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Issue 12 - August 2010  
News from  
League Football Education

# London

In this issue: Assessment Trials | Club Profile - Millwall FC | Pre-season Tours



# London with new start



LFE is a partnership between The Football League and The Professional Footballers' Association.



Skills Funding Agency

Department for Business Innovation & Skills







# Youth Alliance & Academy League Round-Up

**Congratulations go to Queens Park Rangers who took home the silverware in the Youth Alliance Cup (2009-10).**

The final at Loftus Road provided nail-biting action as QPR atoned for last season's heartbreak by coming back from the brink against ten-man Stockport County to be crowned champions winning 4-3.

At the same stage of the Cup twelve months ago, QPR let victory slip through their fingertips by slumping to a 2-1 defeat to Grimsby Town. But Rangers came back from 3-1 down to clinch their first ever victory in the competition.

In the Academy League Leicester City took the title in Group B with an exceptional unbeaten run throughout the season, winning 22 and drawing only 6 games to finish an impressive 16 points clear of second placed Tottenham.

In Group D Nottingham Forest edged past Sunderland to finish in 1st place after an eventful season. A win over Leicester City in the Academy League Play-Off semi finals, meant Forest faced Arsenal in the final but the Reds were beaten 5-3 despite an early goal from Danny Elliot.

With the season almost upon us teams are now busily putting the final touches to their preparations ahead of the big kick-off on 14th August.



## Youth Alliance Honours 2009-10 Season

**North West Conference**  
Winners Preston North End  
Runners-Up Rochdale

**North East Conference**  
Winners Hull City  
Runners-Up York City

**South West Conference**  
Winners Swindon Town  
Runners-Up Bristol Rovers

**South East Conference**  
Winners Millwall  
Runners-Up Brighton & Hove Albion



# Stakeholder Feedback



*LFE would like to thank all stakeholders for their continued feedback from questionnaires throughout the season.*

The feedback we receive is vital in enabling LFE to make judgements about the quality of provision and the continuous improvement of the ASE programme.

The results from feedback provided last season was very positive and response rate for the most recent questionnaire, On & Off the Job Training & Communications, was over 70%.

97% of Apprentices gave an overall score of 'good or better' for the Apprenticeship programme and 100% of Club staff scored the same question as 'good or better'.

# Leonardo Funding

**LFE has successfully been awarded funding for next season from the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme.**

This will allow LFE to offer Clubs and Apprentices two different opportunities: an on-programme Pre-Season Tour and an off-programme Player Placement programme.

Both opportunities provide a fantastic chance for Apprentices to experience European training facilities

and techniques. Being part of an environment where the values of conditioning, psychology, speed and technique are paramount will also provide immense value to all involved.

Those involved in the projects will also be given the chance to experience social and cultural practices within a European setting which is also key to widening the horizon of opportunity that is open to them.

Turn to page 12 for this year's Pre-Season Tour feature, and page 17 for to see Thomas Burgin talk about life in Sweden.







# England U17's & U19's



Goals from Andre Wilson (Liverpool) and Connor Wickham (Ipswich Town) proved enough to see off Spain 2-1 in the final in Vaduz, Liechtenstein. In an absorbing match the young Lions came from behind to deny their Spanish counterparts who were being watched in the stands by their full squad.

The highly-rated Wickham sealed victory early in the second half with a sweet finish after a powerful run. Middlesbrough Apprentice Bruno Pilatos and West Bromwich Albion youngster George Thorne also played their parts as the Lions secured their first age-group title since 1993.

England's U19's could not emulate the achievements of their younger counterparts after falling 3-1 to Spain in the semi-finals of the European U19 Championships.

The U19's had hoped to go one better than last year when they reached the final only to fall at the final hurdle to a strong Ukraine side.

After a 3-2 win in their opening group game against Austria, a 0-1 reverse in the penultimate group fixture against Holland left the Young Lions with it all to do against host nation France who had hit nine in their first two matches. And with the French leading 1-0 it looked curtains for England until Wycombe's Matt Phillips popped up with an injury time equaliser to send Noel Blake's men through to the semi-finals as group runners up.

