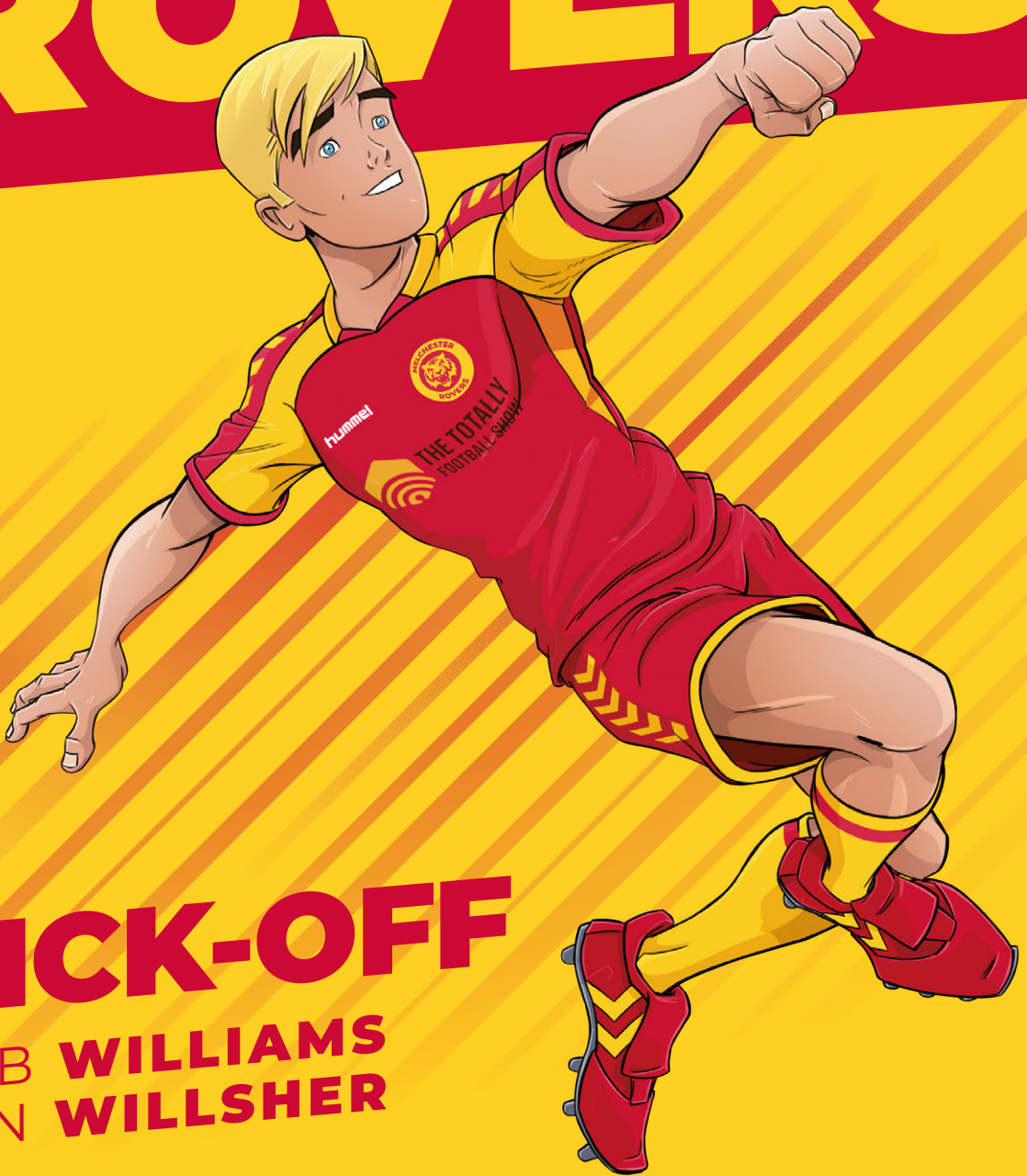


# ROY OF THE ROVERS™



**KICK-OFF**

ROB WILLIAMS  
BEN WILLISHER







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# ROY OF THE ROVERS™



## KICK-OFF

ROB WILLIAMS BEN WILLISHER

B O O K O N E  
**KICK-OFF**

Script  
**ROB WILLIAMS**

Art  
**BEN WILLISHER**

Letters  
**JIM CAMPBELL**

THE COUNTRY CHANGES.

CITIES CHANGE.

FOOTBALL CLUBS RISE...

...AND SOME FALL.

EVERYTHING CHANGES.

EXCEPT THIS.

OI, YOU!  
DO I KNOW YOU, SON?

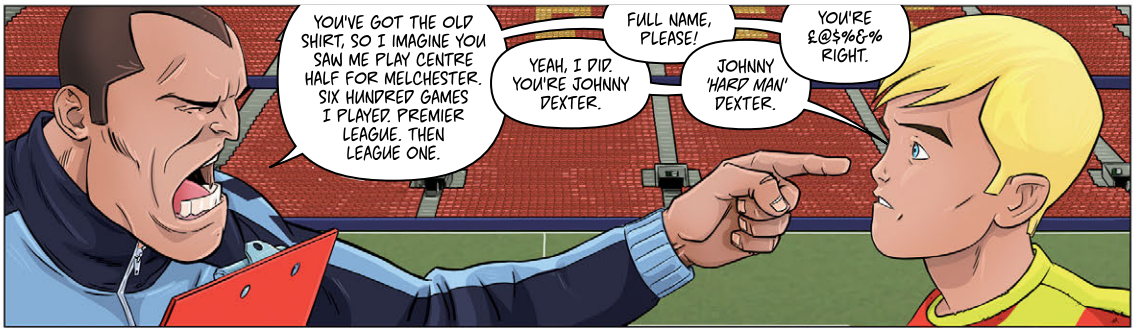
NO...

BUT YOU WILL.

I'M HERE FOR THE ROVERS YOUTH TEAM TRIAL.

I'M ROY RACE.





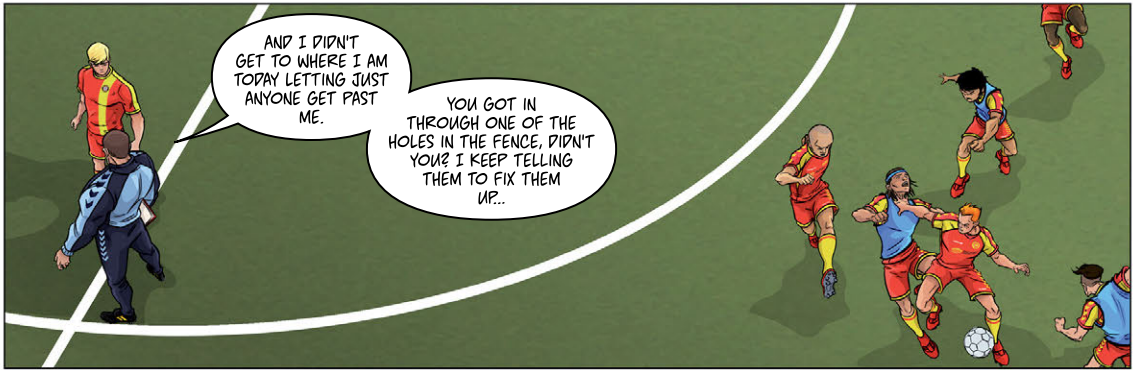
YOU'VE GOT THE OLD SHIRT, SO I IMAGINE YOU SAW ME PLAY CENTRE HALF FOR MELCHESTER. SIX HUNDRED GAMES I PLAYED. PREMIER LEAGUE, THEN LEAGUE ONE.

YEAH, I DID. YOU'RE JOHNNY DEXTER.

FULL NAME, PLEASE!

JOHNNY 'HARD MAN' DEXTER.

YOU'RE £@%&% RIGHT.



AND I DIDN'T GET TO WHERE I AM TODAY LETTING JUST ANYONE GET PAST ME.

YOU GOT IN THROUGH ONE OF THE HOLES IN THE FENCE, DIDN'T YOU? I KEEP TELLING THEM TO FIX THEM UP...



GET HOME BEFORE I CALL SECURITY ON YOU, EH?

THESE LADS HERE ARE THE BEST PLAYERS IN THE CITY, SOME ARE ON OUR BOOKS. THEY WERE ALL INVITED.

THIS IS MEL PARK. WE MAY NOT BE WHAT WE ONCE WERE BUT WE DON'T LET JUST ANYONE IN HERE.



...

IT'S STILL MEL PARK...

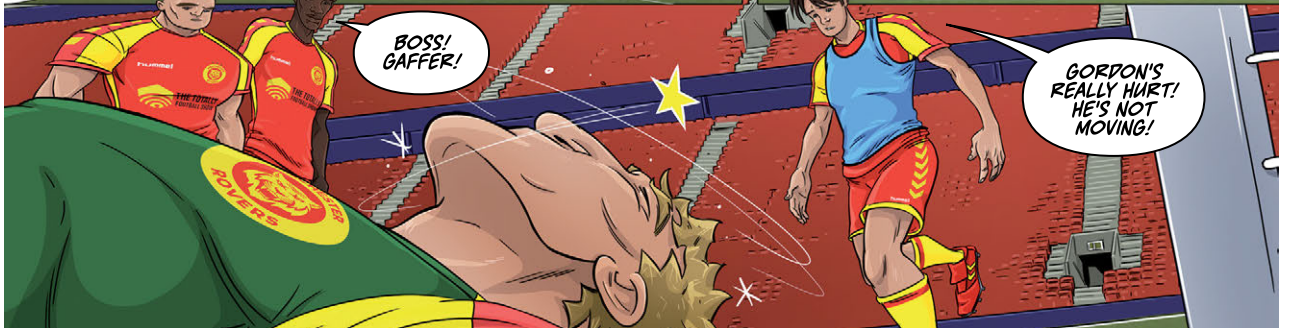
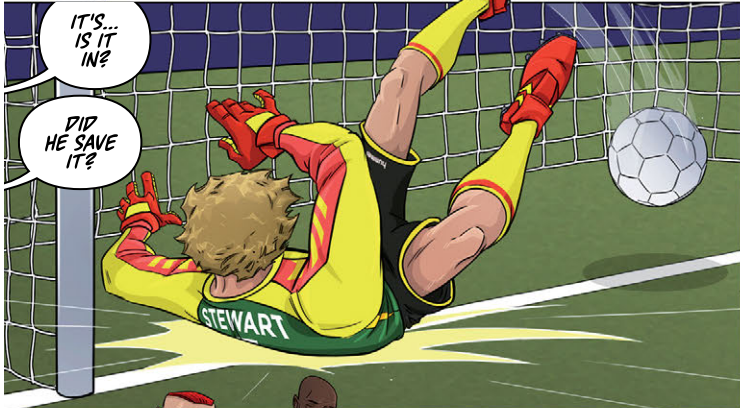
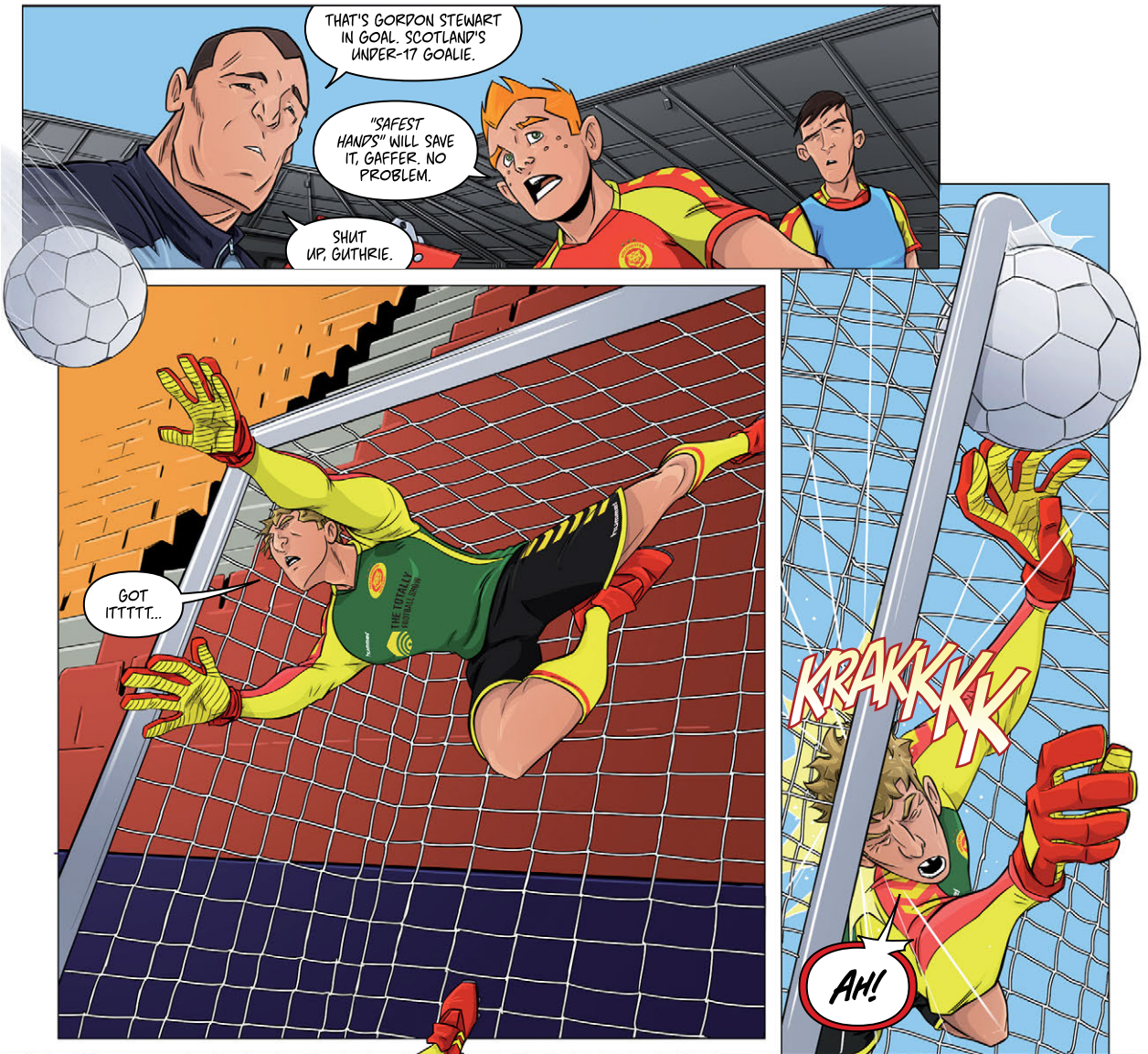
LOOK OUT!

KRAK!!!



OOOPS. SORRY.







YOU'VE KILLED OUR FIRST CHOICE GOALIE YOU FLASH GIT!

IS...IS HE ALRIGHT?



I'M OK, BOSS. I CAN PLAY ON.

YOU LOOK A BIT CONCUSSED TO ME, GORPON. GO AND HAVE A SIT DOWN FOR A BIT.

BUT...

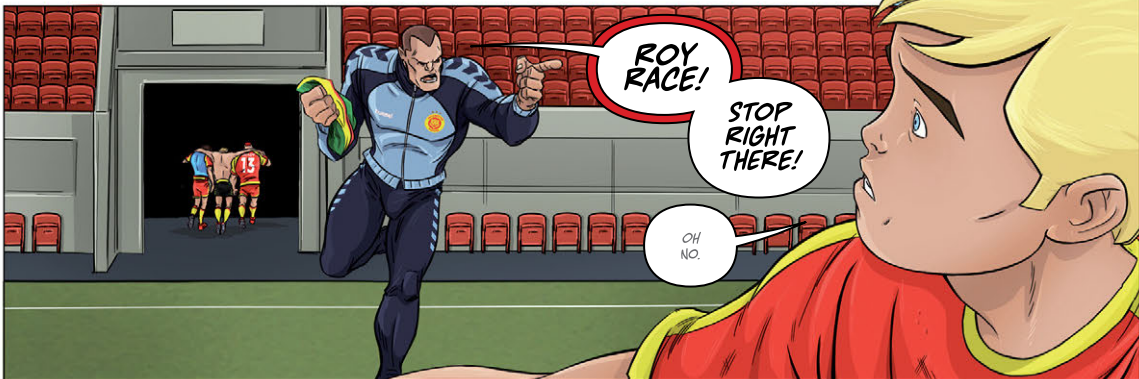
NOW! GOT IT!



YOU'D BETTER RUN FOR YOUR LIFE, RACE. 'HARD MAN' DEXTER MIGHT BE THE CLUB COACH THESE DAYS BUT HIS TEMPER STILL GOES.

ALMOST AS MANY RED CARDS AS CAPS IN HIS ENGLAND CAREER.

AND HE LOOKS LIKE HE WANTS TO KILL YOU. YOU'VE BLOWN THIS, MATE.



ROY RACE!

STOP RIGHT THERE!

OH NO.



YOU JUST KILLED MY FIRST CHOICE GOALKEEPER.

NO I DIDN'T. HE'S OVER THERE. HE'S ALRIGHT. HE'S...

HE'S DEAD AS A DOPO SIX FEET UNDER. WE JUST HAD THE FUNERAL. VERY SAD! DO NOT CONTRADICT ME.

YESSIR.



SO...I'M ONE PLAYER SHORT FOR THIS TRIAL MATCH.

DO YOU WANT THE CHANCE TO PLAY FOR MELCHESTER ROVERS, LAD?



**YES!**

I'M A STRIKER, GAFFER. I SCORED A HAT TRICK FOR GRIMROYD IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE MOOR CUP FINAL! I CAN PLAY IN THE HOLE TOO. I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, I SWEAR!

YES, YES. GOOD FOR YOU. YOU'RE PLAYING IN GOAL.

**OOOOF.. WHAT?**

IT'S A GOALIE I'M SHORT OF. THANKS TO YOU. POOR DEAD GORDON. WHO YOU KILLED. YOU'RE IN GOAL.



BUT...  
I'M NOT A GOALIE! I'M RUBBISH IN GOAL!

THEN THIS TRIAL ISN'T GOING TO GO WELL FOR YOU, IS IT LAP?



NOW, THIS GRACEFUL, FAST, ENORMOUSLY SKILFUL BOY COMING TOWARDS YOU WITH THE BALL IS PACO DIAZ. HE'S FROM ZARAGOSA IN SPAIN.

**I SUGGEST YOU STOP HIM SCORING IF YOU WANT TO STAY WITH MELCHESTER ROVERS!**



OK...

GETHIM  
GETHIMGETHIM  
GETHIM..

GETTTTTT..



AH...



