

= Jerry Gill =

Jeremy Morley " Jerry " Gill (born 8 September 1970) is an English former professional footballer who is currently the head coach of the under @-@ 18 team at Wolverhampton Wanderers . Despite his late entry into the professional game ? he made his debut in the Football League at the age of 27 ? and a career @-@ threatening injury sustained five years later , Gill played more than 250 Football League matches , for Birmingham City , Northampton Town and Cheltenham Town , and was still playing in Football League One , the third tier of English football , three weeks after his 38th birthday . He usually played at right @-@ back , but could play elsewhere in defence or in midfield . His various managers viewed his strengths to be his professional approach to the game and the enthusiasm and whole @-@ hearted determination he shows on the field .

Gill began his football career with non @-@ league club Trowbridge Town . After an unsuccessful 18 months in London with Leyton Orient , he returned to the semi @-@ professional game with Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare followed by six seasons with Bath City . A season at Yeovil Town , where his goals from midfield helped the club to promotion to the Conference , earned Gill selection for the England National Game XI ? England 's representative side for semi @-@ professional players ? and a transfer to the Football League with First Division club Birmingham City .

Though Gill struggled to establish himself with Birmingham , and was never an undisputed member of the starting eleven , he played a big part in the club 's 2001 League Cup run , and was controversially omitted from the squad for the final . After Birmingham 's promotion to the Premier League , he moved to Northampton Town , where he suffered knee ligament damage which ended his career with the club . He went on to spend four seasons with Cheltenham Town , helping them to promotion to League One via the play @-@ offs . He spent most of the 2008 ? 09 season as player @-@ coach of Conference National club Forest Green Rovers . After two unsuccessful applications for managerial posts , and a spell playing for Conference North club Redditch United , Gill was appointed manager of Conference South club Weymouth in January 2010 , only to resign 44 days later . He worked as youth team coach at Bristol Rovers , spent 18 months as academy director at Kidderminster Harriers , before being employed at Norwich City , initially as a scout then as an academy coach . He parted company with the Canaries in July 2015 and soon took up his current post with Wolves .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Early days = = =

Gill was born in Clevedon , Somerset , and attended Backwell School . As a schoolboy he played football for Parkway Youth Club , alongside fellow future professional player Marcus Stewart , and for Backwell United , and was invited to join the Bristol Rovers youth team for a tournament in Germany . After losing in the final , Gill and his Rovers team @-@ mates indulged in the local beer to the extent that they were arrested and kept in police cells overnight . At the age of 16 he joined Trowbridge Town , then playing in the regional divisions of the Southern League (level 7 of the English football league system) under the management of Ken Knighton . The young Gill was spotted by Frank Clark , who had worked with Knighton at Sunderland and succeeded him as Leyton Orient manager , and Clark signed Gill on an 18 @-@ month contract in 1988 . However , he found it difficult to settle ? " moving to the east end of London from a small village was a real culture shock for me " ? and returned to the West Country at the end of his contract without featuring for the Orient first team .

= = = Bath City = = =

In December 1990 , after a brief stint with Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare , Gill joined Bath City , newly promoted to the Conference . In his first 18 months with the club he appeared only

infrequently for the first team , but in the 1992 ? 93 season he established himself as a first @-@ team player and remained so for the duration of his Bath City career . In all he spent six seasons with the club on a semi @-@ professional basis , playing part @-@ time while working as a representative for a supplier of pitch care products , and made 218 appearances for the club in all competitions , scoring 14 goals . He helped the club reach the third round of the 1993 ? 94 FA Cup , in which they held First Division club Stoke City to a goalless draw at Stoke before losing the replay 4 ? 1 .

Since 1986 , Bath City had drawn a significant amount of income from allowing Football League club Bristol Rovers to share their Twerton Park ground ; Rovers ' return to Bristol at the end of the 1995 ? 96 season meant that savings needed to be made , including cuts in the playing budget . Together with team @-@ mate Rob Cousins , Gill joined local rivals Yeovil Town for the 1996 ? 97 season for a fee of £ 9 @, @ 500 .