Unfortunately for Blake and an England team containing Declan Rudd (Norwich City) and Nathaniel Clyne (Crystal Palace) that was where the journey ended. Their dreams of becoming European Champions dashed by an impressive Spain team, whose opening goal in the 3-1 defeat of the Lions, came ironically from a player based in England, Liverpool's Daniel Pacheco.

But despite the defeat Head Coach Noel Blake insisted it was not all doom and gloom, he said:

"We came here with a couple of objectives, firstly to get to the World Cup Finals and we've achieved that and then to get out of the group stages and we've achieved that.

"Another one was to go all the way, we've just fallen a bit short but to finish in the last four of any major tournament is credible.

"When this campaign began, there were 52 nations involved and we made the last four, so that's something to be celebrating."



Got a story? Want to share news with other LFE partners?  
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## Video Analysis Software Training

### LFE & E-Scout recently teamed up to support training sessions for Club staff on video performance analysis.

LFE & E-Scout recently teamed up to support training sessions for Club staff on video performance analysis. This came after LFE had received the backing of its board (The Football League & The Professional Footballers' Association) to supply all clubs engaging on ASE with performance analysis equipment & software.

Having originally secured Learning Innovation Grant funding to account for equipment for just over 30 football clubs, LFE obtained board approval to source equipment for all club's when it became known just how great the demand for the equipment was.

The resources which allow Club staff and Apprentices to break down matches and training

to improve performance fall into LFE's drive to help Clubs adopt and explore new ways of applying technology within delivery of the ASE programme.

Speaking after a training day at LFE HQ at the end of June, Mark Jules from Chesterfield said: "I found the day very informative and very interesting. We're always looking for other learning tools and ways to improve the players so this is ideal in terms of a learning process and it

will definitely add value to the programme." Also at the event, Bradford City Head of Youth, David Wetherall added:

"The day's been very beneficial, it's a great tool for us as a Youth department and especially for the players. What I like about video analysis is it takes opinion out of it – looking back on the video it's there for all to see, it's fact, it's not opinion anymore and that can only help with player development."





# Smith's summer in South Africa



Action Images/ITFC

“

I'm proud to have represented New Zealand on the world stage though and to have remained unbeaten in the competition.

”



While most players were spending their summers on a beach or simply recharging their batteries in preparation for pre-season training Ipswich Town's Tommy Smith was doing battle with some of the World's best at the World Cup in South Africa.

Now 20, Smith graduated from the Tractor Boys Apprenticeship programme two summers ago and is hoping that his World Cup exploits can help him pin down a spot in Roy Keane's first team next season.

The Kiwis drew all three of their group games in South Africa but despite losing out on a spot in the last 16, Smith was pleased by his efforts for the All Whites.

"Playing in the World Cup has been a great experience. I've got mixed emotions about it because I'm disappointed that we didn't take that extra step and get into the next round.

"I'm proud to have represented New Zealand on the world stage though and to have remained unbeaten in the competition.

"I think what we achieved will be massive boost for the sport in New Zealand. Football has forever been a long way behind rugby in the popularity stakes but with us doing reasonably well, the whole country has stood up and taken notice of the sport.

"More and more kids are taking up football and that can only be good for the development of the game in New Zealand".

A student on and off the pitch (Smith got straight Distinctions on his BTEC National Diploma) Smith is now hoping his summer school at the World Cup can help him further his Ipswich career, he added:

"For me personally, I think playing in the World Cup has improved me as a player and I hope that will help me to establish myself in the Ipswich side."



# Second Chance

## LFE's Assessment Trials have once again proved to be a hit with players and scouts and that's official.

A record 270 players and 140 scouts attended this year's trials - held at Adams Park, The Banks' Stadium, Valley Parade and MMU Cheshire. And with over 70 per cent of players attending attracting scout interest the statistics speak for themselves.

Featured by Sky Sports News amongst others, the trials kicked-off as the sun set on Wycombe's home ground but the football on show soon illuminated proceedings in front of the on-looking scouts, camera's and photographers.

With players eager to impress, the games were played at high tempo fused with technical quality and skill which was complimented by a unique competitive edge that was noticeable to all in attendance.

With the intensity and skill levels replicated at the three remaining venues, scouts were left drooling by the quality of the product and were keen to register their interest early in the players that had caught their eye.

Speaking after the final event at MMU, LFE Chief Executive Alan Sykes insists the trials are going from strength to strength.

