

he's my guy

A series about
The Chelsea Men
by The
Chelsea Girls

By ANN McCREADIE

WHEN I come to Stamford Bridge on match-days and see Eddie out there in the Chelsea shirt, I sometimes think I'm seeing a football miracle. This time last year he was wondering if his First Division days were over, yet now he's captain of Chelsea.

In two seasons since the F.A. Cup success in 1970, he'd had only a handful of games because of injuries. It was one darned thing after another. But while there's fight there's hope, and how he fought to overcome every setback.

At times the depression was awful. That was when he tried his hand at writing poetry—perhaps he'll let you read some of it in the programme some time. Gradually he began to feel he was winning, and the thing that gave him his biggest lift was being made captain last March. He was quietly thrilled, coming as it did when he was not yet back in the side.

A bad ankle had been the main trouble, but Eddie returned to the team for the season's final game at Leeds and that was the start of things beginning to go really well. When he came home from the club tour of Barbados in May he said the ankle had stood up to the very hard grounds out there. I was overjoyed for him.

Chelsea also gave him a new four-year contract, and Ed could hardly wait for this season to start . . . for the chance to repay the confidence Dave Sexton had shown in him. But before then, he went to Lilleshall on the F.A. Summer coaching course, and a few weeks ago he heard he'd earned his full certificate.

As you probably know, Eddie has been awarded a Testimonial this season. How those 10½ years have flown since he signed for Chelsea. Tommy Docherty

brought him here . . . and on the night of his transfer from East Stirling I knew about it before Eddie did!

We first met at a Hogmanay party (I lived up the road from Eddie in Glasgow) and by then were going steady. I was a hairdresser and Eddie—when he wasn't playing for East Stirling—worked as a window-dresser for a gents outfitters.

This particular night, in April 1962, I was sitting in the stand watching the game when Tommy Docherty arrived and sat nearby with a friend who introduced us. "How do you fancy coming to London?" was how he greeted me . . . and after the match Eddie signed for Chelsea.

The following year we were married. We settled down in

London from the start, and later this month we are moving from Molesey to Oxshott. We need the bigger house with three children—Paul is 7½, Sean is 3½ and Ann Marie is nearly 2½—and a pet Labrador, Troy, who's grown into a big lad since we had him as a pup in March.

Eddie likes to help around the house. Sometimes he'll bath the kids—I don't know who enjoys it most, him or them—and he'll have an occasional dabble at cooking. My own hobby just now (apart from the family) is shopping for our new house.

My biggest thrill? That's easy—to see Eddie playing big football this season. As he says, it's been like starting his career all over again.

