



Barry Fuller

With a playing career spanning 20 years and over 700 first team appearances for Barnet, Stevenage, Gillingham, AFC Wimbledon, Dorking Wanderers and now Ashford United, Barry Fuller shows no signs of slowing down or losing his appetite for playing the game, even though he turned 40 in September. And having made the majority of those appearances for tonight's clubs, the tenacious right-back – who also skippered both the Gills and the Dons to League Two play-off final successes at Wembley Stadium – is the ideal choice to welcome back to Plough Lane as our special guest this evening.

Barry's career began within the Charlton Athletic youth system,

before signing professional forms in July 2004. Despite captaining the Addicks reserves to the Premier League Southern Division title, it was a loan spell with Barnet where he made his Football League debut, helping the Bees avoid relegation. After being released by Alan Curbishley in 2006, he joined Stevenage Borough and was ever-present as the club became the first team to win a competitive final in the new Wembley Stadium, when Boro' defeated Kidderminster Harriers to win the FA Trophy.

Fuller was reunited with manager Mark Stimson at Gillingham in his first spell at Priestfield in 2008 and nine months later he was appointed captain and led the

Kent side to promotion to League One a year later. His combative style often landed him in the wars and during his playing days he has battled back from a bout of pneumonia, a broken arm and a 'career-saving' knee operation that sidelined him for nine months during the 2011/12 campaign.

Barry rejoined Barnet in August 2012 along with team mate Curtis Weston and after two years, relegation from the EFL saw many senior players released due to budget cuts. AFC Wimbledon manager Neal Ardley stepped in quickly to bring the defender to Kingsmeadow and he was soon installed as vice-captain to Alan Bennett. Fuller was again an ever-present and his consistently

committed performances allied to a dogged attitude culminated in him picking up the Player of the Year award – and also registering his first (and only) Dons goal in a 1-0 win over Dagenham & Redbridge. Fuller then led AFC Wimbledon into League One via a 2016 play-off final win against Plymouth Argyle and was unlucky to be released in the summer of 2018 after 233 Dons games.

Fuller returned to Gillingham on a one-year deal and was voted the Player of the Season, earning a contract extension, but a change of manager saw him depart once again when Steve Evans announced he was pursuing a more youthful squad. Dorking Wanderers were keen to add

his experience to their National League South squad for the 2020/21 season and he captained them to promotion via yet another play-off final win. Last month, Barry's career went full circle as he was loaned to his hometown club Ashford United – managed by another former AFC Wimbledon and Gillingham favourite in Danny Kedwell – and his ongoing enthusiasm was evident when he celebrated scoring on his debut for the Nuts and Bolts.

Barry has run his own Ashford-based football academy for several years and his sporting genes have also been passed to his three daughters Cracie, Evie and Scarlett-Rose, with Evie rising through the academy age groups

at Gillingham and then Chelsea. Together with his wife Laura, we are very pleased to welcome all of the Fuller family here tonight and hope they enjoy their evening with us.