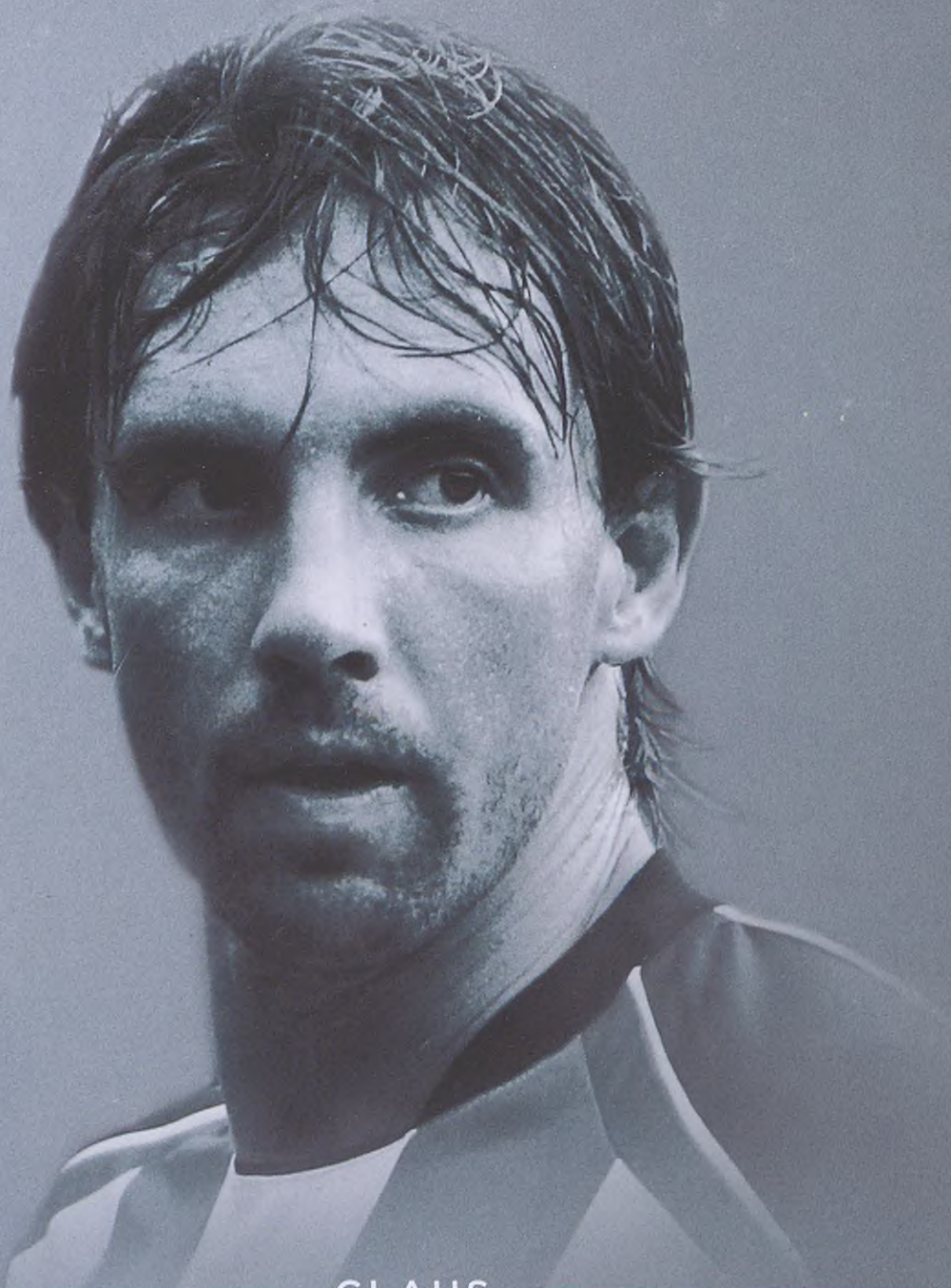


SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAMME



CLAUS

LUNDEKVAM

TESTIMONIAL



Southampton v Celtic

Friday 18th July 2008 Kick off 7.45pm £5.00



ivbe.com



Welcome to what is a very special night for me as I get the chance to say thank you and goodbye to all of you.

It has not really sunk in yet that my career is over. I have been so distracted by this game that I have not had time to think about it. But I am sure it will hit me hard when I pull on the red and white stripes tonight for what will be the last time.

Over the years I have fractured my cheekbone three times, dislocated my shoulder and picked up countless cuts and bruises and I have never shed a tear. But I am certain I will cry tonight.

It is going to be a very emotional occasion for me. I have absolutely loved playing for this club. It has been an honour and I feel very fortunate to have been here for so long. People say it is an achievement to stay here for 12 years but why would I have wanted to go anywhere else? I was already at the best club in the country!

It may not be the biggest or the most wealthy but some things in life are more important than that - like personal happiness. I know I could not have had a better time or met better people anywhere else. I love the city and the fans and I have made so many good friends here. Although I am very sad that I have had to pack up through injury earlier than I would have wished, I am very grateful for the good times I have had.

It would have been much worse if the ankle had gone when I was in my twenties. At least I have had a good and long career and I have enjoyed every minute.

There is no way I could have continued playing even with another year of rehab so there was no option but to pack up otherwise I could have caused myself serious problems in later life.

I have been working hard though to get myself ready for tonight and hopefully I will just about manage to get through the last 10 minutes - and to play alongside Michael Svensson one last time. I am so pleased he looks to be on the road to recovery. He has worked so hard and no-one deserves it more and if he could get back and play again then it would ease my own disappointment. The aim is for us to play the last 10 minutes because both managers want this to be a competitive game - and that has always been my own intention.

I am extremely grateful to Gordon Strachan for bringing Celtic down tonight...

I am extremely grateful to Gordon Strachan for bringing Celtic down tonight. We had such good times when he was at Southampton and I loved playing for him. It took some organising to get Celtic but I really wanted him to be here for this game because I played my best football under him. We could have had lesser opposition either last year or in a few weeks time - and maybe that would have made more money. But that is not what this game is about. I just want it to be a great night for the fans, for my family and for everyone connected with Southampton Football Club.

I must thank my testimonial committee for their incredible hard work to get this game on. Lisa Buckland has worked tirelessly along with treasurer Tony Lynn and Matthew Le Tissier and Francis Benali. I really value their efforts and dedication. Of course, I must also

thank Southampton Football Club for agreeing to stage this game - and all the staff who have worked so hard to ensure it goes smoothly.

Thank you too to Leon Crouch whose Fullers Group are our shirt sponsors tonight. He has been a good friend to me and very supportive. I must thank Graeme Souness and Lawrie McMenemy for bringing me here in the first place and for giving me a chance. They changed my life and I hope I have repaid their faith. I have learned something from all the managers I have played under and it

has been a fantastic time, a real rollercoaster ride but a wonderful experience. There are so many people I need to thank, too many to name them all here but people who have made me welcome here over the years and who are the heart and soul of the club. And most of all I need to thank my family, my parents, my lovely wife Nina and our two girls Tia and Kaja - and of course every one of you for turning out tonight. I hope it will be a very special evening - I know I will treasure the memories for ever.

I feel privileged to have been part of this great club for so long and it will always have a big place in my heart.





RUPERT LOWE

he has also been a big presence around the club and throughout the city. He has done a huge amount of work for the community, giving up his own time and turning out to present cheques or to aid good causes.

He always has time for the fans who have taken him to their hearts and made him one of their own. His laid-back character is deceptive because it masks a steely determination to succeed and he epitomises the winning attitude we want from our players.

It is very sad that we are losing him because his experience would have been a huge asset, particularly to the younger members of the squad. But he has had a top-class career and he will leave us with a lot of very good memories.

He deserves a good send-off tonight and on a personal level I am very pleased that Celtic have agreed to provide the opposition.

It will be good to meet up once again with Gordon Strachan who has stayed

in touch since his time here. He called in to see me a couple of weeks ago and I know he is very much looking forward to this evening.

His team will certainly provide a competitive game for us tonight and it will be a good gauge for Jan Poortvliet, Mark Wotte and the rest of the coaching team to see where we are in our build-up for the new season.

They will also see for the first time the special family feel there is to this club so I hope you will give them and the rest of our new signings a warm welcome as we say goodbye and thank you to Claus who has been a very loyal and committed player.

We wish him and his family well for the future and look forward to seeing him whenever he wants to come back and watch a match. I hope he has a great evening. Enjoy the game.

Rupert Lowe

CHAIRMAN, SOUTHAMPTON LEISURE HOLDINGS PLC.

I am delighted to welcome you all to Claus Lundekvam's testimonial game against Celtic which will be a very emotional occasion as well as a good game.

I have got to know Claus well over the past 12 years with his arrival coinciding almost exactly with my own. And I am very pleased that we are able to stage this match for him tonight.

He has been a tremendous servant to us. Solid and dependable on the pitch,



MICHAEL WILDE

This is a big night for Claus Lundekvam and for everyone at the club as we say thank you to a great servant.

I have only had the pleasure of knowing Claus for the past couple of years but I have been hugely impressed by him as a person as much as a player.

He clearly cares very deeply about Southampton Football Club at every level and he will be badly missed both on and off the field.

It is always sad when any player has to pack up because of injury but even more so when it is someone as

talented and as experienced as he is. Over the past 12 years he has been an excellent servant to this club and he fully deserves this testimonial.

I am delighted to welcome Celtic and of course our former manager Gordon Strachan who did such a wonderful job during his time here.

I am sure it will be a good game and one which will provide a fitting tribute to a great player.

Come on you Reds.

Michael Wilde

CHAIRMAN, SOUTHAMPTON FOOTBALL CLUB



JAN POORTVLIET

He was strong in the air and good on the ground. He was not afraid to put in a tackle or to get hurt and he added great authority and stature to the back line.

He would have been a great asset to us this season with his experience and leadership as well as his football brain - he read the game so well.

But I am also sad not to have been able to get to know him as a person as I have heard only good things about him. He has done so much for this club off the field as well as on it and he will be a big loss.

Tonight though you have chance to pay tribute to his 12 years with Southampton - and it is also an opportunity for you to see the team in action for the first time this season.

We have had a few low-key friendlies already but this will be our first major test and I am delighted that Celtic are here tonight because they are top quality opposition.

I am pleased Claus has opted for a

competitive game because that will form an important part of our pre-season build-up.

It will be great experience for some of our younger players to play against such a strong side who have not only won the Scottish title for the past three seasons but who have also begun to make a mark in the Champions League.

I would like to welcome them and Gordon Strachan who did such a good job during his time as manager here. I know he is still a very popular figure at Southampton and his team will give us a very tough game.

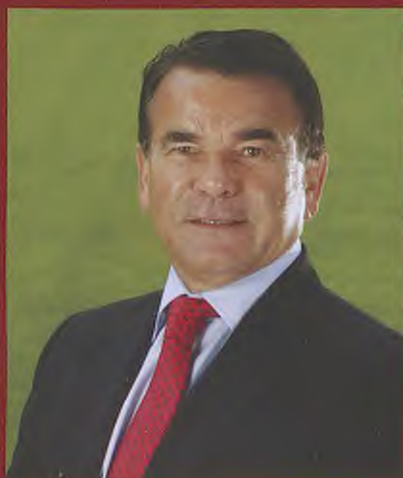
It will provide us with a good idea of how far we still have to go before the new season kicks off on August 9. But the most important thing is for everyone here to enjoy it and to take the opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to someone who has been such a great servant to the club.

Claus will always be welcome around the club and I wish him and his family well for their big night and for the future.

Unfortunately I did not get chance to work with Claus Lundekvam on the training field which is a great shame because he was a tremendous player.

Of course I knew of him through watching Premier League games on the television and through international football and I would have loved to have had him in my squad.

The fact that he has had to retire through injury is very sad both for him and for the club. It was clear from watching him play that he was a terrific centre-half with great pace and courage.



LEON CROUCH

As Chairman of the Fullers Group, I am proud to be the Saints shirt sponsor for tonight's game.

Claus Lundekvam has been a fantastic servant to the club and I hope he has a great night.

It should be a terrific game, despite the fact that I'm not playing! I did win an auction for the chance to play 20 minutes but Celtic have made it clear they want a competitive match and will not allow any amateurs, which will at least spare you the sight of my legs in football shorts!

Nevertheless I am very pleased to still be involved as the shirt sponsor tonight. I have a great respect for Claus who has proven to be a class player and during my time at the club I realised that he was a top man off the field too. He is a leader, a great character and a good person to have around the dressing room even when he was injured.