*"The amount of interest in players attending this year's trials is a testimony to the quality of the players completing the Apprenticeship programme. It is a fantastic source of talent for scouts, while for the players it is a second chance to succeed in the game or move on to play a good standard of football while continuing their education in the UK or abroad."*

The standard was top class - the quality was good and that competitive element was really good to see. Bringing players like this to our university gives us credibility - you're talking about ex players who have played at an elite level.

Nigel Deeley (MMU)



[twitter.com/LFEonline](https://twitter.com/LFEonline)  
[www.lfe.org.uk/progression/trials](http://www.lfe.org.uk/progression/trials)



BACKING: Dan Jolley

### HELPING HAND FOR THE REJECTS

HUNDREDS of young players are cast on the scrapheap at the end of their apprenticeships with League clubs.

Family and friends are left to pick up the pieces, but League Football Education also play a vital role.

A partnership between the Football League and the Professional Footballers' Association, LFE manage the apprenticeship programme at Football League clubs.

Ironically, it can be when teenagers are told they have no future at their club that they need LFE most. The organisation put on the assessment trials to give rejected youngsters the chance to showcase their skills and look at a variety of options for them.

LFE project manager Dan Jolley said: "Of the 600 apprentices who finish their second year, about 60 to 65 per cent won't be offered a professional contract. We've got to try to find employment in football, educational opportunities or other training for these players."

"The assessment trials are the key element of the football pathway and we do them so semi-professional clubs can assess them. There's only so much room in the professional game and it's vital we look at Non-League. That's our prime target audience."

"One or two of these lads may secure professional contracts, but the vast majority will be in semi-professional employment."

It may not even be who they impress on the trial nights as film footage is put on line.

Jolley added: "It's important options are spread as wide as possible. We look at coaching qualifications, football scholarships that offer an academic route and football placements in Europe. We had 18 players go to Sweden last year."



Wallsall trials



I know that I am good enough to be a professional footballer, it's just getting that break - it didn't work out at Charlton but hopefully it'll work out elsewhere.  
Liam Bellamy (Ex Charlton Athletic)



Bradford trials

We still think at this age that you can still sign players that might not be what other Clubs want but you can develop and bring through the system  
Mark Stow (Watford)



CRUNCH: Players fight for the ball in last Tuesday's assessment trials at Wycombe  
Inset: Dan Jolley  
PICTURES: Barry Maden

There's a lot of Clubs watching so hopefully someone will see something in you and take you onboard  
Shane Cusack (Ex Colchester Utd)

## Giving players options

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so much room in the professional game and it's vital we look at Non-League.

"One or two of these lads may go on to secure professional contracts, but the vast majority will be in semi-professional employment."

"It's important the options for the players are spread as wide as possible. We look at coaching qualifications, football scholarships that offer an academic route and also have placements in Europe."

"Whether it's the Glenn Hoddle Academy in Spain, a club in Sweden or US scholarships, we're happy as long as its helps our apprentices as players and as individuals."





# Lion's Roaring Success

The spring of 2010 was about as good as it gets for Millwall FC. Either side of the first team winning the play-off final at Wembley to reach the Championship, the youth team won the South East Division of the Football League Youth Alliance and seven of the eleven graduates from the ASE programme signed professional contracts.

Strangely, not all of those were at Millwall. Centre-back Chris Hegarty and his Northern Ireland international team-mate goalkeeper Wayne Drummond, both joined Scottish giants Rangers, while left-back Danny Fitzsimmons joined London rivals QPR and central midfielder Kemil Tevfik joined his Turkey Under-18 colleagues in Turkey's top flight when he moved to Supa Lig side Bucaspor, who are based in Izmir.

Three others: strikers John Marquis and Kiernan Hughes-Mason plus midfielder Jimmy Rodgers, all signed pro forms for the Lions. The other four second-year Apprentices were all pursuing other career paths:

one re-training at college, another hoping to go to university, one considering a scholarship in the United States and the fourth coaching and having trials for a League Two Club. All in all not a bad crop for youth team boss Scott Fitzgerald to produce. "We had eleven second years here which is a large number for any Club but the lads were phenomenal in terms of their character and attitude everyday in the Club. They had a great attitude for the game and deserved the success they got last year. It was disappointing that we couldn't take more on as professional's here but it does show that if you work hard and make a success of your Apprenticeship you can go on to play at other Clubs or move in new career directions".

