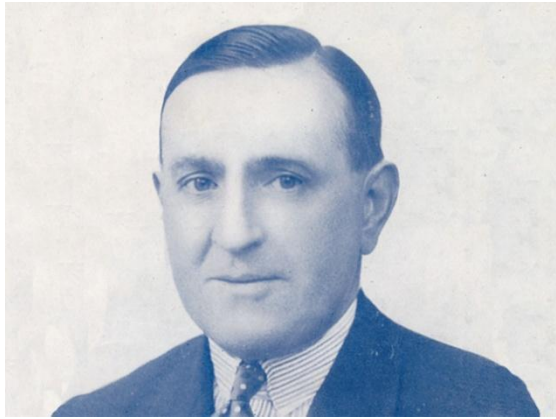




Chesterfield's board got it wrong with the appointment of Alec Campbell, as is indicated by the haste with which they jettisoned him in November 1927. They probably already had his replacement in mind, but it took six weeks to smooth the passage of **John Edward "Teddy" Davison** to Saltergate.

Davison remains a rarity – a goalkeeper who made it in football

management. Born into a Durham mining family in 1887 he served as secretary and goalkeeper to a local boys' side, giving an early hint in the direction of his future career. He was playing for Gateshead when Sheffield Wednesday came in for him in 1908. For a keeper, he was small, even by the standards of the day, coming in at 5'7" in his socks, but made up for this with agility and anticipation.

When the Owls were relegated to Division One in 1920 Davison was one of only two pre-war Wednesday servants to remain on their books. While the Owls battled for promotion back to the top flight Davison won his only England cap, keeping a clean sheet against Wales, in 1922. He toured Australia with the FA in 1925 and remained a Wednesdayite for eighteen years until the summer of 1926, making 397 League appearances for the Hillsborough side.

Upon retirement from the full-time game Davison was appointed Secretary/Manager to non-league Mansfield Town. The Stags had designs on joining the Football League and, in Davison, they had a manager who got the team playing decent, attacking football: furthermore, he impressed local clubs with the way he went about his business, off the pitch. Chesterfield's reserves regularly crossed swords with Mansfield's first team in the Central Combination and Davison's credentials were noted. The fact that he was able to spot a player who might be sold on at a profit didn't go unnoticed, either. When the time came to replace Alec Campbell, Chesterfield did not bother with advertisements, but went straight to the Stags for their man.

Davison was appointed Manager from January 2nd 1928 at £6 per week. Immediately, this was a win for the board, since that sum was around half of his predecessor's wage! In Teddy Davison, the club got a fantastically hard worker, with excellent local contacts and the ability to handle people in a professional manner that the players themselves appreciated. Davison found the administrative side had been neglected under Campbell's stewardship and reorganised that, establishing clear lines between the administrative and football side of things and clarifying John Black's role as Financial Secretary. It emerged that Davison's reforms were only the tip of an iceberg that included the replacement of Harry Cropper as Chairman by Harold Shentall in the summer of 1928.

The second half of 1927-8 was written off as a bad job. 1928-9 was a season of mid-table reconstruction and it looked like 1929-30 would go the same way when the team lost their first three matches. The ship was steadied and a fine revival led to a late charge towards the top of the league and a fourth-place finish. Young George Hunt, a £10 buy that August, went to Spurs for £1500 at the season's end, and Davison used some of this money to bring in experienced and reliable men like George Thornevell, Dick Duckworth, Sid Binks and Tom Bell.

Davison's third full season in charge was an unprecedented success. The side won its first three games but stuttered when Jimmy Bullock was sold to Manchester United in September: when he was replaced by the veteran Albert Pynegar, though, the Spireites began scoring in bucketfuls and stormed to the top of the league. Needing a win over Gateshead on the last day to tie things up, the side responded by scoring eight goals, just to make sure!

