

= Denis Smith (footballer) =

Denis Smith (born 19 November 1947) is an English former professional footballer and manager . He made 531 appearances in all competitions in 15 seasons as a player in the Football League , and as a manager took charge for 1 @, @ 195 competitive matches .

Born in Meir , Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent , he joined local club Stoke City as an amateur in 1964 , making his first team debut in September 1968 . A hard @-@ tackling defender , he soon established himself in the first team , playing in a centre @-@ back partnership with Alan Bloor for much of his career . Stoke enjoyed one of the most successful periods of their history during his time at the club , as he helped Stoke to win the League Cup in 1972 , featuring in successive FA Cup semi @-@ finals in 1971 and 1972 and helping the club to successive fifth @-@ place finishes in the First Division in 1973 ? 74 and 1974 ? 75 . His bravery as a player meant that he also entered the Guinness Book of Records as the most injured man in football , although he was never able to fully recover after breaking his leg for the fifth time in his career in March 1975 . He did manage to continue to play competitive football , and helped Stoke to win promotion from the Second Division in 1978 ? 79 . He missed the entire 1980 ? 81 season due to injury , and left the club in May 1982 .

He began his management career at York City in May 1982 , having played for the club on loan the previous season . He led the club to the Fourth Division title in 1983 ? 84 , totalling five seasons at the club . He took charge of Sunderland in May 1987 , and took the club to the Third Division title in 1987 ? 88 , before getting the club promoted from the Second Division in 1989 ? 90 . Sacked by Sunderland in December 1991 , he took charge at Bristol City three months later . He steered the club away from relegation in 1992 ? 93 , but was sacked in January 1993 after falling out with the club 's directors . He was appointed manager of Oxford United in September 1993 , and though he was unable to avoid relegation in 1993 ? 94 , he led the club to promotion from the Second Division in 1995 ? 96 . He switched clubs to West Bromwich Albion in December 1997 , remaining in charge for two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half seasons before he was sacked in July 1999 .

He returned to manage Oxford in February 2000 , and steered the club away from relegation in 1999 ? 2000 before resigning in October 2000 . In October 2001 he was appointed manager of Wrexham , but was unable to steer the club away from relegation in 2001 ? 02 . He won promotion from the Third Division at the first attempt in 2002 ? 03 , but Wrexham entered administration in December 2004 and the resulting points deduction saw them relegated once more . Despite the financial problems he managed the club to the Football League Trophy title in 2005 , in addition to two successive FAW Premier Cup wins in 2002 and 2003 . He was sacked in January 2007 , months after the club exited administration . He married in October 1967 and has three children .

= = Early life = =

Denis Smith was born in Meir , Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent , the second youngest of seven siblings . At just three years old he formed his own gang , stating in his autobiography that " if we wanted to play in the sandpit we played in the sandpit " , and continued to lead his gang through junior and senior years at Sandon Road Junior School . Despite being involved with gangs since his early childhood he grew out of the culture by the age of ten , and as a teenager formed friendships outside of his local council estate . He turned down the chance to sit the eleven plus exam as local grammar school Longton High was a rugby @-@ playing school , and so instead attended Queensbury Road School , with whom he won the Stoke Schools Trophy ; he also played for the Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent Schoolboys (who were coached by former England international Dennis Wilshaw) . At the age of 15 he became Staffordshire County boxing champion .

He was only 5 ft 2 in (1 @. @ 57 m) at the age of 14 , but a late growth spurt took him to just under six foot , and was therefore tall enough to play centre @-@ back as a professional footballer . He was offered an apprenticeship by Portsmouth , but turned it down as he wanted to sign for his local club Stoke City , who initially were not willing to take him on as an apprentice . They only allowed him to train with the ' A ' team twice a week as an amateur whilst he initially worked as a plumber 's mate , and later as a factory worker at Stone Lotus .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Stoke City = = =

