



Locally-born, **Frank Thacker** began with Sheepbridge sides and went to Sheffield United in February 1898. He played only twice in the Football League for them before being allowed to join Chesterfield Town on their ascension to League football, for £10.

Frank was signed as a capable, scheming inside-forward but was converted to left-half after six months. A worker in the forge at Sheepbridge, he was as hard as nails and fiercely competitive. Sturdy and intimidating, he became a mainstay of the Town club's Football League side and earned a reputation as Herbert Munday's 'minder' - anyone foolish enough to try to kick Town's gifted forward out of the game could expect Frank to come steaming in to exact retribution with interest.

Frank was involved in some notoriously dirty games for Town, none more so than a 1906 FA Cup replay against Clapton Orient that resembled a loose collection of petty fouls and fist-fights. He was awarded a benefit match in 1906/07, against Clapton Orient, of all clubs, and signed for the O's after failing to agree terms for the 1907/08 season.

His reputation remained undiminished by his transfer to another side and, after "misconduct" during Clapton's game at Hull, Frank served out two months' suspension. In London, Frank found himself under the microscope rather more than at Chesterfield and no less an organisation than the Salvation Army sought to get him banned from football for his rough play and the poor example that they considered he set to spectators. Frank lasted only a year in London before joining Rotherham Town.

He returned to Saltergate as the club returned to the Midland League in 1909 and left to become player/trainer to a local club in 1912: he was back at the Rec a year later, as Town's trainer. He remained in that position until that club was liquidated in 1915, whereupon he became trainer to the short-lived Town club that played wartime football for two seasons. He played twice for that club in his fortieth year. Frank was appointed trainer to the current Chesterfield FC on that club's formation and continued to serve them until May, 1925.

After football, he worked for the Corporation Cleansing Department and as a canteen attendant at Sheepbridge Works until retirement. Frank worked hard and played hard, and was on first-name terms with the local police. He found himself up before the beak in 1910 on a charge of stealing three pig's trotters, half a stone of tripe and a bottle of vinegar from a cart outside a working mens' club in Sheepbridge. His vehement denials of guilt were rather at odds with the accounts of a succession of

witnesses but, with the court often reduced to helpless laughter, the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

For Chesterfield Town: 228 league appearances, 23 goals.

Career: 264 league appearances, 24 goals.