= = = Yeovil Town = = =

Though Yeovil were at the time in the Isthmian League Premier Division , the level below the Conference , under player @-@ manager Graham Roberts they were playing good football and were expected to challenge for promotion . Gill scored 16 goals in all competitions playing in central midfield , and was capped for the England National Game XI , England 's representative team for semi @-@ professional footballers , against an Ireland B team in Dublin . In 2002 , the Football Association selected an " all @-@ time " team of players capped at semi @-@ professional level , " representing the very best of this level over the years " . Gill occupied the right @-@ back spot in this team , which had previously featured players such as Alan Smith and Steve Guppy who had gone on to represent England at full international level .

International selection attracted scouts from Football League clubs , and Gill was invited to Birmingham City to take part in trial matches . Halfway through the season , Roberts had brought striker Howard Forinton to Yeovil from Oxford City ; his 23 goals in 21 games did much to secure the Isthmian League title and promotion to the Conference , and also caught the eye of Birmingham manager Trevor Francis . A deal was struck which saw Gill and Forinton join the First Division side in August 1997 for a combined fee of £ 100 @, @ 000 , with Gill valued at £ 30 @, @ 000 plus an additional £ 10 @, @ 000 payable when he played ten first @-@ team matches .

= = = Birmingham City = = =

Gill spent nearly a full season at St Andrew 's before he finally made his Football League debut , at the age of 27 , on 18 April 1998 in a 3 ? 0 defeat of Swindon Town . His second game for the club , away to Oxford United , was particularly eventful . With the score goalless , the referee first failed to award a penalty kick when Gill handled the ball in the penalty area , then disallowed the goal scored when the player deflected an opponent 's cross into his own net ; a few minutes later Gill was substituted , though he kept his place in the starting eleven for the next game . Then in the summer of 1998 , Birmingham paid £ 1 million for Derby County 's Gary Rowett . Installed as first @-@ choice right back , in two seasons at the club Rowett missed only five league games . During this period Gill captained the reserve team to victories in the Birmingham Senior Cup in 1999 and 2000 .

After Rowett made a £ 3 million move to Premier League club Leicester City , Gill faced competition from Nicky Eaden , newly arrived from Barnsley , Northern Ireland international winger Jon McCarthy , often used at right wing @-@ back , and a variety of loan signings . Manager Francis said :

Jerry knows what the situation is . I think he 's done very well for us , considering we plucked him out of non @-@ league football at Yeovil . But he is aware that I have been looking for a right @-@ back and I will continue looking for one . That doesn 't mean I don 't appreciate what Jerry has done for me since I signed him three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years ago . There isn 't a more reliable player at the club than Jerry Gill . He captains my reserve team , his fitness is of a very high standard and he has endless enthusiasm . When I put him in the first team , he never lets me down .

I value Jerry 's professionalism and for as long as I remain manager of Birmingham , there will always be a place for him here .

Gill signed a two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ year contract in January 2001 . Having taken part in most of the games in Birmingham 's League Cup run , he was omitted from the first leg of the semi @-@ final at Ipswich Town in favour of loan player Steve Jenkins . When Jenkins returned to his owning club , Gary Rowett said that Gill should be given a run of games in the Birmingham first team , suggesting that " if anything , he 's too nice . He doesn 't complain a lot and it 's easy for people not to take notice of you . Perhaps if he moaned a bit more he 'd get a start ! " Recalled for the second leg , he produced an excellent performance , making a goal @-@ line clearance from a header which would have left Birmingham two goals adrift had it crossed the line . Yet when it came to the final , manager Francis was unable to find a place for Gill even among the substitutes , preferring Eaden and McCarthy , making only his second start after recovering from a broken leg , in the starting eleven and David Holdsworth , a defender unavailable since the previous November due to serious illness , on the bench . Gill was devastated by this decision , describing it as " the biggest disappointment of [his] whole life " .

Gill played in almost every game after the League Cup Final until Francis left the club the following October , but lost his place soon afterwards through injury . Though he did then receive a League Cup runners @-@ up medal : club secretary Alan Jones had kept a spare one back , which he presented to Gill after Francis left . Under new manager Steve Bruce he played only one game , a 3 ? 0 FA Cup defeat at Liverpool for which Jeff Kenna was cup @-@ tied , and when the team won promotion to the Premier League that season , it became clear that his future lay elsewhere .