Smith signed for Stoke City in September 1966 after telling manager Tony Waddington that he was going to sign a contract at another club ; though Waddington was not keen on Smith 's hard @-@ tackling style , he did not want to lose the young player . At the age of 18 he faced Leeds United 's FWA Footballer of the Year Bobby Collins in a reserve game , and despite Collins going as far as to punch him in the face Smith managed to last the entire match without backing down in an extremely physical contest . However , for a period Waddington banned Smith from playing against first team players in training as he feared Smith would injure one of his players . He made his first team debut in the Football League against Arsenal in September 1968 , and was given the task of man @-@ marking Bobby Gould . He gave away a penalty after fouling Jon Sammels , which Terry Neill converted for the only goal of the game , but otherwise made a solid debut . However , in his second game he gave away two penalties in a 3 ? 1 defeat away to Ipswich Town , and had to wait five months for another first team appearance . In March 1969 , Alan Bloor picked up a knock and Smith returned to the starting line @-@ up in a 5 ? 1 defeat to Leeds , failing in his task to man mark Mick Jones , who claimed a hat @-@ trick . Despite the poor start to his senior career , he managed to finish the 1968 ? 69 season with 14 First Division appearances to his name , and was occasionally used as an emergency striker .

Smith established himself in the Stoke defence in 1969 ? 70 , forming a centre @-@ back partnership with Alan Bloor in between full @-@ backs Jackie Marsh and Mike Pejic . Smith was the aggressive and highly physical defender , complimented by Bloor who tended to stay further back and use his intelligence to read the game and clean up any mistakes Smith made . Smith claimed his first goal for the club on 17 September 1969 , in a 3 ? 1 win over West Bromwich Albion (West Brom) at the Hawthorns . Stoke reached the semi @-@ final of the FA Cup in 1970 ? 71 , and Smith played in the fourth round victory over Huddersfield Town despite suffering from a fractured ankle . He scored the only goal of the game in the fifth round replay away to Ipswich . He also scored a " freak goal " from a deflected Peter Storey clearance in the semi @-@ final against Arsenal on 27 March 1971 , but Stoke lost the replay four days later .

Stoke reached the FA Cup semi @-@ final for a second successive season in 1971 ? 72 , again being knocked out by Arsenal in a replay . He had scored in the quarter @-@ final victory over Manchester United and pressured Arsenal 's Peter Simpson into scoring an own goal in the original semi @-@ final game . However , John Radford was the hero of the tie as he played as an emergency goalkeeper in the first game following an injury to Bob Wilson , and then scored the winning goal in the replay . Stoke found greater success in the League Cup , beating Southport , Oxford United (after a replay) , Manchester United (after two replays) , Bristol Rovers and West Ham United (after three replays) to reach the 1972 League Cup Final against Chelsea . He scored two goals during the run , but was knocked out whilst scoring against Bristol Rovers in the quarter @-@ final , and missed some weeks with concussion . He returned to play in the final , man @-@ marking Peter Osgood in a game which Stoke won 2 ? 1 to win their first major trophy .

Despite the cup success and arrival of new signing Geoff Hurst , Stoke laboured to a 15th @-@ place finish in 1972 ? 73 . Smith blamed the car crash and subsequent injury to Gordon Banks in October 1972 as the cause for the club 's mid @-@ season slump , which compounded an already poor start to the season . Any concerns over relegation disappeared though with six victories in the final eight league games . After a poor start to 1973 ? 74 , Waddington signed Alan Hudson in January 1974 to help revive the club 's fortunes . The defence also improved , as Smith helped to ensure only two goals were conceded in the last nine games of the season as Stoke finished fifth . On 23 February 1974 , Smith scored the winning goal against Leeds to end their opponent 's 29 @-@ game unbeaten run . Leeds went on to have a £ 250 @, @ 000 bid for Smith turned down by Stoke in the summer .

Stoke made a push for the title in 1974 ? 75 . They also competed in the UEFA Cup against Dutch side Ajax , and Smith scored in a 1 ? 1 draw at the Victoria Ground , though Stoke would lose the tie on away goals . Smith scored the only goal of the game against Leicester City on 30 November 1974 to take Stoke top of the table . However , Smith broke his leg for the fifth time in his career making a red @-@ card challenge on Mick Lambert in a 2 ? 1 defeat to Ipswich on 18 March 1975 ; he was the fourth Stoke player to break a leg that season . Stoke ended the season again in fifth place , picking up just two points from their final three games to finish four points behind champions Derby County .

