



# touchline

News from League Football Education

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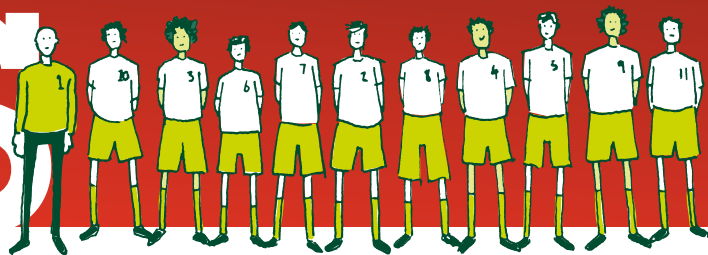


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# news



## FA Youth Cup 2009-10



The FA Youth Cup got underway early in September and with the preliminary round and first, second and third round qualifying already completed we can now look forward to seeing the Football League and Premier League Clubs joining the action.

The First Round proper is scheduled to be played by 7th November.

For further news, updates and results visit [www.lfe.org.uk](http://www.lfe.org.uk)

## Youth Alliance & Academy League Round-Up



Several teams have had a flying start to the Youth Alliance season. Preston North End who had amassed 39 goals in 11 fixtures (at the time of writing) look set to be pushed by Walsall, Wigan Athletic and Stockport County as they compete for the North West Conference Title.

Topping the table in the North East, Hull City will have to contend with the serious threat posed by York City and last years champions Chesterfield.

Bristol Rovers top the South West Conference and remain unbeaten while Colchester Utd have edged ahead of QPR and Southend in the South East.



In the Academy Leagues Leicester City's youngsters have enjoyed a fantastic start to the season and remain unbeaten in Group B.

Norwich City's U18s are also going well and sit in second place to Group A leaders Arsenal, a place ahead of local rivals Ipswich Town.

## Higher Education Applications Guide

LFE has once again produced an updated 'Guide to Higher Education Applications'. The Guide contains information that is relevant to Apprentice footballers who are considering applying for Higher Education courses in 2010.

It offers an insight into what factors to consider when applying for a Higher Education course, a full guide to the application process including Clearing and information regarding student finance and support.

The 2010 Guide is available now to download in PDF format from the LFE website in the 'Downloads' area, so if you are thinking about applying to University please make use of the Guide.



# It's your Newsletter

Got a story? Want to share news with other LFE partners?

This is your newsletter and we welcome any contributions from all Apprentices, Coaches, Clubs, Parents and Partners.

If you have a story, email : [ssutcliffe@lfe.org.uk](mailto:ssutcliffe@lfe.org.uk)

## Stakeholder Feedback

LFE would like to thank all stakeholders for their continued feedback through our online questionnaires.

The feedback we receive remains very positive and the results from the most recent feedback report are very pleasing.

With an 86% response rate overall, 96% of Apprentices rated the Apprenticeship programme as good or better and 83% rated Touchline newsletter as good or outstanding.

The response from Club staff was equally high at 92% overall, with 96% of Club staff rating Touchline newsletter as good or outstanding.

## Leonardo/Pre-Season Sweden Tours


The summer 2009 pre-season tours were hailed a success by all involved with a great deal of positive feedback received from the Clubs and players.

Barnsley triumphed in the LFE Invitational Cup along with two young Tykes receiving individual awards for Top Goal Scorer and Player of the Tournament.

LFE has now secured funding for the 2009/10 season for three Clubs to take part in the 2010 pre-season tours in Sweden.

Funding has also been awarded for individual player placements with Swedish Clubs which will allow us to fund twenty players in total for placements in March and May 2010.

## Apprentice of the Month

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Congratulations go to Ashley Palmer of Scunthorpe United as LFE's first Apprentice of the Month of the 2009-10 season.

Ashley is a regular in the Youth and Reserve teams and has featured in every game this season at both levels and his outstanding contributions for the reserves against Leeds United, Sunderland and Middlesbrough will not have gone unnoticed by Iron boss Nigel Adkins. As a first year Apprentice, Ashley has settled into the Club well, despite having to acclimatise himself to



the new experience of living away from home in digs provided by the Football Club.

