**Thought for the Week:**

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<https://www.theguardian.com/football/the-agony-and-the-ecstasy/2018/may/25/football-league-play-offs-dowie-bouncebackability>

# Bouncebackability: a word coined for the play-offs that fits them perfectly

The best preparation a team can have for a play-off final is the experience of losing one the year before.

**I**ain Dowie coined the word bouncebackability in the 2003-04 season when describing how his [Crystal Palace](https://www.theguardian.com/football/crystalpalace) team had gone from the fringes of relegation in December to winning promotion through the play-offs in May. Not many managers have been responsible for adding words to the English lexicon but Dowie shared the honour with Sir Alex Ferguson in 2005 when both “squeaky bum time” and “bouncebackability” entered the Oxford English Dictionary.

It is fitting that Dowie came up with the word while discussing a side promoted in the play-offs, as bouncebackability has been remarkably common in so many sides who have won promotion in these showpiece finals. Of the 10 beaten finalists who have returned to the same fixture the next season, nine have succeeded second time around – and the only exception made amends a year later.

## **West Ham United: beaten finalists 2004, winners 2005**

While Wembley was being rebuilt, the play-offs finals moved to the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, which was the venue for the next comeback. Alan Pardew’s West Ham responded to the disappointment of losing 1-0 to Dowie’s bouncebackability team in 2004 by beating Preston with a single goal from Bobby Zamora.

This was redemption for Zamora as the previous year he had missed a clear-cut chance, had a goal ruled out for offside and was substituted soon after Palace took the lead. The 2005 final was only part of his redemptive story; Zamora also scored the only goal of the game nine years later when QPR beat Derby in the final to win promotion to the Premier League.