He underwent an operation to remove cartilage in his knee in November 1975 , and his recovery was not entirely successful . He later admitted that after returning to match fitness from the injury he was only ever able to play at " half pace " . His long @-@ term replacement was young defender Alan Dodd . The club also faced a major decline following a gale which severely damaged the Victoria Ground 's Butler Street stand , and a lack of adequate insurance cover left a significant repair bill meaning the club had to sell Alan Hudson , Jimmy Greenhoff , Mike Pejic , Sean Haslegrave and Ian Moores to fund the repair ; Eric Skeels and John Ritchie also retired . Waddington filled in the gaps left by these players with youngsters , and it also meant that Smith could continue to be a regular for the club despite his reduced mobility . Waddington was sacked in March 1976 , and new manager George Eastham failed to prevent Stoke from being relegated at the end of 1976 ? 77 . Following relegation he formed another good partnership , this time with Mike Doyle , which helped Stoke gain promotion in 1978 ? 79 under new manager Alan Durban . Smith claimed his two seasons in the Second Division were " boring " , as even with his reduced mobility few attackers in the division posed too much of a threat for him .

A pre @-@ season injury kept him out of the entire 1980 ? 81 season , during which time he coached the reserves . In this time he converted Steve Bould from a striker into a centre @-@ back . Smith returned from injury in 1981 ? 82 , and featured regularly early in the season , and by the time another injury forced him out of the team , Stoke were sitting in 18th @-@ place . He joined York City , who were struggling in the Fourth Division , on a one @-@ month loan in March 1982 . He debuted in a 3 ? 1 home defeat to Hull City on 16 March 1982 , and scored once for York , in a 4 ? 2 loss away to Wigan Athletic on 2 April . Smith made seven appearances while on loan at York , and exerted his influence on the team by organising the defence ; he commented that " They had been crying out for an older head like me " . He was recalled by Stoke manager Richie Barker as the defence struggled in his absence , and Smith re @-@ established himself in the team as they avoided relegation . He was handed a free transfer to York in May 1982 . He said that if he had been offered a coaching role at Stoke he would have stayed , but that Barker wanted him gone as he saw him as a threat to his position . In total , Smith made 493 appearances for Stoke , a club record for a centre @-@ back .

= = = Style of play = = =

During Smith 's 14 seasons with Stoke , he became known for his fearless mentality which led to him sustaining a large number of injuries . These included five broken legs , breaking his nose four times , a cracked ankle , broken collar bone , chipped spine , breaking most of his fingers and toes and needing more than 200 stitches . The sequence saw him named in the Guinness Book of Records as the most injured man in football . Early into his career Smith soon developed a reputation as a " hard player " , who would launch himself at opponents determined to either block a shot and win the ball , which is how he picked up most of his injuries . He was known as Stoke 's " hitman " , and relished going toe to toe with the biggest and most feared opposition players .

He would generally man @-@ mark the opposition 's playmaker or major goalscoring threat . He was a highly effective tackler , able to either flatten opposition players or to quickly take the ball off their toes . After the tackle from behind was outlawed he adapted to the rule change by making hard challenges from the side . Manager Tony Waddington said that " His qualities were his tackling strength and his courage . On the ball he just did what he could do , but he also had a tremendous ability to read the game . "

= = Managerial career = =

= = = York City = = =

He moved into management with York as player @-@ manager ahead of 1982 ? 83 , accepting the position on 12 May 1982 . He described the set up at Bootham Crescent on his arrival as a " shambles " , as training consisted entirely of running and was devoid of any actual coaching . He signed veteran players Roger Jones (goalkeeper) , Alan Hay (defender) and Ricky Sbragia (defender) , as well as young Stoke defender Chris Evans , which including Smith himself meant a complete change in the club 's back line . He brought in striker Viv Busby as a player @-@ coach . He then made 6 ft 1 in (1 @. @ 85 m) 26 @-@ year @-@ old striker Keith Walwyn his priority , and encouraged Walwyn to use his natural physical presence to become a greater threat in front of goal and unlock his potential . Smith retired from playing after steering York to a seventh @-@ place in 1982 ? 83 , in which he made 36 appearances and scored 4 goals . He signed Sheffield United 's John MacPhail on a free transfer as a replacement for himself .