I would like to thank him for all he has done for the club and for his personal support when I was chairman.

I hope this will be a memorable evening for him and I wish him and his family all the very best for the future.

COYR!

GRAEME SOUNESS



I am very proud to have been the manager who brought Claus Lundekvam into English football - although I had no idea he would stay so long.

There is always a question mark when you sign foreigners because although they might be good players in their own country, you never quite know how they are going to adapt to the English game or fit in with their teammates. I have to say Claus has been absolutely fantastic for Southampton - a top-class performer.

It took him a season to grasp the English game but for me, he should have played his whole career in the Premiership because he was more than good enough. He had terrific pace to get him out of trouble and the older he got, the more he understood the game. He has been terrific value for Southampton - definitely one of the best signings I ever made at any club.

It was obvious he was a good player in Norway but the English game is more aggressive and quicker and there was always going to be a doubt about how he would handle it.

It took him a year to grasp the pace and ferocity of it and there were many times I was screaming at him to put the ball into Row Z. But that was Claus. He liked to play his way out of trouble and had great self-confidence that he could do it.

After a season he worked it out and he has been a top performer. His pace is deceptive but he could always recover and get back - and he was good at reading the game. He was brave - almost to the point of being too brave because he took a lot of knocks over the years, particularly to the head. But that was his whole-hearted approach. He was very popular in the dressing room too. He came in with a Norwegian mentality but settled in very quickly and won over the other lads from day one.

I would like to have worked with him for longer and in fact I tried to sign him when I was manager of Newcastle - but Southampton were not prepared to let him go. And I'm not surprised...

He had a ridiculous dress sense - and that has not got any better over the years by the way! But it endeared him to the rest of the lads. He took the banter and learned to dish it out and he was very quickly accepted.

I would like to have worked with him for longer and in fact I tried to sign him when I was manager of Newcastle - but Southampton were not prepared to let him go. And I'm not surprised. He had become a very steady centre-half in the English top level who just got on with the job. He was solid and dependable and his longevity is a mark of his quality.

He fully deserves this testimonial and I am absolutely delighted for him that he is receiving this recognition. I hope there is a big turn-out and the fans really appreciate all he has done for this club. Have a great night Claus!

GORDON STRACHAN



We got on really well - once I got the hang of telling him and Jo Tessem apart! I'm not sure which of them was the most offended!

I am delighted to have been asked to bring Celtic to Southampton for Claus Lundekvam's testimonial.

On a personal level it will be great for me to be back at St Mary's and to see so many old friends. I really enjoyed my time at Southampton and had a great rapport with the fans who were terrific to me. I still have a house in the area and I love coming back. But I am also honoured to be invited down by Claus who was a fantastic player and a top man off the field too.

We got on really well - once I got the hang of telling him and Jo Tessem apart! I'm not sure which of them was the most offended!

When I arrived at the club, I already knew Claus was a decent player. But I had no idea just how good he was until I worked with him. He really was terrific. Claus was always unflappable as a player. He was the perfect pro on the pitch and the perfect gent off of it.

He was a great reader of the game, he had good composure and a nice short pass. And he was good in the air - in his own penalty area!

There was absolutely no point sending him up field for corners or set-pieces. I'm surprised he was not booked for time-wasting! You could put a dead body in the penalty area and have a better chance of scoring!

He was terrific to work with though - and smashing bloke. He was great with the youngsters and the older pros too and he did a fantastic job for Southampton.

He could have played for a real top club and I would happily have taken him with me to Celtic but we already had a lot of players in that position and I know Saints would not have wanted him to go.

It is rare for a foreign player to stay loyal to one club for so long, but that speaks volumes about Claus.

To be honest I usually forgot he was foreign. I mean I knew he had a funny name, but he was very much one of the lads and just got on with it like all the rest of them. It is nice to help people who have helped me and Claus was a big part of our success during my time at Southampton.

We had a great couple of seasons and Claus was a huge part of that success especially in the FA Cup so I am thrilled to be part of his big night. If anyone deserves it, Claus does and I really am looking forward to it immensely.

Well done Big Man, enjoy your night and thank you for all you have done for me and for this club.

GEORGE BURLEY



He got injured in the final league game against Southend and that curtailed his season. But if he had been available for the play-offs then I am convinced we would have won promotion...

Claus Lundekvam has been a great professional throughout his career and I am very glad to have had the opportunity to work with him.

I knew of him of course before I came here. I had watched him play both for Southampton and for Norway and I had always admired him.

But I did not know him as a person and I have to say he was terrific for me. He was a leader both on and off the field.

He was a great player but he was also tremendous at looking after the other players. He was the right type of captain and he was a big influence around the whole club.

He gained instant respect from all those who came into contact with him. He was not just a destroyer but he could play a bit too and liked to bring the ball out of defence.

Claus was a very intelligent type of defender and he became known as one of the best centre-backs in the league enjoying a terrific career in the Premiership and more latterly in the Championship. He is also one of the best defenders Norway have ever had.

He was the right type of captain and he was a big influence around the whole club...

He had good skill on the ball but he was brave too. Sometimes he was too brave and he would push himself to play even when he was not 100 per cent fit. But that was Claus. He had a big heart and he was a very honest and committed lad. We certainly missed him in the play-off semi-final last year.

He got injured in the final league game against Southend and that curtailed his

season. But if he had been available for the play-offs then I am convinced we would have won promotion. He was a big loss, particularly for the home leg when we missed having him up against Steve Howard. If he had been playing it would have made a big difference.

It is sad that injury was to finish his career but he fully deserves this testimonial for his service to the club and I hope he has a great evening.

MATTHEW LE TISSIER



Perhaps the biggest compliment I can pay Claus Lundekvam is to say he is probably the most English foreigner I know!

Most players coming in from abroad tend to move around because they have no loyalty to the clubs. But Claus is very different and has given superb service. It is very rare for British players to show his kind of loyalty, let alone foreigners. He has really embraced the English way of life. He likes a night out, loves his Only Fools and Horses and eats more than I do - but gets away with it!

He is also one of the most laid-back blokes I know. I thought I was relaxed about life but he is virtually horizontal! But all that changed whenever he took the field. He was still calm and unflappable - but totally committed to the cause. For someone so skinny, he was brave, strong and determined but had an air of class about him.

He reminded me a lot of Alan Hansen because he was so quick and so comfortable on the ball. I knew the first time I came up against him on the training field that he would be hard to get past.

I did not really know him until then. I was away on international duty when he signed so I came back and found myself sitting opposite this strangely dressed character in the changing room. I thought a tramp had wandered in!

But he has turned out to be a top bloke and a great mate. Within a couple of months his English had improved and his sense of humour came out. I loved spending time with him.

Another first impression was that looked as though he might chip in with a few goals - I got that one badly wrong! But it was obvious he could play a bit. He would glide past people

He reminded me a lot of Alan Hansen because he was so quick and so comfortable on the ball. I knew the first time I came up against him on the training field that he would be hard to get past...

in training earning him the nickname Silky which stuck. He even named his boat Silky.

I loved those qualities in a centre-back because I am a purist and want the ball played as much as possible.

Occasionally he tried it in the wrong area but I could never criticise him for that. He always played the game the right way and if that meant trying a Cruyff turn in his own box, then so be it!

He matured into a strong leader and his commitment for the cause has been unflinching - and he has the bumps and bruises and breaks to prove it.

Most of all he is a top man. It has been a pleasure to play with him and to socialise with him and to be chairman of his testimonial committee.

He deserves a great night.

LAWRIE MCMENEMY



Back in the season Graeme Souness and I worked together, Graeme called me one day when I was at The Dell and asked if I could pop up to the training ground where he had organised a game to look at some trialists.

When I got there he pointed out there were three boys from Norway - two centre forwards, Egil Ostenstad and Tore Andre Flo, with Claus at the back.

He wanted my opinion. At half-time I pulled him to one side and said for what it's worth my advice was to try to get them tied up.

The total outlay was about £1.5m for the three with add-ons later as and when they played more games. They all went back to their clubs.

Flo decided he would stay in Norway

for a little longer. He eventually came to England and had a terrific career with clubs including Chelsea and Rangers whereas Egil and Claus came to The Dell.

Claus cost the club an initial £400,000 which finally went to £600,000. Not only did he complete those games but carried on to be one of our longest serving professionals and after 12 years has been granted a well deserved testimonial.

I have to say that I think that £600,000 is pound for pound the best money any club has spent for a long time.

Claus has given Saints things that money cannot buy any more such as loyalty which springs straight to mind. I can't see Claus' service to Saints happening again with the way the modern game is.

Even in the last year when Claus has not been in the team because of injury

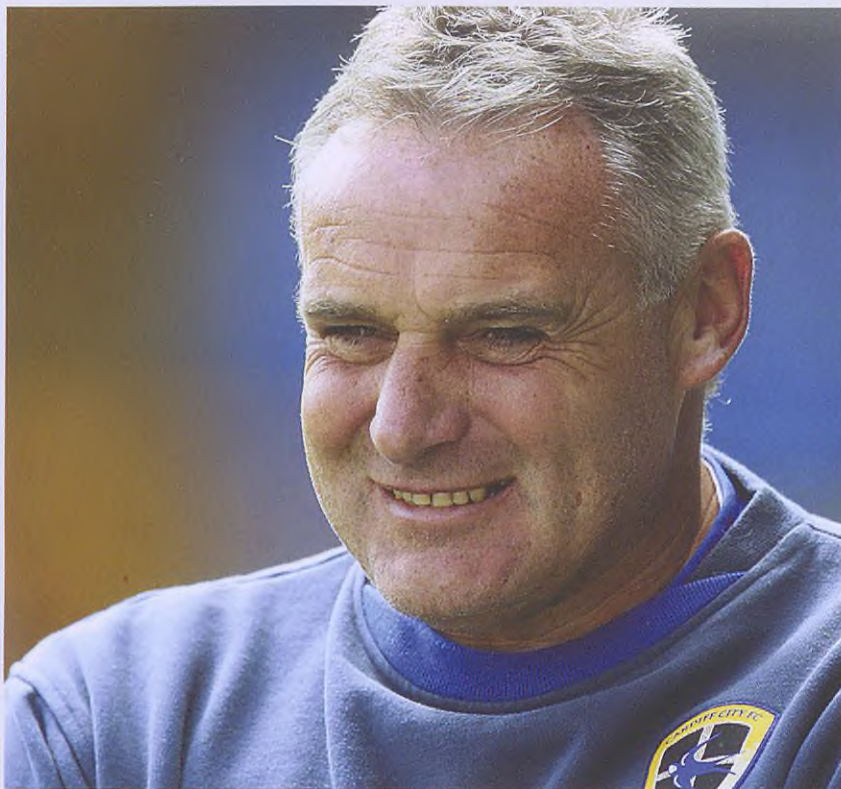
he has been an asset to the club because he took his position as captain very seriously... He had a positive influence at the training ground and was a massive help to the manager as a link between the players and the staff. He's a good family man as well.

With over 400 games for the club Claus has become one of the legends. The respect from people who watched him and those players he played with is immense and everybody appreciates what he's done for the club.

He could easily write a book about the club which was at one time very much like him with stability and continuity from all the things he's seen.

Whatever he seeks to do in the future, I'm sure I speak for everyone - both professionals who have had the privilege of working with him and the supporters who have watched him - in wishing a bit of good luck for him and his family. We wish him well.

DAVE JONES



He got his first goal for Saints against Wolves when I was in charge there - and then got another against Cardiff!

I hit it off with Claus very early on after I took over as manager at Southampton.

I always felt we got on well - so I am not quite sure why he chose to score his only two league goals against my sides! He couldn't score for me - just against me!

He got his first goal for Saints against Wolves when I was in charge there - and then got another against Cardiff!

fantastic job for me and continued to do really well for the club. He was a very classy defender who probably should have got a lot more caps than he did.

I cannot speak highly enough of him. He forged a very good partnership with Dean Richards but he did well whoever he played alongside. He was very adaptable.

As a person, he was an exceptional guy. The only downside with him was

He was certainly not afraid to put his head in where it hurt!

He was a terrific player, a superb header of the ball with good pace - he had all the attributes needed for a top defender. He was one of the best centre-backs in the Premier League.

In many ways he was probably better suited to the Premiership than the Championship because he had that bit of class about him.

It is very sad that he has had to pack up through injury but I hope he has a great night tonight because he fully deserves it.

