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## KEITH WEBBER – A TOFFEE AND A SEAGULL

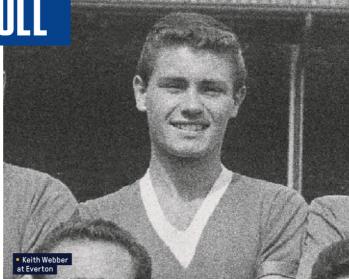
By Rob Sawyer

Keith Webber grew up in rugby-loving south Wales, but it was football that he chose, idolising Trevor Ford and John Charles.

Spotted playing for Barry Town, he was invited for a trial at Everton by manager Johnny Carey and after a few matches, he signed professional forms in February 1960, having turned 17.

In October 1960, Webber caught the eye of the Toffees' full-back Alex Parker, who enthused in his *Liverpool Echo* column about the Welshman's four-goal salvo, including a 30-yard piledriver in an FA Youth Cup defeat of Burnley.

A month later Webber was called up to the First Team for a League Cup tie against Walsall at Goodison Park. He got off to a dream start, netting the Blues' equaliser with a sweetly-struck left-footed effort. The watching Horace Yates, of the Daily Post, tried to dampen expectations, however, stating: 'As the game unfolded it was increasingly apparent that for all his shooting ability, there is the inevitable rawness one can only expect. I am afraid it must be that he needs further time to develop before he can reasonably be expected to do himself justice'.



Webber was given two further tastes of First-Team action that season, in a League Cup quarter-final defeat to Shrewsbury, and at centre-forward in a home league match against Chelsea. A natural athlete, he would frequently come first in Club time trials, but that was not enough to earn the Welshman a regular place under Harry Catterick.

Given a couple of starts early in the 1961/62 season, Webber couldn't add to his goal tally and finding himself down the pecking order, he moved to the south coast in April 1963 when Brighton & Hove Albion paid a £9,000 fee for his services.

Webber would later rue leaving Everton too soon as shortly after his departure, Alex Young and Roy Vernon suffered injuries. During a 17-month stay at the Goldstone Ground, in which he played across the front line, the Welshman scored 15 goals in 38 appearances.

A return north followed, to play for Wrexham and then across the Pennines with Doncaster Rovers, under Lawrie McMenemy. A prolific spell at Chester, where he had made his home, was followed by a last hoorah in League football at Stockport County. Asked if he'd have changed anything, he replied: 'Not a thing. I guess it would work out just the same. I've been around, been paid to keep myself fit and play a game I love and met some great people. Why should I want to change any of that?'

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