Having achieved great things in getting the side promoted, Davison proved equal to the task of keeping them up in 1931-2. "Duke" Hamilton and Frank Froggatt were the only significant additions to the side: Froggatt had been a team-mate of Davison at Sheffield Wednesday but there was no whiff of cronyism in his signing. Davison continued to recruit experienced men for the cause, adding the likes of Sammy Austin and George Ashmore – both ex-England men and in their 30s – but he also paid attention to the production side of the club by establishing a scouting network in his native north-east, under the stewardship of Harry Dormand, whose keen eye for a player would see many Tynesiders launch careers with the Spireites. Davison's last significant act was the promotion of Billy Kidd - one early Dormand recommendation – to the first team in March 1932.

In a few short years Teddy Davison achieved as much as he possibly could at Chesterfield. When John Nicholson, the Sheffield United manager, was killed in a traffic accident in 1932, the Blades turned to Davison and he became their Secretary/Manager in the summer of that year. A mid-table position in his first season was followed by the Blades' relegation, the first in their history, in 1933-4. 1936 saw United make it to the FA Cup final, where they were beaten by Arsenal and, although the cup run may have cost them promotion it indicated that Davison had turned a corner with his side. The Blades finally made it back into Division One in 1939 but war interrupted their recovery and, after only three seasons of post-war football, they were relegated again.

A promotion near-miss in 1950, when the Owls went up in their place, was a bitter pill to swallow. As Davison's management began to run out of steam the side endured two mid-table finishes before the club and their manager parted company, in the summer of 1952.

Chesterfield had just witnessed the end of another indifferent management spell and appointed Davison to his old job almost as soon as he was through United's exit door. His return was met with the universal approval of supporters; directors who had seen him get the side up on a shoestring in 1932 hoped he might repeat the miracle. The club pushed the boat out to sign

Ron Powell, the Manchester City goalkeeper, and the former England forward Dennis Westcott, who got Davison's second spell off to the best possible start by scoring all four in a 4-1 win over Mansfield. George Smith arrived from Maine Road but could not, on his own, score the goals needed to sustain a promotion push and a mid-table place was reached.

1953-4 was better. Veteran players like Alf Bellis and Cyril Hatton were signed as Davison attempted to repeat the promotion formula of twenty years ago. Dave Blakey emerged and a settled defence and half-back line provided a good platform. Keith Marsden came through to support Smith up front but the wings were a problem and the side lacked consistency. A late rally saw the team climb to sixth, but a promotion campaign was never seriously on the agenda.

The financial climate that Davison struggled against was indicated by the retention of only fourteen full professionals in the summer of 1954. Nearly twenty more players were semi-pro, or on National Service. From somewhere, though, the side found the impetus to leap from the blocks, winning their first four games and going unchanged for eleven matches from the start of the season. The side won their last four, too, but with Marsden in Germany with the army, the goals dried up and another sixth place came. At the end of the season Davison gave debuts to emerging players in Gerry Sears, Gerry Clarke and Barry Hutchinson.

1955-6 saw yet another sixth-placed finish but the focus of attention was the junior side, who reached the FA Youth Cup final. Keith Havenhand was a first-team regular by the time of the final and two more team-mates, Charlie Rackstraw and Gordon Banks, would emerge to claim their places. The summer of 1956 saw Davison again shuffle the forward pack while keeping hold of his well-established defence, but another sixth place - the fourth in succession - was the best the side could manage. 1957 saw the establishment of Bryan Frear and Gwyn Lewis but the early departure of Freddie Capel and Tommy Flockett brought only inconsistency.

January 1958 saw Teddy Davison announce that he would retire at the season's end. The team appeared to think that was that, for they won only once more in their last eight games and secured only an eighth-placed finish, though this was good enough to secure a place in the new Division Three.

Davison's period of office in the 1950s did not bring the hoped-for return to Division Two, but the circumstances were different from his previous spell in charge. A post-war boom in interest in football had levelled the playing field in the Third (North) and, while it still had under-funded strugglers, it no longer contained consistently weak teams like the Durhams and Ashingtons of the 1920s. Chesterfield's own financial circumstances were routinely worrying and often desperate during this era, with huge losses only ever offset by donations from local supporters' groups. Those sixth-placed finishes were as close as the team would come to Division Two for twenty more years and, for that, Davison's second spell should not be written off as a failure. His 464 games in charge saw 212 games won, and only two others have a better win

percentage than Teddy's 46%. If the goals had come to turn more defeats into draws, his record might have been better, still.