In his second season as York manager , 1983 ? 84 , he signed another former teammate , energetic midfielder Sean Haslegrave . Smith was named as the division 's Manager of the Month for March 1984 after York won five and drew one of their six league games . He guided York to the Fourth Division title and promotion into the Third Division , with Walwyn scoring 25 goals and earning a place in the PFA Team of the Year alongside strike partner John Byrne , who scored 27 goals . York finished with 101 points , 16 points ahead of runners @-@ up Doncaster Rovers .

Early in 1984 ? 85 York were beaten by Queens Park Rangers (QPR) in the League Cup , but Byrne impressed QPR manager Alan Mullery enough to earn a £ 100 @, @ 000 move to Loftus Road . Smith spent half of this sum (a club record) on Aldershot forward Dale Banton , who went on to score 49 goals in 138 games for the club . He also released winger Brian Pollard , but found that the man he signed in his place , Gary Nicholson , was not able to replicate Pollard 's form . York started the season well and another of his signings , Keith Houchen (£ 15 @, @ 000) , scored a hat @-@ trick in a 7 ? 1 win over Gillingham in November 1984 . On 26 January 1975 , he guided York to victory over Arsenal in the FA Cup fourth round . In the next round York came from behind to draw 1 ? 1 at home with Liverpool , before losing 7 ? 0 away at Anfield .

York again drew Liverpool in the FA Cup fifth round in 1985 ? 86 , and took the lead through Gary Ford only to concede a stoppage time equaliser . Tony Canham scored at Anfield and York had a second goal disallowed before York succumbed to a 3 ? 1 defeat in extra time . York lost only three home league games all season , but missed out on promotion after finishing seventh . In the summer of 1986 he sold MacPhail to Bristol City for £ 15 @, @ 000 , whilst many of the veteran players he signed when he first came to the club were coming to the end of their careers . The 1986 ? 87 season was disappointing for York as they were knocked out of the FA Cup by non @-@ League team Caernarfon Town and ended the season in 20th @-@ place . They did though manage to beat Chelsea 1 ? 0 in the League Cup , but lost the return fixture at Stamford Bridge 3 ? 0 . Smith ended up falling out with the club 's directors , who invested money in the club 's facilities rather than on players , and released goalkeeper Andy Leaning against his wishes .

= = = Sunderland = = =

In May 1987 , Smith was appointed manager at Sunderland , who had just been relegated into the Third Division for the first time in their history . York were unwilling to release him from his contract for less than £ 20 @, @ 000 compensation , and Sunderland would only go as far as pay £ 10 @, @ 000 . Smith agreed to a £ 40 @, @ 000 @-@ a @-@ year contract that meant if he failed to win promotion with Sunderland in his first season he would pay the extra £ 10 @, @ 000 compensation himself . He brought his York coaching staff with him : Viv Busby , Malcolm Crosby , and Roger Jones . He also signed former York player John MacPhail to shore up the defence , who captained

the side and scored 16 goals (including 10 penalties) in his maiden season at Roker Park . He signed right @-@ back John Kay , whilst remaining satisfied with existing left @-@ back Reuben Agboola , centre @-@ back Gary Bennett and goalkeeper Iain Hesford . In midfield he played a youthful combination of Gordon Armstrong , Paul Lemon , Gary Owers and Paul Atkinson , alongside the more experienced defensive midfielder Steve Doyle . He sold Mark Proctor to Sheffield Wednesday for £ 275 @,@ 000 . He signed young and pacey York striker Marco Gabbiadini for £ 80 @,@ 000 and played him alongside the experienced Eric Gates ; the pair scored 42 goals between them in 1987 ? 88 . A 7 ? 0 win over Southend United started a run of 15 league games unbeaten , though in the second half of the campaign a run of just 2 wins in 10 games set them back . Smith bought Swansea City winger Colin Pascoe in March 1988 , and oversaw a run of seven wins in the final eight games to secure the Third Division championship and promotion with a record 101 points .