= = = Northampton Town = = =

At the start of the 2002 ? 03 season Gill joined Second Division club Northampton Town on a month 's loan . Northampton 's manager , the former Birmingham player Kevan Broadhurst , praised his qualities of leadership and determination :

Jerry will lead at the back by example . He does not pull out of anything and if there is a tackle to be won he will win it .

The loan was twice extended for a further month , and on 11 November 2002 Gill left Birmingham permanently , signing for Northampton until the end of the season . His season proceeded successfully ? a new two @-@ year contract had been discussed , and he finished as runner @-@ up for the club 's Player of the Year award ? until with two games remaining he damaged his anterior cruciate ligament and was expected to be out for several months . Northampton were prepared to give him a six @-@ month contract , albeit on reduced wages , to allow him time to recover and prove his fitness . Birmingham City allowed him to use their facilities for his rehabilitation , and he recovered sufficiently to play a couple of reserve games for Northampton , but by that time new manager Colin Calderwood had other players in Gill 's position and he was not offered another contract .

= = = Cheltenham Town = = =

Following a trial at the club , Gill signed for Cheltenham Town on 25 February 2004 on a non @-@ contract basis until the end of the season . He was given a one @-@ year contract for the 2004 ? 05 season and , at the age of 34 , played in all 46 league games ; he believed that all the fitness work he did during rehabilitation from his knee injury had given him a new lease of life . Gill acted as regular deputy when club captain John Finnigan was unavailable through injury . For the following season , he was given another one @-@ year contract , with an option for 2006 ? 07 if he managed to play 20 games during the season . Not only did he start twice that number , he contributed to the club reaching the final of the League Two play @-@ offs at the Millennium Stadium . His starting place and winners ' medal , achieved with the help of his " excellent last @-@ ditch defending " , went some way to alleviate the disappointment of missing the 2001 League Cup final . In addition , his sales experience enabled the players to look smart for the occasion ; expecting to be wearing

tracksuits for their big day because the club was unable to afford a set of new suits , Gill persuaded a local outfitters to supply a set of suits at reasonable cost . While at Cheltenham Town he became a fan favourite and even had a song created by the fans who jokingly sung about his less than impressive goal scoring abilities , " If Jerry scores , We 're on the pitch , if Jerry scores , We 're on the pitch ! " to the tune of Tom Hark .

By Christmas 2006 , while the team worked towards maintaining their place in League One , Gill had already reached his target of 25 games for the whole season which triggered the offer of another year 's contract ; he chose to take up the offer . Gill missed only three games in all competitions in the 2007 ? 08 season , and then signed a contract for yet another year with the club . Manager Keith Downing said :

Jerry 's form has been impressively consistent over the past few seasons , he has maintained excellent fitness levels and will once again be a very valuable player for us next season . He is a very good professional who is always on the training field . That is why his career has lasted as long as it has . Jerry is a very good influence on the dressing room as well and I 'm delighted that he will be staying with us .

He made his 200th start for the club in August 2008 , but was transfer @-@ listed , together with five team @-@ mates , when Martin Allen replaced Downing as manager in September 2008 . He had become involved with coaching at Cheltenham , but still felt capable of a playing role , albeit at a lower level , so saw Forest Green Rovers ' offer of a role as player @-@ coach as " too good an opportunity to miss " .

= = = Later career = = =

Gill joined Forest Green Rovers as player @-@ coach on 1 October 2008 , initially on loan , expecting to make the move permanent when the transfer window opened in January 2009 . He made his playing debut three days later , in the starting eleven in a 3 ? 2 defeat at home to Wrexham . When January arrived , the loan was not made permanent , instead being extended until the end of the 2008 ? 09 season . During a match against Oxford United in March 2009 , Gill suffered a triple fracture to his cheekbone and eye socket when a " nudge " from opponent Chris Carruthers , a former team @-@ mate at Northampton Town , propelled him into the advertising boards surrounding the pitch with such force that he was unable to prevent his head taking the full impact of a collision with a steel bar . Surgery to insert a titanium plate into Gill 's face was performed two days later , and he was restricted to a coaching role for the remainder of the season . He contributed to Forest Green avoiding relegation , and developed his skills by attending a fast @-@ track coaching course at the end of which he received the UEFA " B " licence . In June 2009 , the club made the financial decision that player David Brown would take over as assistant to manager Jim Harvey , and that Gill would leave the club .