I cannot speak highly enough of him. He forged a very good partnership with Dean Richards but he did well whoever he played alongside. He was very adaptable...

People asked if he had something against me but it was just one of those things and I must have done something right because he did a

his white suits. I think he thought he was James Bond but he has not quite got the looks for that after the number of knocks he has taken.



CLAUS STORY

By Graham Hiley

When Asta Lundekvam gave birth to a son in Austevoll on February 22, 1973, she can have had no idea where his life would lead.

Like all parents, Asta and Knut will have tried to imagine the future for baby Claus - and would probably have assumed he would one day join the fishing industry on their tiny island of Selbjorn.

With less than a thousand inhabitants, it was a close-knit community but part of a chain of small islands off the coast of Norway. Traditionally most young men would be educated on the islands then move away for further education at 18 before returning home to join the lucrative fishing industry.

Although he shared the native love of the sea and of boats, Claus was always a bit different. His first love was always sport – not just football but also athletics, acrobatics and even martial arts which toughened him up for his future career. His father Knut recalled: "Claus was very talented at all sports, particularly skating. He began playing football at seven or eight and from then on he always had a ball under his arm.

"He grew up on a tiny island with just one pitch. He and his brother Robert were always out playing football and up to the age of 15 they were a similar standard.

"But Claus had more ambition and drive. He was very competitive and single-minded in his determination to become a footballer.

"I feel really lucky to have grown up there. We were free to do what we wanted with no restrictions. Everyone knew each other and looked out for each other and there was a very close-knit atmosphere.

"I played a lot of sports. I was into kung-fu and athletics as well as football - but that was always my first

Claus was very talented at all sports, particularly skating. He began playing football at seven or eight and from then on he always had a ball under his arm...

"In those days, believe it or not, he played up front - and scored a lot of goals. He was a good player and we encouraged him all the way." Claus said: "It was a wonderful place to grow up. It was a very safe environment so we were always off playing.

love. I always wanted to be a footballer."

In those days football was not seen as a great career in Norway where clubs were often part-time and the national side had yet to make its mark on the world stage.



Claus recalled: "That explains the huge excitement and the famous 'Your boys took a hell of a beating' commentary rant when Norway beat England.

"It was only in the Nineties when Egil Olsen took over as national coach that things started to pick up and Norwegian football really began to develop.

"When I was 17 I was spotted by Brann Bergen scouts and they asked

me to sign for them. It meant moving away from the island which was a big wrench. It was a huge thing for me to do to leave everything and everyone I had ever known.

"By then I had decided I did not want to go into the fishing industry like my grandfather and brother. My dad had already bucked the trend by becoming a teacher while my mother was a hairdresser.

"I wanted a normal education so it was natural for me to go to Bergen anyway - but by then I knew I had a talent for football and wanted to pursue it. However, at that time I had no idea I would have the sort of career I have had.

"I moved into a little flat on my own but I was not really home-sick because it was not that far away and I was able to go home for the weekend.

"Besides, football was such a big part of my life and it was what I wanted to do and that was the way to achieve it.

"I made some good friends and went to school in Bergen while playing for their junior sides and moved up through the ranks. I made my debut in 1993 against Molde - I didn't score! In those days, I was playing a central defensive midfielder. It was only a year or two before I came to Southampton that I was converted to centre-half.

"In my second or third year as a first-team player we got a new coach Hallvard Thoresen and I remember him coming up to me and suggesting I try playing centre-back. I think it is nice of him to take the blame!

When I was 17 I was spotted by Brann Bergen scouts and they asked me to sign for them...

"I had played as a striker when I was younger and I am really glad I had experience of those different positions because it gave me a greater understanding of the game."





Lundekvam's life changed for ever in autumn of 1996 when Southampton got wind of his impressive displays.

Manager Graeme Souness and chief scout Terry Cooper came to watch him twice and on the second occasion they decided to take a punt on the Norwegian unknown. Lundekvam went for a post-match meal with Souness and director of Football Lawrie McMenemy - with a photograph appearing in the town's local paper the next day. So, not quite the secrecy they had hoped for!

The £400,000 deal was one of the best bargains the club has ever had and it was conducted smoothly and swiftly. Knut Christiansen, Brann chairman at the time, recalled: "Claus came to us as an Under 19 player and always looked the part. He was tall, quick, had a good brain and read the game well.

"He was a superior player and it was no surprise to me when Graeme Souness came over and liked what he saw. Lawrie McMenemy flew over and we sorted out the deal very easily.

Asta Lundekvam smiled: "I remember when Claus was 10 or 11 he had a big poster of Graeme Souness on his wall. His grandmother came from Liverpool so he always followed them and it was fantastic for him to suddenly be signing for him."

Having grown up by the sea, that was a real bonus to me when I found out that it was a port and a big yachting centre and such a beautiful city. I could not believe my luck...

"There were no agents involved - we did not need any. We had some good discussions and all parties were very happy.

"We got 50 per cent of the transfer fee on signing and the rest after games. There were no complications at all."

Claus said: "We had a good chat but he did not need to sell the club to me at all. There had been some interest from German side Freiburg who wanted me but they did not have any money.



"When I got the chance to play in the Premier League, I could not possibly turn it down. It was such a good opportunity for me.

"When I first signed for Brann it was as a semi-professional. I had to work part-time because I could not live on what the club paid me. It was 3,000 Krone per month - around £250, so it was not big money.

"I signed a new contract with them a year before I left and that earned me



£20,000 a year. But when I signed for Southampton that went up to £100,000 a year which at the time was massive - it still is.

"It was huge for me but the money was not really an issue. The most important thing for me was to prove myself in the English game and at the highest level.

"I had to prove to myself and to others that I was good enough for the Premiership and I jumped at the opportunity – even though I had no idea where Southampton was.

"I knew a bit about English football because I had followed Liverpool and watched games on television but I had no idea Southampton was even on the coast.

"Having grown up by the sea, that was a real bonus to me when I found out that it was a port and a big yachting centre and such a beautiful city. I could not believe my luck.

"It literally could have been anywhere but I felt at home here from day one. We turned out to be a perfect match for each other.

"Nina, then my girlfriend, came with me. That was a big thing for her. She had to give up her job and schooling but she fell in love with the place too and having her with me helped me enormously. It would have been a lot harder for me to settle without her.

"It was still a massive step because it was a different country and we hardly spoke any English. I went into it blind but it was what I wanted to do.

"I told myself if I did not do it then I would never get the chance again and I would always regret it. It was an easy decision but still a big step." Knut Lundekvam added: "We had always encouraged Claus to keep up his education because it was so hard to make a successful career in football.



"It was quite a shock when Graeme Souness came to see him play and said he wanted to sign him. It was fantastic for Claus and for all of us." Claus laughed: "I was the first sportsman from our tiny island ever to make it so it was big news back home!"

"My first memory of Southampton was the Park Hotel where we stayed. John Mortimore picked us up at the airport and then Lawrie McMenemy collected me for training the next morning.

"I had to meet the media which was a new experience. I had dealt with the press back home of course, but not on this level. The Premier League attracts massive attention and there were even Norwegian reporters there to cover the story.

"I have never really been fazed by the press though. It is very much part of football and it came naturally to me.

"I just tried to be myself - as I always do. I am who I am and that is a philosophy which has stuck with me through my whole career. I like to think I have remained the same person all through these years."

Lundekvam did have to change in one respect though - he faced a steep learning curve in the Premier League and had to adapt his game on occasions when his love of playing his way out of trouble sometimes had to be jettisoned in favour of the big boot upfield!

He recalled: "I made my debut in a 2-2 draw against Middlesbrough and I was

so nervous beforehand but that all went out of the window when I stepped onto the pitch.

"I just concentrated on the job but the toughness of it really hit me in the first half. I felt the pace and I was up against Kevin Campbell and Dean Saunders which was a decent test for my first game!

"Soon after that we beat Manchester United 6-3 which was unbelievable, especially looking back now at the talent they had. It was crazy.

"Then a couple of weeks later, we lost 7-1 at Everton when Andrei Kanchelskis tore us apart. It was a tough first season and we only stayed up on the last day of the season.

"That was my first experience of a Great Escape. It was a nerve-racking build-up but I just tried to put it out of my head and just concentrate on the football.

"At that stage I did not fully appreciate what it meant to the club and to the city. We needed a point at Aston Villa who also needed a draw to get into Europe. We lost 1-0 to a Richard Dryden own goal but we knew well before the end that we were safe. Middlesbrough went down instead. "We did not have one of the best squads but we had the most heart and spirit and togetherness. With the likes of Jason Dodd, Francis Benali, Tommy Widdrington and Neil Maddison, we knew how to battle for the shirt. And of course we always had the magic of Matthew Le Tissier.

"Probably the greatest escape came in 1998-99 when we only had nine points by mid-December and looked doomed. Hassan Kachloul came in and scored on his debut against Wimbledon just before Christmas.

"It helped turn things around but even so we were still in trouble with two



games left - and I will never forget the penultimate match against Wimbledon when we took 12,000 fans to Selhurst Park.

"It was the most astonishing sight to walk out and see that many Southampton supporters at an away game. You could tell just how much survival meant to them and there was no way then that we could lose.

Although we lost 1-0, it was a wonderful occasion. It was fantastic to see that wall of yellow as Saints fans took over most of the Millennium Stadium...

"I remember Tiss scored direct from a corner and we won 2-0 and thought that was enough - only to come off the field and find Charlton had got a late winner at Villa. Marian Pahars scored twice on the last day against

Everton and we ended up staying up by five points which was astonishing considering how far behind we had been at Christmas."

For a while at least, relegation battles became a thing of the past as Saints built steadily, moving to a new ground in 2001 with Lundekvam still treasuring the emotion of the final day at The Dell.

The Norwegian had by now established himself as the kingpin of the defence which he marshalled with his trademark calm authority and gritty determination. His understated style of play meant he often did not get the credit he

deserved with the plaudits going instead to the more obviously robust Ken Monkou or Dean Richards or Michael Svensson. But they would be the first to admit that Lundekvam made them better players with his pace a valuable fall-back to get them out of trouble.

His consistency played a key role in helping Southampton to the FA Cup final in 2003. It was the highlight of his career - but it was almost over as soon as it began.

Saints made a jittery start and were caught cold as Thierry Henry cut through inside the first 25 seconds. In desperation, Lundekvam tugged him back in the box.

If the Arsenal striker had gone down it would have been a clear penalty and instant red card. But, to his credit, he stayed on his feet and gave the Norwegian his Cup Final.



Lundekvam recalled: "I could very easily have gone off in the first minute but fair play to Thierry for staying on his feet. I will always be grateful to him for that."

"He could easily have gone down but he is not that sort of player and his honesty enabled me to have my big day."

"Although we lost 1-0, it was a wonderful occasion. It was fantastic to see that wall of yellow as Saints fans took over most of the Millennium Stadium."

"Probably the better memory was the semi-final where the whole day was magnificent. It was very special for me because the FA Cup has a big tradition in Norway and I grew up watching it so it was fantastic for me to be involved in the final."

"I just wish we could have kicked on from there when things were good because we had a really good side then and we had the chance to establish ourselves as a top-half team."

"But then things went wrong after Gordon Strachan left. He was a top manager, the best I worked under. And his departure hit us hard."

In less than a year Saints had Steve Wigley as caretaker boss, followed by a brief spell with Paul Sturrock at the helm, then Wigley again full-time followed by the astonishing appointment of Harry Redknapp who never looked at ease around St Mary's.

Lundekvam does not want to go into the personalities or politics raging behind the scenes as Saints went into freefall to finish bottom of the table for the first time in the club's history.

But he could see relegation coming from a long way out and even though they had a chance to save themselves on the final day against Manchester



united, he could see on the faces of his team-mates that it was a lost cause.

He admitted: "In the previous Great Escape years I always knew we would survive because we had a bond and a togetherness which saw us through. We were not always the most technically gifted but we fought for each other."

"It was not like that the year we went down. The atmosphere was not the same and looking back I think we were dead and buried months before the end of the season."

"It was a horrible time. We actually had one of the best squads I have worked with in all my time here and I kept telling myself with that sort of quality we should be OK."

"But although we had good players we were not working as a team. We were just arguing amongst ourselves, the confidence had gone and none of the players really wanted the ball."

"There was a lot of stuff going on with arguments between the manager and the chairman about how to take the club forward. Clive Woodward was in the background and as captain I was



caught in the middle and took a lot of flak. It was a very miserable time for me."