Injuries to Kay and Lemon hindered Sunderland at the start of 1988 ? 89 , and they took until 1 October 1988 to register their first win back in the Second Division . He signed burly striker Billy Whitehurst to act as a " battering @-@ ram " , who proved to be an effective player despite being a heavy binge drinker . He spent a club record £ 500 @,@ 000 on goalkeeper Tony Norman , though Hesford and Whitehurst were traded as part @-@ exchange on the fee . Sunderland improved and ended the season in 11th @-@ place .

He signed experienced forward Paul Bracewell for 1989 ? 90 , who partnered an increasingly effective Gabbiadini , and spent £ 130 @,@ 000 on Portsmouth left @-@ back Paul Hardyman . He introduced the exceptionally talented teenage winger Kieron Brady to the first team , but was unable to discipline the precocious teenager , and Brady never realised his full potential . Sunderland reached the play @-@ offs , and faced rivals Newcastle United in the semi @-@ final , securing passage into the final with a 2 ? 0 victory at St James ' Park . They lost 1 ? 0 to Swindon Town in the play @-@ off final at Wembley Stadium . However , Swindon were found guilty of financial irregularities and remained in the Second Division , whilst Sunderland took their place in the First Division .

Having been promoted weeks after the end of the previous season and not being granted an increased wage budget , Smith felt he had a tough job in keeping Sunderland in the top @-@ flight in 1990 ? 91 . He allowed Gates and MacPhail to leave on free transfers in order to free up money to bring in new players . He spent £ 350 @,@ 000 on Portsmouth defender Kevin Ball and took midfielder Peter Davenport from rivals Middlesbrough ; Ball would prove to be a success , though Smith admitted in his autobiography that signing Davenport had been a mistake that left him unable to bring in any further players , as his small budget was spent . He was given further funds in February 1991 as Sunderland were engaged in a relegation battle , and Smith spent £ 225 @,@ 000 on midfielder Brian Mooney , who had a limited impact due to injuries . On the final day of the season Sunderland had to better Luton Town 's result at home to Derby in their game against Manchester City at Maine Road , but they lost 3 ? 2 and were relegated back into the Second Division .

In the summer of 1991 , Stoke chairman Peter Coates offered Smith the vacant management position at the club , but Smith decided that potentially being sacked by his hometown club would be too intense an experience emotionally , and chose to stay loyal to Sunderland . This was despite finances being tight at Sunderland as the club saved the money to build the Stadium of Light . However , after just 4 wins in the opening 14 games of 1991 ? 92 , Smith decided to sell star striker Gabbiadini to Crystal Palace for £ 1 @.@ 8 million in order to raise funds to improve the squad . He then spent £ 350 @,@ 000 on Celtic left @-@ back Anton Rogan and brought in strikers Don Goodman (£ 900 @,@ 000 from West Bromwich Albion) and John Byrne (£ 225 @,@ 000 from Brighton & Hove Albion) . Smith was sacked on 30 December 1991 , with Sunderland lying 17th in the Second Division . His former assistant Malcolm Crosby took Sunderland to the 1992 FA Cup Final , in which they were beaten by Liverpool .

== = Bristol City == =

Smith was only out of work for nine weeks before being appointed manager of Bristol City on 9 March 1992 . He succeeded Jimmy Lumsden , who left the club second @-@ from @-@ bottom in the Second Division . Smith felt the team lacked pace , so signed 20 @-@ year @-@ old striker Andy Cole on loan from Arsenal . Dariusz Dziekanowski scored both goals against Wolverhampton Wanderers (Wolves) in Smith 's second game in charge to provide City with their first win in three months . They then won 3 ? 1 against Smith 's former club Sunderland , with Cole scoring the first of his 8 goals in 12 appearances during his loan spell . Smith successfully steered the club out of the relegation zone at the end of 1992 ? 93 with a run of eight games unbeaten , and paid a club record £ 500 @,@ 000 to secure Cole 's services on a permanent basis . He further paid £ 250 @,@ 000 for Everton midfielder Raymond Atteveld and signed West Ham United striker Leroy Rosenior .