As well as excelling at football, the young defender has displayed a great all round attitude and manner, demonstrating commitment to College and the educational elements since starting his Apprenticeship this summer.



# Bluebirds Youngster hitting the headlines

Joining the Club as an Apprentice in the summer of 2008, the Swansea born youngster has leapt to prominence this term after making tremendous strides during the first 12 months of his Apprenticeship.

Having had a taste of first team involvement as an unused substitute at Charlton Athletic (away) last season Matthews was keen for more of the same and the teenage full back did not have long to wait this term.

An injury to Paul Quinn (at Blackpool) saw Matthews make his debut for Cardiff City on the second weekend of the season and he followed that up by making his full debut the following Tuesday, when helping City record a 3-1 victory at Plymouth Argyle.

Cardiff City boss Dave Jones has since handed the youngster a regular starting berth in his first eleven and been rewarded by a string of impressive displays, a watershed moment coming when the Bluebirds travelled to meet Aston Villa in the Carling Cup and Matthews was faced with a head to head with current England international James Milner.

Speaking after the encounter, Jones, who had been keen to see how far his young protégé had developed, said; "We knew 12 months ago that we had a player in Adam, the question was how quickly he would progress.

"I said to Adam before he went out: 'Let's see how far you've come.

"He's been talked up well in Wales...and he's played against a top, full international player and he's done well against him."

The full-back subsequently started the next three league matches for the Bluebirds and registered his first goal for the Bluebirds courtesy of a 50-yard strike at Watford.

His rapid progress has not gone unnoticed at international level either, currently captain of the Wales U17's, Matthews had been earmarked to make his debut for Brian Flynn's U21s against Bosnia-Herzegovina last month until an injury sustained during a 4-0 win at Watford ruled him out.

Speaking on his season so far Matthews says: "Everything is going really well for me at the moment obviously being with the first team has been a fantastic experience but also a learning curve. I just want to do as well as I can each time I play but am equally keen to ensure I complete my education programme because it's importance and value for now and later in life cannot be understated."





# Brian Borrows talks coaching

**In a career of over 600 games that spanned some of the greatest changes in modern day British football history the PFA's newest regional coach, Brian Borrows has seen and done it all.**

A skilful defender, Borrows will be best remembered for a 12 year spell (1985 -1997) at Coventry City during one of the most successful eras in the Club's history but his time as a professional also saw him enjoy spells at Everton, Bolton Wanderers, Bristol City and Swindon Town.



Values such as commitment, discipline, hard work and a drive to learn were to form his belief system in his 19 years as a player and remain principles that he endorses today, so who could be better to impart knowledge and lead Apprentices through the L2 Coaching Certificate in a role of Coach Educator for the East Midlands.

Borrows admits that his career could have taken a different turn but for his perseverance as a young player at Everton, he says;

"I was rejected as a 16 year old at Everton but the Club allowed me and another young player, Steve McMahon, to continue to train with them. We weren't paid or anything but we did it because we felt we were good enough to earn a contract".

It was a determination and will to succeed which marked Borrows out from others in similar situations and eventually both him and McMahon were given contracts.

"Neither of us did badly out of the game but it could have been very different if we hadn't shown how committed we were to becoming professionals," says Borrows.

For Borrows coaching was a natural career progression but in those days it was by no means as accessible as it is to players today, something he recalls well;

"I did my first coaching badge in my late twenties with a team-mate, Kenny Sansom. The course was run over 6 weeks with a group of students from Coventry University. As you can imagine that brought its own difficulties and it certainly wasn't an easy environment to learn in for two current professional players".

With the PFA now delivering to Senior and Apprentice players alike, often at state of the art training facilities, Borrows believes that Apprentices should appreciate the coaching certificate for the openings it can provide;

"Apprentices have a great chance to get their first coaching badge early, this then opens up a coaching pathway, which can mean lots of opportunities to stay in the game. I know in my region both Derby County and Mansfield Town have employed former Apprentices as skills coaches".

