



April 1955 – Sheffield Wednesday's goalie congratulates John after 3-0 win at The Bridge

behind. The league was so tight, nobody had ever edged ahead, not by more than a few points, so it was always critical not to lose those kinds of games, as it would allow your rivals to make up ground.

With Wolves breathing down our necks, doing the double over them was clearly vital and I'm sure when we won at their place it damaged their belief. I remember as the players were walking off the pitch after winning at Molineux one of their lads walked over to shake my hand and said that his team were going to get murdered by their manager for losing to Chelsea, he was genuinely worried about Stan Cullis' reaction. Wolves had been in control for a lot of the game but we never gave up and to win 4-3 up there was tremendous.

I scored forty-three goals for Chelsea, including fourteen during the Championship season, but the strangest goal I had a part in that year was against Leicester in a three-one win at The Bridge just before Christmas '54. I hit the ball well which beat the 'keeper, only for it to hit the underside of the bar and bounce on the goal line. The two full-backs, Froggatt and Milburn, were so confused about what to do with the ball that they both kicked it at exactly the same time and it went straight into the back of the net. That is the only time I can remember one own goal being credited to two separate players! I was a bit disappointed that they'd made contact really as the ball was going to roll back into the net and would have been my goal, but it was a real catalogue of errors and very funny to watch from a supporter's point of view.

The biggest problem with Chelsea's Championship win, and the main reason that so little is really known about it, is the fact that there was a national newspaper strike on for a large part of the season, so our achievements weren't being reported. The week when we clinched the title only a handful of reports were published so the event was a bit of a flounce. Even when the newspapers were being printed, very few of them were saying complimentary things about us, they were very unimpressed with Chelsea. I don't know what rubbed them up the wrong way about us, we were an attractive side and our games were always exciting, but I got the impression that the only people who were genuinely pleased that we won the title were our own supporters. Wolverhampton Wanderers and Manchester United, who won the titles before and after Chelsea, were treated in a far more complimentary fashion.

It was a very open division, even until the final few weeks any one of up to five clubs were still in with a shout of glory, but that was the case most seasons, unlike today when the same two clubs have a monopoly on things. More or less any club was capable of topping the league because they all had the same sized squads, every player earned the same amount of money and the win bonuses were equal no matter