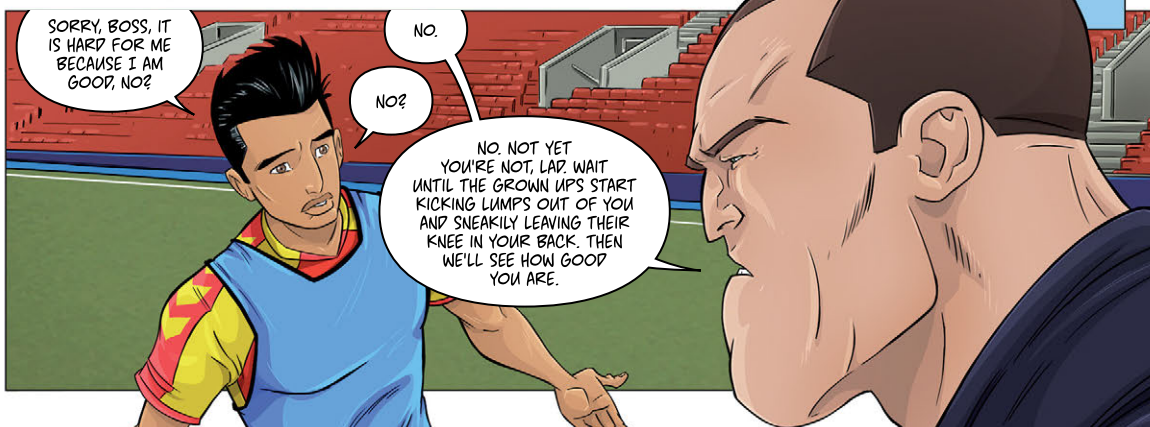
SORRY, SENOR!

DO IT AGAIN!  
AND STOP BEING SUCH A FLASH BIT, DIAZ!



YOU MISSED ME, I THINK, NO?

PERHAPS NEXT TIME, MY FRIEND...

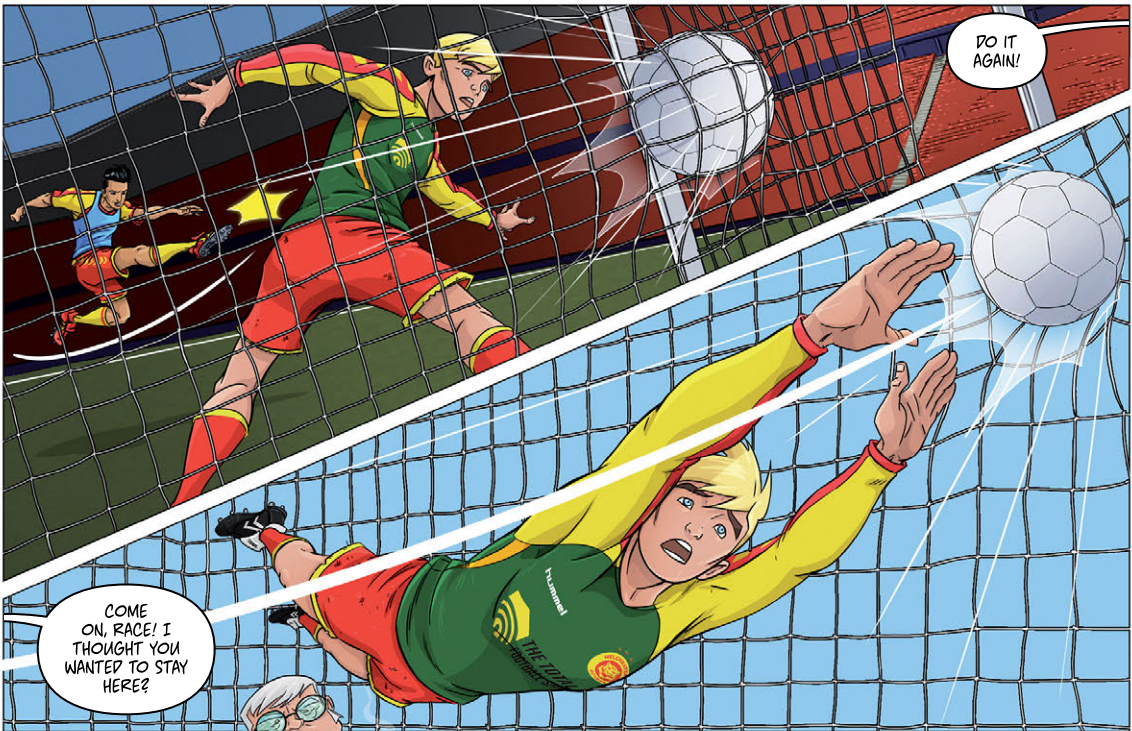


SORRY, BOSS, IT IS HARD FOR ME BECAUSE I AM GOOD, NO?

NO.

NO?

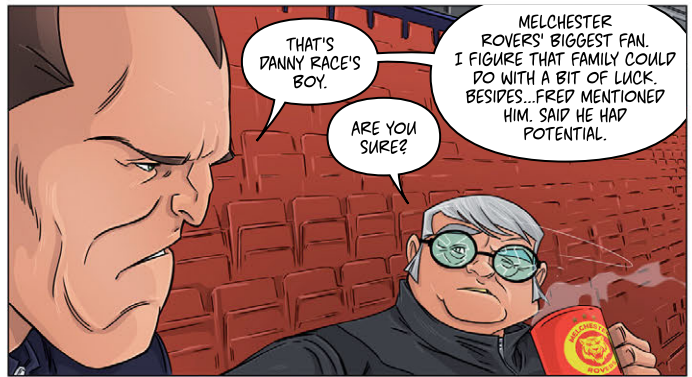
NO. NOT YET YOU'RE NOT, LAD. WAIT UNTIL THE GROWN UPS START KICKING LUMPS OUT OF YOU AND SNEAKILY LEAVING THEIR KNEE IN YOUR BACK. THEN WE'LL SEE HOW GOOD YOU ARE.





I'VE KNOWN YOU LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THERE'S USUALLY A REASON FOR YOU EMOTIONALLY BULLYING A PROSPECT.

YOU DON'T BOTHER WITH THE ONES WHO DON'T INTEREST YOU.



THAT'S DANNY RACE'S BOY.

ARE YOU SURE?

MELCHESTER ROVERS' BIGGEST FAN. I FIGURE THAT FAMILY COULD DO WITH A BIT OF LUCK. BESIDES... FRED MENTIONED HIM. SAID HE HAD POTENTIAL.

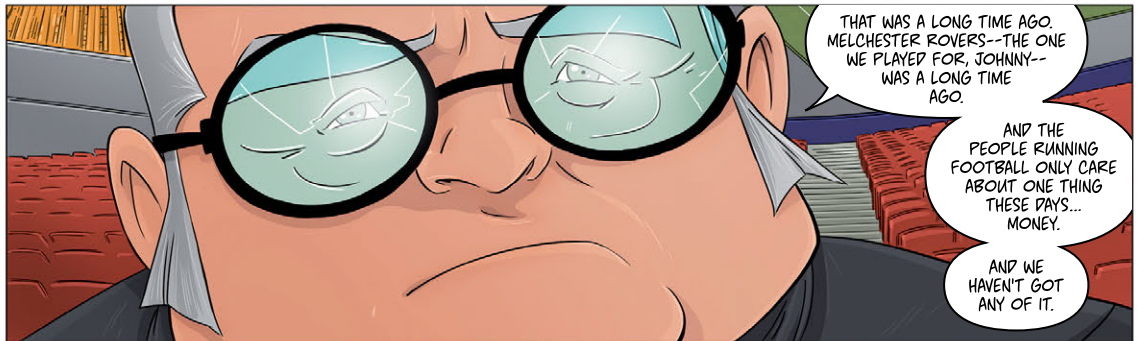


WELL, FRED KNOWS HIS STUFF. I HOPE HE'S GOOD. WE'RE GOING TO NEED THE YOUNGSTERS, JOHNNY. SOON.

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I'VE GOT ANOTHER DEPRESSING BOARD MEETING TO GO SIT IN ON.

YOU'RE STILL THE MANAGER, RIGHT? THEY CAN'T FIRE YOU AFTER FOUR GAMES OF THE SEASON!

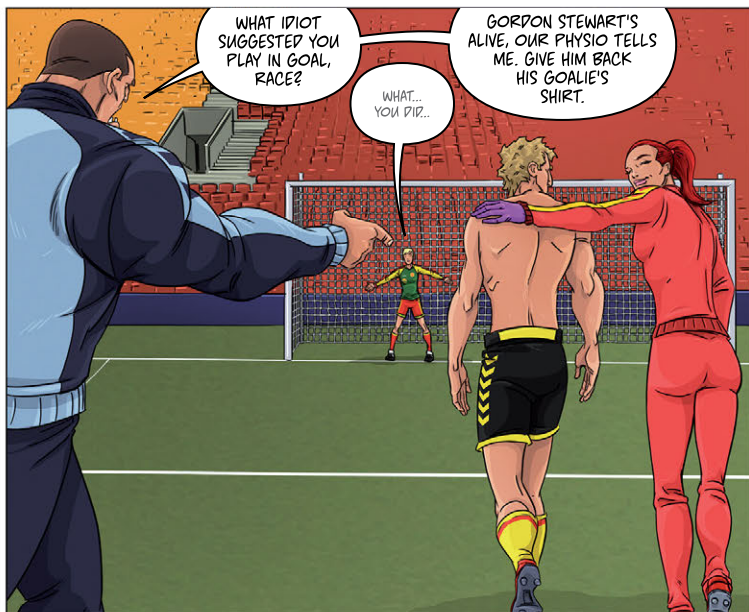
YOU'RE A LEGEND AT THIS CLUB! YOU'RE THE MIGHTY MOUSE!



THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO. MELCHESTER ROVERS--THE ONE WE PLAYED FOR, JOHNNY-- WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

AND THE PEOPLE RUNNING FOOTBALL ONLY CARE ABOUT ONE THING THESE DAYS... MONEY.

AND WE HAVEN'T GOT ANY OF IT.



WHAT IDIOT SUGGESTED YOU PLAY IN GOAL, RACE?

WHAT... YOU DID...

GORDON STEWART'S ALIVE, OUR PHYSIO TELLS ME. GIVE HIM BACK HIS GOALIE'S SHIRT.



I'LL GIVE YOU THE LAST TEN MINUTES UP FRONT, RACE. SHOW US WHAT YOU CAN DO.

REALLY?

THANKS. I'LL NOT LET YOU DOWN, GAFFER!



YOU'VE GOT NO CHANCE.  
PROPER FOOTBALLERS, YOU'RE PLAYING AGAINST NOW!



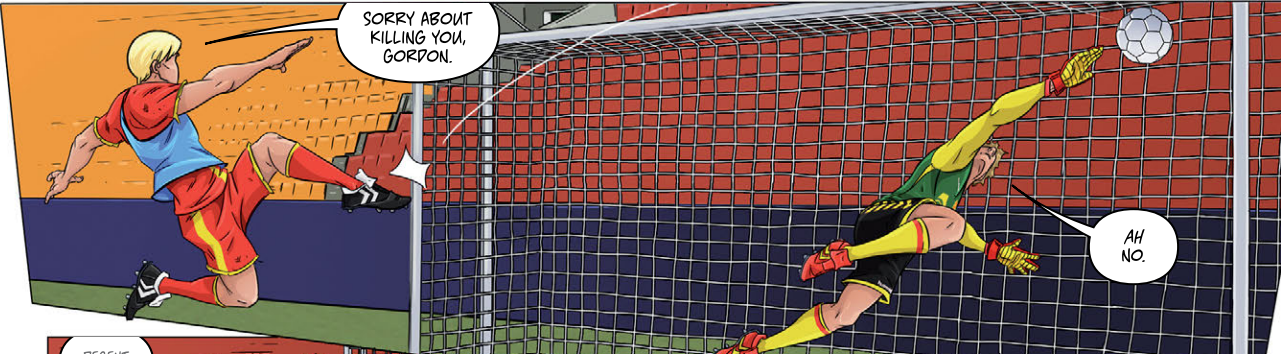
PROPER FOOTBALLERS WITH THEIR LEGS TOO FAR OPEN.

WHAT?!



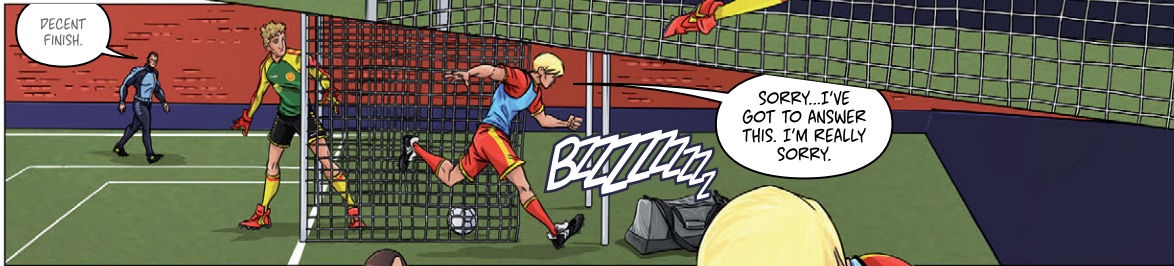
GET HIM, GORDON!

I'VE GOT IT.



SORRY ABOUT KILLING YOU, GORDON.

AH NO.



DECENT FINISH.

BOOM!

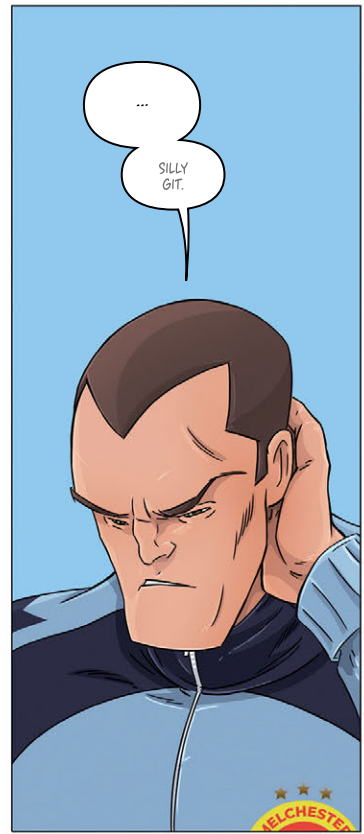
SORRY... I'VE GOT TO ANSWER THIS. I'M REALLY SORRY.

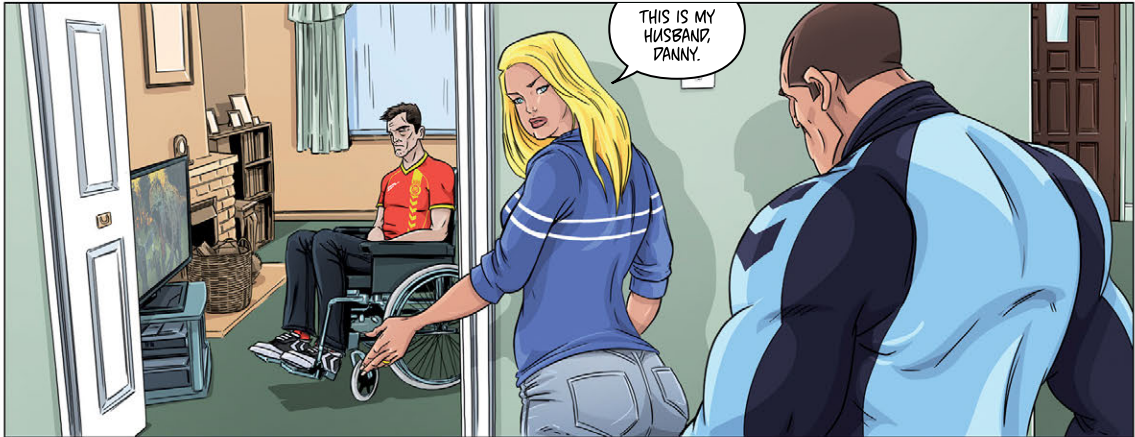


SERIOUSLY, SON? ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO ANSWER YOUR PHONE, RACE? NOW? GOT TO CHECK YOUR FACEACHE ACCOUNT OR SOMETHING?

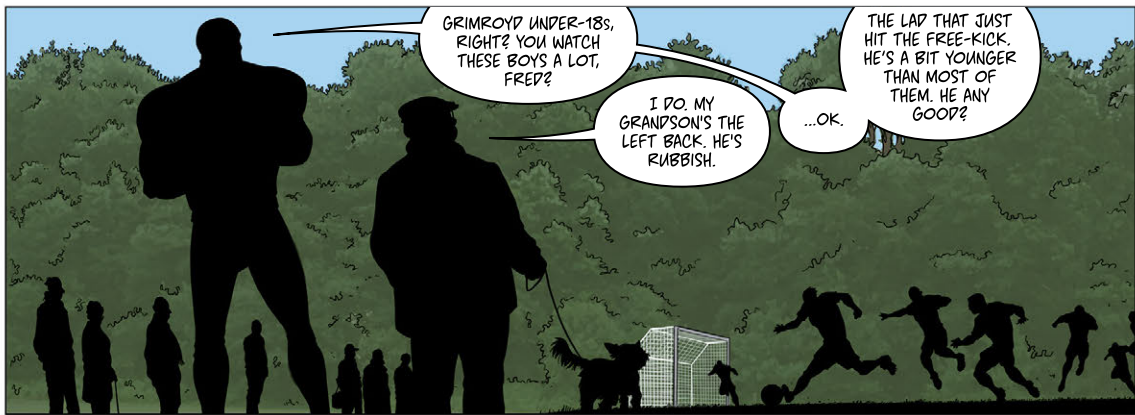
THIS MAY GENUINELY BE THE STUPIDEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN ON A FOOTBALL FIELD.

AND I SAW GUTHRIE TRY A BACKHEEL IN HIS OWN AREA ONCE.









GRIMROYD UNDER-18S, RIGHT? YOU WATCH THESE BOYS A LOT, FRED?

I DO. MY GRANDSON'S THE LEFT BACK. HE'S RUBBISH.

...OK.

THE LAP THAT JUST HIT THE FREE-KICK. HE'S A BIT YOUNGER THAN MOST OF THEM. HE ANY GOOD?



GOT EYES HAVEN'T YOU, DEXTER? YOU SAW WHAT HE JUST DID?

YEAH...

PUT ME HIP OUT IF I TRIED THAT...



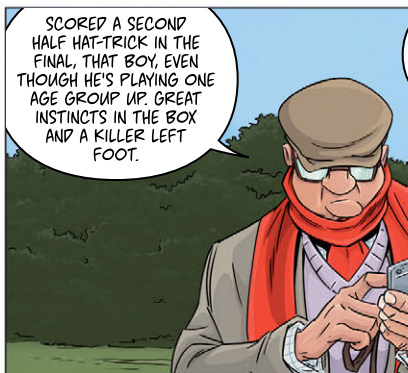
ROY RACE.

OH GOD.

COME AND SEE ME AFTER THE GAME, ALRIGHT LAD?



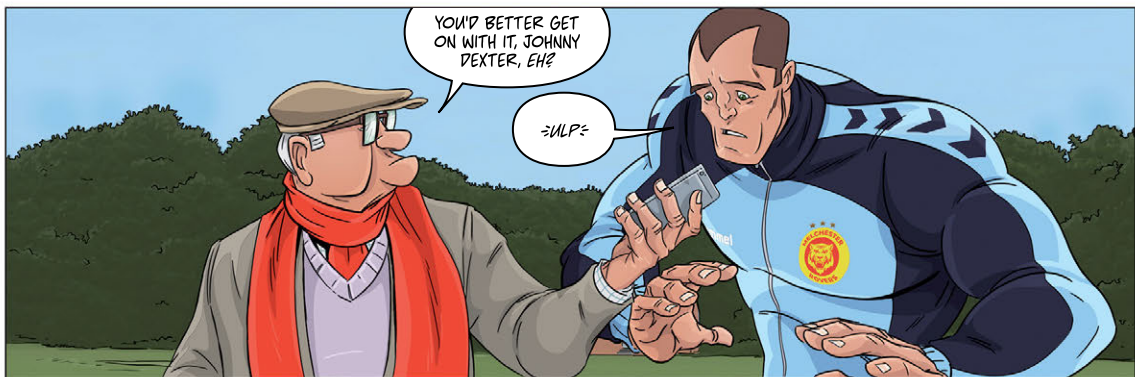
OK.