Smith rebuilt the defence for 1993 ? 94 , signing right @-@ back Brian Mitchell and centre @-@ back David Thompson , and oversaw a mixed start to the season . City won four straight home games but also lost 5 ? 1 to West Ham , 5 ? 0 at Newcastle , and most significantly 4 ? 0 to local rivals Bristol Rovers at Twerton Park . He found it difficult to control the club 's talented and popular players , as Dziekanowski regularly got into trouble in his social life and skilled left @-@ winger Junior Bent was unwilling to deliver crosses as regularly as Smith demanded . He tried to sell Bent but was unable to have the deal sanctioned by the club 's directors . His relationship with the board was poor and he found himself regularly undermined and sensitive boardroom discussions were leaked . He also tried to sell Cole in order to provide funds to restructure the first team but again the board refused to sanction the deal . He was sacked on 21 January 1993 following a run of 10 matches without a victory , and his assistant Russell Osman was appointed as his successor .

= = = Oxford United = = =

Smith made a return to management with Oxford on 10 September 1993 , and the following day led them to a 4 ? 2 victory over his former club Bristol City . A victory over another former club , Stoke , took Oxford off the bottom of the Second Division , but a sequence of just 2 wins in 17 games left them in great danger of relegation . He signed goalkeeper Phil Whitehead on loan from Barnsley , signed striker John Byrne (£ 50 @,@ 000 from Millwall) for the third time in his career , and then made what he later said was the best signing of his career by bringing in defender Matt Elliott from Scunthorpe United for £ 170 @,@ 000 . Oxford were boosted by these arrivals and briefly exited the relegation zone , also claiming an FA Cup giant @-@ killing over Leeds at Elland Road after Jim Magilton scored the winning goal in extra time . However , after the game Magilton moved to Southampton for a £ 600 @,@ 000 fee . Oxford had struggled in the league during their FA Cup run and were 15 points short of safety with 16 games to play , but were aided by £ 60 @,@ 000 signing Paul Moody , who , despite arriving in February 1994 , managed to finish as the club 's top @-@ scorer with 12 goals in 15 games . His arrival kick @-@ started the club 's fightback , and Oxford closed the 15 points gap in just 9 games . However , a difficult run @-@ in left Oxford needing to beat Notts County on the last day of the season and hope results elsewhere went their way , and though they beat County their relegation rivals also claimed victories and Oxford were relegated .

The sale of star midfielder Joey Beauchamp to West Ham for a club record £ 1 million allowed Smith money to spend in the transfer market , and he spent £ 100 @,@ 000 each on Norwich City midfielder David Smith and Sunderland striker David Rush . Oxford formed a strong promotion push in 1994 ? 95 , but were knocked out of the FA Cup in the first round by non @-@ League Marlow . In February 1995 , he spent £ 60 @,@ 000 on Hartlepool United 's Phil Gilchrist , who would form a highly effective centre @-@ back partnership with Elliott . Oxford finished the season in seventh place , six points outside the play @-@ offs . In November 1995 , Smith re @-@ signed Beauchamp for £ 300 @,@ 000 , who continued his excellent form after returning to his native Oxfordshire . The next month he brought in striker Martin Aldridge on a free transfer . The club were 14th in January 1996 , but lost only once in their last 17 games of 1995 ? 96 in a tremendous second half of the season that saw them climb 12 places to win promotion as runners @-@ up . At the end of the season , Smith became a director of the club .

