

Kev's joy as he hits first-ever hat-trick

VETERAN striker Kevin Gallen's long wait for a hat-trick finally ended on Monday.

Despite having played over 500 league games for six different clubs and scoring well over 100 goals, the 34-year-old forward had never netted a professional treble until he scored three in Saturday's 6-0 demolition of sorry Grays.

Gallen starred in the rout as daughters Sofia and Siena attended their first-ever game.

He said: "I was pleased they came. I've scored about 20 twos. So close so many times but it hasn't been. I'm over the moon. It's the first time my kids have come to see me play.

"I've been playing now professionally 15 and a half years, so it's a long time.

"I made my debut in 1994 and I don't think Jake Howells was even born then!

"I've got the ball signed by all the lads and there are a few comments that are unprintable about being old, etc."

Gallen may have got some congratulatory waves from the five and three-year-old girls, but he believes they were too busy playing on their Nintendo DS systems to see him

by Mark Wood

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make history.

And he was delighted with his first strike – a scintillating 25-yard shot into the top left-hand corner.

He explained: "I said to Keano (Keith Keane) I would have a shot here and he just grunted at me as usual.

"I said I'm going to have a pop and I'm glad I did. I was having a go at the ref anyway for pulling Jake up and I said afterwards good decision. It's a better strike than I scored against Kiddeminster."

Gallen also praised unselfish striker partner Tom Craddock who put the second on a plate for him, saying: "Tommy is great. He has great skill and is a great runner and keeps stretching the defences.

"He took a gamble on a long ball and got round the goalkeeper. It was great set up play and I'm enjoying playing with him."

And on his hat-trick strike, he said: "It was nice to score a header. I said to Tommy on the way back I think that's my first headed goal in two and a half years. To get a head-

er today is really good, I'm very pleased."

Gallen was full of praise for the way the Hatters played on the day and believes they are showing some great form, even if it did take a while for them to get into their groove against Grays.

He said: "I think we were looking at each other and looking for someone to do something rather than doing it as a team.

"Tommy has taken a gamble on a cross and it was a great goal-scorer's goal. We came off at 4-0 and it could have been a lot more.

"We need to get a few goals and six is good at any level.

"Eighteen goals in three home games is brilliant really."

And Gallen, who has 17 goals for the season, is now hoping to hit the 20-goal milestone, although he dismissed any talk of competing with Craddock for the top scorer spot.

He added: "I love playing. I love training. So it might be a few more goals before the end of the season. It's 37 goals between us this season, which is good going. My aim now is getting to 20. I'm not into competitions with Tommy."