SCORED A SECOND HALF HAT-TRICK IN THE FINAL, THAT BOY, EVEN THOUGH HE'S PLAYING ONE AGE GROUP UP. GREAT INSTINCTS IN THE BOX AND A KILLER LEFT FOOT.



SIGNING UP THE NEXT GOLDEN GENERATION FOR ROVERS, ARE YOU? BRINGING BACK THE GLORY DAYS?



YOU'D BETTER GET ON WITH IT, JOHNNY DEXTER, EH?

=ULP=



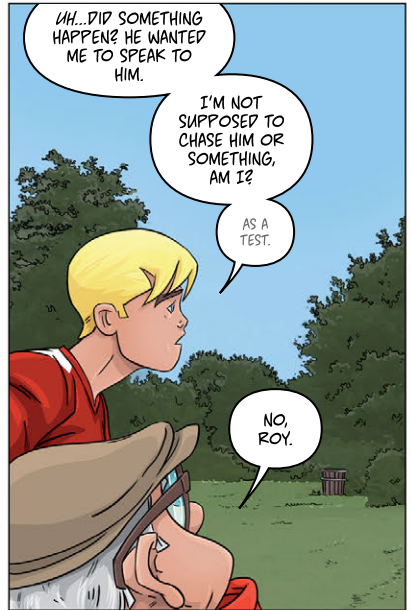
UH...FRED?  
THE MAN WHO  
WAS JUST WITH  
YOU?

JOHNNY  
DEXTER OF  
THE ROVERS?  
YES.



THERE  
HE GOES.

NEVER  
THE FASTEST AS  
A CENTRE-HALF, THAT  
LAD. BUT HE CAN STILL  
GO SOME, FAIR  
PLAY.



UH...DID SOMETHING  
HAPPEN? HE WANTED  
ME TO SPEAK TO  
HIM.

I'M NOT  
SUPPOSED TO  
CHASE HIM OR  
SOMETHING,  
AM I?

AS A  
TEST.

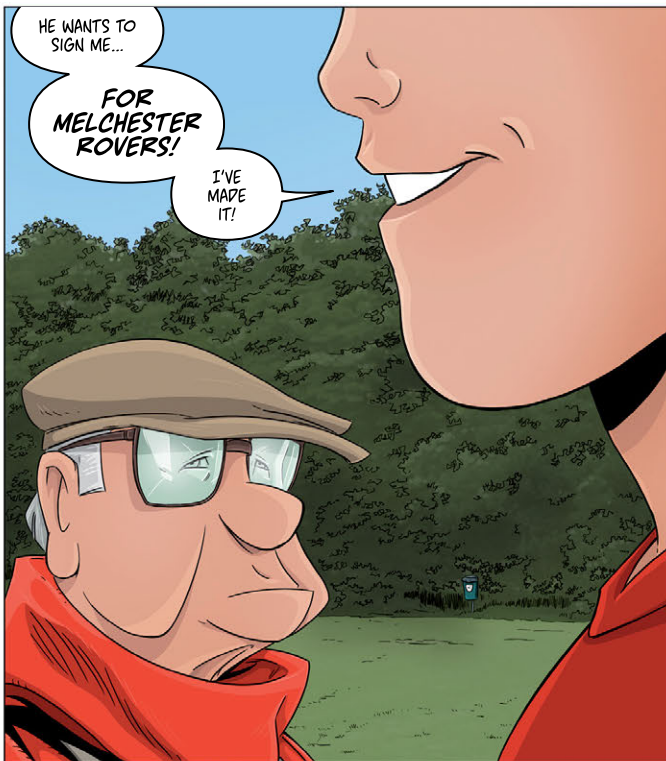
NO,  
ROY.



PROBABLY  
HAS SOMETHING  
TO DO WITH  
THIS.

O!!  
RACE!

The **ORBIT**  
SPORTS HEADLINES: FOOTBALL  
**FALLEN GIANT  
MELCHESTER  
ROVERS  
SELLS EIGHT  
MEMBERS OF  
FIRST TEAM.**  
Tap for press conference video  
< BACK





LONG WAY TO GO, ROY RACE.  
DON'T GET CARRIED AWAY.



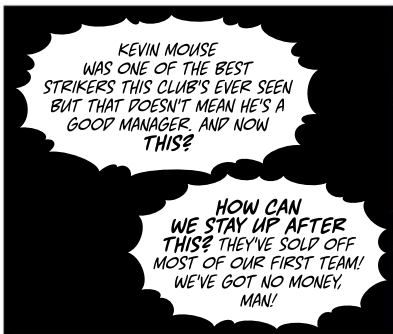
THE FALL FROM GRACE OF THE ONCE-GREAT MELCHESTER ROVERS CONTINUES.

ONCE ONE OF THE PREMIER CLUBS IN ENGLISH FOOTBALL, REGULARLY CHALLENGING FOR TROPHIES, RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN FINANCIAL TROUBLES AND RELEGATION AFTER RELEGATION.



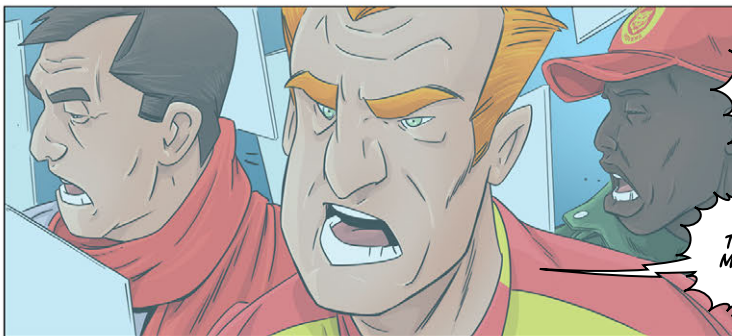
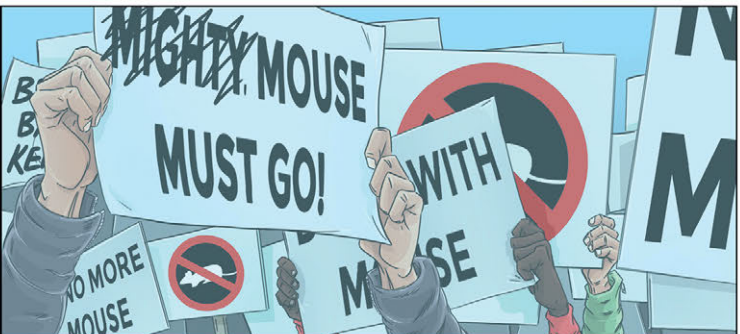
NOW, AFTER LOSING THE FIRST FOUR GAMES OF THE NEW SEASON, AND WITH FANS DISTRAUGHT AT THE STATE OF THE CLUB, IT APPEARS THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET EVEN WORSE FOR THE ROVERS.

EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE MELCHESTER FIRST TEAM HAVE BEEN SOLD IN WHAT CRITICS ARE DESCRIBING AS A 'CUT-PRICE FIRE SALE' BY OWNER BARRY 'THE MEAT' CLEAVER.



KEVIN MOUSE WAS ONE OF THE BEST STRIKERS THIS CLUB'S EVER SEEN BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE'S A GOOD MANAGER, AND NOW THIS?

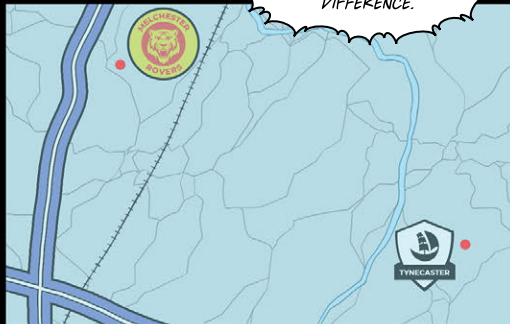
HOW CAN WE STAY UP AFTER THIS? THEY'VE SOLD OFF MOST OF OUR FIRST TEAM! WE'VE GOT NO MONEY, MAN!



WE'RE GONNA GET RELEGATED! WE'LL FLY DOWN THE LEAGUES LIKE THIS. BE OUT OF BUSINESS IN NO TIME!

THIS IS THE END OF MELCHESTER ROVERS!

AND WHAT MAKES THINGS WORSE FOR ROVERS FANS IS THE RISE IN FORTUNES OF LOCAL RIVALS **TYNECASTER**, WHO CURRENTLY SIT ATOP THE PREMIER LEAGUE ON GOAL DIFFERENCE.



BOUGHT BY SAUDI PRINCE BASSAM SIRAJ ANTOHNI JUST TWO YEARS AGO, TYNECASTER HAVE BROUGHT SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST PLAYERS TO THE PREMIER LEAGUE.

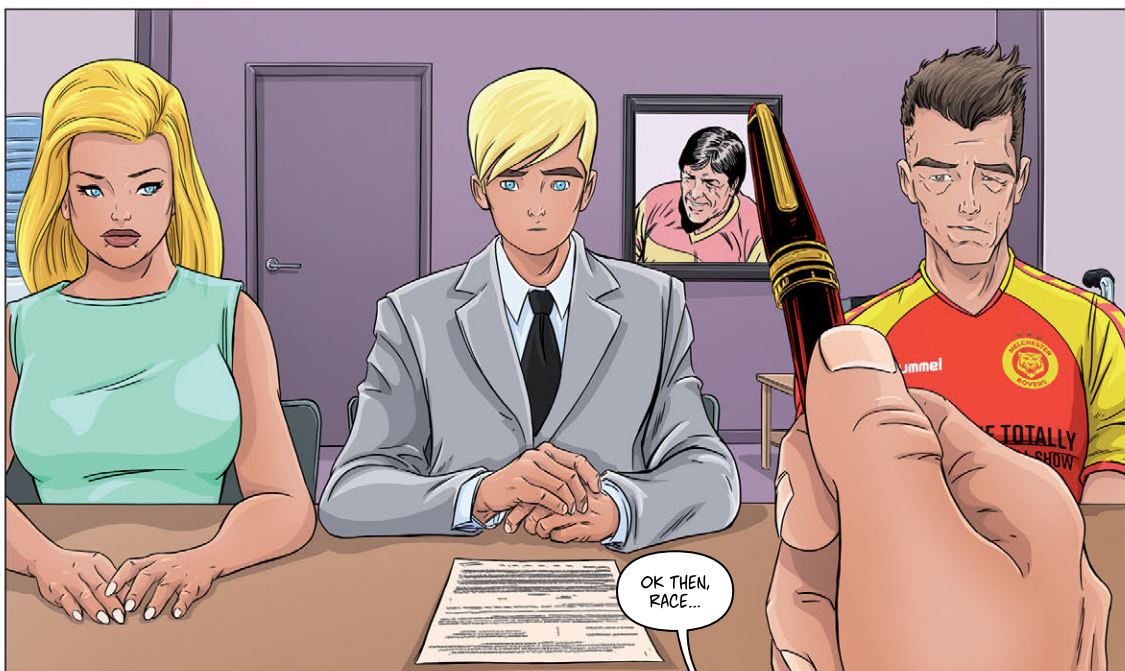
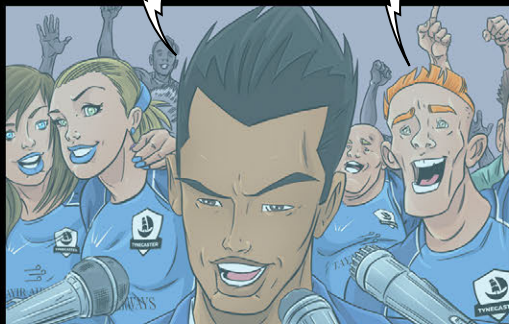


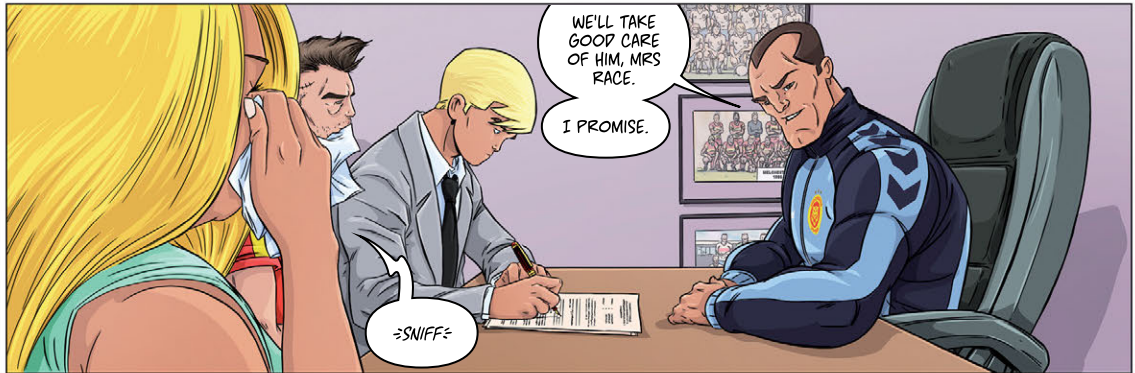
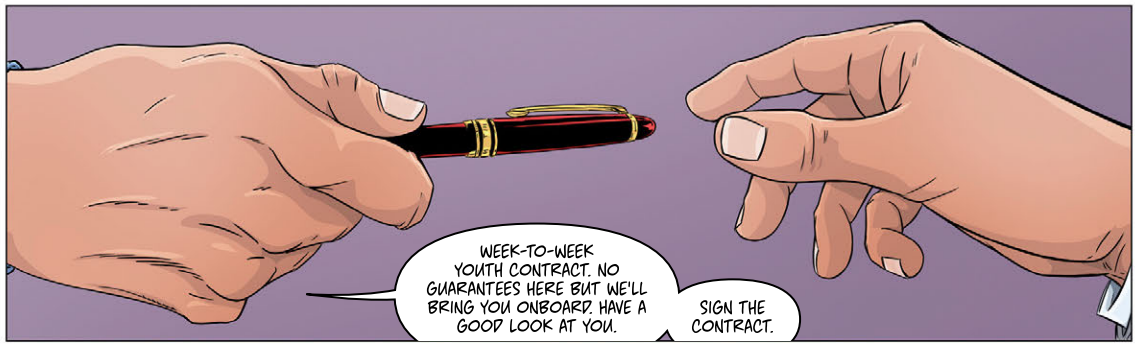
THE LATEST ADDITION? £175 MILLION BRAZILIAN SUPERSTAR STRIKER **HUGO**, AS REVEALED JUST PRIOR TO THE TRANSFER WINDOW CLOSING.

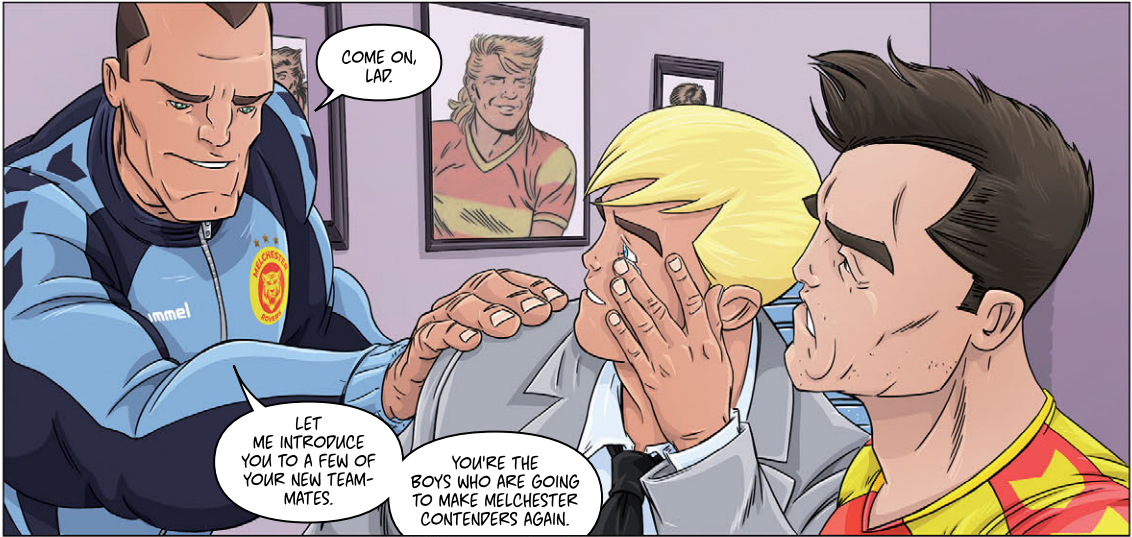
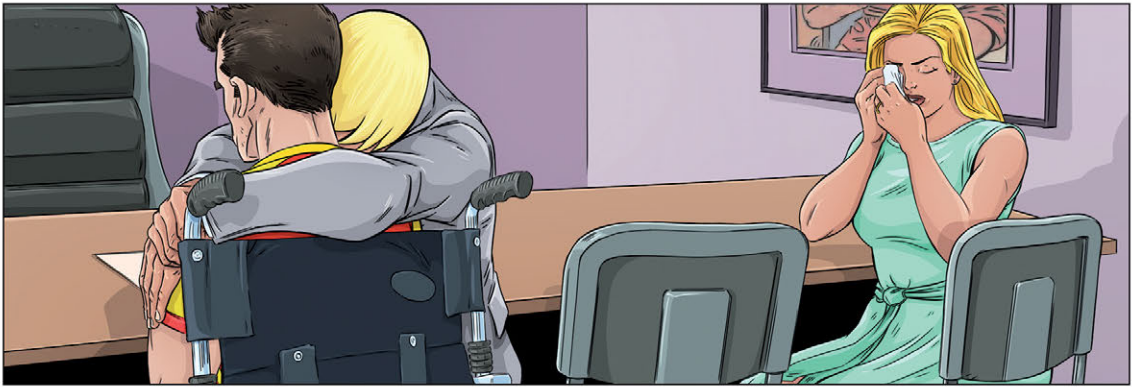


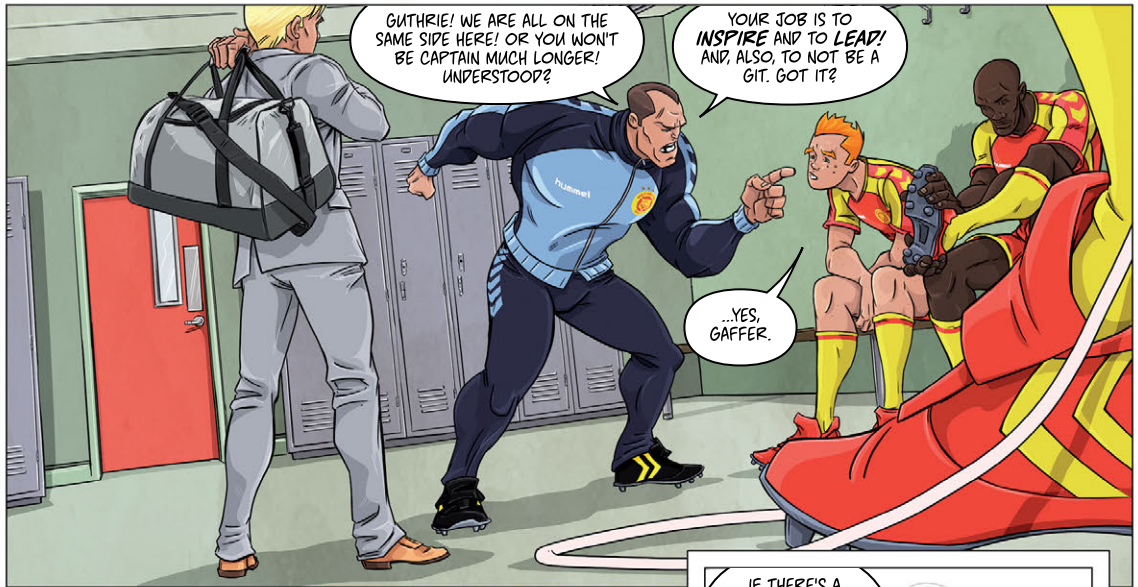
I VERY PLEASED TO JOIN THE TYNECASTER AND COME HERE BECAUSE WE WANT WIN **CHAMPIONS LEAGUE!**

YAYYYYYY!









