = =

Wark signed for Middlesbrough , the first club to show " a definite interest " in him , on a two @-@ year contract , moving back to play in the centre of defence . He made regular appearances and helped the team to seventh place by the end of the season and qualification for the Second Division play @-@ offs . Following a 1 ? 1 draw with Notts County at Ayresome Park , Wark was informed by manager Colin Todd that he would not be selected for the second leg . Wark was outraged ; Middlesbrough lost the second leg 1 ? 0 . Todd departed from the club and was replaced by Lennie Lawrence , who insisted that all players live " within an hour of Ayresome Park " . Wark was still living in Ipswich at the time and following a " sensible agreement " with Lawrence , Wark 's contract was terminated and he became a free agent again .

= = = Third spell at Ipswich = = =

Remaining without a club before the start of the 1991 ? 92 season , Wark trained with Ipswich to keep fit , and rejected interest in his services from Leyton Orient , Colchester United and Falkirk . When Ipswich suffered a succession of injuries among their defenders , they offered him a contract , initially on a week @-@ by @-@ week basis , before securing a year @-@ long deal . Wark made 43 appearances in the first season of his third spell with the club . Early results in the season were

excellent ; the club won seven of their first 11 matches in the league . In the FA Cup , Ipswich progressed to a fifth round encounter against Liverpool ; when the tie went to a replay at Anfield , Wark received a standing ovation from both sets of fans . Ipswich lost the match 3 ? 2 after extra time , having led 2 ? 1 in the first period . Ipswich went on to finish strongly in their league campaign and were crowned Second Division champions and promoted into the newly formed Premier League . Wark ended the season as the club 's Player of the Year for the third time .

Wark agreed to a new one @-@ year contract for the 1992 ? 93 season and was asked to feature in a Sky Sports advertisement to promote the inaugural Premier League competition . Ipswich were the only Premier League club to remain unbeaten after eight games ( a sequence that included Wark 's first Premier League goal in a 1 ? 1 draw with Tottenham Hotspur ) . Ipswich went fourth in February and there was talk of finally winning that title that had eluded them more than once during Wark 's first spell there , but 13 consecutive games without a win resulted a 16th @-@ place finish in the table , just three points above the relegation zone , and only a win on the final day of the season made sure of their survival . Wark , now aged 37 , secured yet another one @-@ year contract shortly before the end of the 1993 ? 94 season . Ipswich were saved from relegation in the last round of matches ( for the second season running , another good start had given way to a late season slump ) , courtesy of an injury time winning goal scored by Mark Stein of Chelsea at Stamford Bridge , which ensured that Ipswich 's fellow strugglers Sheffield United went down . Wark went on to be voted the club 's Player of the Year for a record fourth time .

Ipswich and Wark fared worse in the 1994 ? 95 season . The club lost 9 ? 0 to Manchester United during a season in which Ipswich " recorded fewer victories and suffered more defeats than in any campaign in the club 's history " . He was sent off in the away game at Norwich , where the team lost 3 ? 0 . Wark made fewer than 20 appearances in the following season , primarily because of a persistent foot injury . Despite his appearance in three more matches in the 1996 ? 97 season , and a testimonial against Arsenal at Portman Road , Wark played his last professional match against Tranmere Rovers on 30 November 1996 at the age of 39 . By this stage , he was the club 's oldest player . Of a total 826 league matches played by Wark as a professional , he made 679 appearances for Ipswich . As of 5 June 2009 , he is Ipswich Town 's third @-@ highest all @-@ time scorer , with 179 goals scored for the club , despite rarely appearing as a striker .

= = International playing career = =

From 1979 , Wark was selected to play for his country , usually as a defender , eventually winning 29 caps for Scotland and scoring seven goals . Jock Stein was the Scotland manager who gave him his debut , in a game held on 19 May 1979 , a British Home Championship match against Wales at Ninian Park ; Scotland lost 3 ? 0 . Wark scored his first international goal a week later on 26 May , again in a British Home Championship game , this time against England at Wembley . Wark 's opening effort was not enough , as Scotland were defeated 3 ? 1 . A week later Wark played for Scotland in a friendly against Argentina at Hampden Park . However , the game is best remembered for the performance of Diego Maradona who scored his first international goal and whose performance led Argentina to a comfortable 3 ? 1 win over the Scots .

After a 3 ? 1 home defeat by Belgium in December 1979 , Wark was not selected again for his country until February 1981 for the 1982 World Cup qualifying match away against Israel . Following a successful qualification campaign , Wark was included in the Scotland squad that went to the World Cup in Spain under Stein 's leadership . Wark played three games and scored two goals , both of which were Scotland 's opening match against New Zealand , a game Scotland won 5 ? 2 . Scotland were knocked out in the group stage .

Wark 's final appearance for Scotland came in September 1984 , under Stein ; he was replaced in favour of Paul McStay at half @-@ time in a 6 ? 1 victory over Yugoslavia .