The Level 2 Coaching award allows Apprentices the chance to work at an Academy/Centre of Excellence or within the Community department in order to log their 12 hours of coaching which Borrows sees as a mutually beneficial scenario;

"Apprentices and Clubs both benefit, the lads get the experience and ultimately the qualification while the Club can use them as examples to players at their younger age groups or as positive role models in the community. The more enlightened Clubs see this as a good opportunity with many realising that it can potentially be used to help mentor coaches they may one day need to call on."



# Progression keeps on moving...

As you might expect it's been a busy time for the Progression Team since the last edition of Touchline back in June but that's exactly why we're here.

Available all year round, the Progression Team has been busily working to ensure that opportunities and support is available to all current and ex Apprentices and we are proud to say that whatever your situation, our unique service is on hand to make a real difference and help you take the next step.

You may not be thinking beyond the end of your playing contract but it would be foolish to overlook the work that has already taken place in this area or not consider the Progression offerings already in the pipeline for late 2009 and well into 2010.

## The story so far....

Our Progression Partners have been keen to snap up the services of a number of former Apprentices following Progression 09 'The Careers Events' held in Sheffield and Reading.

**Chris Fower's** (Ex-Oxford United) 2009 – 2010 season will now be spent on the impressive Hartpury College campus where he is taking advantage of the

***“Joe Conkleton (Ex-Doncaster Rovers) is another to benefit from the myriad of associations that LFE continues to build.”***

combination of outstanding sports facilities, good grade football and a university education.

**Ciaron Barton** (Ex-Preston North End) moved quickly to top up his BTEC qualification within the ASE framework to take his place on Physiotherapy (BSc) at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). (Learn more about Ciaron's progress on page 12).

**Jo Harris** (Swansea City) has been even busier engaging with no less than three of LFE's Progression Partners.

Having acquired a gym qualification with Lifetime, the Solihull based youngster subsequently stepped into employment with Fitness First and he now has even greater goals on his radar as he attempts to combine his efforts

as a Goalkeeper in The Blue Square South with the challenge of becoming an Olympian via Pitch2Podium.

Currently awaiting the results from phase two testing at GB Cycling headquarters - The Velodrome, Harris will hope he has shown he has the potential to join the likes of Hoy, Wiggins, Cavendish and company! LFE will be keeping an eye out for his progress and will of course report back.

**Joe Conkleton** (Ex-Doncaster Rovers) is another to benefit from the myriad of associations that LFE continues to build. Conkleton has gone state-side after being offered a scholarship by Barry University, Miami but was aided in no small measure by E-Scout and the footage they shot and analysed of the Assessment Trials.





### Where Next?

The tracking and monitoring programme has now been completed and a number of e-campaigns will now be launched to pick up on opportunities that Ex-Apprentices have said they are keen to pursue.

Expect opportunities with Challenger and Major League Soccer Camps to rev up now that the recruitment season for coaches in the United States has started.

The Leonardo Da Vinci programme will once again provide a number of players with the chance to showcase their skills in Sweden, from March 2010 on funded placements.

Also clicking into gear are preparations for the 2010 careers events which will fall under the umbrella of 'Competitive Edge', an initiative run by LFE's Progression Brand and Jobsrev.

The Northern event will take place on 10th & 11th March 2010 at the Bolton Arena. The Southern event is scheduled to be held on 25th March 2010, venue tbc.

These elite events will give you the chance to meet all LFE's Partners and ensure that you're as well prepared as you can be to take your next step.

For more information call LFE's dedicated Progression Team on 0845 074 0561 or visit [www.progression09.com](http://www.progression09.com)



This provided head coach Steve McCrath with the chance to assess Conkelton in action despite not being present on the night.

E-Scout will be collecting footage throughout the season to offer an even wider range of analysed material to scouts across the world as LFE seek to pave the way for Apprentices to maximise their opportunities.

***“E-Scout will now be collecting footage throughout the season to offer an even wider range of analysed material to scouts across the world.”***

The Assessment Trials also saw **Billy McKenna** (Ex-Blackpool) find his way up the road to Scottish Premier League Club Heart of Midlothian. Hearts scout, John Murray, registered official interest in McKenna at the trials with LFE ensuring the official exchange of contact details. The rest as they say is history and we wish Billy every success north of the border.