GUTHRIE! WE ARE ALL ON THE SAME SIDE HERE! OR YOU WON'T BE CAPTAIN MUCH LONGER! UNDERSTOOD?

YOUR JOB IS TO **INSPIRE** AND TO **LEAD!** AND, ALSO, TO NOT BE A GIT. GOT IT?

...YES, GAFFER.



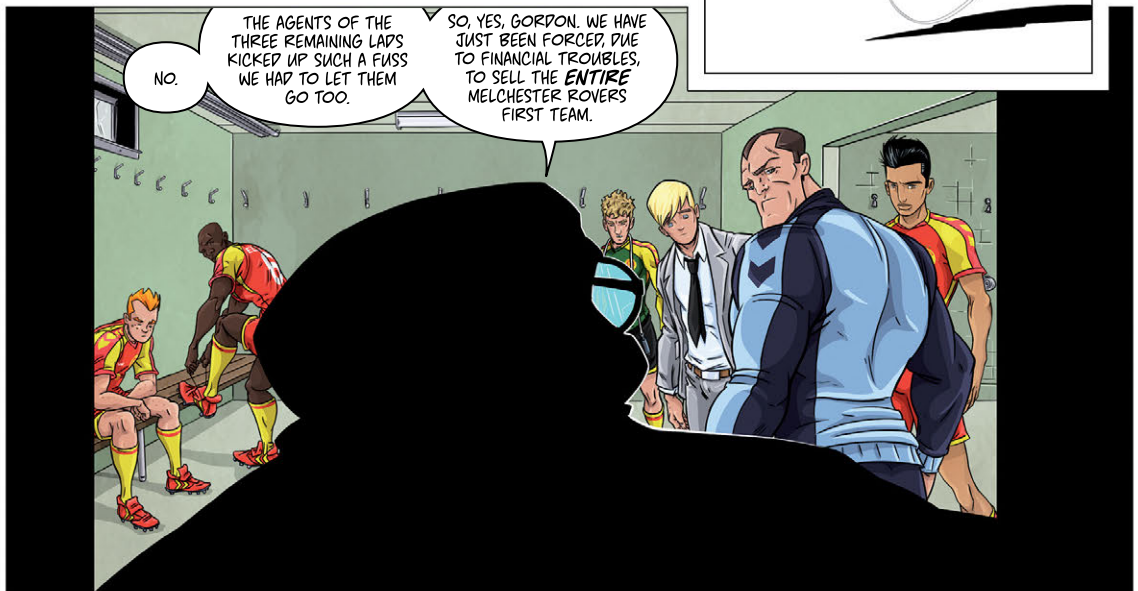
CONGRATULATIONS, MY FRIEND. I HOPE THEY HAVE NOT SIGNED YOU TO PLAY IN GOAL THOUGH, NO.

I HOPE NOT TOO, PACO.

WELCOME TO MELCHESTER.



IF THERE'S A MELCHESTER MUCH LONGER. I MEAN... THE BOARD JUST SOLD PRETTY MUCH THE ENTIRE FIRST TEAM, RIGHT...



NO. THE AGENTS OF THE THREE REMAINING LADS KICKED UP SUCH A FUSS WE HAD TO LET THEM GO TOO.

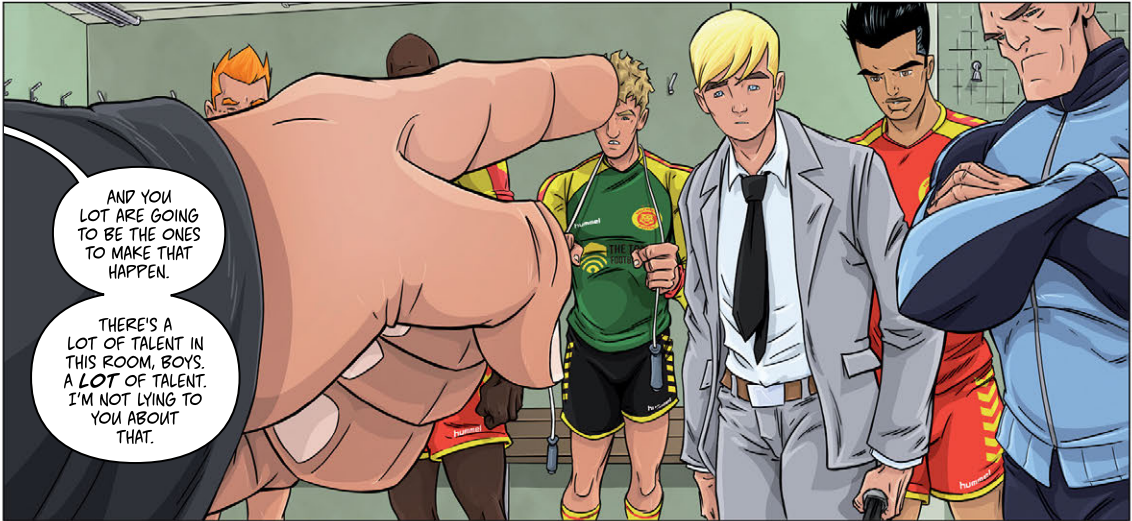
SO, YES, GORDON. WE HAVE JUST BEEN FORCED, DUE TO FINANCIAL TROUBLES, TO SELL THE **ENTIRE** MELCHESTER ROVERS FIRST TEAM.



BUT THIS IS STILL MELCHESTER LADS. WE WON LEAGUES, FA CUPS. EUROPEAN CUPS.

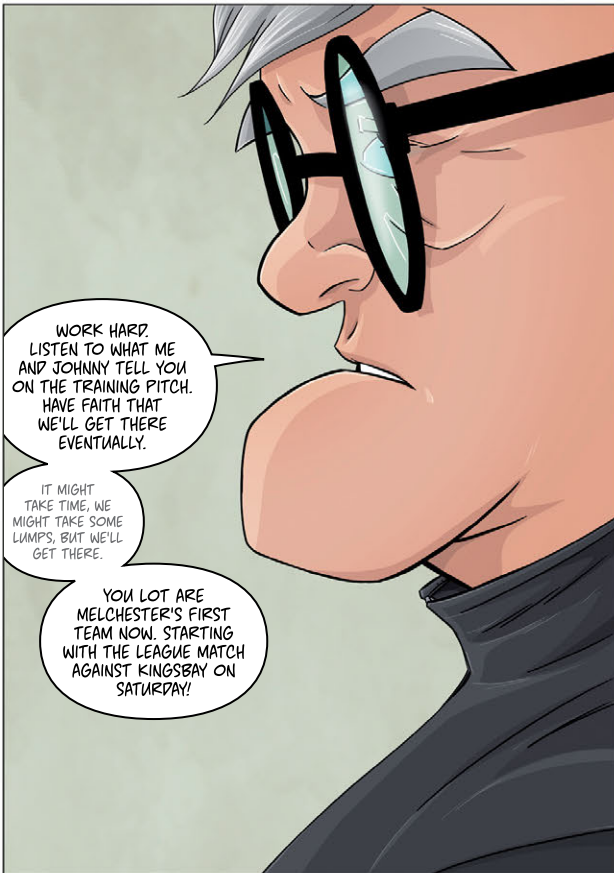
THIS WAS THE HOME OF FOOTBALL ONCE.

AND IT WILL BE AGAIN.



AND YOU LOT ARE GOING TO BE THE ONES TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

THERE'S A LOT OF TALENT IN THIS ROOM, BOYS. A LOT OF TALENT. I'M NOT LYING TO YOU ABOUT THAT.



WORK HARD. LISTEN TO WHAT ME AND JOHNNY TELL YOU ON THE TRAINING PITCH. HAVE FAITH THAT WE'LL GET THERE EVENTUALLY.

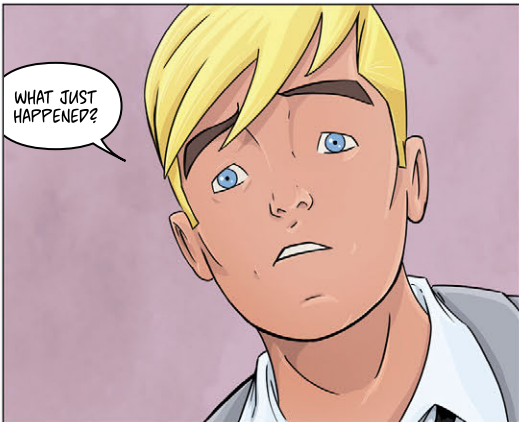
IT MIGHT TAKE TIME, WE MIGHT TAKE SOME LUMPS, BUT WE'LL GET THERE.

YOU LOT ARE MELCHESTER'S FIRST TEAM NOW. STARTING WITH THE LEAGUE MATCH AGAINST KINGSBAY ON SATURDAY!

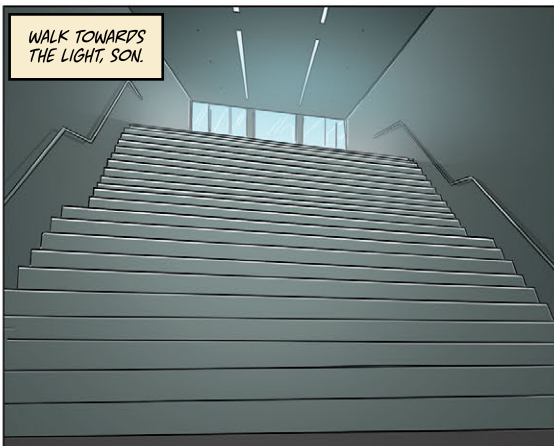
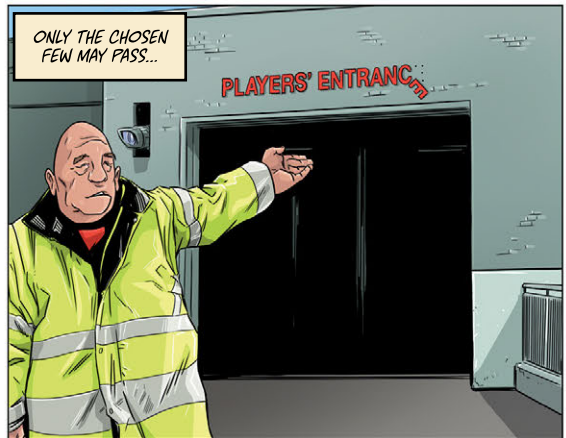
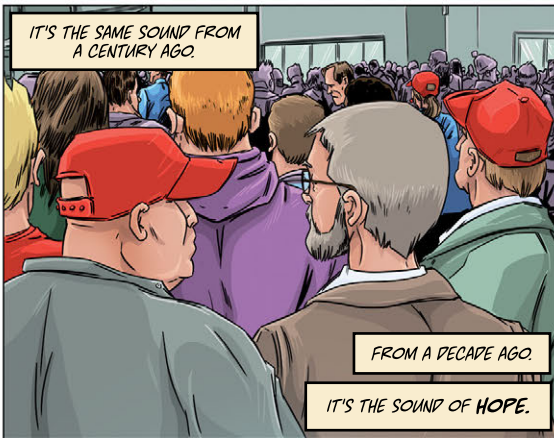
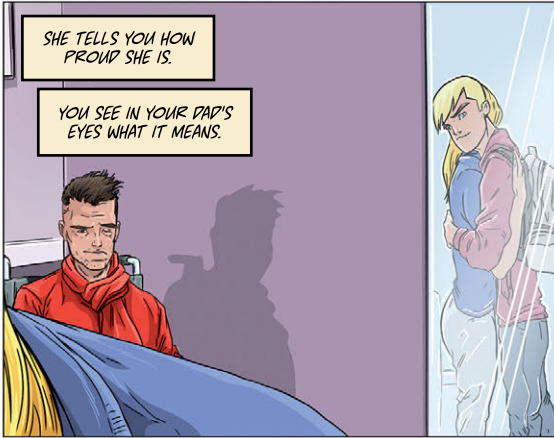
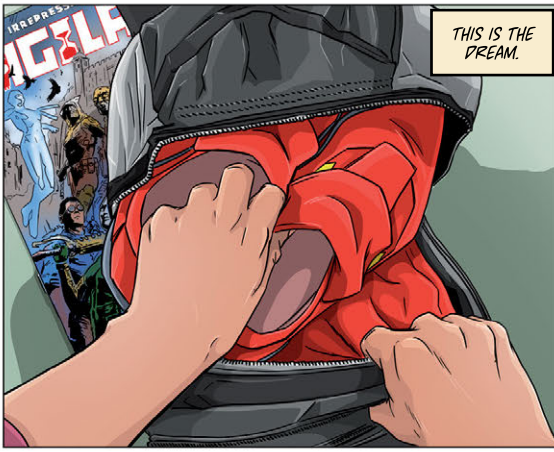


YOU WIN NOTHING WITH KIDS, SOMEONE ONCE SAID.

WE'RE GOING TO PROVE THEM WRONG.



**HALF TIME!**  
GO HAVE AN ORANGE SLICE AND A DRINK OF WATER!



THIS IS THE DREAM.



AND THIS IS THE NIGHTMARE.

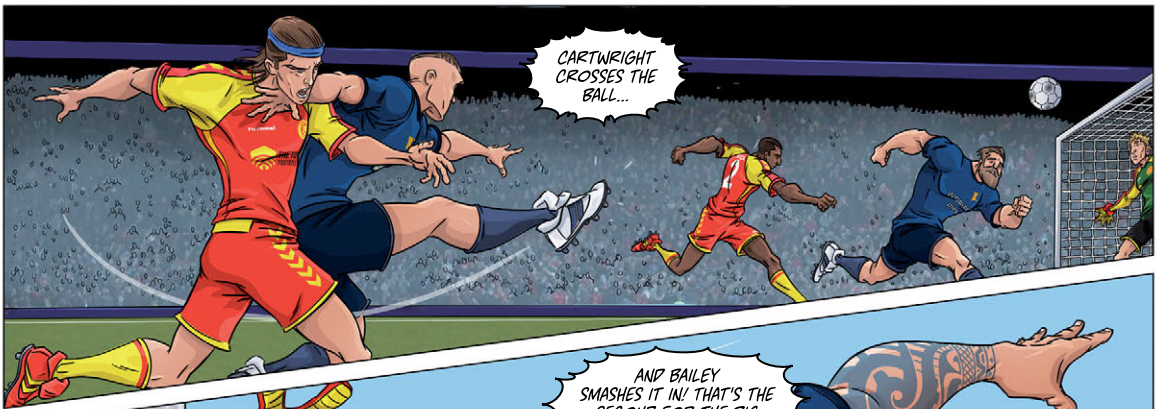
MELCHESTER 0  
KINGSBAY 3



I SWEAR, I'M GONNA HAVE A STROKE.

THEY'RE DOING ALRIGHT. THEY'RE PLAYING GOOD FOOTBALL. WE KNEW THE KIDS WOULD NEED TIME TO GET USED TO THIS LEVEL.

OH NO, THEIR WINGER'S IN AGAIN!

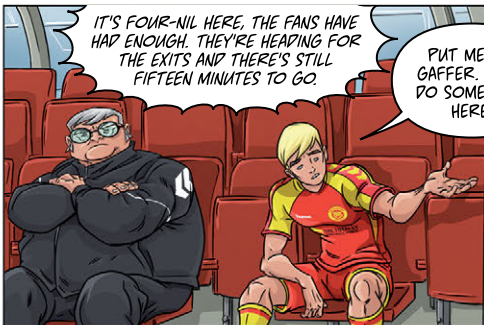


CARTWRIGHT  
CROSSES THE  
BALL...



AND BAILEY  
SMASHES IT IN! THAT'S THE  
SECOND FOR THE BIG  
TARGET MAN.

THE KIDS OF  
MELCHESTER HAVE PUT IN  
A BRAVE SHIFT HERE BUT THEY  
CAN'T COMPETE WITH THE PHYSICAL  
NATURE OF KINGSBAY'S LONG  
BALL GAME.



IT'S FOUR-NIL HERE, THE FANS  
HAD ENOUGH. THEY'RE HEADING FOR  
THE EXITS AND THERE'S STILL  
FIFTEEN MINUTES TO GO.

PUT ME ON,  
GAFFER. I CAN  
DO SOMETHING  
HERE.



LEAVE OFF,  
FACE. YOU'VE  
ONLY HAD A HANDFUL  
OF TRAINING SESSIONS.  
AND BESIDES, HAVE YOU  
SEEN THEIR CENTRE  
HALVES? THEY'RE  
CAVEMEN.

THEY'LL EAT  
YOU FOR BREAKFAST.  
YOU'RE BETTER OFF  
WATCHING THIS ONE  
AND LEARNING.

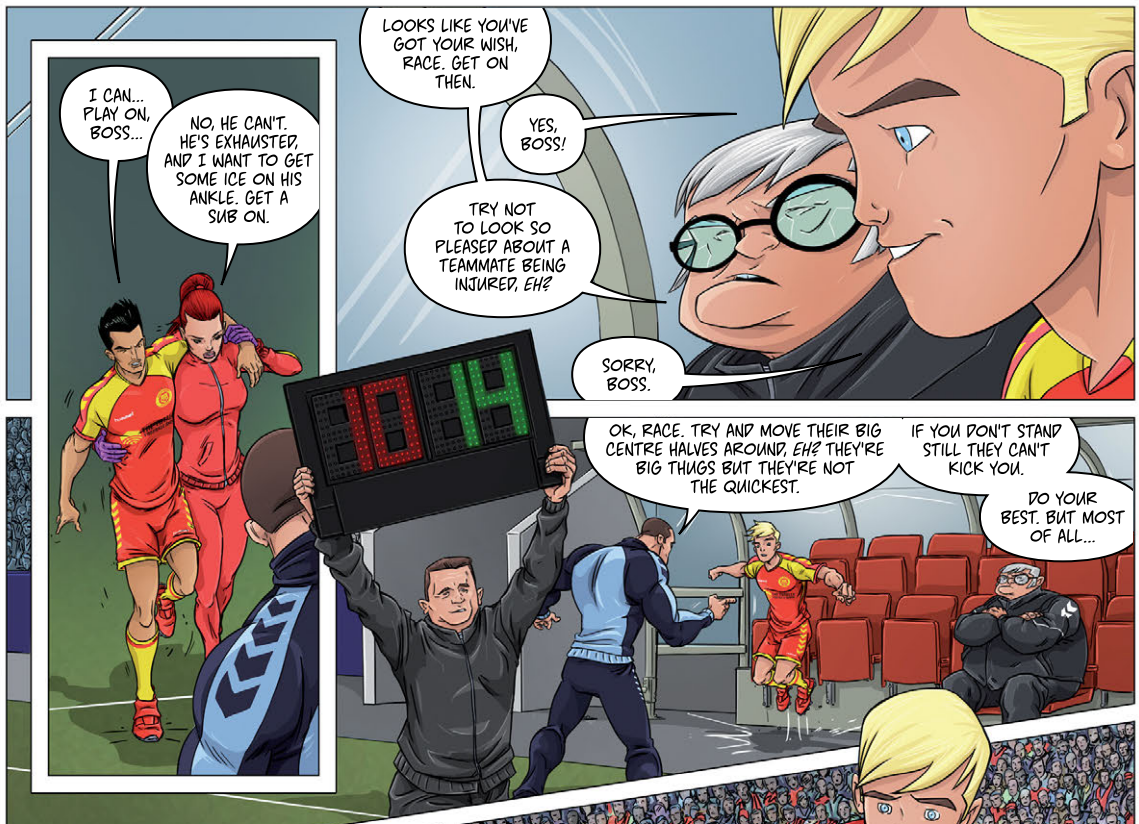


AND DIAZ,  
ONE OF THE FEW  
BRIGHT SPOTS FOR  
MELCHESTER TODAY...  
OH! HE'S SKIPPED  
PAST ONE, PAST  
TWO...