A 3-0 victory at Southend United and a surprise defeat for eventual runners-up Brighton and Hove Albion in the penultimate league fixture clinched the title for Millwall, with the added bonus for Fitzgerald of being able to blood several of his Under-16 players in the last few games. Defender Jake Goodman, midfielders Luke Kingsmill and Dylan Richards and striker Aiden O'Brien were among the incoming Apprentices to get opportunities at the end of last season.

With only six Apprentices now starting their second year, there will be a new look about the Lions this season and their league triumph will be hard to match.

But they are expecting to equal last year's record of 100% full ASE framework achievements and positive destinations for all of their graduating scholars.

"Orpington College have done an excellent job delivering the BTEC element of the programme and this year they are providing all the education for Millwall," explained the Club's RO Gavin Willacy. "Mark Hammond, the tutor at Orpington, has produced great results and I'm sure this year will be no different given the calibre of student he has to work with. Mark's been well mentored by the vastly experienced Joe Francis, and they work very closely with Scott at the Club."

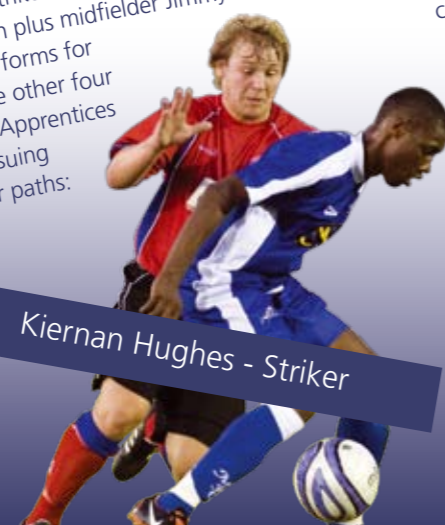
While Millwall's promotion has enabled them to increase the number of staff working in their youth system, it will make graduating to the first team more difficult. However, Kenny Jackett's squad is filled with players who have either come through the youth ranks at Millwall, such as Alan Dunne,

Paul Robinson and or completed their Apprenticeships at other Football League Clubs – such as Mark Laird (an Apprentice at Northampton), Chris Hackett from Oxford United and Lewis Grabban (ex Crystal Palace) – and progressed up the pyramid to Championship level. Star striker Steve Morison was released by Northampton Town and worked his way back up via Bishop's Stortford and Stevenage, while Club legend Neil Harris made his breakthrough with non-League Cambridge City. So there is hope for everyone!

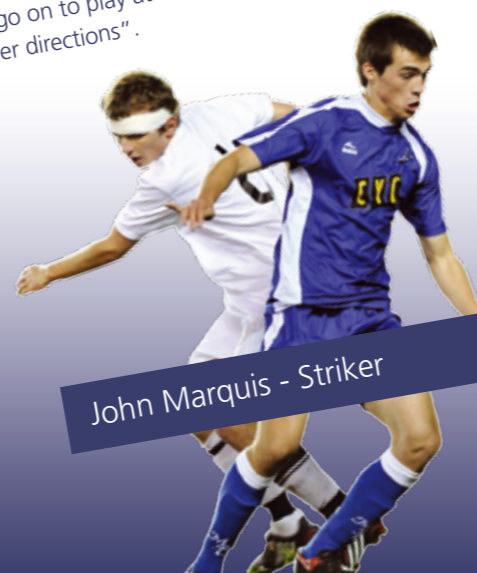
 [www.millwallfc.co.uk](http://www.millwallfc.co.uk)



Jimmy Rogers - Midfielder



Kiernan Hughes - Striker



John Marquis - Striker



Wayne Drummond - Goalkeeper



Chris Hegarty - Centre-back



Danny Fitzsimmons - Left-back







# LEONARDO

[www.lfe.org.uk/progression/leonardo](http://www.lfe.org.uk/progression/leonardo)  
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After last year's successful pre-season tour to Sweden LFE teamed up with three top Dutch Clubs for this season's tour with Apprentices from Aldershot Town, Crystal Palace and Huddersfield Town the beneficiaries.