"Our fate was not in our own hands on the last day but we could have done it because it was obvious at half-time that Norwich would lose at Fulham. But we folded big-time and that can happen when you do not have the right spirit and togetherness. Without doubt that was the lowest point of my career and the biggest regret of my life."

Like so many others, Lundekvam fully expected a promotion push the following season but most of the top players left, followed in December 2005 by Redknapp who was replaced by George Burley. He undertook a rebuilding process which meant



achieving mid-table stability that season to set up a concerted challenge in 2006-07. Saints battled through to make the play-offs thanks to a 4-1 final-day victory at home to Southend when Lundekvam was stretchered off with an ankle injury.

That kept him out of the play-off semi-finals against a robust Derby side and Southampton badly missed his leadership and experience as well as his aerial power against Steve Howard who epitomised the Rams' strongarm tactics.



It was a bitter blow for Lundekvam when Saints unluckily lost on penalties but he remained confident they could go one better the following season - and he had every reason to think he would be part of it.

He looked to be making a good recovery but struggled in pre-season and needed surgery which was always going to rule him out until around March.

Lundekvam could only look on helplessly as the team found themselves sucked into an unlikely survival struggle but he was buoyed by the thought he would soon be back to help.

His rehabilitation looked to be bang on schedule but then without warning the ankle gave way again in a routine sprint. Immediately he feared the worst. He said: "I just knew it was bad. It was just a question of how severe the damage was.

"I tried to prepare myself for the worst but even so it was still a hammer blow when I came round after the operation and the surgeon told me I would not be able to play again.

"The op was a success but it was a case of repairing it sufficiently for me to be able to walk without a limp and to be able to enjoy a normal life. There is no way it was going to be strong enough for me to play again, even with a year of rehab.

I have played against the likes of David Beckham and Eric Cantona and Jurgen Klinsmann and I am very proud that I have lasted so long...

"It was horrible, especially with the team fighting for their lives. But Nigel Pearson kept me involved which helped to take my mind off my own problems.

"He wanted me around the training ground and in the dressing room and even at some away games just to help gee the lads up and to tell them what this club means to the city and to the fans and to me personally.

"I was an absolute wreck watching that last-day game against Sheffield United. It is so much easier playing because you just absorb yourself in the match instead of listening for other scores and wondering what other teams are doing.

"At the final whistle, I could not speak. I just crumbled with the emotion of it all - the relief at knowing we were safe mixed with the sadness of knowing my career was over. It is sad in many ways that we were celebrating finishing 20th in the Championship - just imagine the scenes if we actually won a trophy! But it shows how much people care

about this club and it was fantastic to see such joy on the faces of the supporters.

"It was a real high note to end on even though I was not playing. Even now it has not fully sunk in that tonight will be the last time I pull on the red and white stripes and I am sure it will be a very emotional occasion. I have loved every minute of my time at this club. I have made so many good friends and played with and against some top players.

"At the time it seemed routine because it was my job but looking back now I realise it was something very special.

"I have played against the likes of David Beckham and Eric Cantona and Jurgen Klinsmann and I am very proud that I have lasted so long. Although I have had to pack up slightly earlier than I had hoped, I know I am very lucky. I have had a great career and I have enjoyed every minute.

"I have played for a wonderful club in a lovely city with some terrific people and I have represented my country 42 times - and even scored their 1000th goal!

"When I kicked a ball around on that tiny island with its one proper pitch, I could never have imagined where it would lead. But it has been the most amazing journey and I feel very honoured and humble to have had so many good times in the game."





CLAUS LUNDEKVAM A PROFILE

By Graham Hiley

For Claus, read Class. For the past 12 years it has been a privilege to work with this consummate professional who has been a huge asset to the club both on and off the field.

When he signed for Southampton in September 1996, I was covering the club for the Southern Daily Echo and Claus Lundekvam was just another foreign unknown to be researched.

Details were sketchy. He was reported to be a cultured centre-back who could play a bit - a description which prompted the immediate question: "OK, but how will he cope at Bolton on a Tuesday night in November?"

And it has to be said that was a very valid concern, especially in his first season when even the supposedly impartial local media were yelling: "Get rid of it!" as he insisted on playing his way out of trouble. It was a trait which he quickly learned to control as he adapted to the pace and power of the English game - and also one which we all came to know and love.

No wonder he was nicknamed Silky! His skill on the ball endeared him to the fans but more importantly to his team-mates who instantly respected his

qualities - although they got one thing wrong about him.

Looking at his six foot three frame and his cultured touch, most assumed he would be a threat at set-pieces. But 411 appearances were to yield just two goals, the first - in a 4-1 win at Wolves in April 2004 - came at the 296th attempt. Those lucky enough to witness it, still talk about the day Claus scored!

The second also came against his old boss Dave Jones as Saints beat Cardiff 3-2 in April 2006 - but by a twist of Fate he does hold the distinction - and a trophy - for netting Norway's 1000th goal in international football.

Deceptively quick, strong in the tackle and awesome in the air, he was also brave as a lion - almost to the point of recklessness at times.

There were so many times when he leaped in where it hurt - and fans were already wincing even before the inevitable clash of heads!

He fractured the same cheekbone three times - yet still never shirked an aerial challenge.

His determination was summed up in the opening game of the 2006-07 season when he picked up two injuries in the same incident with the campaign less than five minutes old.

As he jumped for the ball, a clash of heads left him unconscious before he hit the ground causing him to land awkwardly and badly damage an ankle.

He picked up another ankle injury in the final league game of the campaign - missing the Play-off semi-finals, a crucial loss for the team as they faced the aerial power of Steve Howard.

He was convinced he would be back for the start of the following campaign but needed surgery after breaking down in pre-season. He set his sights on a return the following March and looked to be making a strong recovery.



But suddenly and inexplicably, the ankle gave way once more. It was no minor set-back either.

Very quickly it became obvious that a further operation was necessary - and then only to enable him to live a normal life. There was no way the ankle would be strong enough to withstand the rigours of professional football - and in particular the relentless onslaught of the Coca-Cola Championship with its 46 physical games!

It was a bitter blow and this normally laid-back character admits he found it hard to get his head around the fact he was being forced to retire.

Never a great watcher of games, the skipper was forced to view helplessly from the sidelines as his beloved side fought a relegation battle without him.

A lesser man might have sat in a corner feeling sorry for himself but he continued to play a captain's role in the dressing room and around the training ground, geeing up the players and making them realise just what this club means to the city and to the fans.

On the final day of the season he was even more of a nervous wreck than the supporters until the final whistle heralded survival - and the end of his career.

It was an emotion-charged moment, which saw him shed a few tears - mainly of relief that the side had stayed up but

Deceptively quick, strong in the tackle and awesome in the air, he was also brave as a lion - almost to the point of recklessness at times...

also mixed with sadness that his own career had come to a premature end.

But even amid the pain of packing up, he was also quick to acknowledge how fortunate he had been to enjoy such a long and successful career at Southampton.

When he arrived here as a nervous 23-year-old, he could have had no idea that he would still be here 12 years later. After all foreign players rarely stayed at one club more than a few years - either through finding it hard to settle or because they had no particular attachment to their chosen club other than a lucrative contract.

Lundekvam was very different. He took Saints to his heart - and vice versa. Having grown up by the sea, he fell in love with Southampton - despite admitting he had no idea the city was even on the coast when he signed!

He struck up an instant rapport with the fans, the club staff, the local media

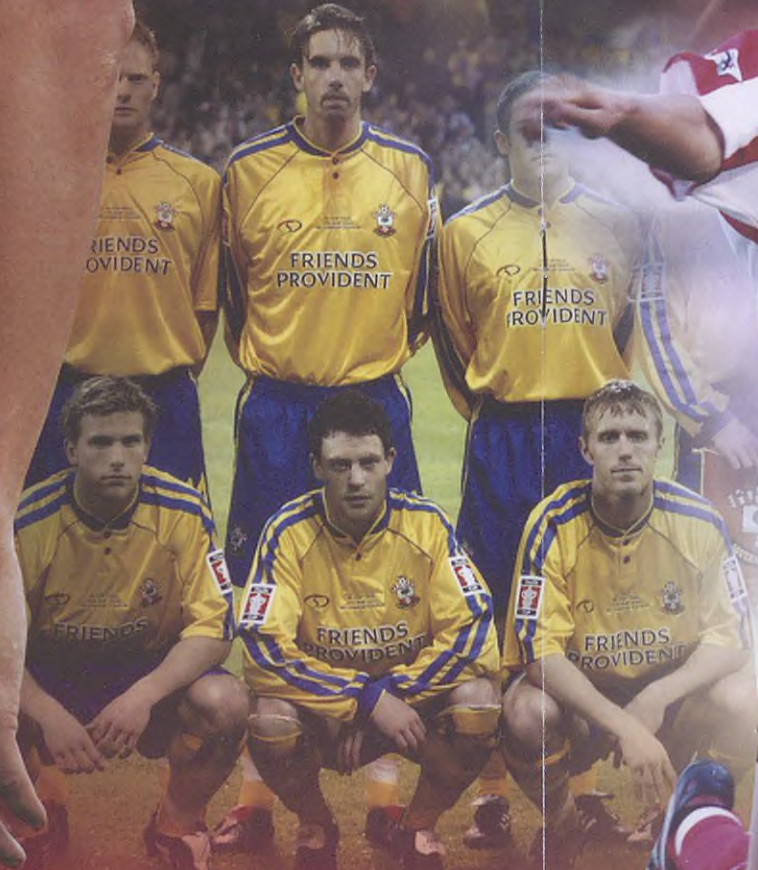
and a succession of team-mates and managers. During his 12 years at the club, he has worked under 10 different managers - not including caretaker bosses!

And it is testament to his enduring and endearing qualities that he has been first pick for all of them. He may have missed a few games through injury, but such was his reliability he was never dropped. And those fortunate enough to play alongside him were improved by his calm leadership and never-say-die spirit.

Ken Monkou, Dean Richards, Richard Dryden, Paul Williams and Michael Svensson all felt the benefit of having the composed Norwegian alongside them in the heart of defence. He fitted in equally seamlessly with the rest of the team, becoming an instantly popular figure in the dressing room.

His often unusual taste in clothes made him an obvious target for banter but he took it and dished it out too. He completely got the English sense of humour as epitomised by his love of Only Fools and Horses. His similarity of looks and build with Rodney Trotter earned him the nickname Dave - as bestowed upon that television character by Trigger, the tag given to Dryden for his perceived lack of intelligence!

Lundekvam has every one of the DVD's in the series and can recite most of the lines by heart and it is that willingness to embrace the English way of life which established him as a true Dell Boy!



KNUT AND ASTA LUNDEKVAM



This is a very proud night not just for us but also for everyone back home in Norway.

Coming from such a small community, it is a huge thing for you to make it in professional football both at the top of the English game but also for your country. Everyone at home has followed your career with real interest and you have given us all so much pleasure over the years as we have watched you develop into a well-known and well-loved player.

We are so proud of all you have achieved in the game but as your parents we are even more proud of the person you are. For all the glamour and the glory, you are still the same down-to-earth, humble and dedicated son that you were when you were growing up off the west coast of Norway.

Conditions for football were not the best with just one pitch covered in gravel. But even from a very early age you showed the hunger to succeed and the willingness to work as well as a great talent.

You were always sporty as a boy with a love of fishing, sailing, football and athletics in the summer and of skiing, skating and gymnastics in the winter. You could have done well in any one of them because of your competitive nature which has seen you hate to lose. But football was always your first love and you committed yourself to it 100 per cent, making your debut in the local third Division league at the age of just 15.

That same year, you left home and moved to Bergen to play for SK Brann as a junior, moving up the grades to the first-team and to the national Under 21 side where you had the captain's armband. The big turning point came when Graeme Souness took you to Southampton and the rest is history. You quickly established yourself in the first-team and - injury apart - you have been there ever since. Throughout that time, you worked with countless managers and coaches who all believed in your qualities and I don't think you ever let any of them down. Loyalty has always been very important to you and it did not take long before the club and its fans had a very big place in your heart.

You gave everything for them and enjoyed some wonderful moments - most notably the FA Cup final, scoring Norway's 1000th ever goal and winning the Norwegian Footballer of the Year award as well as the Southampton Player of the Season trophy.

You could have played at Euro 2000 - but sacrificed your place because the training camp clashed with the wedding of your brother Robert. You were the best man and family came first. That says everything about you. You have a wonderful family of your own now with wife Nina and daughters Kaja and Tia and we are so happy for you.