HE'S STILL  
GOING!



OH!  
THAT'S A BAD  
TACKLE! THAT'S A  
DEFINITE YELLOW  
CARD!



I CAN...  
PLAY ON,  
BOSS...

NO, HE CAN'T.  
HE'S EXHAUSTED,  
AND I WANT TO GET  
SOME ICE ON HIS  
ANKLE. GET A  
SUB ON.

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE  
GOT YOUR WISH,  
RACE. GET ON  
THEN.

YES,  
BOSS!

TRY NOT  
TO LOOK SO  
PLEASED ABOUT A  
TEAMMATE BEING  
INJURED, EH?

SORRY,  
BOSS.

OK, RACE. TRY AND MOVE THEIR BIG  
CENTRE HALVES AROUND, EH? THEY'RE  
BIG THUGS BUT THEY'RE NOT  
THE QUICKEST.

IF YOU DON'T STAND  
STILL THEY CAN'T  
KICK YOU.

DO YOUR  
BEST, BUT MOST  
OF ALL...



ENJOY  
THIS MOMENT.  
RELISH IT.

BECAUSE  
YOU WILL NEVER  
FORGET IT AS  
LONG AS YOU  
LIVE.

AND NOW, HERE  
COMES ANOTHER  
YOUNG MELCHESTER  
HOPEFUL FOR HIS FIRST  
PROFESSIONAL  
APPEARANCE.



NUMBER 14...  
ROY RACE!

WHO?



REALLY? WAS THERE NO ONE ELSE?

OBVIOUSLY NOT.

YOU LOVE ME REALLY, GUTHRIE.



VERNON. IF YOU GET WIDE I'M GOING TO MAKE THE NEAR POST RUN. WHIP IT IN HARD AS YOU CAN, EH?

YEAH. WILL DO.



HEH. MORE BABYSITTING, THEN?

YOU'LL HAVE TO CATCH ME, FIRST.

I WILL. AND THEN YOU'LL WAKE UP IN A HOSPITAL BED, LAD.



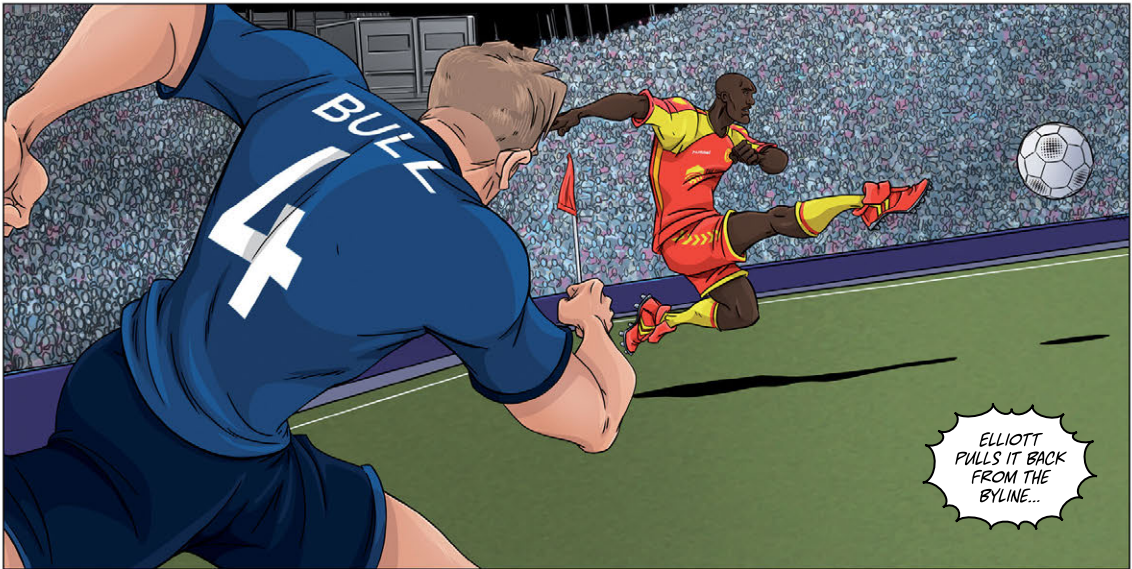
JUST A COUPLE OF MINUTES LEFT NOW. AND VERNON ELLIOTT'S PACE HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS FOR KINGSBAY'S RIGHT BACK THE WHOLE GAME.

HE'S ROUND HIM AGAIN. THE BALL'S GONE TO THE BYLINE.



SEE YOU.

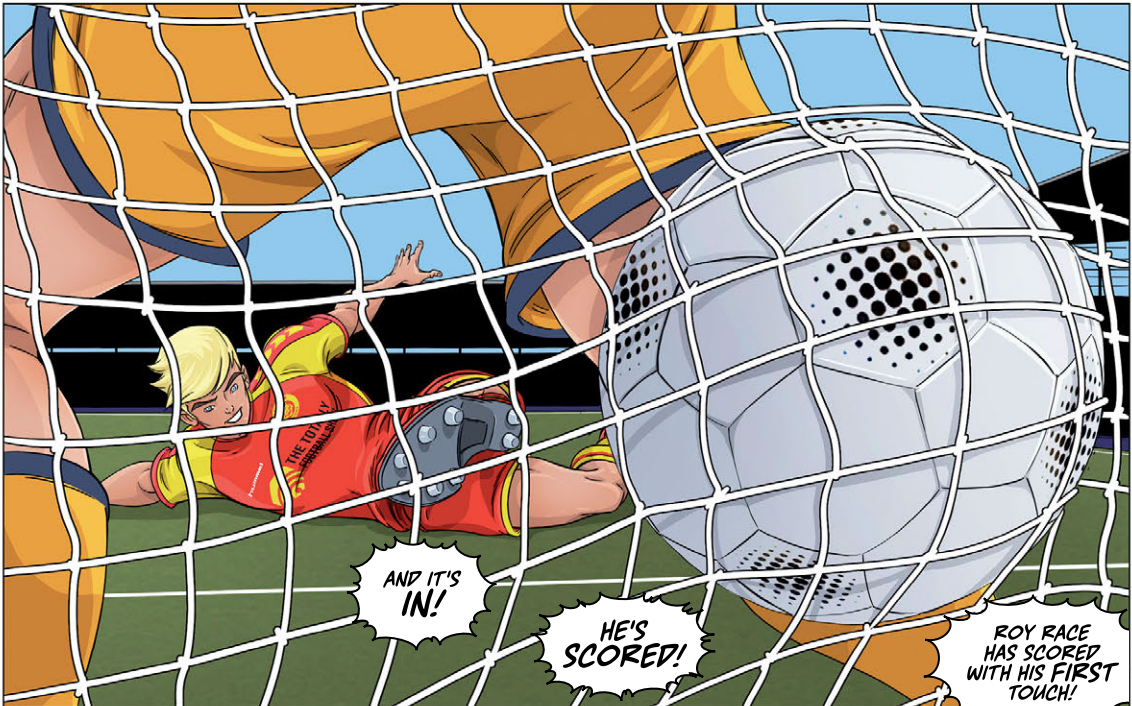
OII!



ELLIOTT  
PULLS IT BACK  
FROM THE  
BYLINE...



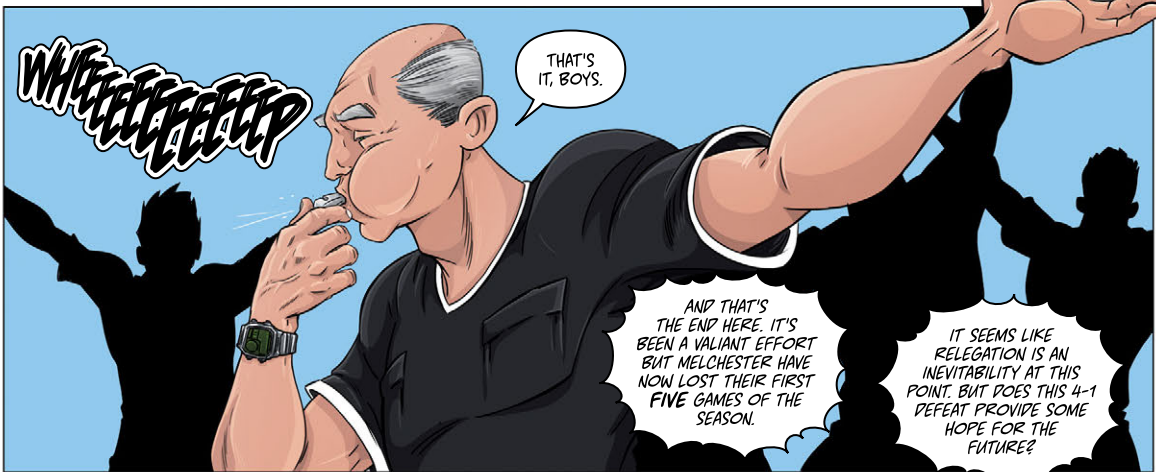
RACE  
GETS A  
CHANCE!



AND IT'S  
IN!

HE'S  
SCORED!

ROY RACE  
HAS SCORED  
WITH HIS FIRST  
TOUCH!





WELL DONE, LADS. IT MAY NOT FEEL LIKE IT NOW BUT YOU GAVE THEM A GAME AND A HALF.

YOUR PACE, BOYS. YOUR MOVEMENT. EXCELLENT. EXCELLENT. AND THAT'S HOW WE'RE GOING TO PLAY.

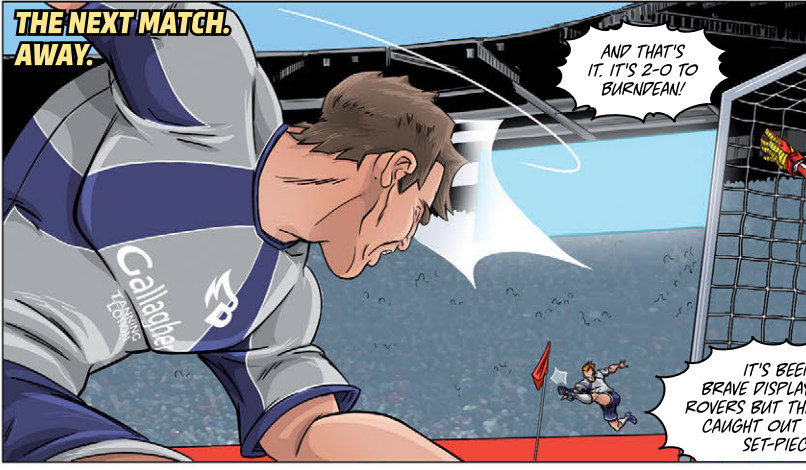
KEEP THE BALL ON THE FLOOR. PASS AND MOVE.



THE MELCHESTER WAY.

WE ARE ONLY GOING TO GET BETTER, BOYS. TRUST ME.

**THE NEXT MATCH. AWAY.**

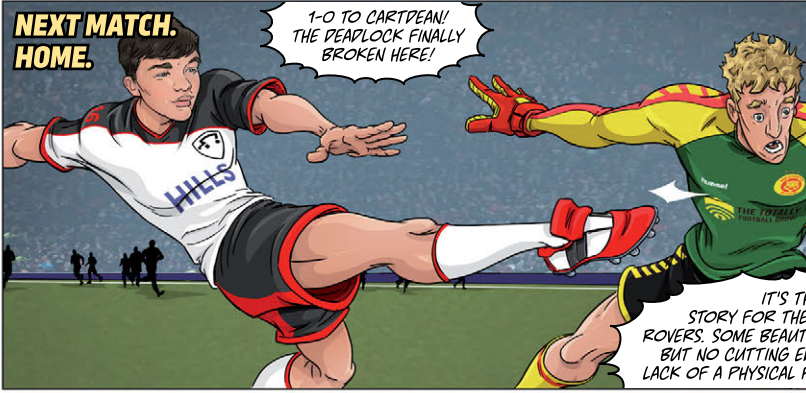


AND THAT'S IT. IT'S 2-0 TO BURNDPEAN!

IT'S BEEN A BRAVE DISPLAY BY THE ROVERS BUT THEY'VE BEEN CAUGHT OUT ON TWO SET-PIECES.

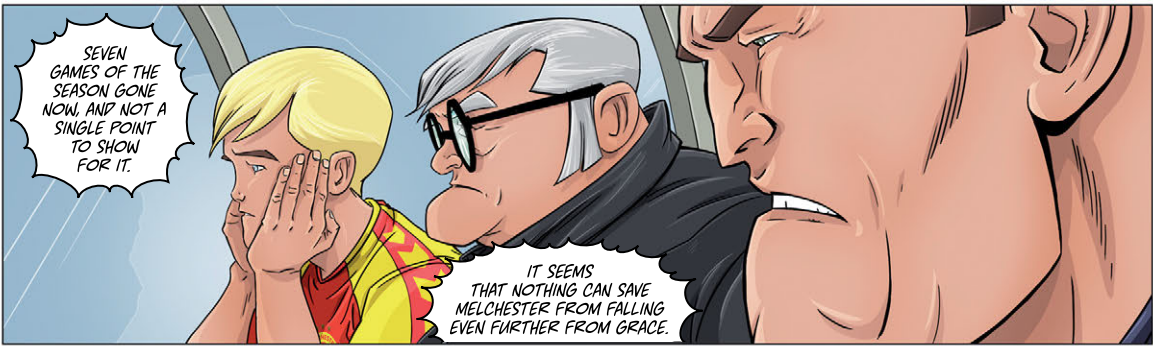


**NEXT MATCH. HOME.**



1-0 TO CARTPEAN! THE DEADLOCK FINALLY BROKEN HERE!

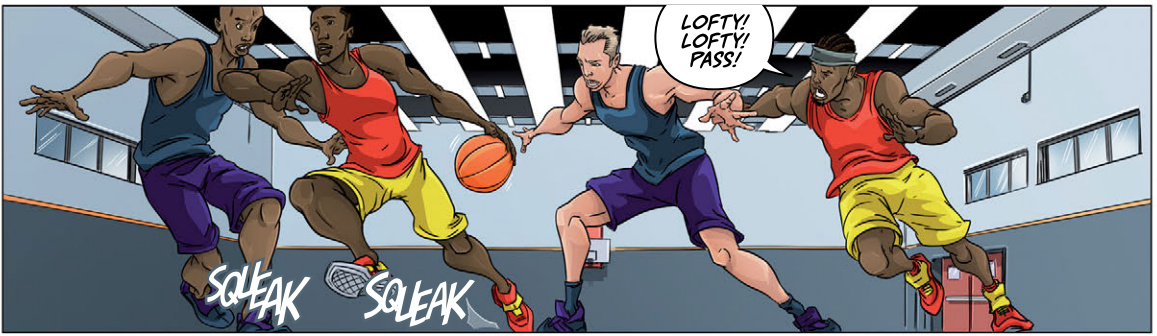
IT'S THE SAME STORY FOR THE YOUNGSTERS OF ROVERS. SOME BEAUTIFUL FOOTBALL PLAYERS, BUT NO CUTTING EDGE UP FRONT AND A LACK OF A PHYSICAL PRESENCE AT THE BACK.



SEVEN GAMES OF THE SEASON GONE NOW, AND NOT A SINGLE POINT TO SHOW FOR IT.

IT SEEMS THAT NOTHING CAN SAVE MELCHESTER FROM FALLING EVEN FURTHER FROM GRACE.





LOFTY!  
LOFTY!  
PASS!

SQUEAK SQUEAK



THAT BALL...

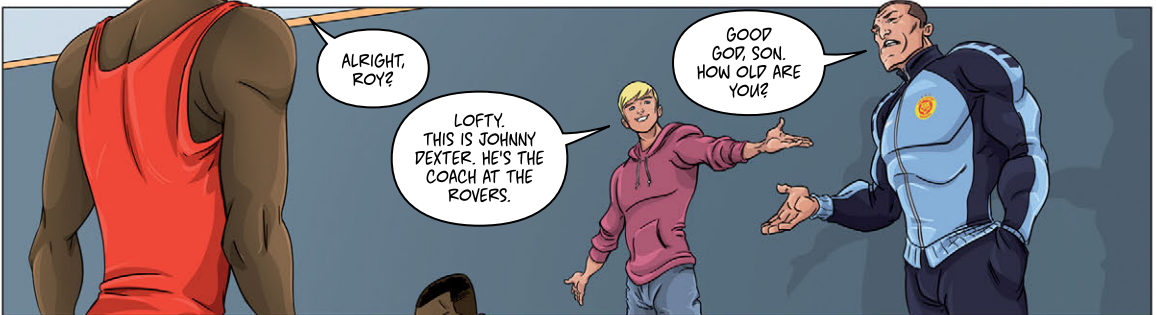
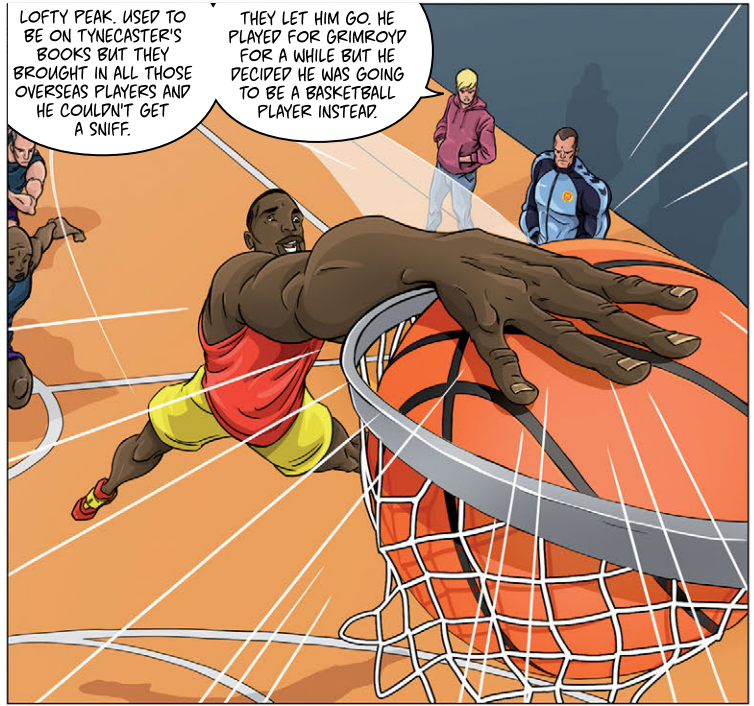
...WHY AREN'T THEY KICKING IT?