# Wolves keep producing the right results



Scott Malone  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



David Davis  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



Danny Batth  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



For many at Wolverhampton Wanderers the 2008-09 season will go down as a vintage year.

The Wolves topped the Championship table to earn promotion to The Premier League after a five year absence, however, while Mick McCarthy's stars will rightly take the plaudits for putting the West Midlands Club back in the top flight, the Club's Academy has quietly been producing some excellent results of their own.

This summer saw the graduation of the Clubs 2007 Apprentice cohort of 11 players. The result, 11 full Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence Frameworks and 7 Professional contracts.

Of the seven who were rewarded with professional contracts all have shown promise; Defender and Reserve team captain Danny Batth is currently assisting Colchester Utd's quest to regain Championship football while David Davis has replaced Batth as Reserve team skipper to good effect.

Scott Malone has recently featured for England U19 in the UEFA Championship after returning from a loan spell at Ujpest FC, whom he helped to a runners-up spot in the Hungarian Championship while Ashley Hemmings will hope to add to his two first team appearances last term that will live long in the memory for him.

The young striker, made a dream debut for Wanderers, when coming off the bench as they clinched promotion at Barnsley. He then went on to appear during the Championship winning carnival at Molineux, that greeted the visit of Doncaster Rovers.

Sadly injury is currently slowing the progress of Kyle Bennett, Sam Winnell and Republic of Ireland U18 captain John Dunleavy, but all have shown enough to suggest that they have bright futures in front of them when they return from the sidelines.

**“It's a great achievement to get all eleven through the framework...”**

Nick Loftus - Education & Welfare Officer

John  
Wolve





Dunleavy  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



Sam Winnell  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



Kyle Bennett  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



Ashley Hemmings  
Wolverhampton Wanderers



### Life after football

The quartet who have left the Club are also making advancements as they move towards new career goals. Richard Wooley and Michael Wardle were supported by the Club when integrating an A Level programme into their Apprenticeship and both are now reaping the rewards after taking up places at University. Wooley is studying Economics at The University of Sheffield while his former team-mate Wardle is closer to home at The University of Birmingham studying Chemical Engineering.

Fabrice Kasiama has returned to Wolverhampton College who deliver the Club's BTEC provision to top up his qualification while playing for Stafford Rangers in the Blue Square North and James Davis is currently exploring football opportunities in mainland Europe.

Nick Loftus (Education & Welfare Officer) believes that the success of all eleven players is essentially down to hard work.

"It's a great achievement to get all eleven through the framework, obviously when recruiting, eleven players is a big number to

handle and can present its own problems, but all the lads had a fantastic work ethic which helped us no end."

"Take Wardle and Wooley they returned to their old schools to take A Levels and did the BTEC by distance learning while Scott Malone was still doing his college work when he was out in Budapest at the end of last season. Allied to that of course is the strong relationship we have with Wolverhampton College and other support partners which has allowed us to offer a flexible programme to cater for every eventuality".



# Improving the ASE experience

**Set up in 2006 to provide Clubs with an opportunity to invest in the delivery and support of the ASE programme, the fund will once again be in operation during the 2009–10 season.**

Last year LFE made payments to 72 Clubs which amounted to a total of £245,000 being reinvested in the ASE programme.

All Clubs are different and so are their needs, so Clubs utilised the fund for a variety of purposes. Some Clubs broke the general patterns and investments were made in such things as team building activities and psychology consultants. One such Club was Chesterfield who have just had the keys handed over for their new team bus!

Once again LFE was satisfied that the fund has been used in ways that have improved the ASE experience and we are confident that Clubs will continue this trend during 2009–10.

All documentation relating to the 2009-10 season Development Fund was sent to Clubs during the second week of October. The deadline for the Development Fund for the 2009–10 season will be 30th April 2010 so please ensure that you submit your applications before this date to maximise the funding available.