= = Life outside football = =

== Personal life ==

Wark has married twice ? first to Toula , on 1 July 1981 , with whom he has a son , Andrew , born in June 1983 . He married Karen at Gretna Green in April 2009 . They live in Onehouse near Stowmarket in Suffolk .

== Film appearance ==

In 1981 , Wark was one of several Ipswich players who appeared alongside stars including Bobby Moore and Pelé in the Second World War football film *Escape to Victory* , which starred Sylvester Stallone , Michael Caine and Max von Sydow . Wark played a character called Arthur Hayes , but his only line was dubbed due to his broad Glaswegian accent .

== Since retirement as a player ==

Following his retirement from playing football professionally , Wark continued to live in Suffolk , like many other ex @-@ Ipswich players , including Allan Hunter , Mick Mills , Roger Osborne and Mick Lambert . Despite his retirement from the professional ranks , Wark continued playing football as an amateur , and signed for Woodbridge Town in 1999 alongside former Ipswich team @-@ mate Paul Mason . He also played veterans football for Windsor and Eton , played with Soccer AM 's Badgers team at the Millennium Stadium , and has represented the Liverpool veterans in the Sky Sports Masters series .

In 2005 , Wark was voted as the BBC television programme *Football Focus* " all @-@ time cult hero " by Ipswich Town fans . In 2008 Radio Suffolk announced that he would join their commentary team as a summariser , alongside former team @-@ mates Kevin Beattie and Bryan Hamilton . As of April 2009 , he works in the corporate hospitality department at Ipswich Town .

== Autobiography ==

Wark 's autobiography *Wark On* was published on 9 April 2009 . The book contained material that gained media interest . Wark stated that he made " a small fortune by flogging tickets for the FA Cup Final to a shady underworld ticket tout " . " Wark used his share of the cash to help pay for his wedding while a team @-@ mate bankrolled a house extension . He added : " Other teams had done it , so why shouldn ' t we ? Nowadays it 's illegal but in those days it was regarded as a perk . " The report also highlighted Wark 's " dig " at the current " crop of stars " at Anfield . He said : " None of that lot would have been good enough in my time at Anfield . "

== Playing style and personality ==

Wark played as a central defender , midfielder and , occasionally , as a striker . Wark was an unusual player ; he was able to play as a defensive midfielder yet break forward to score . According to former team @-@ mate Terry Butcher , this was because his colleagues would drop back to cover for him : " I played with John Wark , who was a sitting midfielder but was one of the top scorers in England and Europe . If you see it , then do it , as long as the others spot it and cover for you . "

Wark was not a " supremely talented " player , but , according to football journalist Jim White , one who espoused team @-@ work and team spirit : " There is no question that the ' one @-@ for @-@ all , all @-@ for @-@ one ' mentality generated in the Anfield dressing room was the engine that drove the great team . With players such as Alan Kennedy , John Wark , Sammy Lee and Craig Johnston , nobody could claim this was a collection of top @-@ notch operators in the manner , say , of the current Real Madrid . Every week , they played as an entity greater than the sum of its parts . " He has been described as " a defensive midfielder with an astonishing goalscoring record " .

Over the years , Wark has become closely associated with his moustache . Owen Slot described

the player as " Ipswich 's immortal moustache " , while Wark himself notes " ... it is something of a trademark , even if people are always calling me Bruce ... "

= = Honours = =

In 2006 Wark gained the final place in the poll 100 Players Who Shook the Kop , conducted by the liverpoolfc.tv website . The list was compiled as a result of a fan survey : " Over 110 @, @ 000 supporters all nominated their own personal Top 10 players in order of impact made " . In 2007 , the Professional Footballers ' Association polled fans of all Football League clubs , as to " their No 1 player " as part of the " centenary celebrations of the players ' union " ; Wark was the choice of Ipswich fans . In the same year , Wark was one of four Ipswich Town players to be inducted into the club 's Hall of Fame .

= = = Ipswich Town = = =

Winner

1977 ? 78 FA Cup

1980 ? 81 UEFA Cup

1981 PFA Players ' Player of the Year

1981 Young European Player of the Year

1991 ? 92 Football League Second Division ( Level 2 )

Runner up

1978 ? 79 Charity Shield

1980 ? 81 Football League First Division ( Level 1 )

1981 ? 82 Football League First Division ( Level 1 )

= = = Liverpool = = =

Winner

1983 ? 84 Football League First Division ( Level 1 )

1985 ? 86 Football League First Division ( Level 1 )

Runner up

1984 ? 85 Charity Shield

1984 ? 85 Intercontinental Cup

1984 ? 85 European Super Cup

1984 ? 85 Football League First Division ( Level 1 )

1984 ? 85 European Cup

1986 ? 87 Football League Cup

1986 ? 87 Football League First Division ( Level 1 )

= = = Scotland national team = = =

1979 ? 84 29 caps , 7 goals

All honours referenced by :

= = Career statistics = =