We will be the proudest people in the stadium tonight. You may no longer be a Saints player but you will always be a star to us.

Dear Claus

The last 12 years have passed so quickly. You have had some fantastic years at Southampton Football Club and we are so very proud of you.

You and Saints have given us so much joy over those 12 years, following you through the high and lows. Those years will always be so very special to us and Southampton Football Club will continue to have a special place in our family's hearts.

Claus, you have a fantastic family and we have always enjoyed visiting you, our daughter Nina and of course our two beautiful grand daughters, Kaja and Tia. When we are in Southampton the hospitality and generosity you have given us has always been genuine and is so appreciated by us. Thank you.

We both wish you, Nina, Kaja and Tia so much love and happiness today and always.

Lots of love

Bente & Harald - the in laws!

MICHAEL SVENSSON



Without doubt the highlight of my career was coming to Southampton and teaming up with Claus Lundekvam.

He was a terrific player and I enjoyed every minute alongside him. I just wish we could have had longer together because I felt we made a good pair.

In my first season we made it through to the FA Cup final and finished eighth in the Premiership which was a fantastic achievement.

Even though we lost the final it was still a magic moment, especially with the wonderful support we received from our fans who seemed to take over the stadium.

My partnership with Claus was the best I ever had in football at any level. He was a fantastic player who has done a tremendous job for the club and showed great loyalty.

Foreigners tend to move around more than home-grown stars but Claus has stayed - and even managed to get a couple of goals in the end. He left it late but he got there eventually!

Claus was a great captain too. He looked after all the players and if anyone ever had a problem they knew they could go to him.

He had so many strengths. He was great in the air, good with the ball at his feet and a tremendous reader of the game. He was the perfect centre-back.

He was never going to be able to play wing-back or striker. Like me, he was just made to be a centre-half.

We were very different but we complemented each other very well and made each other better players. He was calm which is a really good thing. I am the opposite and he was able to calm me down.

Playing alongside him was definitely

My partnership with Claus was the best I ever had in football at any level...

my best time in football – and he became a good friend off the field too. I am sure we will always remain close friends.

I did not know him before I came here, only by reputation as a player. But he is a top man off the field, always smiling and I am definitely going to miss him.

I am so looking forward to playing alongside him one last time tonight. I have been absolutely desperate to get myself fit enough to come on for the last 10 minutes to partner him. I think we will have one good ankle and one good knee between us but it will be fantastic to link up again.



CLAUS ON FAME

By Graham Hiley

Claus Lundekvam is still every bit as laid-back and down-to-earth as he was when he signed for Saints. And he has vowed he will never change.

The Saints skipper has enjoyed the trappings of success but insists he will never allow his head to be turned by the fame and fortune which has come his way.

And as the senior head in the Saints dressing room, it is something he has been keen to get across to the youngsters coming through the ranks.

He said: "I have just tried to be myself - as I always do. I am who I am and that is a philosophy which has stuck with me through my whole career. I like to think I have remained the same person all through these years.

"The money is better here and the people around you might judge you differently because of it but I am the same guy and that is important.

"If I could pass on any advice to anyone - especially youngsters coming through the system - it would be to remain true to yourself.

"Whatever happens and whatever fame and fortune might come your way, don't change the person you are.

"In my 12 years here, I have seen so many examples of people being changed by the glamour or the money or by the hangers-on - and it is never for the better.

"Whenever I go back to Norway I do some coaching at football schools and you see the parents pushing their children. They want the millions and the glamour and the glory and they think it will be easy. It is anything but.

If I could pass on any advice to anyone - especially youngsters coming through the system - it would be to remain true to yourself...

"Any kid would want to be able to buy a fast car or a super boat but you get that through hard work. I am lucky that I have been good enough to achieve a lot of these things but I am really grateful for it.

"Of course you need an attitude and a hunger to reach your goals but that

does not mean you should be flash or arrogant or big-headed. Not everyone tackles fame and fortune in the same way and I was very lucky with my upbringing. I owe so much to my parents and the rest of my family who even now keep me down-to-earth.

"You do get a few hangers-on and you find out quickly which of them are real friends. I feel incredibly lucky that I have achieved as much as I have and

very proud to have stayed at this club for so long and under so many managers.

"I think I have had 10 different full-time managers in my 12 years. Thinking about it, I am the only common denominator there... maybe it is my fault?"



Claus Lundekvam's best Saints XI contains just six players!

For this brochure, he was asked to name his best Southampton team from his 12 years with the club - and came up with five in defence... plus Matthew Le Tissier!

Perhaps not surprisingly considering his own goalscoring record, Lundekvam has focused solely on the back line - with Le Tissier as the firepower.

He laughed: "My job was to defend and I did not worry too much about what happened at the other end - as most of you probably noticed! I just rely on Tiss to get the goals and sort us out. And to be fair that play worked well for 10 years!

"I have no problem picking a defence.

Although we have had a lot of top quality keepers down the years, I'd have Antti Niemi in goal because he has that extra touch of class.

"Right-back would have to be Jason Dodd - if only because he would moan like a drain if I left him out! He could complain for England but he was a top pro, a real leader and talker with huge heart and passion.

"I would put myself in the centre of defence - to give us an edge at attacking set-pieces! I have been lucky enough to play alongside a lot of top defenders during my 12 years here but I would have to go with Michael Svensson. We had a great partnership and I am very sad that it did not last longer because of his injury problems.

"He has worked so hard to try and get fit and it would be wonderful if we could play the last 10 minutes or so together tonight.

"At left-back I would put Wayne Bridge who is a top player, good going

I would put myself in the centre of defence — to give us an edge at attacking set-pieces!

forward and strong in defence. That would be a pretty decent defence - and that is all I would worry about.

"Of course Tiss would have to be in - and then let the gaffer take care of the rest. Which gaffer? It would have to be Gordon Strachan, not least for bringing Celtic down tonight!"





MEDIA TRIBUTES



Graham Hiley - www.saintsfc.co.uk and match programme editor

Journalists are notoriously selfish creatures. Their ideal team is picked not so much on ability as players' willingness to speak to the press.

Francis Benali, Jason Dodd, Andrew Surman, Matthew Le Tissier would all be certain starters but possibly the first name on the team-sheet would be Claus Lundekvam.

Every inch the statesman, he could always be relied upon to speak on behalf of the team even after the most disappointing defeat. Indeed, whenever Saints were heading for a hiding at half-time, it became something of a standing joke in the press box that the skipper would already be working out what he was going to say to the press afterwards!

While other players might have scuttled past to the bus with heads bowed to avoid eye contact or with disconnected mobiles pressed firmly to their ears, Lundekvam never shirked his responsibility to the fans.

There were times he clearly did not want to do it, but he recognised it as a key part of his duties. And he never fudged the issue.

If the team had not performed, he said so. If he had been at fault, he admitted it. And, unlike some precious team-mates, he never threw a hissy-fit if he was marked down or criticised for an uncharacteristic error.

There was no fragile ego to prevent him from acknowledging the truth. He called it as he saw it even after the most humiliating or heaviest of defeats.

His sense of humour and ability to laugh at himself, immediately endeared him to the media as much as it did to all those who came into contact with this immensely likeable character.

While other players might have been stand-offish or at best wary, this laid-back and genuine guy always had time for journalists on a personal as well as a professional level.

While other players might have scuttled past to the bus with heads bowed to avoid eye contact or with disconnected mobiles pressed firmly to their ears, Lundekvam never shirked his responsibility to the fans...

As dependable off the pitch as he was on it, he had the knack of saying all the right things, weaving together honesty with diplomacy.

That in turn won him the gratitude and respect of the press who knew they could rely on the captain to come up with the goods to save them heading back to the office with empty notepads.

It has been a true pleasure and a privilege to work with him over the past 12 years.

Enjoy tonight Claus, you've earned it. Thank you for your commitment, friendship and for all you have done for this club. It's been our pleasure.



BBC RADIO SOLENT
96.1 & 103.8 FM

Tony Husband - BBC South and BBC Radio Solent

It's one of those "I was there" moments for Saints followers. When Claus Lundekvam jogged up the field for a set-piece in Saints' 4-1 victory at Wolves in April 2004, one or two fans must have wondered why he was bothering. After all, Claus had hardly threatened the opposition goal in his eight years at the club until that time.

Of course, we all know what happened next! Sports commentators often think about what they would say 'if' something memorable happens in a match, many have pre-prepared lines, so that they're on top of the situation. I don't! I'd rather be spontaneous and just react like anyone else watching. And I certainly would never have dreamed of having a line ready in case Claus scored!

My abiding memory of his goal that day at Wolves, was the total confusion in the press box. As I dared to utter the words, "could it be... Claus Lundekvam has scored!" Radio Five Live reporter Pat Murphy turned around and shook his head, claiming Danny Higginbotham had got the final touch.

I stuck to my guns and as Claus emerged from the pack, the realisation dawned on the Saints fans that he'd actually gone and done it! It's not often a goal is cheered twice in a football ground- that day it was, and if any Saints player of the last decade deserved more than one round of applause, it's Claus.

SOUTHERN
Daily Echo

Adam Leitch - Southern Daily Echo

Claus Lundekvam's departure will not just leave a void in the Saints squad but also for the press that cover the club because he is the last of the 'old school' players to depart.

Even in the six seasons I have covered the club for the Daily Echo things in the game have changed massively. Where once there was free access to the training ground and the players there are now barriers.

Whereas before the players were just ordinary guys who were as easy to chat to as any of your mates, they suddenly became mega rich superstars whose lives bore no resemblance to your own.

Lundekvam is the last of a generation of players that bucked that trend. He is the kind of guy that does stop for a chat, does take an interest in other people.

Frequently over the last few years, and especially as the paper carried a fortnightly column with him, we would set the world and particularly Saints to rights.

Whilst publicly he always said the right things he was honest and open behind the scenes and discussing Saints with him you never felt guarded or that he would take any criticism towards him or his team-mates personally.

There has been a noticeable change in Claus over the last couple of years from being another footballer to an ambassador for the club and city.

Lundekvam is the last of a generation of players that bucked that trend. He is the kind of guy that does stop for a chat, does take an interest in other people...

Having put together a series of articles on his career and life for the week leading up to the game I discovered yet more about him and even more hidden depths to the man that everybody knows and loves.

If there's one thing I always tell people who want to get into football journalism it's not to bother if you want to be friends with the players because there's not been one yet that has taken particularly well to being given the odd three or four out of ten in a match report.

But Claus is one of just a few players and managers over my six seasons that I am proud to say is a friend as well as a contact - open, fair and able to see beyond the fact that you are a journalist and realise you are a human being as well.

For me that has spoken volumes for the man and leads me to believe that even without football his life will continue to be as happy and fulfilled as it's always been.



PLAYER TRIBUTES

JAMES BEATTIE



It is rare in football that you stay in touch with somebody for so long but Claus is still a good friend of mine and that is testament in itself to his character.

During our time together at Southampton, he was always a happy guy and always very approachable. We had a great relationship and were always laughing and having fun. He is a very genuine person and loyal to his friends.

I will never forget the time I lost my licence and "Dave" picked me up every morning and took me to training. Not once did he ask for anything, he did it because we were friends and that is the type of bloke he is - a real top man.

On the pitch, Claus was probably one of the most under-rated players I have seen - not by us or by the fans but by others. He was quick, strong, good in the air and he read the game very, very

well. He and Michael Svensson formed probably the best central defensive pairing of 2003 when we reached the Cup Final.

He was reliable and consistently good which is the sign of a great player and along with his class and character, it made him a much loved and respected member of our team.

Thanks for our time together Claus and best wishes for the future. Good luck with your game and with your family.

FRANCIS BENALI



Claus Lundekvam's career statistics in 12 years at Southampton read Played 411, Scored 2 - a strike rate only slightly better than my own!

The service he has given to Saints is an amazing achievement. It would be rare to expect this kind of loyalty from a home-grown or English player but it is remarkable for a foreigner. However, as

we all know, he is very much an adopted Sotonian - a proper Mush! From the day he arrived at The Dell for what was an unbelievable bargain fee of £400,000, he immediately settled into both the team and the city. His style of play was confident, assured, calm, effective and very skilful, thus earning him the nickname Silky. He did come in for some stick from his teammates for his dress sense but took it in good spirit and often responded with a quip of his own.

Claus' character and humour was very much an integral part of the spirit we had at the club.