If you need any further help or advice in relation to the Development Fund or have any ideas on how the scheme could be developed in future years please do not hesitate to contact Alan Sykes on 0870 458 9250 or e-mail [asykes@lfe.org.uk](mailto:asykes@lfe.org.uk)



**“ Last year LFE made payments to 72 Clubs which amounted to a total of £245,000 being reinvested in the ASE programme ”**



# Outside the Box

## Making a Positive Contribution



With over 300 Apprentices participating in charitable or community based initiatives last season through

their Football Club's, LFE has produced 'Outside the Box - Making a Positive Contribution' materials to support Clubs currently engaging in this work and to provide those Clubs who are not, with a suggestive template of how this contact may take place.



Activities that took place last season varied across the country and by Club but Apprentice participation and support included key areas such as education, equality, health, and social inclusion.

Endorsed by The Football League Trust and The PFA, the materials all relate to the ASE framework, however their design represents an opportunity for further interaction



between community and youth departments while supplying Apprentices with the opportunity to increase their knowledge and awareness of the social responsibilities they will be encouraged to show on graduation to the professional ranks.

This type of work has the potential to lead to meaningful employment opportunities for Apprentices within community departments or centres of excellence, a point which has not been lost on Preston North End, who recently appointed former Apprentices Ash Higgins and Chris McGrail to the Club's Community Department working on 'The School's Football and Healthy Lifestyles programme' which is being run in partnership with the Primary Care Trust.

Speaking about the duo, Head of Youth, Dean Ramsdale, says:

"Chris and Ash both came through the ASE programme, which, in essence has given them the empirical knowledge to

go out and convey information about the body, diet, nutrition and general health in an easy and understandable way.

"Both were already working for me in the Centre of Excellence, coaching our young players, so I knew that they'd be a perfect fit for the Community Department. As soon as this opportunity emerged, I had no hesitation in recommending the lads to Gary Robinson (Community Manager) and they seem to have settled in really well."

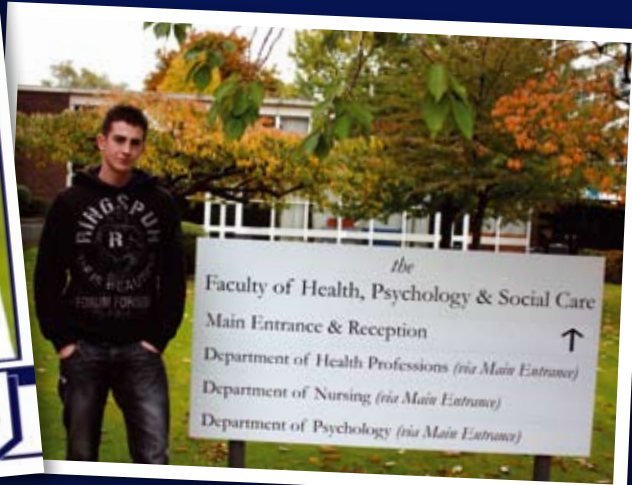
While the activities covered in this material are voluntary we hope that Club's and Apprentices are able to use the suggested ideas to make a positive impact.

### Contact us

*LFE is keen to highlight the excellent work conducted by Apprentices and Clubs where possible therefore we would ask Apprentices and Clubs to contact us if they undertake any community based activities during the season.*



# Ciaron heads to MMU



## Ciaron Barton has swapped football for physiotherapy after being released by Championship Club Preston North End in the summer.

The youngster has started down the track to a new career by enrolling on a BSc in physiotherapy at LFE progression partners Manchester Metropolitan University. Having joined the hordes of freshers/undergraduates starting university life in the student capital of the UK, Barton insists he has no regrets but is happy to be embarking on a fresh new challenge after completing his Apprenticeship. He says;

"I was understandably disappointed when I found out I wouldn't be getting a contract to stay at the Club but thankfully other doors have

opened for me because I've done the Apprenticeship at North End. This is very much an opportunity for me to carve out a new career that may or may not still see me involved in sport".

Barton however, admits that the origins for his choice of course come from his time spent at a Football Club and in particular on the treatment table:

"I was injured a lot when I was at Preston so you could say my interest developed from there - probably because I was in the treatment room so much I'd ask questions about things and while some players aren't that bothered about the intricacies of injuries I was fascinated by the rehabilitation process and management of injury."

