

Transfer

Inside: International View | The Tour Trilogy | Big Money Moves | Reece James



BIG MOVERS

Academy League Round-up

Touchline reviews the opening weeks of the Under-18 season and reports on the early high-flyers for each regional league.

With four matches down in the North West Youth Alliance, **Burnley**, **Tranmere Rovers** and **Walsall** remain unbeaten but it is the Saddlers who occupy top spot courtesy of Levi Rowley's one goal per game strike rate.

At the other end of the M62, in the North East, **Lincoln City** and **Scunthorpe United** have set the early pace with seven points from three matches. Both share a goal difference of plus two.

Elsewhere **Swindon Town** have kicked-off with a bang. The Robins boast a 100 per cent record and have scored a staggering 20 goals in four matches so far.

Over in the South East, **Peterborough United** and **Luton Town** top the table after four wins and one draw from their first five games. Yet the eye catching result this term came when **Watford** found **Dagenham & Redbridge's** net eight times without reply at the end of August.

Birmingham City's two weeks in Holland seems to have helped them hit the ground running. The Blues opened up in the Under-18 Professional Development League North with 2-0 and 9-3 wins against **Cardiff City** and **Sheffield Wednesday** respectively.

At the time of writing **Ipswich Town** have so far ploughed through **Crystal Palace** and **Leeds United** to take maximum points in the Southern equivalent.

In the Under 18 Premier League North there has been plenty of net busting action with **Bolton Wanderers** thumping neighbours **Blackburn Rovers** 5-1 before being on the end of a 6-0 drubbing by **Middlesbrough** who in turn had lost out 6-3 the previous week to **Everton**.

In the South, **Brighton & Hove Albion** will be looking to put pressure on **Arsenal** and **Tottenham Hotspur** at the top after starting with victories over **Fulham** and **Norwich City**.



Education Support Fund

The Education Support Fund will continue to operate during the 2014-15 season.

The fund which was originally set-up in 2006 is designed to help clubs enhance and support the education of apprentice players.

With levels of funding yet to be determined LFE chief executive Alan Sykes is keen to remind clubs that they should not commit to spending without prior authorisation from LFE and that the key requirement of funding is the enhancement of the education programme.

"Since we set-up this fund over £2million pounds has been ploughed back into football to improve the apprenticeship programme at clubs," Sykes said.

"This support has taken many forms - from desktop/laptop computers to sports science equipment and the delivery of life skills. We're also happy for club's to look at innovative ways to improve their programmes and if we can support them we will – ultimately the key criteria will be how what they are proposing will benefit their education provision and apprentices."

Further details on funding criteria, levels and the claims process will be communicated to clubs by October 2014. Any immediate queries should be directed to Alan Sykes on 0870 458 9250 or via email: asykes@lfe.org.uk

asykes@lfe.org.uk



Goal of the month

Jack Willbye's 45 yard thunderbolt for Ipswich deservedly saw him claim last terms Goal of the Season crown with over two thousand votes.

The question is though, who can follow that spectacular feat when Goal of the Month returns this season. To watch the competition and more stunning strikes visit the LFE website or our YouTube channel LFETV

To check out the goals visit: www.lfe.org.uk/goal-of-the-month





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THE AMERICAN DREAM



Soccer scholarships are the 'perfect fit' for young players who are not offered professional deals according to Pass4Soccer's Daniel Gray.

Pass4Soccer who became LFE's chosen partner in this area two summers ago help dozens of young players head to America each year and Gray believes that it remains a great way to work towards a University degree while continuing to play football at a good level.

"You have brilliant facilities and a fantastic lifestyle that comes with living in the USA," Gray said.

"It's the perfect fit for those that want to play a good standard of football, that can lead to the MLS while enhancing their career prospects by earning a degree.

"The key for second year apprentices is to start planning now because that widens their options in terms of their end destination."

For further information, please visit: www.pass4soccer.com

The 11

What do Lewis Cook (Leeds United), Connor Roberts (Northampton Town), and Sam Ling (Leyton Orient) have in common?

Well they were three of forty-four players who made it into 'The 11' last term. And from October, LFE will once again be focusing on the academic and football successes of apprentices in this season's competition.

Our team of regional officers will each nominate a player from their club's on four occasions throughout the 2014-15 season with their judgements based on the following criteria.