During the summer of 2009 Gill worked as a coach in Birmingham City 's youth system . He was shortlisted for the post of manager at Conference club Cambridge United , but lost out to the more experienced Martin Ling , and was a favourite to replace Harvey , dismissed by Forest Green , but was again unsuccessful . Gill signed for Conference North club Redditch United in September 2009 , where he became a regular in the first team .

= = Coaching career = =

In January 2010 , Gill was appointed manager of Weymouth , then bottom of the Conference South . With the club already in financial difficulty , many first @-@ team players left . Budgetary constraints meant Gill was unable to bring in replacements , and after 44 days in post , he resigned , feeling the job had become untenable . Weymouth 's chairman claimed the cost of travelling from his Midlands home was a factor in his departure , a suggestion Gill refuted . In mid @-@ 2010 , he joined Bristol Rovers as youth team coach . He led the team to the third round of the FA Youth Cup , in which they lost narrowly to Aston Villa 's youth team , before a management restructure at the club resulted in his departure .

In June 2011 , Gill was appointed director of Kidderminster Harriers ' new football academy . According to the director of sport at Stourbridge College , Harriers ' academy partner , he " was instrumental in setting up the Football Academy and has laid down some very solid foundations in relation to shaping the discipline and attitude of our young players " . He left Harriers in February 2013 to concentrate on scouting for Premier League club Norwich City , a role he had been involved with for some months on a part @-@ time basis . He replaced Gary Holt , who departed to manage Falkirk , as Professional Development Phase Coach at Norwich City 's academy , and was subsequently appointed as the U18s Academy Team Manager . He parted company with the club in July 2015 and soon took up his current post with Wolverhampton Wanderers .

= = On and off the field = =

Gill has been popular wherever he has played . At Birmingham the fans used to greet him with a Jerry Springer @-@ style chant of " Jerry ! Jerry ! " , support which the player greatly appreciated . At the end of the 2000 ? 01 season , he was chosen Birmingham 's Clubman of the Year . Cheltenham manager John Ward told the Western Daily Press :

We played Birmingham City in pre @-@ season and he got a lovely ovation from their supporters and it was the same at Yeovil last year . He got a lovely clap at Northampton a few weeks ago when he was taken off . I don 't think that happened by coincidence . And I 've got a feeling that if he leaves Cheltenham he will get a similar reception if he comes back with another club . Supporters recognise him and they see the whole @-@ heartedness and the commitment and the ability that he has got .

When Gill did leave Cheltenham , chairman Paul Baker confirmed Ward 's feeling :

Jerry has been a fantastic ambassador for the club following his arrival from Northampton some four years ago . He quickly established himself in the first team and became one of the fans ' favourites with his consistent performances , cheery smile and friendly manner . Without question he has played a very important part in the club 's success in achieving promotion and subsequently retaining our Coca @-@ Cola League One status .

His enthusiasm for the game remained undaunted . Asked at the age of 37 what part of training he enjoyed , he replied " All of it . There 's no better feeling than coming in , even on a cold day , and feeling fit and on top of your game . "

Gill is married to Victoria and has a son . After the knee injury which threatened his career , he became involved with a company which helps sportspeople prepare themselves for life and work after their sporting career comes to an end . As of 2008 , he was director of the sports marketing and retail company , Protech Sport , which managed the club shop at Cheltenham Town F.C. In his spare time he is a keen golfer .

= = Career statistics = =

= = Honours = =

with Bath City

Somerset Premier Cup winners : 1994 , 1995

with Yeovil Town

Isthmian League Premier Division champions : 1996 ? 97

with Birmingham City

Birmingham Senior Cup winners : 1999 , 2000

Birmingham City F.C. Clubman of the Year : 2000 ? 01

Football League Cup runner @-@ up : 2001

Football League First Division promotion : 2001 ? 02

with Cheltenham Town

Football League Two play @-@ off winners : 2005 ? 06