IT'S BASKETBALL, GAFFER.

I DO NOT APPROVE.

LOFTY PEAK. USED TO BE ON TYNECASTER'S BOOKS BUT THEY BROUGHT IN ALL THOSE OVERSEAS PLAYERS AND HE COULDN'T GET A SNIFF.

THEY LET HIM GO. HE PLAYED FOR GRIMROYD FOR A WHILE BUT HE DECIDED HE WAS GOING TO BE A BASKETBALL PLAYER INSTEAD.



ALRIGHT, ROY?

LOFTY. THIS IS JOHNNY DEXTER. HE'S THE COACH AT THE ROVERS.

GOOD GOD, SON. HOW OLD ARE YOU?



SEVENTEEN.

I ASKED HOW OLD YOU WERE NOT HOW MANY FEET TALL YOU ARE.

YOUR NAME'S NOT REALLY LOFTY, IS IT?

NICKNAME. MY SURNAME IS PEAK, THOUGH.

YOU HAVE THE ELBOWS, SON. AND THE HEAD. AND I HEARD GOOD THINGS ABOUT YOU DOWN THE YEARS.

WOULD YOU LIKE A TRIAL WITH THE MELCHESTER ROVERS?

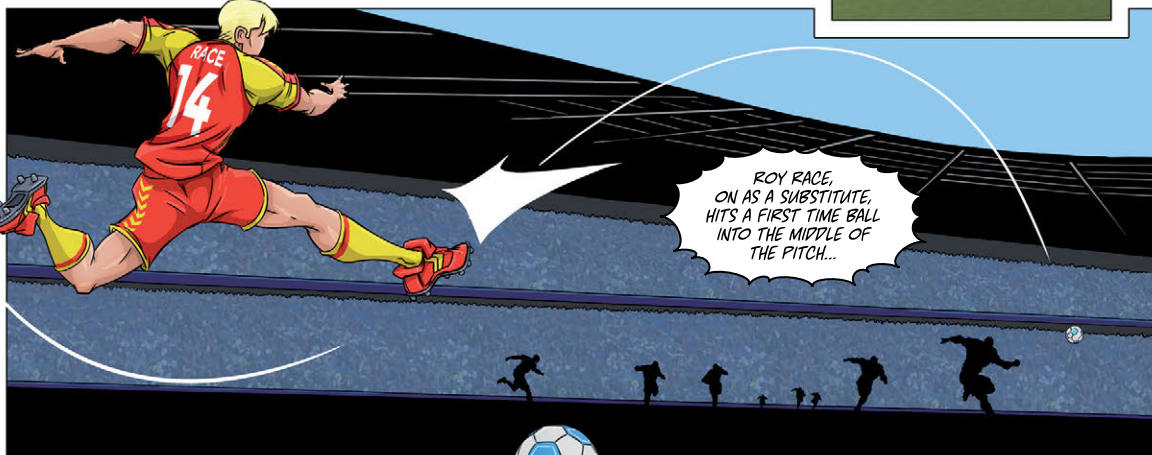


AND THE BIG CENTRE HALF MAKING HIS DEBUT FOR MELCHESTER TODAY IS HAVING A STORMER.

TRY AS THEY MIGHT DANEFIELD CAN'T FIND A WAY PAST HIM. AND THE ROVERS ARE JUST TEN MINUTES AWAY FROM THEIR FIRST POINT OF THE SEASON!



THE BALL COMES OUT AND THE BREAK MIGHT BE ON FOR MELCHESTER HERE. VIC GUTHRIE HITS A LONG BALL DOWN THE LEFT CHANNEL...

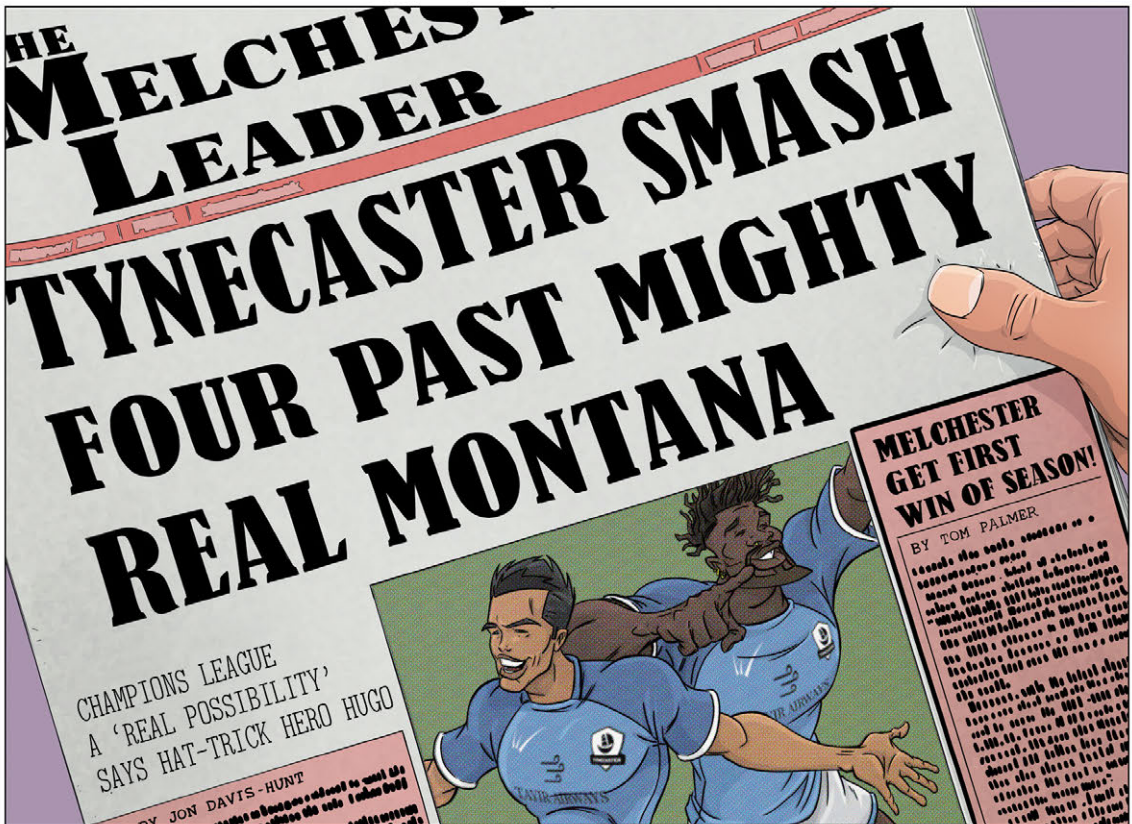
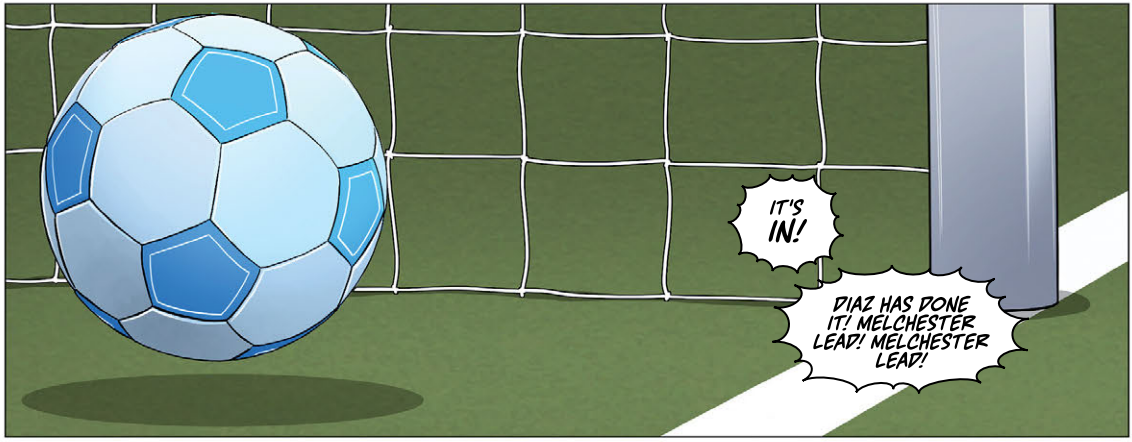


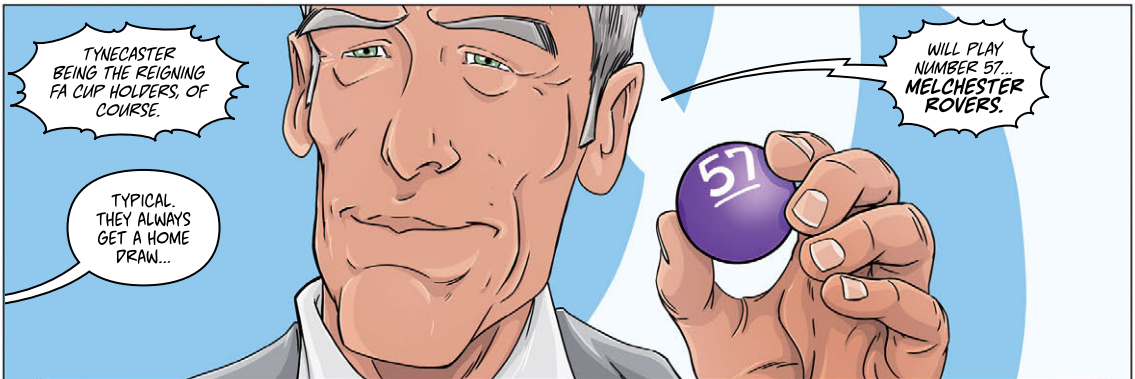
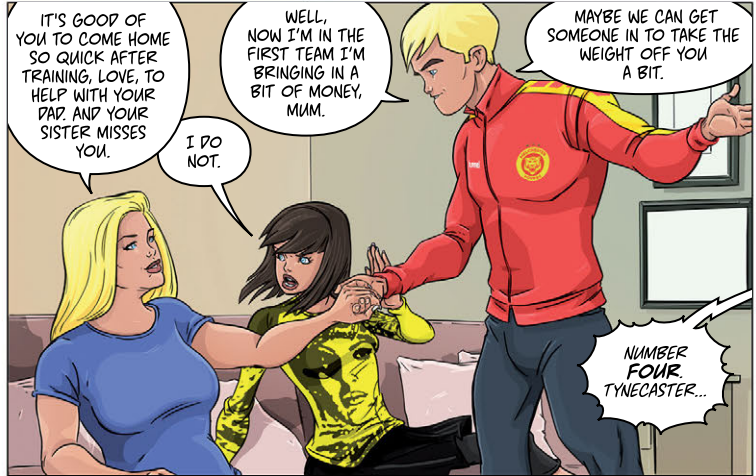
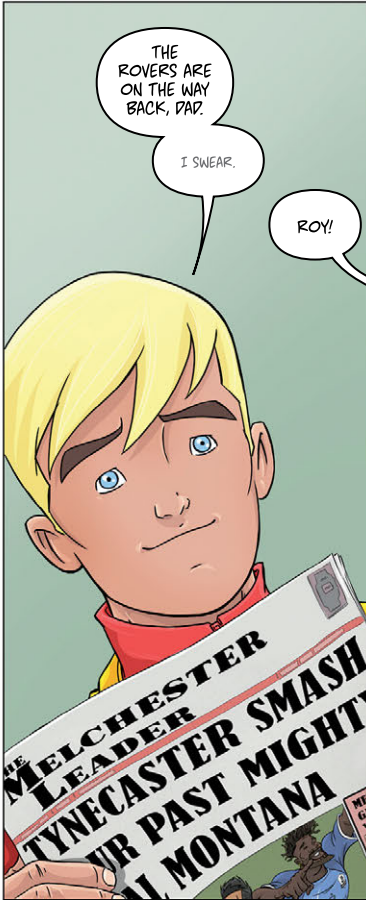
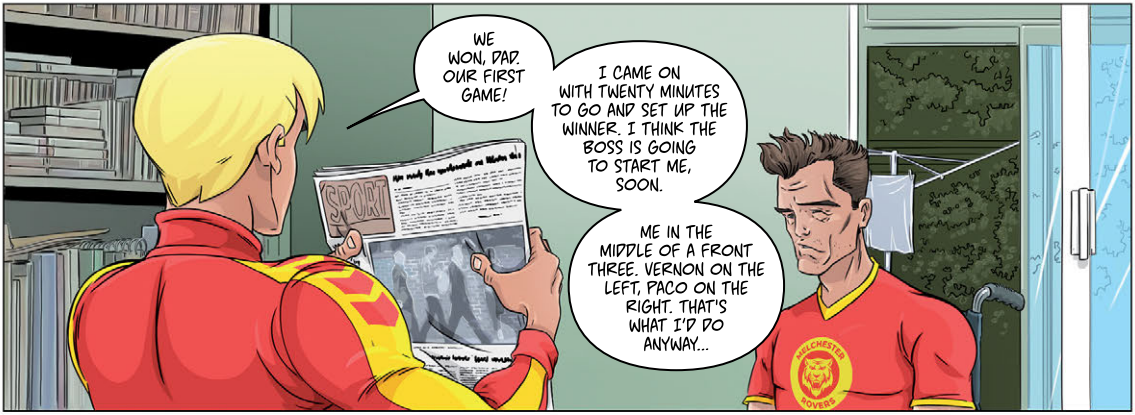
ROY RACE, ON AS A SUBSTITUTE, HITS A FIRST TIME BALL INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE PITCH...



DIAZ IS THERE! DIAZ PINKS IT OVER THE DANEFIELD KEEPER!

WILL IT GO IN? WILL IT GO...





LIVE THIRD ROUND DRAW

**TYNECASTER** **V** **MELCHESTER ROVERS**



OH...  
MY...

"DAYS..."



WELCOME TO THE TAYR STADIUM. HOME TO TYNECASTER AND THE GLAMOUR TIE OF THIS, THE 3RD ROUND OF THE FA CUP.

MELCHESTER, AS A CITY, HAS LONG BEEN ONE OF THE HOMES OF ENGLISH FOOTBALL AND HERE, TWO OF THE GAME'S BIGGEST RIVALS COME TOGETHER IN A SNAPSHOT OF THE STATE OF THE GAME IN 2018.



ON ONE SIDE YOU HAVE THE MILLIONAIRES OF TYNECASTER. GLOBAL SUPERSTARS ON RELEASE CLAUSES NEARING £200 MILLION AND WAGES OF £350,000 A WEEK.

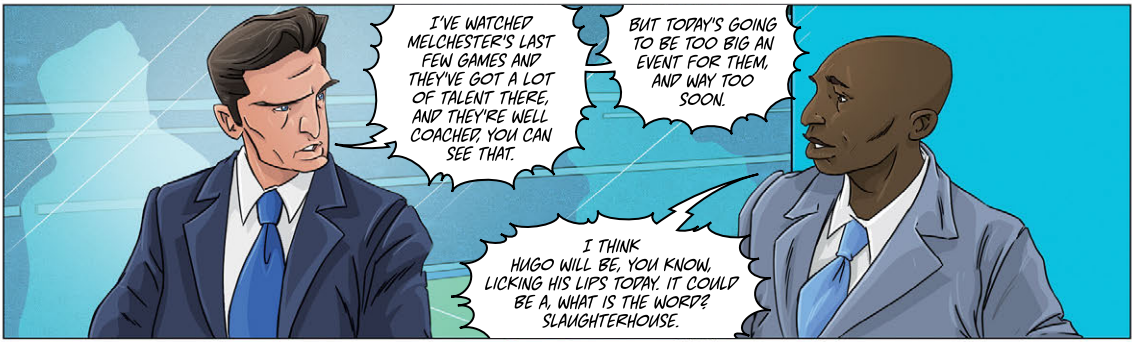
TYNECASTER AND MELCHESTER WERE ALWAYS THE FIERCEST RIVALS BUT IN PAST DECADES THEY WERE OPERATING ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD.



NOW MELCHESTER SIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TABLE TWO DIVISIONS BELOW TYNECASTER AND ARE ATTEMPTING TO BUILD THROUGH A YOUTH MOVEMENT THAT SURELY WILL TAKE TIME TO PAY DIVIDENDS.

MONEY TALKS IN MODERN FOOTBALL, AND ONE SIDE HERE TODAY HAS IT AND THE OTHER DOES NOT.

THIS GAME IS THE EPITOME OF DAVID VS GOLIATH.



I'VE WATCHED MELCHESTER'S LAST FEW GAMES AND THEY'VE GOT A LOT OF TALENT THERE, AND THEY'RE WELL COACHED, YOU CAN SEE THAT.

BUT TODAY'S GOING TO BE TOO BIG AN EVENT FOR THEM, AND WAY TOO SOON.

I THINK HUGO WILL BE, YOU KNOW, LICKING HIS LIPS TODAY. IT COULD BE A, WHAT IS THE WORD? SLAUGHTERHOUSE.

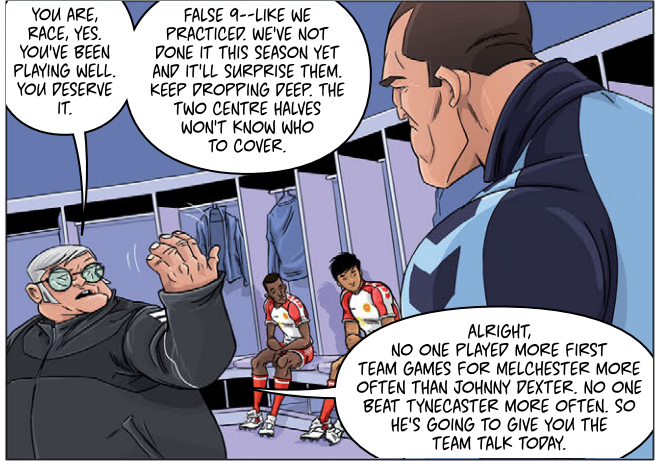


I'M STARTING?

I'M... STARTING, MY FIRST START.

OK...

I'M STARTING.



YOU ARE, RACE, YES, YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING WELL, YOU DESERVE IT.

FALSE 9--LIKE WE PRACTICED WE'VE NOT DONE IT THIS SEASON YET AND IT'LL SURPRISE THEM. KEEP PROPPING DEEP! THE TWO CENTRE HALVES WON'T KNOW WHO TO COVER.

