

Tractor Boys All Psyched Up

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LOOK deep into the eyes of Ipswich players before their Chelsea showdown and there will be no fear and no doubts.



IN THE MOOD ... Ipswich boss Jim Magilton reckons they now have an extra edge

Neither will there be any evidence that they have turned into zombies.

That assurance came from the Australian hypnotist called in to try to help the Tractor Boys create a huge FA Cup upset at Stamford Bridge today.

Instead of waving watches in front of players to put them in a trance, Rick Collingwood supplied them with soothing CDs to help them fall asleep last night.

He insists that will be enough to 'unlock the hidden power of their minds' and help them play out of their skins against their Premier League opponents.

Collingwood said: "There's a lot of nonsense talked about hypnotism, and since the news leaked out that I was working with Ipswich I've been amazed at how much the club and myself have been slagged off.

"Luckily, I have developed pretty thick skin to deal with the stuff you get from people who don't know any better.

"People tend to think about stage hypnotists, who get audience members barking like dogs, or imagining the cushion they are sitting on is filled with hot coals.

"Hypnotherapy is totally different. But it was pretty obvious that most of the players were extremely sceptical when I first got involved.

"The first thing I had to do was convince them I wasn't there to turn them into a bunch of zombies, or promise them I could turn them from good players into world-beaters.

"You can't hypnotise someone who has never kicked a ball and transform him into the best player in the world.

"But you can give players a vital edge, by convincing them the pain in their muscles is not as bad as they think, and by helping them concentrate better over 90 minutes.

"What hypnotherapy can do is considerably enhance your performance, by tapping into the subconscious mind to remove doubt, banish the fear of failure and boost self-confidence.

"I believe I can help any sportsman or woman improve performance by at least 10 per cent. I've proved that repeatedly in the 18 years I've been doing this.

"The CDs the players were asked to play as they dropped off into sleep urged them to recall the best game they'd ever played - and wake up believing they were going to reproduce that."

Collingwood was called in by Ipswich boss Jim Magilton after a chance meeting with a club official at the start of December.

He watched them lose 2-0 to rivals Norwich and predicted he could help them improve.

Ipswich go into the Chelsea game on the back of a four-match unbeaten run and Collingwood is so convinced they can shock Chelsea he has put £50 on it.

He added: "In the weeks I've been working with the players I've seen enough to convince me that they are going to produce an exceptional performance against Chelsea.

"I've worked with them individually and as a group, and the CDs are just a means of refreshing what we've already done.

"But I want to stress, the players will not be in a trance.

"They will be fully alert, and ready to perform at their absolute maximum. That is all anyone can ask of them."