



Born in Dronfield in 1937, Keith Havenhand's development as an inside-right began at school, where he became part of the Chesterfield Schoolboys' side that reached the final of the English Schools FA Shield in 1953, scoring in the 3-1 aggregate defeat to Swansea Boys.

Keith joined Chesterfield as an amateur upon leaving school in May 1953 and made his Northern Intermediate League debut for us in August of the same year. The schoolboy became a young adult and progressed to our "A" team, in the Yorkshire League, by April 1954, playing men's football against local colliery and works teams.

Keith was still 16 years old when he made his debut for our reserves in a Central League game against Wolves Reserves on August 28th, 1954. Opposing him down the left of the Wolves defence that day were future England internationals Ron Flowers and Eddie Clamp. He played 29 times for the reserves that season and scored a respectable seven goals in a side that finished – as it often did - bottom of the Central League.

At the age of 16 years and 227 days, Keith became the club's second-youngest Football League debutant on December 17th, 1955, when he was selected to play against Carlisle United. Having made the first team he stayed there for the rest of the season, with several notable omissions: still young enough to play for the youth team, he found himself alternating between that and the 1st XI as the youngsters progressed to the FA Youth Cup final. Having scored in the schoolboys final of 1953, Keith scored another in the home leg of the Youth Cup final, against Manchester United. Again, the game ended in the disappointment of defeat.



First-team opportunities were restricted for the next two seasons by a period of National Service, but Keith was allowed leave to appear for England's youth team in a 2-1 win over Hungary at Roker Park in October 1956. Freed from service commitments by the start of the 1958-9 season, he came straight back into the first team and netted 13 goals from 38 appearances. His powerful physique and great ability made him one of the more sought-after members of the declining Spireite side of the late 'fifties.

As a boy, Keith had turned down overtures from Wolves and Sheffield Wednesday to sign for The Spireites, and when he felt the need for a higher grade of football, the club repaid that early loyalty by privately inviting enquiries for him. He was eventually sold to Derby County for £10,000 during the 1961-2 season. By the time of his move Keith had played 176 Football League games for Chesterfield and scored 58 goals – the 7th-highest by any Chesterfield player at that time.

Thriving at second division level, Keith scored 14 goals in 26 games for The Rams. There were home and away hat-tricks against Bristol Rovers, but his career shuddered to a halt at Norwich City in April 1962, when a knee injury led to a cartilage operation. Unable to get back into the first team, Keith had a transfer request granted in October 1963 and made a move to Oxford United two months later.

Keith preferred to live locally rather than move to Oxford, and this didn't help him settle, so it was no surprise when he was placed on Oxford's transfer list within a year of signing. Hopes of a return to Saltergate were stumped by the prospect of our having to pay a fee, and he remained at Oxford until moving to King's Lynn Town in the summer of 1965. Keith's time with The Linnets lasted one season; when he was transfer-listed in the summer of 1966 he chose retirement from football instead.

In 1967 Keith took over a local driving school and became a familiar sight on Chesterfield's roads, until retiring in 2003. He played a good standard of Derbyshire League cricket and founded a small sporting dynasty in Dronfield. One son played football locally for Staveley and Hallam, while another entered the world of professional ice hockey, appearing as the goalminder for the Sheffield Steelers.

Keith passed away in September 2025. He was one of a comparatively small number of players who joined Chesterfield straight from school to make a career in football that ran for more than 200 games. He was, as the song goes, "One of our own," and commands a prominent place in the club's history, long remembered by anyone who saw him play.