In my capacity as club captain, I helped with the organisation of the players' appearances within the community and he was one of the few who would always make himself readily available for those duties.

He has been at the heart of our defence since he arrived and

throughout the years he has formed some fantastic partnerships with players like Ken Monkou, Dean Richards and Michael Svensson. English football is now full of foreign players, not all of whom have contributed towards or improved the state of our game. In my opinion, I would rate Claus' contribution to Southampton alongside that of Gianfranco Zola at Chelsea or Dennis Bergkamp at Arsenal.

Claus, it has been a real pleasure and honour to play in the same team as you and to be part of your testimonial committee. I would like to congratulate you on your incredible service to Saints and when you hang up your boots for the last time, I am sure you will look back on your career with immense pride.

I hope you have a memorable and rewarding testimonial and I wish you, Nina, Tia and Kaja every success and happiness in the future.



MATTHEW OAKLEY



Claus was a very good footballer which was something we did not have in defence at the time. No disrespect to the others who were very good at what they did but Claus had that extra bit of class and it was very refreshing to see the skills he had.

He brought something different to what we had. Suddenly we were not giving the ball away so much from the back and he brought an air of calm which improved the way we played.

Claus is a top man off the field too. He was always happy to pass on his experience to the younger players but never in a way which would make them feel inadequate.

He commanded respect from everyone and led by example and I enjoyed playing in the same side as him. I wish him all the best tonight and in the future.

ANTTI NIEMI



When I first signed for Saints, I remember arriving at the training ground and the first team-mate I met

was Claus. I remember him wearing dodgy gear which I later learned was quite normal for him! But I think it is fair to say we really connected from the first second.

Claus walked off and Gordon Strachan said to me: "You'll like Claus. He could play for someone like Liverpool, he's that good."

Well, he never played for Liverpool or any of the other so-called bigger clubs but in my eyes that does not make him any less of a player. I know for a fact that he loves Southampton Football Club and the area where his lovely family are living.

Twelve years in football at the top level is a long time and playing for only one club is an achievement in itself these days.

I want to congratulate you Claus for your fantastic career and also thank you because I probably played my best football with you and my best memories are associated with you. Who could forget the 02-03 season when we made it the Cup Final and had such a brilliant campaign? You may have played your last game but I have no doubts that being the guy you are, you will continue to enjoy life. I really hope you understand how well you have done over the years and be proud of yourself.

GORDON WATSON



I remember the first time I played against Claus Lundekvam was in a trial game at Staplewood when we were looking at Egil Ostenstad and Tore Andre Flo.

Claus had just arrived at the club and whenever anyone new comes in you want to test them out and try to show you are better than them.

Early on I went for a ball which I thought was mine. When I got to it, he was already waiting for me! I thought I

was nippy but he was real quick. I had a two-yard head start and he still got there first and I thought to myself "We have got a player here!"

He was excellent on the ball, good in the air, strong in the tackle – he had all the attributes. And he was a great character too. He settled really well and we all took to him immediately. There was no-one else in his class.



PAUL JONES



I like to think I have had a pretty decent career but I will probably never live down the fact that Claus scored his first ever league goal against me.

In fairness I did not get a lot of protection from the defence which went AWOL and left Claus totally unmarked. It was a fair enough tactic - he had not looked like scoring in more than 300 previous matches! But the ball just had to fall to him. He stuck out a leg and I knew as soon as

it went in that he would never let me forget it. It was bad enough losing 4-1 at home that day - but for Claus to score just rubbed salt in the wounds.

To be fair though he is a terrific lad, very easy to get on with. And it was fantastic playing behind him because he read the game so well and gave terrific protection. I am delighted he is being given a testimonial and wish him and his family all the best for the future.

JASON DODD



Where do you start to talk about Claus? Not with his goal-scoring that's for sure!

It has been an absolute pleasure though for me to play most of my

career with Silky. Always the highlight of my pre-season was seeing the state of Claus when we reported back for training.

He was the only player I knew who could be so out of shape and look like death for the first fortnight but then get himself into such good condition for the season.

Very rarely in the game will you get foreign players staying at one club for 12 years and his loyalty to Southampton sums up the character of the man who is a great friend as well as a terrific player. He has dislocated his shoulder a few times, smashed the same cheekbone three times and taken countless bangs, bruises and cuts to the head. But he always came back stronger.

Very rarely in the game will you get foreign players staying at one club for 12 years and his loyalty to Southampton sums up the character of the man...

It is disappointing for me and for the club to have lost Claus to this latest injury. I wish him well in his recovery and in whatever the future brings.

The one redeeming feature for me is that Claus will now be able to spend more time on the golf course and I look forward to taking plenty of money off him!

GARETH BALE



During my time at Southampton, I was lucky enough to have Claus as my captain.

When I moved from the Academy to the first-team, he used all his experience to help me and was always happy to give me advice when I needed it.

I would like to thank Claus for all his support and wish him and his family all the best for the future.



JOHN GORMAN



When Glenn Hoddle and I were in charge at The Dell, we both had an instant respect for Claus Lundekvam as a class defender and it is an honour to be asked to speak about him now.

The thing which impressed me most was his coolness under pressure. He never panicked and was always so composed, even in the biggest games.

I will never forget the first time he broke a cheekbone and had to wear a

protective mask. We played away at Everton and, being a bit of an artist, I painted the mask. At first it looked too dark and Claus got a lot of stick so I got some skin coloured nail varnish - but I did not realise the fumes were intoxicating! Claus got a bit high during the game but ended up being named Man of the Match so it can't have done him too much harm!

Apart from being a great leader on the pitch, he is also a really nice person

and a fantastic ambassador for the club. It is a real tragedy that his career has to end and it was so disappointing that we did not have his services last season. He was sorely missed.

The thing which impressed me most was his coolness under pressure. He never panicked and was always so composed, even in the biggest games...

It is great that his old manager Gordon Strachan has agreed to bring his Celtic team here.

With their great backing together with the fantastic Southampton supporters, I am sure Claus will get a wonderful send-off.

Have a great night.

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER



I first met Claus in 1994 at an Under 21 tournament when we made our debuts. I made mine slightly earlier because Claus was ill and missed the first match.

Even then it was clear he had a remarkable talent. We used to analyse our games afterwards and he

never lost a header and no-one ever got past him. He was always going to be a great defender and he has had a great career.

Farewell Claus...

....but hopefully not Good Bye

Claus may be leaving the Saints but hopefully he and his family, Nina and his two daughters Tia and Katja, will not be leaving his beloved Southampton which he has long since made his second home.

We first met in the old Executive club at the Dell one Saturday afternoon when Claus was injured and unable to play. With his passion for cars, yachts and more recently owning a power boat, Claus needed someone to guide him through the maze of insurance requirements that we have in the UK and someone who would provide him competitively priced insurances for all his families needs. From that first chance meeting Claus has become a personal friend over the years and we continue to act on his behalf by providing not only a service but also competitively meeting his insurance requirements.

Have a great night Claus and we all hope and trust it will be one to be remembered and an evening you will treasure for ever, we thank you for the memories **and the two goals**, you will be missed.

Phil Shephard
Simple Insurance Solutions

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FANS TRIBUTES

Claus is one of those rare players that has loyalty to a team, even during the bad times. He was a very influential captain and I've no doubt that he will be missed. The testimonial is on my birthday and I can't think of anywhere else I'd rather be!

Good luck for the future Claus, we wish you well!

Kate Brown

Season Ticket Holder - Kingsland Stand

Claus, it really is a shocker,
To think that my first love of soccer,
Will be without by favourite 'blocker',
And, there's no more legends in Saint's locker.

Thanks for all the memories, especially THAT goal.

Andrew Hamshare, Southampton

What can I say about Claus that hasn't been echoed by a host of other people before me. A true Saints legend and a true Saints fans' favourite. It has been a pleasure to watch your style of entertaining football over the years Claus and St Mary's will be a different place without you. All the best for the future.

Gary Lee, Castleford, West Yorkshire - Long distance Saints fan for 32 years

Thanks Claus for your wonderful loyalty to Southampton over the last 12 years. A rare quality in this day and age and one that that will be remembered for years to come.

Jodie Copeland

It is with deep sadness that after the battle you put up to recover from your injury you had to quit playing for the Saints. You have always and will always be a battler and nothing will get the better of you, you always put in so much hard work for our Club for which I and every other Saints fan will always be grateful, your dedication and commitment kept us in the Premiership for nearly all your career here. Your presence in the team will be missed by us all, team-mates alike, and I my son and wife take this opportunity to say thanks very much mate and we wish you every success for the future and hope to see you about St Mary's hopefully still working for Saints in another just as important role.

All the best Steve Daniel and Jane Jarvis

In a greedy world where so many players move on from one signing-on fee to the next, you have shown loyalty, determination and passion for this club which make you a true Saint and a legend in our eyes. Congratulations on your well-deserved testimonial and enjoy your special night

From three Coventry-based Saints:

Marc, Dave and Tim

Thanks for: Your outstanding commitment to the club. All of the memories, especially when alongside Mr Swensson.

But most of all that chant "our Claus, in the middle of defence, etc, etc"

All the best for the future, you will always be "a Saint".
Regards. Neil and Sam (my lad) Ridout.

CLAUS YOU HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE SAINTS GREATS PUTTING YOU UP WITH LIKES OF LE TISS, MICKY CHANNON, TERRY PAINE ETC.
YOU HAVE BEEN A GOOD SERVANT TO THE CLUB AND A FINE EXAMPLE TO ALL OUR YOUNG SAINTS FOOTBALLERS

ALL THE VERY BEST FOR THE FUTURE

PETER WAITE, ANDOVER

Mighty Claus, from Austevoll.
Came to Saints and wowed us all.

Pace of a cheetah, tall as a giraffe.
Goals a plenty, now your havin a laugh.

Claus, Killer, Benali and Dodd
What a defence, not to mention Le God.

Best of Luck Claus, a true Saint and a gent.
11 of you, and Prem football no-one can prevent!!

John Rowthorn, Eastleigh

I have been a Saints supporter now for some 48 years and have had the privilege to see some great players turn out for the Saints and you are in that league of greats. What a great partnership you and Michael Swensson formed and by heck haven't we missed you both? You're loyal and a great ambassador to the game on and off the pitch. Wishing you all the best have a great day.

Graham Cobb

My family and I wish you all the best for your's and your family's futures. We will miss your solid, reliable and enthusiastic performances for our team. We look forward to seeing you at your testimonial match. You will be missed.

Angela Duell, Hythe

It is rare today to find such a faithful servant.
Thank you and good luck

Russ Cook, Southampton

Best wishes for a long and healthy retirement

Steve Pullen, Hedge End

Enjoy your night Claus. You were always a consummate professional for the club and there are many of us who wish like you, that you were still playing.

Peter Bartholomew, New Zealand

Claus was a true professional who I had great confidence in, and playing alongside Michael Swensson he made Saints have one of the top defences, and not a lot got past. It will be a great honour to applaud a man who deserves to have this testimonial and I hope he enjoys the rest of his life, wherever it may lead him. A true gentleman and a legend amongst the Saints fans

Have a wonderful night Claus.

Melanie Doncom, Northam Stand

Just a note to say thanks for your services at Southampton FC, I was absolutely gutted when you got injured last season, I just knew from that point we would have a rocky season! But we pulled it out of the bag on the last game of the season, I celebrated that night like we had won the league!! Good luck for your testimonial match, I'll be there supporting you 100%!! Looking forward to next season.....

Simon Evans, Southampton

Thank you for the great years and football you have given to Southampton Football Club. I was there when you scored for Saints and bought the t-shirt! But I will never forget the time that you gave my son late one Wednesday evening after a match, when he needed to interview supporters and players for his A level Media Studies, you took the time to talk to him for 10 minutes which was very much appreciated. Thanks and good luck

Jane Rodway

Season Ticket holder and True Saints fan

Very few players emerge with loyalty, honesty and integrity after a career in football. Claus matches all of these qualities and will forever be a welcomed citizen in Southampton - the club owes him massively, a very sad end to a wonderful career. I wish you all the best.

Andrew Whiteside, Winchester

Claus Lundekvam, the best foreign defender the Premiership has ever seen.

Ryan Abraham

Thank you for 10 years commitment, we'll miss you, but hope you have happy retirement.

From **Brian, Barbara and Crawford White**

A day I will never forget At Marchwood training ground, You are a true pro, genuine person, quality captain, great centre-half...Thanks Claus.