The tour which was designed to enhance the Clubs pre-season training regimes saw the Apprentices take up temporary residence at Feyenoord, FC Utrecht, Vitesse Arnhem and the KNVB facility close to Amsterdam.

Running from the 19th – 31st July players were given the opportunity to train at top class facilities and sample a different football and cultural environment. With specialist sessions being put on by the KNVB and fixtures between themselves and Qatar U19 national team to add a competitive thrust the tour has been well received by players and Club staff.

Dan Jolley, project manager at LFE, says: "This is the second year we've been awarded funds for our 'Leonardo Life Long Learning' programme, which is very encouraging on two levels. Not only is it recognition that our objectives are strongly aligned with those of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme's to exchange best practice between European nations, increase staff expertise and develop learners' skills, but it also allows us to support young English football talent and take the work we already do as an organisation to an even greater level.

"53 of our Apprentices made the trip out to Holland and the experience has been beneficial on a professional and cultural level."

*"The thing that impressed me the most, apart from the friendliness of the people, are the facilities. Every amateur Club seems to have facilities that even some of the professional Clubs in England don't have. Feyenoord have access to about ten grass and four astro-turf pitches on this site. They should never have to train on a poor surface."*  
**Gary Issott, Crystal Palace, Youth Team Manager.**

*"What a great experience all round – training with a coach like Rob Witschge (Ajax) was superb. The guy was Marco Van Basten's assistant with the Dutch national team a few years ago and you can't help but listen and learn when someone like that is passing on their knowledge to you."*  
**Adam Mekki, Aldershot Town, Apprentice.**

*"The facilities, the food, the people have all been first class. Our first week at Vitesse was excellent, we got some really good work in and that then prepared us for the games in the 2nd week which were over at the equally impressive KNVB facility. A tour like this adds a great deal of value to the programme we run and I'd like to thank LFE for putting this all together."*  
**Graham Mitchell, Huddersfield Town, Academy Manager.**







The Vuvuzelas have stopped blowing.  
The La Furia Roja finished celebrating.  
Yet for the PFA Coaches who went  
to the World Cup the memories are  
still vivid.

WORLD CUP

[www.givemefootball.com](http://www.givemefootball.com)

Andy Barlow, Brian Borrows, Phil Church and Jamie Robinson had the opportunity of a lifetime out in South Africa. Seeing the talents of Lionel Messi and Gonzalo Higuain, Kaka and Luis Fabiano and Mesut Ozil and Thomas Muller captivate the crowds was a great experience.

Yet for all the coaches the underlying reason for going out was to broaden their own knowledge of the game as Brian Borrows explains: "It was fantastic to be given the chance to get out to South Africa and see that talent out on the pitch. But equally important was seeing the pre match warm up, the team shape as the game ebbs and

flows, the tactical switches that can turn a match. You just can't see that so easily on the television". It's precisely this kind of knowledge and understanding that made the trip so worthwhile as Phil Church says; "This sort of information is a priceless asset to have and one that can really enhance a coaching course. It's something

the PFA Coaching Department are always keen to try and do. In a number of tasks on the L2 Coaching course we can use these experiences to show Apprentices how it can improve them as coaches and players". It's a theme that Andy Barlow is happy to endorse: "We hope the Apprentices really enjoy our coaching courses but we also want them to go away with a real understanding of the game.

If we can use the examples of Messi, Kaka and the rest to make that happen then so much the better". For Jim Hicks Head of Coaching at the PFA this kind of experience is invaluable: "We want to be at the cutting edge of coach education. The world game is changing at such a pace that we need to see at first hand these developments and consider how we are going to apply them on our coaching courses for the benefit of all".



Learn from the success of the Development Fund



Set up in 2006 over £850,000 has now been made available to football Clubs through the LFE development fund to provide Clubs with an opportunity to invest in the delivery and support of the ASE programme.

During the last 4 years Clubs have used the fund in a variety of ways to enhance their programmes and the Apprentice Journey. Expenditure has included laptops, video cameras, performance analysis equipment, heart-rate monitors, smart boards, outward bound days, tours and even mini-buses. The Development Fund will once again be in operation during the 2010/11 season but with new criteria which will include the need for Clubs to have laptops available for Apprentices. By the end of the 2010/11 season the minimum requirement will be for all Clubs have acquired one laptop for every two Apprentices on programme. By the end of the 2011/12 season, Clubs will be expected to have obtained one laptop for each Apprentice on programme.