- Academic progress
- Football progress
- Other factors – e.g. participation in community/charity based initiatives

All winners receive a certificate, cheque for £50 and coverage on the LFE website.



Mike Johnson Award Winner
Aaron McGowan, Morecambe



Donald Bell Award Winner
Offrande Zanzala, Derby County

The Mike Johnson Award

Aaron McGowan picked up the Mike Johnson award for producing the best NVQ portfolio in the country last season.

The 18-year-old Morecambe defender was the youngest player to play in the Football League in the 2012–2013 season at 16 years and 6 months old and is also the clubs youngest ever debutant. McGowan received a memento and cheque for £250 from LFE ahead of the club's League Two fixture against Plymouth in September in recognition of his efforts on the National Vocational Qualification Diploma in Sports Performance (Level 3).

"I'm delighted for Aaron," said Shrimps academy manager Phil Hackney.

"He's a young player of immense potential and has always applied one hundred per cent commitment to anything he's been asked to do since he arrived at the club.

"That is shown by his conduct and the quality of his work on and off the pitch – he completed his NVQ diligently and made it relevant to his journey as a young footballer. He's an excellent example to our current apprentices."



A decade of educational excellence

It's 10 years since LFE was established by The Football League & The PFA – watch out for our bumper anniversary edition in December.

The Donald Bell Award

Derby County's Offrande Zanzala has been named as the winner of the Donald Bell Award by League Football Education (LFE).

Zanzala will receive his prize ahead of the Rams Championship fixture against Bournemouth at the iPro Stadium on 30 September.

The award which commemorates the memory of Donald Simpson Bell VC was instituted to recognise the efforts of a player who has overcome adversity of some form.

Bell was the first professional footballer to enlist in the Army during the First World War and went on to win a posthumous Victoria Cross for the bravery of his actions during an engagement in the Somme, France.

Second year apprentice Zanzala was born in the war torn Democratic Republic of Congo and has experienced an incredible journey to become an apprentice footballer at Derby.

"Offrande has persevered through difficult and challenging circumstances and he thoroughly deserves this type of recognition," said the club's Academy Education and Welfare Officer, Simon Ord.

"His life experiences to date have shaped him as a person and he is very appreciative of the opportunity he now has at Derby County to try to fulfil his dream of playing professional football.

"The club is proud of his achievements and we wish him continued success in the future."

The Debutants

Since the last edition of Touchline even more LFE apprentices have made first-team bows – so we thought we’d run the rule over a selection of players who’ve tasted the real thing.



Reece James Manchester United



Released by Preston North End just two summers ago Reece's rise to Louis Van Gaal's first-team squad has been meteoric.

Last term he was nominated as the club's Under 21 player of the season and more recently came to prominence on the Reds tour of the USA, scoring twice against LA Galaxy. He also impressed against Roma and Valencia during pre-season.

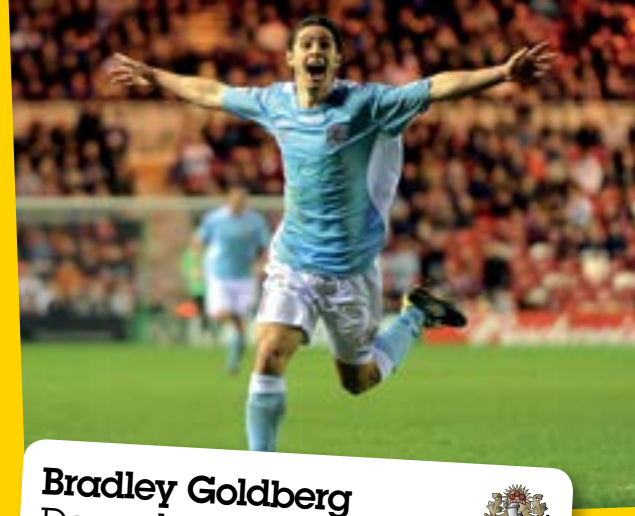
Was one of a handful of United players who could hold their head-up high after the 4-0 hammering at MK Dons in the League Cup in August – which also marked his competitive debut.

Josh Hare Gillingham



Son of Gillingham academy manager Darren, midfielder Josh has patiently worked his way through the Gills' system while other younger players were handed debuts.