RYAN HARMER (AGE 12), ISLE OF WIGHT

Our Claus in the middle of our defence
Long live the King of Norway, thanks for your loyal and loving service throughout the years
We love you Big man!

Aaron Gardener, Horton Heath

Good luck in the future and a massive thanks for what you have done for Southampton FC. True professional and one of the best players to grace the red n white of Saints. True leader and you always showed quality and leadership on the pitch.

Wish you all the best and you will be missed on the pitch

Many thanks for the years of work and loyalty you have shown

Steve Pitchford

Saints have had fantastic players, but some are outstanding and one of them is Claus Lundekvam. A cool and calm central defender with plenty of skill to ease the ball out of the box under pressure, commanding in the air and one of the all time greats.

A loyal player who was part of the old school Dell players and SMS.

Manny Baldwin Saints Zulus Bikers.

Thanks for the memories Claus!

All the very best for the future!

James Keys

Your long ungainly stride, your commanding aerial presence, your leadership qualities, your sportsmanship, your ability to dispel any danger in defence, your sheer determination, the way that you wore your heart on your sleeve makes you one of Saints' true greats. Your name will long be remembered and live long in Saints' folklore.

Graham Jones, Langley

I have seen your progress at Saints since your arrival and shared lot of fun, cheers and frustration through your career here. I saw how much you celebrated and enjoyed our win last season in the last home game to escape from relegation to League 1. You just showed as much care for our club as any other player could have shown, just as if you were another local lad in the club. I have also seen how much you have supported Michael Svensson through his rehab to return to football and how much you have done to make the players united on and off the pitch when you got the captain's band. The fans love you, they all have enjoyed your time here.

Definitely you have become a Saints Legend and become part of the best pair of centre-backs we have ever had in the last decades together with Michael. I'll come to your testimonial as promised and we'll have a great evening to show you how grateful we are to you for these years. It was sad to see your retirement too soon but remember that it's still good to get retired at the age of 34 after so much done for one club. You can feel lucky and proud. All my wishes to you & Nina and your daughters. And please get involved in football. You have much to give back to this sport. And we will meet in Southampton and Marbella as usual and remember the old days as if they were just yesterday! You are a top man and a good friend.

Best wishes! Javi Cano

ALL THE BEST CLAUS YOU WILL BE MISSED GREATLY FOR MANY SEASONS TO COME. UP THE SAINTS , ALL THE BEST

Brian, Weymouth

Thanks Claus

Claus was a legend in our best period in the Premiership and will be a reminder of the standard our future stars have to reach

Cheers Dave, IOW

"Our Claus in the middle of defence" If you were cut in half you would have red and white stripes flowing thru your body, you just don't get blokes like you anymore, you're a true pro on and off the pitch, good luck for the future !!

You'll be truly missed

Mark Diaper

You have been a rock for this club, all the best for your future.

The Davies Family

Claus you are a legend at Southampton and always will be. Thanks for all your loyal service over the years and I hope tonight is a great success!!!

James Grimes, New Milton

A fantastic player, a real gentleman and a true Saints legend forever. We saw your first, your last and most of the games in-between including 50% of your goals! and its been a privilege.

Best wishes from The Smedley Family

Claus. Thanks for your loyalty and sterling performances over the past 12 years. You leave us with many memories, including the great escapes from relegation, hard fought wins over the top Premiership teams, your two goals and the FA Cup run of 2003. You have also been a true role model with your behaviour on and off the field, always happy to sign autographs for the younger fans. Good luck for the future, best wishes.

Andy, Sean & Callum Kershaw

You are one of the best defenders to wear the shirt!!!! Good luck to you with whatever you choose, I'm sure you will do great!

ROBERT BENHAM

I have been watching Saints since 1982, and am always proud when a player shows loyalty and commitment to a club, which, lets face it, whilst is special to many, is not one of the 'big' clubs.

Claus over the last 12 years has been one of the most ever-present players, week in, week out, and has been there with the club and its loyal supporters through good times and bad.

For this, I for one, salute his desire and professionalism over these times, and wish him all the best for the future.

Good luck Claus and thanks for being such an example to many!

Matt Drewitt

Just like to add my best wishes to Claus in his premature retirement.

I have had a season ticket Saints since I gave up playing football on Saturdays and can say without doubt in all the matches I've seen, Claus and Michael Svensson formed the best central defensive partnership we ever had. Had it not ended I am convinced we would not have been relegated - that was the loss!

Good Luck Claus we'll miss you!

Jon Loader

Claus and Killer - the best defensive pairing in the Premiership!

Not only were you highly rated for tremendous performances on the pitch but you also took the time and trouble to look after the fans off the pitch.

My son still treasures the photo with you from a prizegiving several years back at one of the Saints Summer Soccer Schools.

You will be sorely missed - I hope you have a brilliant testimonial - you deserve it.

Phil Hill

I saw you in your first game and will see you in your last.....a great servant to us

Good luck man,

Alan Rees

You have been at the heart of our defence for so long it will seem strange not to see you there in the future.

The problems the club faces ahead are a stark reflection of that relegation season, but that's football.

Good luck for the future in everything you do in the future - there will be many in Southampton that will miss your valuable contribution!

Bob Stott, York

Good luck with your future mate, you have been a great servant to Saints and we have been lucky to have such a great player and captain. You are a great guy with such a good character. All the best,

Tony Ryles

Ooh you are so missed. Very fond memories of you. The chant 'Our Claus in the Middle of Defence' was the first one my daughter ever learnt (she is now singing it along to a particular ad on the telly!) You have also bought my sons a pint in Jumpin Jacks, in our eyes you are an out and out legend. Always had time to sign autographs and chat to everyone outside.

Love you, Kim and Zoe Vella (and the boys)

Thank you whole-heartedly for your outstanding service to Southampton Football Club.

I think I can honestly say that your fine skills and commitment will be very missed by all fans of the club. Good luck for the future! God Bless.

Tim Balsom

Claus has been one of the best servants to Southampton Football Club, without doubt one of the most loyal and professional players around. When times have been hard at St Mary's and The Dell Claus stayed with us and showed an undoubted passion for the club which is what we needed in times of need, a club captain who stood up to be counted. Claus you are a legend!!

Nick Taylor

Claus, your playing ability and loyalty to Saints, along with your selfless dedication shine through like a beacon in this modern football era. Thank you and good luck for the future in all that you do.

Paul Howlett

There's a Claus loose about this hoose !!!

Last time to see the legendary Scandinavian with a Southampton accent, so I'll be bringing my young boys down from Scotland to watch Celtic lose !! (nothing to do with my Scottish part of the family being RANGERS fans)

Come on you SAINTS !!!

Dan Leng

G'day Claus,

A special thank you coming to you from Sydney, Australia, Thanks for the memories and captaining the club so well. You have held the ship together on so many occasions.

I am hoping to see you in action one more time for our beloved Saints as I will be moving to England in time for you testimonial.

You'll always be red and white!
James Knowles, Australia.

You should have been named Loyaltykvarn. Thanks for all your great years with the Saints, you have really made a fantastic contribution to the team.

Should have scored more goals though. Hope that they build a new hospitality suite in your honour or at least carve your name somewhere in big high letters around the ground.

Nick Wilkinson

Best of luck for the future Claus, you'll be sorely missed by all Saints fans.

Richard Sharp, Southampton.

I have been a Saints fan all my life and I would just like to say that the past 12 years of your dedication have been the best highlight of the troubled past seasons. The club missed you last season with the bad injury.

I hope the game goes well against Celtic because you deserve to go out with a bang after the years of dedication you showed the club.

Matt Warne, Shirley

A great career spanning 10 different managers, Claus has remained a staunch and dependable fixture. An incredibly cool customer under pressure - the heart of the defence. Quiet, calm and (nearly always!) collected. Wish you well in all that you do Claus, you have served us well. Thank you

Charlotte Thompson

Just a massive thanks for the years of committed service you have given our club. You have been a fantastic player and a brilliant role model. I even managed to talk my girlfriend into going to watch you and she even joined in with a chorus of "Our Claus". I am also delighted to be able to say I have seen you score a goal! One of the best moments of my life! Good luck with the future. At least you have a lot more time to spend aboard your boat now!

Colin Miller

Claus - Your presence was sorely missed last season, but we pulled through ... just! Wishing you and your family very best wishes for whatever you decide to do in the future. Enjoy your evening - we'll be cheering you on!!
Sharon, Gary and Eloise Prowting

Thanks for all those years of loyal service to our club - we will miss you. Very best wishes for the future.

Clare Challis

Claus you're an absolute legend. Thanks for all your hard work and for both your goals!

Chris Lewis

Dear Claus good luck on the night, I will be there to cheer you on for the final time. Like Matty, Franny and Jason you have been a great servant to the club and probably one of the last long serving players we will see. Wishing you all the best in your future career in whatever you decide. All the best

Gary Tonner, Bitterne

What can I say about Claus? He has been a fantastic loyal player to us, which is hard to say about players nowadays. I would like to say a BIG THANKS to Claus who has been one of the best defenders Saints have had and I hope one day he comes back to us as a coach as he will be sadly missed in the Saint's line up.

Thanks Claus

Tony Antoniou

We would like to wish Claus and his family all the very best for the future. He has been a loyal servant to the club and we have been honoured to watch him play. We wish him well for his testimonial match and we will be there to see him one more time sadly his last. We hope he stays in the Southampton area hopefully with some future role with Southampton Football Club.

All the very best.

Terry and Jane Smart.

I remember when you first joined us and I wasn't so sure - but, hey, how you proved me wrong. Fantastic player, whole-hearted (unlike some today it would appear) and more than a match for any striker in the English top-flight in your day (which was probably only the day before yesterday). Thanks for all you did for us, thanks for the entertainment ('cos at the end of the day that's what it's all about) and thanks for staying true to the red and white. Good luck in all that you do in the future.

Mark Magee

Thanks for your 12 years, you have been a true Saint.

Sue & Pete Henley

Thanks for all those good moments you gave us. All the best for the future.

Paul Chaz Tony and baby Alex.

"Our Claus, in the middle of defence!"

I will miss that song. You're a legend and you're a model professional.

Best of luck for the game and the future and I hope you manage to poach the winner in the last minute!

Dan Beggs, Barnsley.

I have been a huge fan of Claus since he started playing for us during the Dell days. He has stepped up his game numerous times, and has given this club everything. If only we had him fit enough to play again, we would not have to worry about falling short at the back. He is one of the reasons for our success in the past, and will be greatly missed. Hopefully Claus will be able to help out our team at some level. We quite honestly need some

help at the back!!! Good luck on your future aspirations Mr Lundekvam. Also, from the bottom of my heart I can't thank you enough for playing for Southampton Football club, you have shown in the past what it means to be a dedicated Saint.

Andrew Sall - Montreal, Canada

Thank you Claus, for your many years of loyalty towards the red and white shirt, enjoy your retirement!
Steve, Vanessa & Ellie Kill

Thanks Claus for your great efforts for Saints over the years, you must be the most loyal foreign player ever to play for an English club and one of the true Saints legends.

Good Luck for the future

Kevin Byrne

To Claus you have been a great and loyal servant to this club good luck in everything you do.

Paul Davies

Claus Lundekvam, the reason I got into football.

A real legend and someone Saints fans will never forget. Thanks Claus!

Tom Richmond

Claus has been a dedicated Saint since he started years ago. The only familiar face that was recently in the team from the days at the Dell. Numerous times he has stepped his game up, and produced some terrific performances. I will greatly miss this solid player, and hopefully he will be connected with club for a time at some level. Quite honestly we need the defensive help. Good luck in whatever you intend on doing in the future Mr. Lundekvam

Andrew Sall





SPOTLIGHT ON CELTIC



1 - Artur Boruc

Having introduced himself to the Celtic support with a penalty save in the first minute of his debut against Leicester City, Artur Boruc went from strength to strength in 2005/06 - cementing his place as first-choice goalkeeper. During the 2006 World Cup in Germany the 26-year-old was in outstanding form and one of the few positives in what was a disappointing campaign for the Poles. An athletic shot-stopper and genuine personality on and off the park, Boruc has continued his superb form in the SPL and Champions League over the last two seasons. Outstanding at Euro 2008, he is rightly regarded as one of Europe's best goalkeepers.



2 - Andreas Hinkel

The experienced German right-back joined Celtic in January 2008 and played an important role in the club's dramatic SPL title win. Formerly of Stuttgart and Sevilla, Hinkel is a German international and loves driving forward from deep on the right side. He was part of Sevilla's UEFA Cup-winning squad and is looking forward to playing in this year's Champions League after being cup-tied last season.