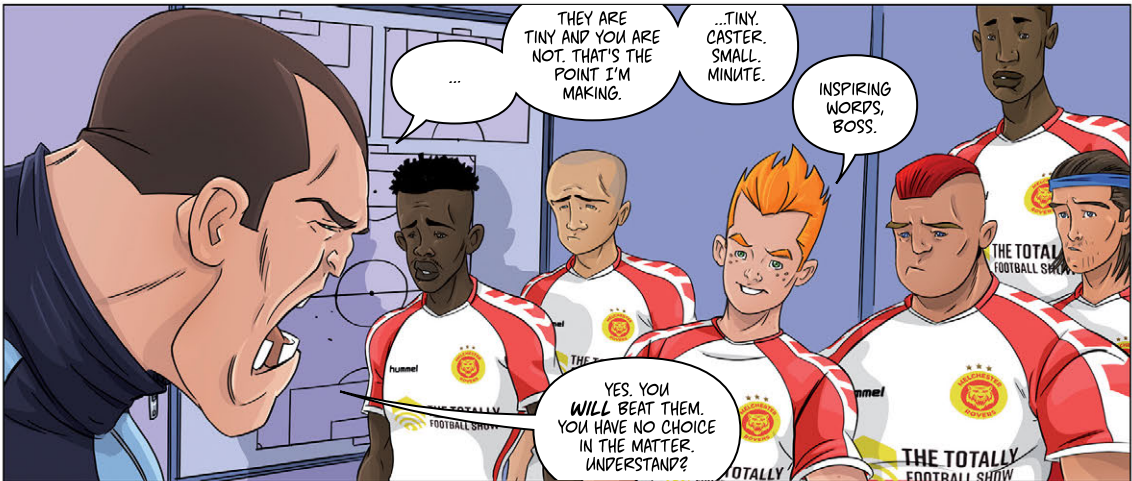
ALRIGHT, NO ONE PLAYED MORE FIRST TEAM GAMES FOR MELCHESTER MORE OFTEN THAN JOHNNY DEXTER. NO ONE BEAT TYNECASTER MORE OFTEN. SO HE'S GOING TO GIVE YOU THE TEAM TALK TODAY.



YOU ARE MELCHESTER ROVERS.

THE MELCHESTER ROVERS. THE GREATEST CLUB IN THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH GAME. GIANTS HAVE WORN THAT SHIRT, BOYS. LEGENDS!

THEY ARE TYNECASTER, WHICH SOUNDS A BIT LIKE TINY CASTER.



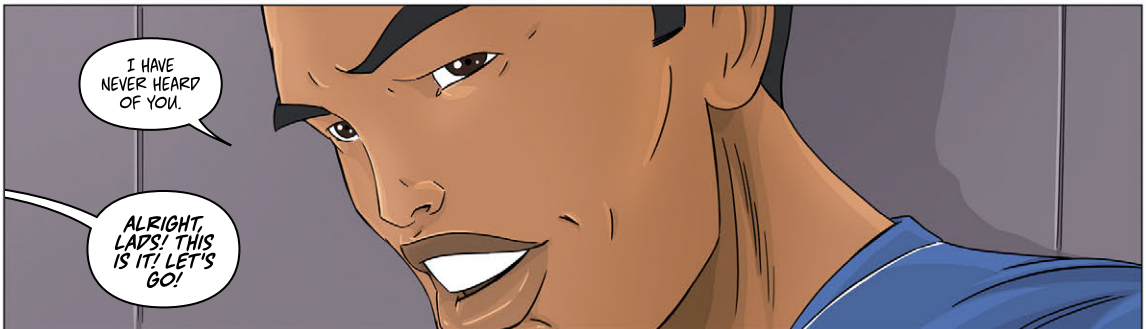
THEY ARE TINY AND YOU ARE NOT. THAT'S THE POINT I'M MAKING.

...TINY. CASTER. SMALL. MINUTE.

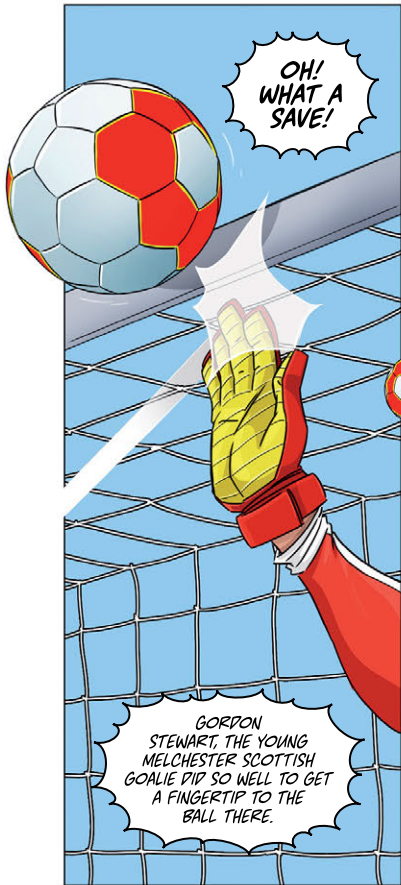
INSPIRING WORDS, BOSS.

YES, YOU WILL BEAT THEM. YOU HAVE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER. UNDERSTAND?

THE TOTALLY FOOTBALL SHOW

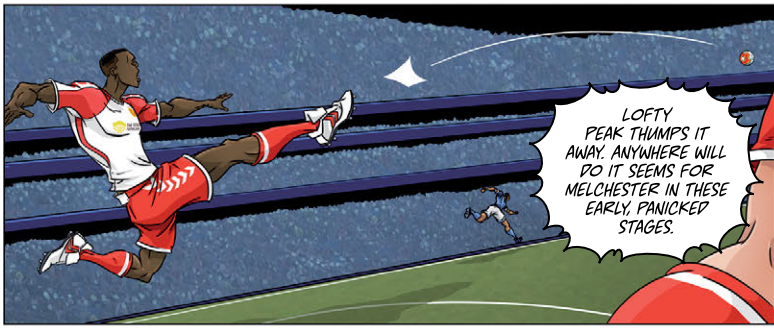




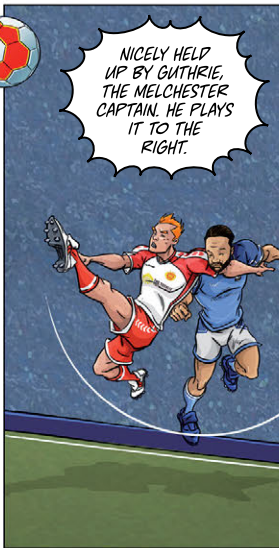


OH!  
WHAT A  
SAVE!

GORDON  
STEWART, THE YOUNG  
MELCHESTER SCOTTISH  
GOALIE DID SO WELL TO GET  
A FINGERTIP TO THE  
BALL THERE.



LOFTY  
PEAK THUMPS IT  
AWAY. ANYWHERE WILL  
DO IT SEEMS FOR  
MELCHESTER IN THESE  
EARLY, PANICKED  
STAGES.



NICELY HELD  
UP BY GUTHRIE,  
THE MELCHESTER  
CAPTAIN. HE PLAYS  
IT TO THE  
RIGHT.



OH, OUTRAGEOUS  
BIT OF SKILL THERE FROM  
DIAZ, THE YOUNG SPANIARD.  
HE'S COMPLETELY FOOLISH  
HENPERSON, THE ENGLISH  
INTERNATIONAL.



BATISTA  
THE PORTUGUESE  
DEFENDER COMES  
ACROSS TO COVER  
AND... OH!

WAS THAT A  
RABONA? IT WAS!  
DIAZ TURNING ON  
THE SKILL.

BUT IT'S GOING  
INFIELD, AWAY FROM  
THE TYNECASTER  
GOAL...

AND RACE  
HIIITS IT...

OH!  
OH MY  
WORD!

THAT...THAT IS  
UNBELIEVABLE!





**IT'S A  
ROCKET!**



THE COUNTRY CHANGES.

CITIES EVOLVE. FOOTBALL CLUBS RISE. AND SOME FALL.

EVERYTHING CHANGES.



EXCEPT THIS.



YOU'RE HAVING A LAUGH.



TELL THEM...TELL THE FULLBACKS TO STAY HOME...

ROY RACE! HA!

JOHNNY! CONCENTRATE! TELL THE FULLBACKS TO STAY BACK THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES. GUTHRIE TOO. CONSOLIDATE! DON'T GET CAUGHT!

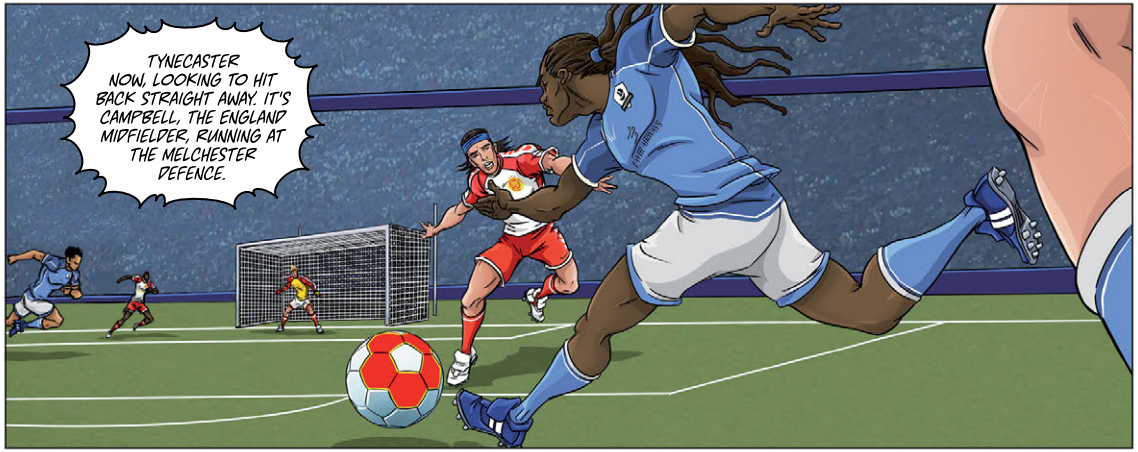
ROY... RACE...



ROY RACE'S ROCKET!

ROY OF THE ROVERS!!

HAVE ITTTTT!!!



TYNECASTER NOW, LOOKING TO HIT BACK STRAIGHT AWAY. IT'S CAMPBELL, THE ENGLAND MIDFIELDER, RUNNING AT THE MELCHESTER DEFENCE.



STEWART'S COMING BUT HE'S NOT GOING TO GET THERE...



OFF THE LINE!

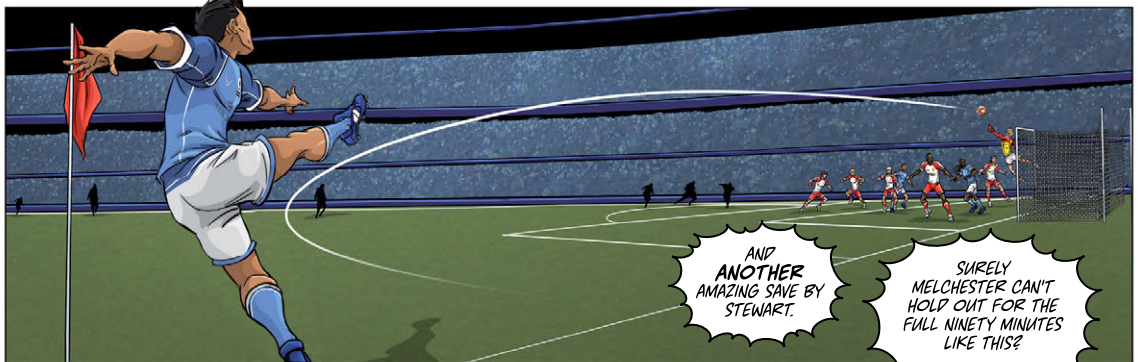
IT COULD'VE GONE ANYWHERE BUT LOFTY PEAK, THE EX-TYNECASTER YOUTH PLAYER, SOMEHOW MANAGES TO TURN IT AROUND THE POST.

IT'S A CORNER.



THAT'LL TEACH THEM TO GET RID OF YOU, EH, LOFTY?

YEAH... MARK 'EM UP, ROY! GOAL SIDE!



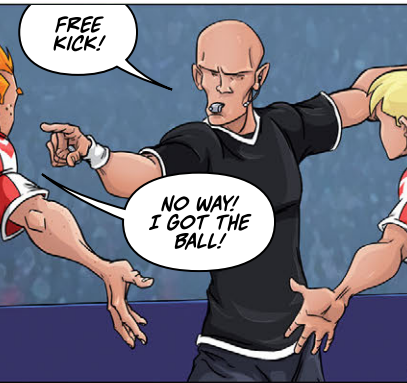
AND ANOTHER AMAZING SAVE BY STEWART.

SURELY MELCHESTER CAN'T HOLD OUT FOR THE FULL NINETY MINUTES LIKE THIS?

YOU HAVE TO BE IMPRESSED BY THE COMMITMENT OF THESE MELCHESTER BOYS. THEY ARE PUTTING EVERYTHING THEY HAVE INTO TRYING TO KEEP THIS LEAD.



IT'S A MONUMENTAL EFFORT BUT THEY'RE BEGINNING TO LOOK A LITTLE TIRED AS WE APPROACH HALF TIME.



FREE KICK!

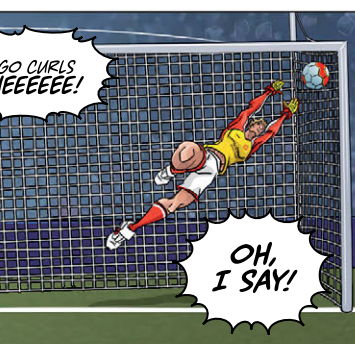
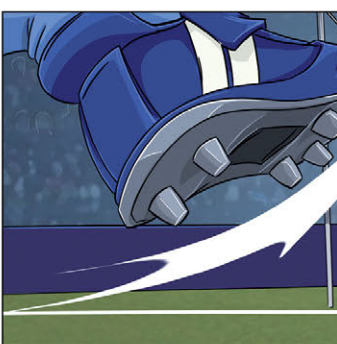
HE DID, REF! HE TOOK THE BALL!

NO WAY! I GOT THE BALL!



MISS IT, MISS ITTTTT....

JUST A MINUTE TO HALF-TIME. GIVEN THE PRESSURE THEY'VE BEEN UNDER, YOU FEEL MELCHESTER HAVE TO KEEP THIS OUT.



HUGO CURLS ONEEEEE!

OH, I SAY!



AND WHAT A CRUEL BLOW, JUST BEFORE HALF-TIME.

COME ON BOYS. HEADS UP! WE'RE STILL IN THIS.

HEY, ROY RACE.



I KNOW WHO YOU ARE NOW.

GOOD GOAL. BRAZILIAN GOAL, NO?



AND AS THE SECOND HALF CONTINUES IT IS ATTACK AFTER ATTACK FOR TYNECASTER. SURELY MELCHESTER CAN'T HOLD OUT!

OFF THE LINE, VIC GUTHRIE!



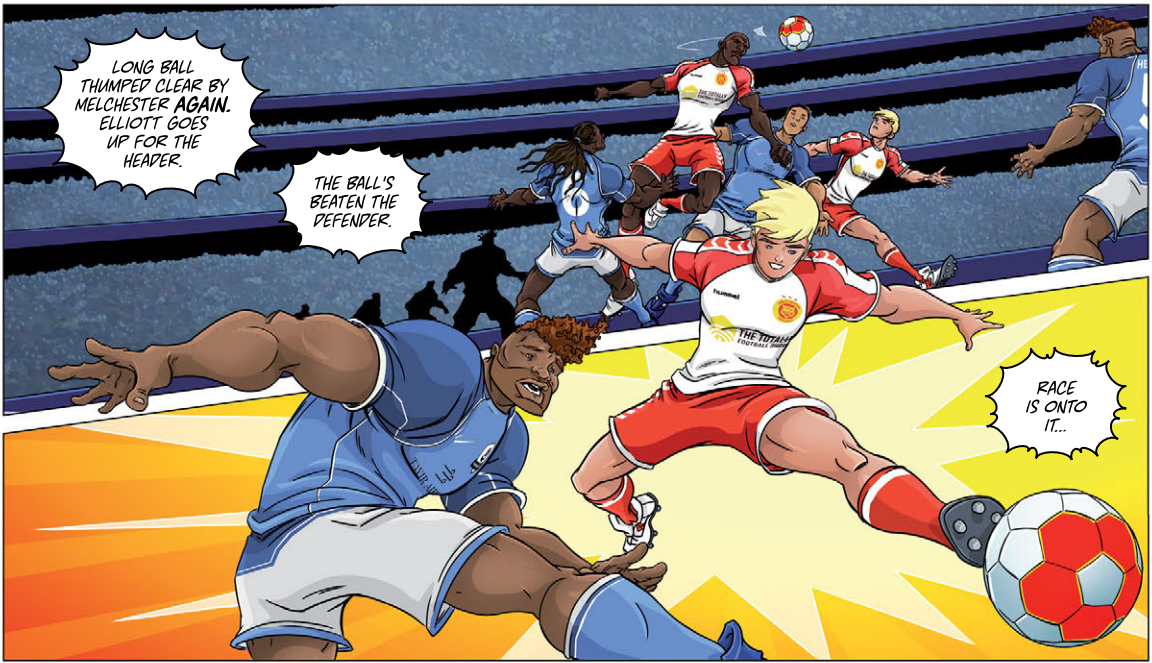
SAVED AGAIN! GORDON STEWART!

WHAT A GAME THIS YOUNG GOALKEEPER IS HAVING!

DIOS MIO!

ABSOLUTELY, MATE. ABSOLUTELY...

THERE'S JUST FIVE MINUTES LEFT HERE AS MELCHESTER TRY TO HANG ON FOR THE REPLAY AT MEL PARK.



LONG BALL THUMPED CLEAR BY MELCHESTER AGAIN. ELLIOTT GOES UP FOR THE HEADER.

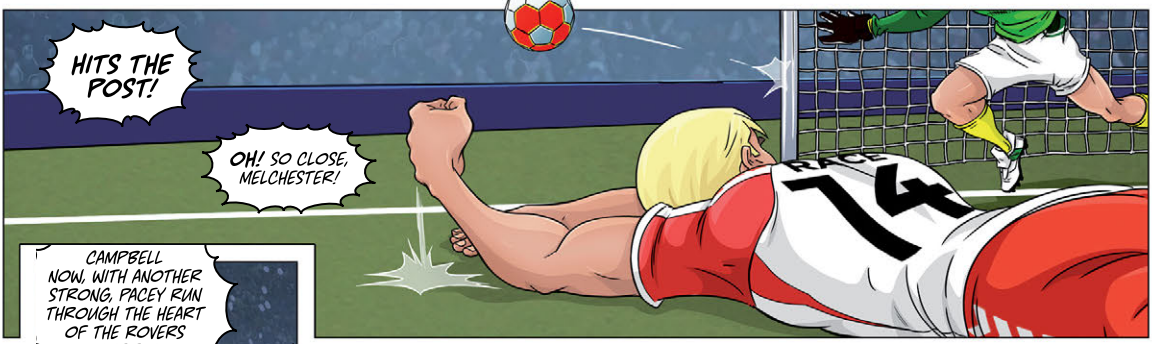
THE BALL'S BEATEN THE DEFENDER.

RACE IS ONTO IT...



HE SCUFFS THE SHOT...

