

It told him that there was now only one way Jamie could reach that ball before the defender cleared it for ever.

He had to go with his head.

He knew he shouldn't. He knew every piece of logic said he should protect himself. He knew the fear in his chest was a warning sign for him to stay on his feet...

But Jamie let his heart rule his head. He let his spirit lead his mind. And as he dived head first into the air, the world seemed to turn in slow motion.

He could see himself from above, diving towards the ball, just as the defender lashed his boot in the exact same direction.

As he glided through the air, Jamie understood that it had all been building up to this moment. Not just the last few months, but his whole life ... ever since that day when his granddad had first given him a football. This was what it had all been leading towards...

The ball was on the line.

The defender swung his boot. Jamie Johnson dived forward. The crowd held their breath.

Johnson Heads Hawks To Historic New Heights

Champions League, Round of 16, Second Leg

Hawkstone 2 – Real Madrid 1
Johnson 22, 89 Gazzi 78

Jacqueline Marshall

When he was an eleven-year-old schoolboy, Jamie Johnson stepped out at Old Hawk Road for the very first time. He was just a mascot that day and no one had ever heard of this small, skinny kid who had grown up around the corner from the ground. Yet, in having the impudent cheek and talent to execute an overhead kick to beat goalkeeping legend Leon Tibbs, Johnson immediately, even then, wrote himself into Hawkstone United folklore.

Last night, having only just returned to the game following what had appeared to be a career-ending head injury, a similar moment presented itself to Johnson in his side's cataclysmic Champions League Round of 16 tie against the mighty Real Madrid.

“I would do anything for the Hawks fans,”
@RealJJSkills

With just a minute of the match remaining, and with the ball dropping on Madrid's goalline, any player in Johnson's circumstances might

have been forgiven for thinking twice before putting his body on the line once more.

Yet the outcome was never in doubt. Fully aware of the risk that he was taking, Johnson threw himself at the ball, guiding his winning bullet header into the roof of the net, before taking an almighty kick to the head from the defender, who he had beaten to the ball by just a millisecond.

“Yeah, I knew I would get a bit of a whack,” admitted Johnson after the game. “But, to be honest, there wasn't much time to think about it. The ball was there and I just had to do what I had to do. My granddad always used to tell me I played my best football when I didn't think too much so I just try to go with what my instincts tell me.”

Although Johnson was knocked off his feet by the Madrid defender's swinging boot, he refused to be substituted and stayed on until the very end before leading the chorus of songs with the Hawkstone fans at the final whistle. Those celebrations continued into the early

hours because this was more than just a football game for the club. This historic victory, and the income which it guarantees, secured the club's very survival.

“This is the best night of my life,” beamed Johnson, who was given the all-clear from the doctors straight after the game. “These fans and this club mean everything to me. Now we know that Hawkstone will still be here for all of us to love and support in the future. That's why I did what I did.”

Eight years may have passed since the day Jamie Johnson was first welcomed into the Hawkstone family but some things never change. Last night, as he left the pitch, it was, once again, to the sound of his name being sung aloud. One senses that, whatever happens in Jamie Johnson's life in the future, he will always have a home here.

“I would do anything for the Hawks fans,” Johnson tweeted after the game. “Nothing compares to hearing you sing my name. It's the best feeling in the world.”

Bert Banned



Mattheus Bertorelli

Hot-head striker Bertorelli was sent off last night for taking his shirt off! Having struck his second goal of the night, Bertorelli once again removed his shirt in celebration, leaving the referee with no choice other than to send off the striker for the eighth time.

Final

Jose Luis Armando Godal laid the newspaper down on the table in front of him and took a final sip of his coffee. After thinking for no more than a second, he raised his hand and signalled to the waiter to bring the bill. Then he took out his phone and dialled the number of the young man who was, once again, the hottest property in the whole of European football.