In order to strengthen for 1996 ? 97 , Smith signed striker Nigel Jemson and spent £ 100 @,@ 000

on Leyton Orient defender Darren Purse . In order to finance these deals he sold Chris Allen to Nottingham Forest for £ 450 @, @ 000 . Oxford knocked Premier League side Sheffield Wednesday out of the League Cup en route to a fourth round exit . Oxford were fifth in the table in December 1996 , but chairman Robin Herd resigned amidst financial problems at the club , and work on the new stadium came to a halt as the club debt reached £ 13 million . Smith raised funds by selling Elliott to Leicester for £ 1 @. @ 7 million , and signed veteran defender Chris Whyte on a free transfer as a short @- @ term replacement . Oxford finished the season in 17th place , but the club 's financial situation became ever bleaker . Numerous players were sold , though Smith was allowed to spend £ 170 @, @ 000 on defender Phil Whelan . Smith left the Manor Ground mid @- @ way through 1997 ? 98 with Oxford 16th in the league , and his assistant Crosby managed to maintain the club 's mid @- @ table position at the end of the season .

= = = West Bromwich Albion = = =

Smith was appointed manager of West Brom on a three @- @ year contract on 24 December 1997 , with Oxford receiving around £ 100 @, @ 000 in compensation . He had a mixed start to his time at the Hawthorns as Albion fell from promotion contenders to a tenth @- @ place finish in 1997 ? 98 , but recorded victories over local rivals Wolves and Stoke .

In preparation for 1998 ? 99 , he signed athletic Derby centre @- @ back Matt Carbon for £ 800 @, @ 000 , Blackpool striker James Quinn for £ 500 @, @ 000 , and Manchester City defender Jason van Blerk for £ 50 @, @ 000 . He also brought in winger Mark Angel , midfielders Mario Bortolazzi and Enzo Maresca , and striker Fabian de Freitas . However , the player who had the greatest impact for West Brom was young striker Lee Hughes , who had been signed before Smith 's arrival but only made his first start under Smith . Aside from Maresca , many of Smith 's signings had little impact , and supporters criticised him for allowing popular goalkeeper Alan Miller and strikers Andy Hunt and Bob Taylor to leave the club . West Broom started the season well with Hughes in tremendous form , but a slump in form in March 1999 left them ending up in 12th place . Smith was sacked on 27 July 1999 , just a week before the start of 1999 ? 2000 .

= = = Return to Oxford = = =

On 3 February 2000 , Smith was appointed manager of Oxford for the second time in his career , with the club 21st in the Second Division . He re @- @ signed striker Nigel Jemson from Ayr United , and kept Oxford in the division as they ended 1999 ? 2000 in 20th place , one place and one point above the relegation zone . He signed a one @- @ year contract extension in the summer of 2000 , but fell out with chairman Firoz Kassam . He later admitted that the signings he made on a limited budget , which included Ian McGuckin , Andy Scott and Rob Quinn , were not good enough . Smith resigned on 2 October 2000 after a terrible start to 2000 ? 01 , a season which ended in Oxford being relegated in last place . He continued to work as a scout for the club under David Kemp and then Mark Wright .

= = = Wrexham = = =

Smith returned to management on 8 October 2001 with Wrexham on a two @- @ year contract , replacing Brian Flynn who had resigned after 12 years in charge , with the club 23rd in the Second Division . He was tasked with keeping the club steady whilst it struggled with financial problems . He decided to cut back on the club 's youth coaching spending , and as a result Wrexham 's youth structure was downgraded from an Academy to a Centre of Excellence . He signed goalkeeper Marius Røvde , midfielder Jim Whitley , and gave striker Hector Sam his debut , but failed to keep Wrexham away from the relegation zone . With relegation confirmed , new signing Lee Jones scored all five goals in a 5 ? 0 win over Cambridge United , leaving cause for optimism at the Racecourse Ground .

He signed wing @- @ back Paul Edwards and held on to most of his key players for the 2002 ? 03

season . Wrexham had a good start to the season and Smith won the Manager of the Month award for September 2002 after a sequence of four wins and two draws . A slump followed but Wrexham recovered from a poor October 2002 after coming from behind to beat Bournemouth on 9 November , as strikers Andy Morrell and Lee Trundle formed a good partnership , with Jones an impact substitute . Wrexham dropped out of the play @-@ off places following a sequence of draws in March 2003 , but new signing Scott Green scored both goals in a 2 ? 0 win over Hartlepool United on 18 March , the first of a sequence of eight victories that took Wrexham into the third automatic promotion place with four games to go . They held on to the position to secure promotion from the Third Division at the first attempt . Wrexham also beat Newport County 6 ? 1 in the final of the FAW Premier Cup to secure an important £ 100 @,@ 000 in prize money . Smith was named as the Manager of the Month for April and 2003 , before winning the League Managers Association 's Third Division Manager of the Season award .