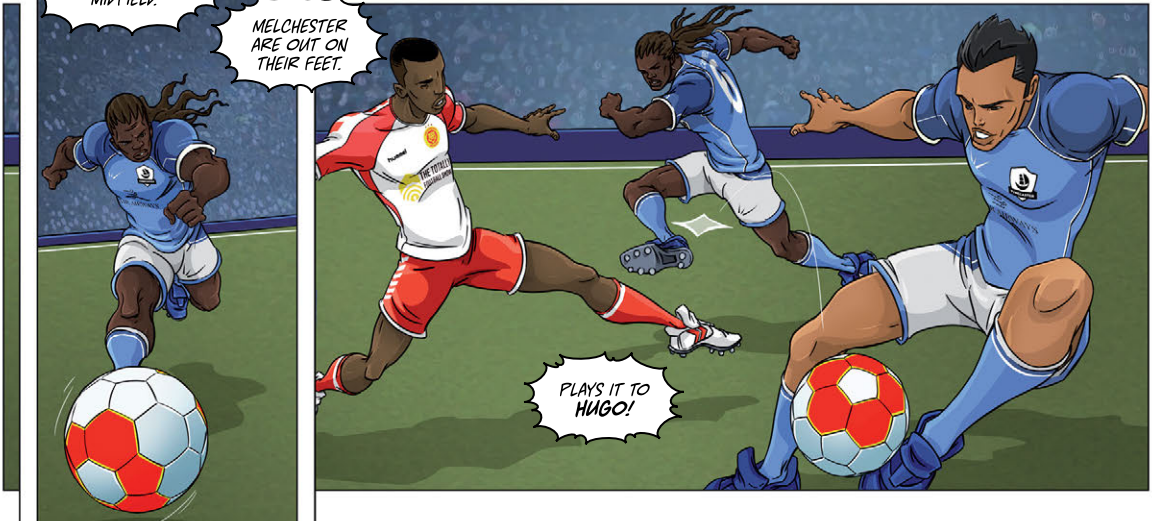
IT'S GOING INNNNNN...



HITS THE POST!

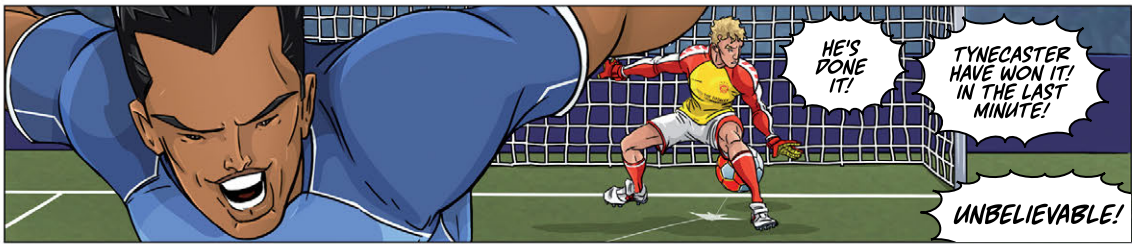
OH! SO CLOSE, MELCHESTER!

CAMPBELL NOW, WITH ANOTHER STRONG, PACEY RUN THROUGH THE HEART OF THE ROVERS MIPFIELD.



MELCHESTER ARE OUT ON THEIR FEET.

PLAYS IT TO HUGO!



HE'S DONE IT!

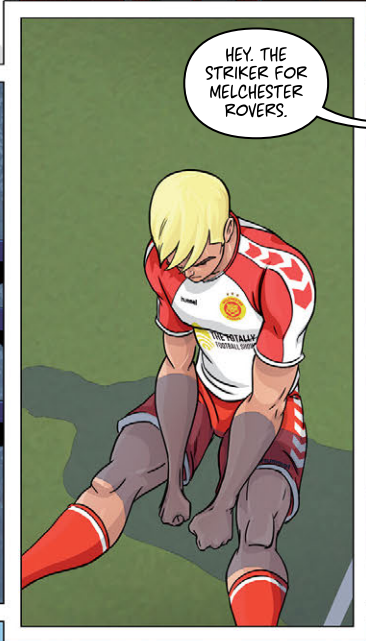
TYNECASTER HAVE WON IT! IN THE LAST MINUTE!

UNBELIEVABLE!

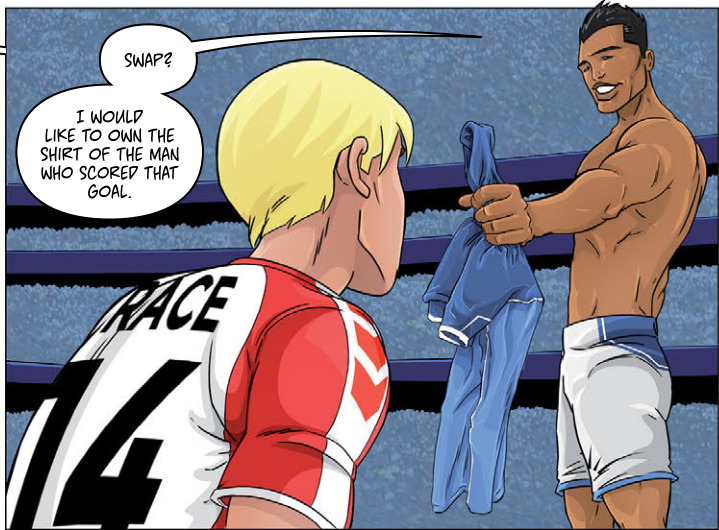


THE LAST KICK OF THE GAME, VIRTUALLY!

AND THAT'S IT! IT'S OVER! THERE'LL BE NO GIANT KILLING HERE TODAY.



HEY, THE STRIKER FOR MELCHESTER ROVERS.



SWAP?

I WOULD LIKE TO OWN THE SHIRT OF THE MAN WHO SCORED THAT GOAL.



UH...NO OFFENCE, BUT SO WOULD I.

I'M GOING TO GET THIS FRAMED FOR MY DAD.

THANK YOU, THOUGH.



I UNDERSTAND.

I WILL SEE YOU AGAIN, ROY RACE.

BE LUCKY.



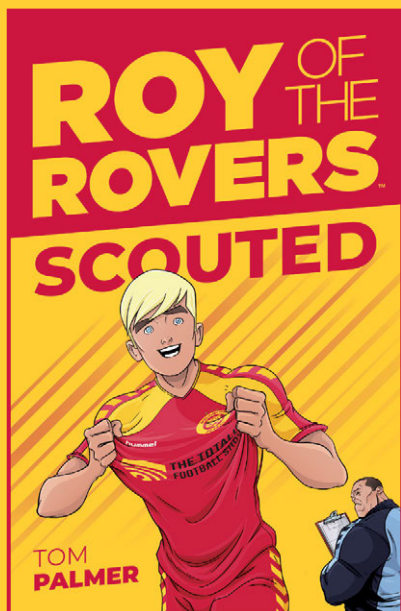


# ROY OF THE ROVERS™

## THE FIRST SEASON

Keep track of every new *Roy of the Rovers* book here!  
Don't forget to tick the boxes as you read each one.

### FICTION

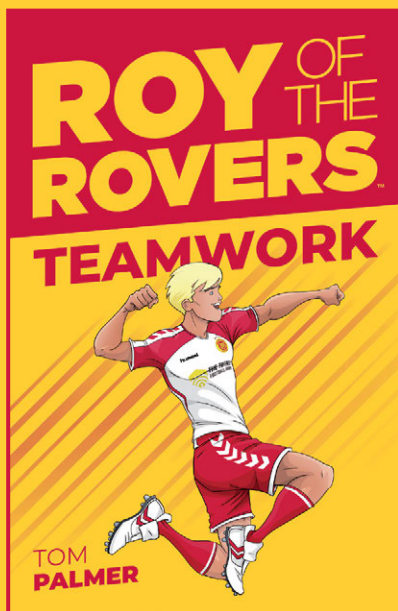


#### BOOK 1 **SCOUTED**

Author: Tom Palmer  
Out: October 2018  
ISBN: 978-1-78108-698-8

Roy Race is the most talented striker in Melchester – but is he good enough to catch the eye of the Melchester Rovers scouts?

**READ?**

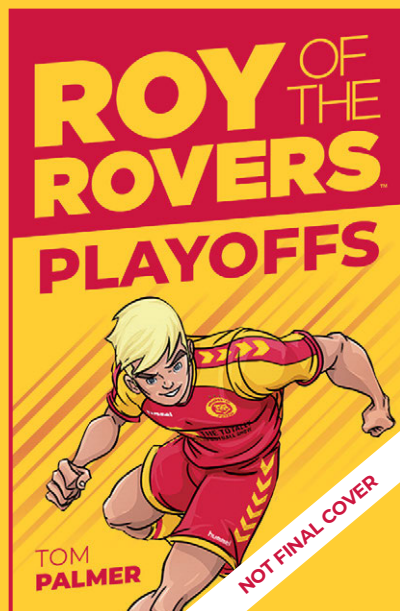


#### BOOK 2 **TEAMWORK**

Author: Tom Palmer  
Out: February 2019  
ISBN: 978-1-78108-707-7

Life gets tricky for Roy as he adjusts to life in the spotlight. Fortune and glory await, but can Roy juggle football, fame and family?

**READ?**



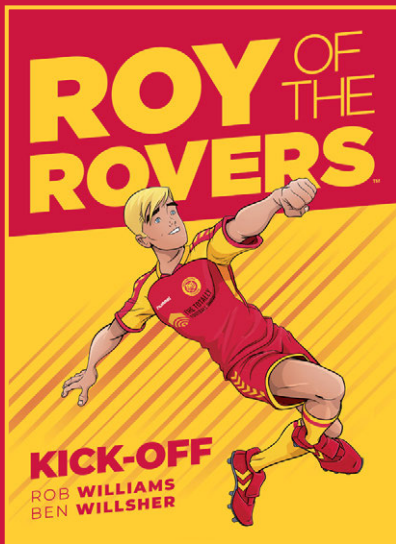
#### BOOK 3 **PLAYOFFS**

Author: Tom Palmer  
Out: May 2019  
ISBN: 978-1-78108-722-0

Crunch time for Rovers: the end of the season is here, the club is in deep trouble, and it's down to Roy to bring a bit of hope back to the Melchester faithful.

**READ?**

# GRAPHIC NOVELS

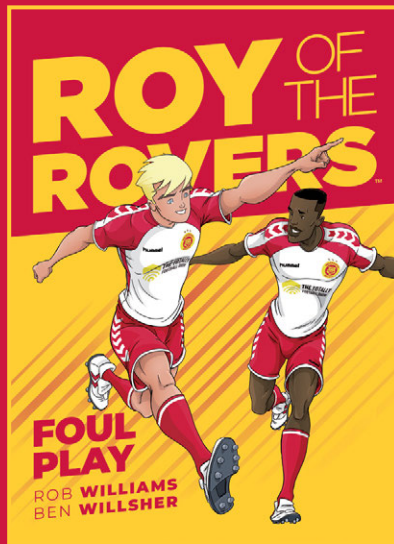


## BOOK 1 KICK-OFF

Writer: Rob Williams  
Artist: Ben Willsher  
Out: November 2018  
ISBN: 978-1-78108-652-0

Roy Race is 16, talented, and desperate to make it as a footballer. But is he good enough for Melchester Rovers? Now's the time to prove if he's got what it takes to become Roy of the Rovers.

READ?

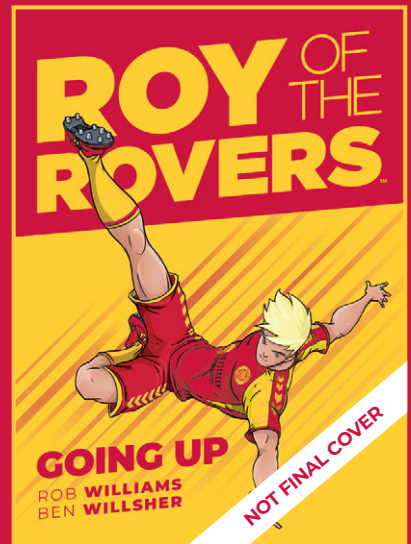


## BOOK 2 FOUL PLAY

Writer: Rob Williams  
Artist: Ben Willsher  
Out: March 2019  
ISBN: 978-1-78108-669-8

Roy picks up an injury that puts him on the sidelines, and suddenly there's competition for his place as a brand new - and brilliant - striker is brought in by the management...

READ?

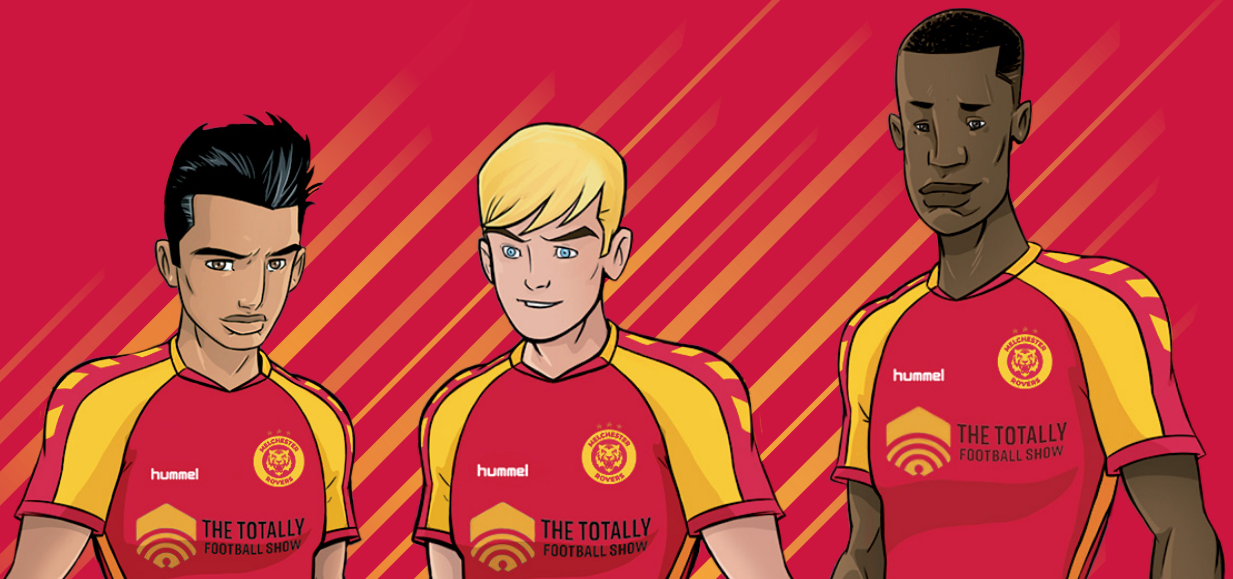


## BOOK 3 GOING UP

Writer: Rob Williams  
Artist: Ben Willsher  
Out: June 2019  
ISBN: 978-1-78108-673-5

Roy and the team have battled through a tough season, but have they got enough left to get promoted? Or will they fall at the final hurdle and see the club sold by its greedy owner?

READ?



# PLAYER INTERVIEW

## Introduce yourself

Hi, I'm Roy Race. I'm the new Melchester Rovers striker!

## Do you have a nickname?

At Melchester? Occasionally people call me Racey... same as at my old club Grimroyd.

## Who was your favourite team growing up?

I'm playing for them! My family have supported the Rovers since, like, forever! My Dad is Melchester's biggest fan and knows literally everything about the club and its incredible history.

## Who is the best player that you have played with?

So far, I couldn't pick one out of the Rovers side – they're all great. After trialling in goal for a bit though, I have a lot more respect for what Gordon Stewart has to do!

## Who is the best player that you have played against?

Hugo is pretty spectacular. I felt for our defense whenever he was in possession of the ball during our cup game against Tynecaster. He really is a different class.

## Do you have a pre-match routine?

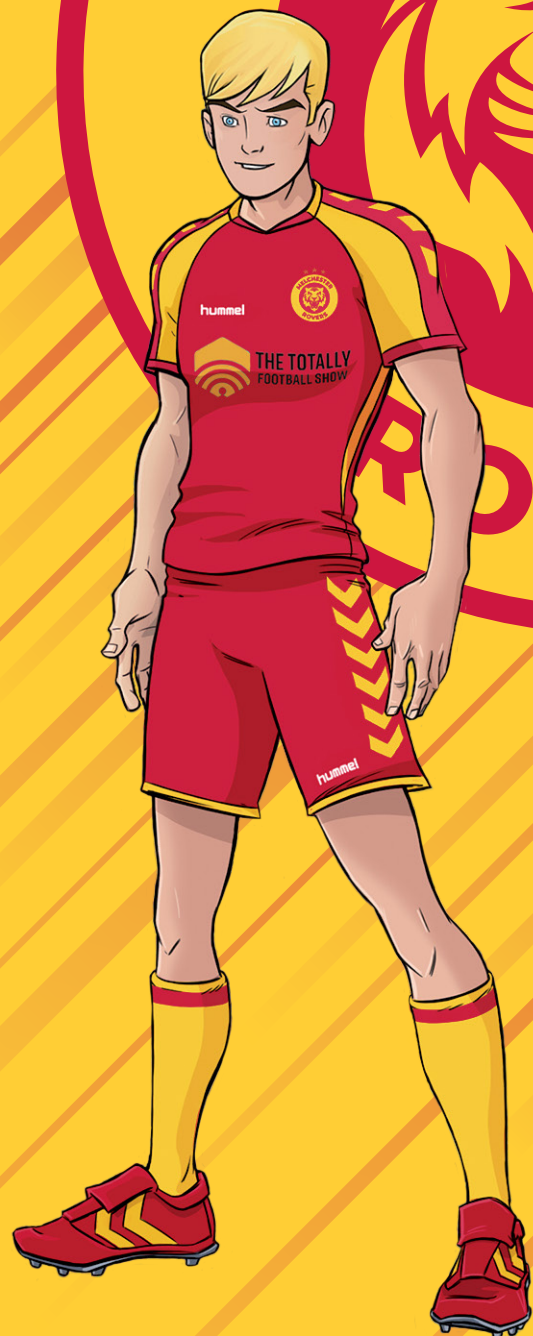
Before home games, I like to have breakfast with my Mum, Dad and sister Rocky, whilst wearing my favourite Melchester Rovers top.

## What's your advice to young players?

Wow! Well, I'm kind of still a young player myself, so I don't know really. I guess I would say never give up and keep on practising.

## What's your favourite social media network and why?

Instagram is cool... I've seen some great football clips on Snapchat as well.





# PLAYER INTERVIEW

## Introduce yourself

Lofty Peak. Defender.

## Do you have a nickname?

Yeah, Lofty.

## So what is your real first name?

It's not Lofty!

## Who was your favourite team growing up?

I'm a local, so Melchester Rovers. I'm also a big B-ball fan as well, so I should shout out to my boys the Melchester Swish.

## Who is the best player that you have played with?

My boy, Roy Race. Have you seen him shoot with that left foot? Devastating man! We call it Racey's Rocket on the training ground...

## Who is the best player that you have played against?

Ha! Hugo, no doubt. That guy made me tired man, he's quality.

## Do you have a pre-match routine?

Nah, not really. I listen to some music... get in the zone a bit, y'know?

## What's your advice to young players?

What, am I old now?!? I would say just keep playing. And remember to do some proper stretching exercises before starting a game. It's important to keep limber!

## What's your favourite social media network and why?

Twitter – keep it short and sweet man!







# A LEGEND REBORN!

Times are tough for Melchester Rovers. Languishing at the bottom of League Two, the once-proud powerhouse of British football is out of money and out of luck.

Sixteen-year-old Roy Race always dreamt of playing up front for Rovers. Oozing with natural talent and possessing a powerful left foot, Roy may just be the answer to all of Melchester's prayers.

Can Roy break into the Rovers first team and bring back the glory days of old? Or will the pressure of problems on and off the pitch prove too much for the young prospect?

The epic footballing saga begins here!

**REBELLION**



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