The youngster made his decision to apply for the course in May after learning he was not going to be offered a pro contract and quickly set about completing an additional six BTEC units to convert his National Certificate in to a Diploma to meet entrance requirements. With an invitation from

Dean Ramsdale (Head of Youth) to link back into the Club to further his practical experience Barton seems ready for the challenges that lie ahead of him. He said;

"It's early days but it's already obvious that this course is a step up from what I was doing last year at college, that said, I feel confident that adapting won't be a problem. Dean has also been really supportive and told me that I can come back in at any time to gain some practical experience at the Club which will help me out no end especially as there is a placement aspect to the course."



# Meet Ian Smithson

## Regional Officer

Born in Watford, Ian's early school life was spent at Watford Boys Grammar school where he became an avid sports fan and tried his hand at a variety of sports including Cricket, Rugby, Cross Country and of course Football.

Affectionately nicknamed 'Smithers' by his friends, Ian enjoyed his early schooling before moving north to complete a degree in Sports Science at Liverpool John Moore's University.

After 3 years of study he moved into employment in an investment office, but his keen interest in sport saw him return to University to study a PGCE in Physical Education at Loughborough. On graduation he secured his first teaching position at Finchley All Boys Catholic Grammar School where he taught PE for over 6 years, combining teaching with other responsibilities such as being Head of Year and football coaching.

During his time teaching he also undertook a part time sports injuries diploma, and it was through this qualification that he began working for Watford Football Club. Initially working as a part-time Physio within the youth department; his role developed to include coaching and refereeing.

As his role increased at the Club a full time position became available in the youth department. This combined his skill as a teacher and his love of the game, and the role of Education and Welfare Officer provided him with a new, exciting challenge.

During his time at the Academy Ian worked with the likes of Ashley Young, (Aston Villa and England). Having successfully operated as the Club's Head of Education, Ian decided it was time for a change and in 2005 after 5 successful years, he joined LFE as a Regional Officer to replace the outgoing Jack Burket, when the long serving former West Ham Utd defender moved into retirement.

Perfectly suited to the role through his vast educational and football experience Ian made light work of this transition and is now in his fourth year of service at LFE.

Covering a large London and South West patch he has responsibility for dealing with education and welfare issues across 8 Clubs and over 70 Apprentices and has a better insight than most about the role education has to play in the modern game.

A keen advocate of education he offers all Apprentices the same key advice, "Always have a plan B, keep one eye on the future. You never know where you might end up so make the most of every opportunity both on the pitch and also in the classroom."

Away from football Ian's enthusiasm for sport is epitomised by his respect for Athletes such as Usain Bolt and Lance Armstrong while he cites his proudest personal sporting achievement as managing to complete the 2002 London Marathon in a respectable sub 4 hour time.

# Billy wins the Heart of Midlothian

**Former Blackpool Apprentice, Billy McKenna is enjoying a new start in the Scottish Premier League thanks to LFE's Assessment Trials.**

The 18 year old striker, who was released by the Tangerines at the end of his Apprenticeship made the move to Heart of Midlothian in the summer after impressing Scout John Murray at LFE's end of season Assessment Trials in Bradford.

A successful trial spell followed during pre-season before Billy penned a one year deal with the Jambo's but he believes the skills he honed at Blackpool will stand him in good stead.

"I'm really happy to have signed a professional contract with Hearts, because they're such a high-profile Club," Billy says.

*"I know it's a really big step up for me to make from being an Apprentice at Blackpool in the Championship, to trying to become a first team player at Hearts in the SPL, but I know that my Apprenticeship has given me the skills I need to succeed."*

"I improved my game technically and tactically in my two years at Bloomfield Road and I gained an NVQ a BTEC qualification and my Level 2 Coaching certificate in to the bargain."

While Billy is keen to make the most of his latest opportunity he has retained an eye on the future just in case things don't go as planned, he says:

"I know that I've got a fantastic opportunity at Hearts, but I'm also aware that I'll have to do something when I finish as a footballer.

"Personally, I can't imagine a career that doesn't involve football, so becoming a coach would be an ideal choice, I've already made a start thanks to ASE but I'm definitely looking to move on and cross the next bridge which would be to become qualified at UEFA B standard".





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