Smith lost Morrell and Trundle on free transfers , and replaced them with Chris Armstrong and Chris Llewellyn . The club 's financial problems meant that players went unpaid at the start of 2003 ? 04 , although they remained in the play @-@ off places in December 2003 . However , a hairline fracture to Shaun Pejic left Smith short of defenders and the promotion challenge ebbed away to a mid @-@ table finish . Wrexham retained the FAW Premier Cup though with a 4 ? 1 victory over Rhyl . However , Smith made himself unpopular with supporters after refusing to endorse their campaign to oust controversial chairman Alex Hamilton .

Writing in his autobiography , Smith described 2004 ? 05 " the most harrowing , distressing footballing time of my life " as the club entered administration with debts of £ 2 @.@ 6 million . Wrexham became the first club to be deducted 10 points for entering administration and were subsequently relegated from League One , eight points short of safety despite new signing Juan Ugarte scoring 23 goals . Despite the financial trouble Wrexham managed to win the Football League Trophy , knocking out Notts County , Stockport County , Chester City , Hereford United and Oldham Athletic en route to the final against Southend United at the Millennium Stadium . The final was settled in extra time , with Ugarte and Darren Ferguson securing a 2 ? 0 victory . The club earned £ 250 @,@ 000 in prize money and the first national trophy in Wrexham 's history .

Smith turned down the managerial role at Blackpool to remain in place at Wrexham for 2005 ? 06 . He signed goalkeeper Michael Ingham , defenders David Bayliss and Lee Roche , and strikers Lee McEvilly and Jonathan Walters , whilst bleeding brothers Marc and Mike Williams . However , Wrexham struggled in the league , despite on loan striker Matt Derbyshire scoring 10 goals in 16 appearances . They finished the season 13th in League Two , having won only one of their last nine games . The last game of the season was a 1 ? 1 draw with former club Oxford , which sent Oxford out of the Football League .

Wrexham exited 18 @-@ months of administration at the start of 2006 ? 07 , and started the season with an eight @-@ match unbeaten run , including a 4 ? 1 win over Championship club Sheffield Wednesday in the League Cup . However , a 5 ? 0 defeat at Accrington Stanley triggered a run of bad results that Smith was unable to turn around . With Wrexham hovering above the relegation zone in 18th @-@ place , Smith was sacked on 11 January 2007 . He is one of only 24 people to have managed over 1 @,@ 000 professional matches in English football .

= = Personal life = =

He married childhood sweetheart Kate in October 1967 . Their first child Paul was born in April 1969 , and was named after teammate Paul Shardlow , who had died six months earlier . They had two further children : Becky , and Tom (born 1978) . Smith released his autobiography , Just One Of Seven , in November 2008 . He writes a weekly column for The Sentinel and is occasionally a commentator on Stoke matches for BBC Radio Stoke . In July 2011 , he re @-@ joined Stoke on a part @-@ time basis as a mentor for young Academy players needing guidance off the pitch .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = As a player = = =

= = = As a manager = = =

= = Honours = =

= = = As a player = = =

Stoke City

Football League Second Division third @-@ place promotion : 1978 ? 79

Football League Cup winner : 1972

Watney Cup winner : 1973 ? 74

= = = As a manager = = =

York City

Football League Fourth Division champion : 1983 ? 84

Sunderland

Football League Third Division champion : 1987 ? 88

Football League Second Division promotion : 1989 ? 90

Oxford United

Football League Second Division promotion : 1995 ? 96

Wrexham

FAW Premier Cup winner : 2003 , 2004

Football League Third Division third @-@ place promotion : 2002 ? 03

Football League Trophy winner : 2005

Individual

Football League Fourth Division Manager of the Month : March 1984

Football League Third Division Manager of the Month : September 2002 , April 2003

Football League Third Division Manager of the Season : 2002 ? 03