5 - Gary Caldwell

The former Hibernian captain and Scotland defender signed a pre-contract deal with Celtic in January 2006 and joined up with his new team-mates at Celtic for pre-season training that summer. A versatile defender, who has been deployed as a centre-half, right-back, sweeper and holding midfielder at both club and international level, Caldwell has been a major asset for Gordon Strachan and has played a major role in the last two SPL Championship wins.

CLAUS

LUNDEKVAM

TESTIMONIAL



44 - Stephen McManus

A lifelong Celtic fan, Stephen worked his way through the youth ranks to become captain of the club. Known as 'Mick', he became a regular in the team in the opening weeks of 2005/06 and went on to become an ever-present in Gordon Strachan's championship-winning side. The affable big centre-half is an uncompromising figure in defence and has continued his progress over the last two years. He succeeded Neil Lennon as club captain in 2007 and McManus has excelled in the Champions League, while also becoming a Scotland regular. At just 25, he has the presence and ability to be the cornerstone of this Celtic side for years to come.

48 - Darren O'Dea

A powerful and physical presence in the heart of several title and cup winning reserve and Under-19 defences, O'Dea is one of several talented defenders to have emerged from the Celtic Youth Academy. An Irish youth and Under-21 international, O'Dea has made rapid progress since

breaking into the first-team in 2007 and was outstanding against AC Milan in the last 16 of the UEFA Champions League ties. O'Dea is a rising star at Celtic and has all the attributes to go far in the game.

3 - Lee Naylor

During nine years at Wolverhampton Wanderers, Lee Naylor established himself as the club's first choice left-back and showed his quality at both Championship and Premiership level. After breaking into the first team at Molineux as a 17-year-old, Naylor went on to make over 300 starts for Wolves under four different managers and was capped at Under 18 and Under 21 level by England. Since moving north in August 2006, the defender has delivered consistent performances in the SPL and Champions League and teams up well with Aiden McGeady on the left wing.

12 - Mark Wilson

A former schoolboy international captain and Scotland Under-21 star, Wilson has long been regarded as one

of Scottish football's most exciting prospects. He is quick in the tackle and capable of delivering quality crosses and comfortable on the left and right, Wilson arrived at Celtic Park from Dundee United ready to stake his claim for a place in Gordon Strachan's first-team. While at Tannadice Wilson had been admired by the Celtic supporters and his January 2006 transfer fulfilled his lifelong dream of playing for the Hoops. He has won three SPL titles for the Hoops.

11 - Paul Hartley

Another lifelong Celtic supporter, Paul Hartley fulfilled a long-held ambition when he joined the Hoops from Hearts on transfer deadline day in January 2007. Having initially begun life as a winger at Hamilton Academicals, Hartley has made progress at every club he has played for, eventually switching to the role of box-to-box midfielder.

A talented, driving presence in the midfield, Hartley is a Scotland international and was in superb form as Celtic won a third successive SPL title.





18 - Massimo Donati

The Italian midfielder was once signed by AC Milan for £10m and moved to Celtic in the summer of 2007. He was capped 26 times for Italy Under-21s and is comfortable playing as an attacking midfielder, or in the holding role. He played a major role in Celtic's SPL title success last year and also scored one of the most memorable goals of the season against Shakhtar Donetsk, which secured Celtic's passage to the last 16 of the Champions League.



19 - Barry Robson

Robson has already become a real fans' favourite at Celtic, just months after joining from Dundee United. He possesses one of the deadliest left feet in the game and was a driving force for Celtic in the final four months of last season. He scored with his first touch as a Celtic player against Aberdeen in February 2008 and then capped a stunning performance with the winning goal in a vital 3-2 win over Rangers. Comfortable all across the midfield, Barry is reaching his prime at the perfect time.



25 - Shunsuke Nakamura

One of the biggest stars in his native Japan, Shunsuke has impressed the Celtic supporters with his flair, vision and ability since his move from Reggina in Italy in July 2005.

Nakamura worked hard to adapt to the demands of Scottish football and has been a star for Celtic over the last three seasons in the SPL and Champions League.



8 - Scott Brown

One of the biggest talents in the British game, Scott started his career with Hibernian and caught the eye with a string of energetic, combative performances at Easter Road. Celtic beat off competition from a host of top clubs to sign Scott in the summer of 2007 for £4.4 million and he made a massive contribution to Celtic's title-winning campaign. At just 23, he is a Scotland regular and will be a major player for Celtic for years to come.

His free-kick winner against Manchester United in 2006/07 already has its own place in Celtic folklore. He was crowned Scottish Player of the Year in 2007 and again weighed in with some vital goals last term.



46 - Aiden McGeady

The Irish international announced his arrival on the first-team scene in 2004 with a spectacular debut goal and man-of-the-match winning performance at Tynecastle against Hearts. Since then, youth academy graduate McGeady has made stunning progress and has shown that he is capable, with his many tricks and flicks, of winning games at Champions League and domestic level. A special talent, Aiden committed his long-term future to Celtic last year and was in sparkling form as the Hoops won another SPL title – lifting a host of Player of the Year awards in the process.

7 - Scott McDonald

An Australian international, 24-year-old McDonald was an instant hit in his first season with Celtic - scoring 31 goals in his debut campaign as the Hoops landed the SPL title. He worked under

Gordon Strachan at Southampton and also had spells with MK Dons, Bournemouth and Motherwell before fulfilling a boyhood ambition by signing for Celtic in 2007. A native of Melbourne, Scott is also a regular for his national side and recently signed a new five-year deal with Celtic.

10 - Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink

A prolific goalscorer in his native Holland with FC Twente and PSV Eindhoven, the man with the most unusual name in European football

was brought to Celtic Park by Gordon Strachan in August 2006. A towering presence in the penalty box and comfortable with the ball at his feet, Vennegoor has been capped by Holland and was a part of the Dutch squad which featured at the 2006 World Cup and Euro 2008.

A three-time title-winner and Champions League semi-finalist with PSV, the striker has now added two SPL medals to his collection and scored 20 goals last season.





I had gone up for a corner and the ball pinged around, hit me on the stomach and went in!

GOALSCORER EXTRAORDINAIRE

When you consider some of the great goalscorers Norway have had over the years, it is hard to believe that their landmark 1000th goal was netted by Claus Lundekvam!

The same Claus Lundekvam who had never previously netted for his club had become the one to pick up commemorative trophy for the milestone which eluded the likes of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Steffen Iversen and Tore Andre Flo.

His big moment came after seven minutes of the Euro 2004 qualifier against Bosnia in Oslo on October 16, 2002.

Lundekvam recalled: "I had gone up for a corner and the ball pinged around, hit me on the stomach and went in!

"It might not have been the most classy of goals but they all count and it was a very special moment for me and for the country. I was very proud - although I can understand the strikers being a bit resentful that I had stolen their thunder."

Saints fans had to wait until April 3 2004 to see the big defender get on the scoresheet in a 4-1 win at Wolves. Had the game been played two days

earlier, most would have dismissed it as a totally unbelievable April Fool's spoof.

He recalled: "I was just standing still when Fabrice Fernandes played the free-kick in from the left. Kevin Phillips got a flick on and I just managed to drag myself away from my marker and dived in.

"I got my right foot to it and I could not really miss from there! It was a long time coming but it was a great feeling to get off the mark at last.

"It was wonderful to be able to go over to the fans and to celebrate in front of them. They had waited a long time so I hope they enjoyed it as much as I did."

Wolves were then managed by Lundekvam's former boss Dave Jones - who found himself on the receiving end again two years later, almost to the day.

This time there was no hint of

scrappiness as the centre-back scored with a towering header to set Saints on the way to a 3-2 win over Cardiff.

Lundekvam said: "It is unfortunate that both goals have come against Dave Jones because I like him a lot.

"He is a good man and a good manager who did well for us and it is nothing personal. It did cross my mind before the game that Dave Jones was the manager last time I scored but I did not really expect to do it again.

"It was a weird feeling but nice to get my first goal at St Mary's. And it was good that it was the opener for all those who have kept backing me to score.

"They will have lost a lot over the years and finally they got some payback so I hope they won a bit of money on it to make up for it. I have now scored twice for Norway and twice for Southampton but this was probably the best of the four."



WHAT NEXT?



When Claus Lundekvam's ankle buckled and gave way during a routine training sprint, he knew instinctively that it was the end.

Of course he went through a series of consultations with specialists, desperately hoping for one of them to come up with a miracle - or at least a ray of hope.

But it was always a forlorn hope and when he went under the knife, realistically it was with the aim of allowing him to live a normal life with his lovely wife Nina and delightful daughters Tia and Kaja.

When he came round after surgery, his worst fears were confirmed; it was the end of the road.

Even now, some four months later, he is still struggling to get his head around the fact that tonight's brief cameo role will be his last in the red and white stripes of his beloved Saints.

And he is still no nearer deciding where to go from here.

He said: "It still has not sunk in properly. I thought it would hit home when the lads reported back for pre-

season training - not that I mind missing that!

"But I guess I have been so distracted by all that has been going on ahead of tonight's game that I have not had time to think about it. Probably it will hit when I leave the field for the last time. And then it will be time to get on with the rest of my life - and to decide what to do with it.

"I honestly don't have any plans at this stage. The club have said I can come in and do some coaching but I am not sure about that.

"Right now I think I need to take a step back and then work out what to do. Football has been my life for so long that it feels very strange now that I am not involved.

"At the moment I don't see myself being a coach or a manager. I don't feel any burning desire to do that.

"I am sure the hunger will come back in time but I don't know when that will

be. Some players are itching to get back involved within days or weeks, for others it takes months or even years.

"I really don't know how it will be for me and whether I will carry on in football or do something completely different.

"I had a lot of good chats with Nigel Pearson towards the end of last season. He also had to give up through injury and he told me he found it very hard. For years he did not want to do anything in football and then he found the hunger came back. He got back into it and has not looked back so we will see if it is the same for me.

"Most immediately I am going to spend time with my family here and in Norway. Having lived all my life on the coast and developed a love of the sea, I have no doubt that boats will figure quite prominently - but I don't think I will be buying a trawler and joining the fishing community back home!"



TONIGHT'S TEAMS



Southampton

HEAD COACH: Jan Poortvliet

KELVIN DAVIS
CHRIS PERRY
WAYNE THOMAS
MAREK SAGANOWSKI
ANDREW DAVIES
MICHAEL SVENSSON
RUDI SKACEL
BRADLEY WRIGHT-PHILLIPS
GRZEGORZ RASIAK
PAUL WOTTON
ANDREW SURMAN
LEE HOLMES
TOMMY FORECAST
STERN JOHN
JASON EUELL
JHON VIAFARA
DAVID MCGOLDRICK
NATHAN DYER
MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN
ADAM LALLANA
JAMIE HATCH
SIMON GILLET
LLOYD JAMES
OLIVER LANCASHIRE
MICHAEL POKE
JAKE THOMSON
KYLE DAVIES
BARTOSZ BIALKOWSKI
JEFFREY IMUDIA
ANDREJ PERNECKY
JOSEPH MILLS
JAMIE WHITE
MATTHEW PATERSON
MICHAEL BYRNE
OSCAR GOBERN

CLAUS LUNDEKVAM
MATTHEW LE TISSIER
FRANCIS BENALI

V



Celtic

MANAGER: Gordon Strachan

1 ARTUR BORUC
2 ANDREAS HINKEL
3 LEE NAYLOR
5 GARY CALDWELL
6 BOBO BALDE
7 SCOTT MCDONALD
8 SCOTT BROWN
10 JAN VENNEGOOR OF HESSELINK
11 PAUL HARTLEY
12 MARK WILSON
14 DEREK RIORDAN
15 EVANDER SNO
16 THOMAS GRAVESEN
18 MASSIMO DONATI
19 BARRY ROBSON
20 PADDY MCCOURT
21 MARK BROWN
23 BEN HUTCHINSON
24 JOE DOUMBE
25 SHUNSUKE NAKAMURA
26 CILLIAN SHERIDAN
29 KOKI MIZUNO
33 CHRIS KILLEN
41 JOHN KENNEDY
44 STEPHEN MCMANUS
46 AIDEN MCGEADY
48 DARREN O'DEA
52 PAUL CADDIS

Match Officials

REFEREE: Lee Probert (Wilts)

ASSISTANT REFEREES: Mike Mullarkey and Ron Ganfield