

Pembrokeshire Media Officer's Dream Visit

Pembrokeshire Voluntary Media Officer, Sharron Hardwick, had the opportunity of a life time joining Premiership Stoke City's Media Team, at the Stoke v Fulham football match, December 28th.

Passionate about media work and an avid Stoke City fan, Sharron said: "I am so excited! To get involved with Stoke City from a media point of view, really is a dream come true."

Organised by Media Manager, Colin Burgess, the day commenced with the collection of a match day programme, media information sheet and press pass. Phil Lawton warmly welcomed Sharron, taking her and three others on a Britannia Stadium tour.

Passing the players and official's dressing rooms, they headed through the tunnel, to walk around the pitch, stopping at the dug outs for photographs. They visited the post match interview, BBC and Sky TV camera areas.

After a meal with the Media Team, Sharron was escorted by Colin Burgess, to the busy dressing room area, meeting many extremely positive Stoke City players. She witnessed Radio Stoke presenter, Nigel Johnson, receiving the team news from Stoke City's Dave Kemp. The teams were unchanged from Boxing Day's convincing away win at Blackburn.

"I felt privileged to witness first hand, what I usually hear on Radio Stoke. The chance to meet the players was brilliant!" continued Sharron.

Returning to the Media Suite, reporters were handed the quickly produced team sheets. Sharron chatted with former Stoke player, Tony Bentley, still an avid Stoke fan, visiting from Canada, with wife Judy.

During the game Sharron joined the press; where individual monitors display live feed of the game.

"The view was excellent; unfortunately the football did not match. The first half was disappointing, although Jermaine Pennant ran his socks off! I felt Stoke would break through in the second half, especially when Ricardo Fuller came on, but it just wasn't our game. Loosing 2-0 we slipped to 10th. Fulham fought their way out of the drop zone to 16th."

After the match Sharron returned to the Media Suite for the manager's interviews. Facing an alleged "three game trial", Mark Hughes was pleased to gain three points saying: "We kept our focus, I thought we were immense. Every aspect of our game was spot on."

Tony Pulis said: "The start was very, very poor for us. We did really well at Blackburn; the players have been bubbly. But, like all human beings, they let you down sometimes, or let themselves down. After 20 minutes we got more into the game. We needed a goal."

It was noticed that, after the match, Tony Pulis did not shake Mark Hughes' hand. Both managers commented on this *tit for tat* treatment: "Mark did it during the League

Cup, I done it back; it's just two Welsh men with a bit of competition. I'm sure we won't lose any sleep over it!" Pulis smiled.

Tony Pulis left, and this completed Sharron's media visit. "I loved every minute, an amazing day I'll never forget! Thanks to all who made it possible, and to Stoke City for making me feel so welcome." concluded Sharron.



