



**EXCLUSIVE by ROB MAUL**

**DAVID SEAMAN reckons two Premier League relegations helped cement Aaron Ramsdale's rise to become an England goalkeeper.**

Arsenal No1 Ramsdale is set to be rewarded for his excellent start to the season with a first England cap against San Marino in tonight's decisive World Cup qualifier.

Questions were asked by Arsenal fans when he was signed in August for £30million.

Many doubted the wisdom of recruiting a player who had experienced top-flight relegations with Bournemouth and Sheffield United in consecutive seasons. But legendary Gunners keeper David Seaman feels the stopper has been toughened up by recent adversity.

Seaman (*below*) told SunSport: "Aaron's biggest strength is his confidence and character. As a goalkeeper you need to be mentally tough. And he has got that.

"He has gone through tough relegations with both Bournemouth and Sheffield United.

"Everyone puts that out there as a negative towards him and I'm thinking, 'No. That's great experience.

"It's playing under proper pressure'. A relegation fight is the worst ever.

"I had it at Birmingham

in the 1980s – and it was horrible. You know you're going down a division. You know how it affects everyone, financially as well. That's big pressure.

"Aaron has played under that pressure. It's invaluable."

And Seaman was left in awe by Ramsdale's "technically brilliant" save in 2-0 win at Leicester last month.

The 58-year-old, who picked up nine major trophies with

Arsenal, often visits the club in a mentoring role and has spent time helping out Ramsdale.

He added: "The doubters were there at the start.

"I had the same when I joined the club in 1990.

"I took over from a fans' favourite in John Lukic. I told Aaron that story and he was like: 'That's brilliant. That's great to know'. It really clicked with him.

"He felt the pressure of what Arsenal fans were saying.

"But they are seeing what a quality keeper he is. They love him now."

But 75-cap Seaman feels that Jordan Pickford is still the main man for the Three Lions right now.

Although the likes of Ramsdale, Burnley's Nick Pope, West Brom's Sam Johnstone and Manchester United's Dean Henderson are "catching up" in the pecking order.

Seaman added: "It's great for England goalkeeping."

● **DAVID SEAMAN** is backing Football Shirt Friday on November 19 — the Bobby Moore Fund's national fundraising and awareness campaign.

This year's tagline is 'wear, share, donate'. Everyone is encouraged to take part by wearing their favourite football shirts, sharing a selfie and donating to tackle bowel cancer.





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St George's  
Park yesterday