LFE will also expect Clubs with in-house provision to utilise the fund to fill any gaps in resources or equipment. Clubs should not commit to spending without prior authorisation from LFE.

Should you require 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 :

Contact information for Alan Sykes: Phone 0870 458 9250, Email asykes@lfe.org.uk

# Midnight Sun shining on Burgin in Sweden

Central Defender Thomas Burgin could've been forgiven for thinking he had been prematurely placed on the football scrap heap at the tender age of 18. Released by Rotherham United last summer, the teenage defender was scraping a living as an odd job man, labourer, construction worker, you name it he did it!

Disillusioned with football the youngster initially had no intention of playing again - however slowly but surely his love of the game came back and he was persuaded to turn out for local Central Midlands League Club Sutton Town some seven divisions below League Two.

Having rekindled some desire to play again, Burgin then received an e-mail from LFE that offered him the chance to make a new start in a new country. The correspondence of course related to LFE's player placement programme funded by Leonardo that aims to place ex Apprentices and first year professionals with a Club in Europe for period of 8-16 weeks.

The opportunity in this instance was with Swedish Division Two Club, Sollefteå GIF and Burgin jumped at the chance, he recalls:

"It was really simple, I received an e-mail from LFE which was of interest, I followed it up and Sarah Stonehouse from LFE's Progression team did all the groundwork for me in terms of sorting out travel, expenses, accommodation etc. From the point of my e-mail it took me no more than 4 weeks to get out there and while it took me some time to settle it's all coming together now."

Hailed as a revelation by fans, he has not looked back since joining Sollefteå in March and has been a key performer for the Club who now top the Swedish Second Division. While the youngster admits he would one day love to return to England, he is for now, happy to concentrate on his football in Sweden, he said:

A collage featuring a photo of Thomas Burgin playing football, a handwritten note with a quote from him, and a Swedish postage stamp with an 'AIR MAIL' label. The note reads: 'I'm just going to enjoy my football here and see if I can help the Club gain promotion this year. We're at the top of the table so I hope we can see the job in hand through. I've already got a deal on the table for me to stay at the Club next year but equally I've also had offers from teams in the next division up and the one higher than that which is the equivalent to the Championship in England. I can't thank LFE enough for helping me get out to Sweden it's done me the world of good and definitely broadened my horizons. It's helped me massively in terms of rebuilding my confidence and the people over here are unbelievable, the town probably only has a population of 10,000 - 15,000 so you do tend to get recognised by people and well looked after. I can't remember signing this many autographs when I was in Rotherham's reserves anyway'.

Thomas Burgin



check out  
[www.lfe.org.uk](http://www.lfe.org.uk)

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Joe Conkleton

# WELCOME TO MIAMI

Joe Conkleton insists he has no regrets about football as he comes to the end of his first year at Barry University in Miami. The former Doncaster Rovers Apprentice upped sticks from his Derbyshire home last summer to head to the American city popularised by fictional detectives Sonny Crockett and Rico Tubbs in the cult 1980's TV show Miami Vice.

And while he might not have adopted the Italian suit jacket, white linen pants, slip-on sockless loafers or yet be driving a Ferrari Daytona, Conkleton has settled in to a new way of life and is confident that his career is travelling in the right direction.

He said: "After the disappointment of leaving Doncaster this is the sort of life change that gives you an immediate lift. I've had a great first year here and am now looking forward to starting the new academic year and playing football once the season starts up again. Everyone here has been great with me and I can't stress how fantastic this opportunity is."

Spotted after taking part in LFE's Assessment Trials last year, Conkleton is now studying for a degree in sport management with business but is keen to retain a link with the past:

"Ideally I'd like to work in sport and I haven't entirely ruled out coaching in the future after my experiences at Doncaster and why would I, I enjoyed my Apprenticeship immensely.

"The highlight would definitely be meeting so many new people, playing with and against good professional players and doing something I love every single day; not many people can say that. Times change though and you move on, it's great out here in Miami and in many ways I have landed on my feet but I would urge anyone considering coming out to the States to do plenty of research, you need to find a university and a course that fits for you, if you do that you've got one hell of a back-up plan".

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