His patience was rewarded in August when he made his first-team debut in the cup at Yeovil. He retained his place for his league bow against the same opposition four days later, only to get injured a few minutes into the game.



Bradley Goldberg Dagenham & Redbridge



Has showed that you sometimes have to go down and work your way back up. Released by Charlton three years ago Bradley bagged goals galore in non-League for Bromley and Hastings – including a corker in the FA Cup at Middlesbrough – earning a move to Dagenham & Redbridge. He made his league debut in August, aged 20.



Conor Wilkinson Bolton Wanderers



A year after finishing his apprenticeship at Millwall and moving to Lancashire to turn pro, striker Conor made his debut for Bolton Wanderers in their thrilling League Cup win over Bury. He had come off by the time Bolton scored a last minute equaliser, the first of four goals in seven crazy minutes!



Danielle Machin Photography

Joe Gomez Charlton Athletic



England Under 17 defender Joe made his first-team debut in the League Cup win over Colchester and retained his place for the visit of Derby County in the Championship.

A second year apprentice, Joe has been handed the number 3 shirt and seems set to spend the season with the first-team.

Ryan Johnson Stevenage



Signed from West Bromwich Albion at 16, tall defender Ryan made his Stevenage debut in the last match of last season and played twice more in August for Boro, at the tender age of 17.



International View

England may have failed to cover themselves in glory at the World Cup in Brazil but several LFE apprentices did lift silverware this summer as John Peacock's Under-17 side won the European Championships in Malta.



Centre-back **Bailey Wright**, was called-up to the Australia squad on the back of an outstanding season for League One Preston



A quartet of apprentices from Football League clubs were in the Young Lions squad that saw off The Netherlands on penalties after the final ended 1-1.

Charlton centre-back **Joe Gomez** was an ever present, appearing in all ten games in England's campaign, from the first qualifier to the final. Joe, from Catford in south-east London, did not celebrate his 17th birthday until two days after the final but has since gone on to make his first-team bow for the Addicks.

Recently described as "phenomenal" and "special" by Leeds United owner Massimo Cellino, midfielder **Lewis Cook**, was an integral part of Peacock's team playing in all of the semi-final win over Portugal and most of the final before being replaced by fellow LFE apprentice **Callum Cooke** of Middlesbrough.

While mainly used as an impact sub, Callum, from Peterlee in County Durham, was part of the England squad throughout the competition, clocking up ten appearances over the season. His Boro team-mate, centre-back **Dael Fry**, was an unused substitute in the final but did play against Malta and Holland in the group stage.

Dael has time on his side though – if he was two days younger he would only be starting his apprenticeship this summer!

They were not the only LFE apprentices who did themselves proud in Malta though. There

were three 'Anglo's' in the Scotland Under-17 side that shocked Europe by reaching the semi-finals before losing to the Dutch.

Reading defender **Zak Jules**, from North London with Scottish family, played throughout the wins over Switzerland and Germany. He then appeared in the semi-final, while club-mate **Jake Sheppard** played every minute of the two group victories aged just 16. Birmingham defender **Tom Lang**, from Reddith, was just 16 when he came on for the last minute of the semi.

Remarkably it is only just over a year since **Luke Shaw** was an LFE Apprentice of the Month at Southampton. Now he has played in a World Cup – impressing in England's dead rubber against Costa Rica in Belo Horizonte - and moved to Manchester United for a whopping £27m!

Shaw, from West Moseley in Surrey, was in a year group at St Mary's that also included Arsenal's £16m signing Calum Chambers and talented midfielder James Ward-Prowse!

While Everton's former Barnsley defender **John Stones** made Roy Hodgson's standby list and an England debut in the run-up to the tournament, another youngster who started his apprenticeship on LFE's programme was forced to sit things out much closer to the action.

Four years ago, Arsenal's **Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain** had just started his apprenticeship

with the Saint's, however an injury in the warm-up games denied him the opportunity of playing in the biggest sporting competition in the world.

"I got to be around an England squad at a World Cup in Brazil – that was an amazing experience," he told the Times.

"I was running around trying to help, handing out water bottles and trying to get the boys through the games when they were cramping. I definitely didn't want to go home (when injured). I would have been fit to play in the last group game but got a nick in training and there was no point risking anything as we were already out."

Another **Oxlade-Chamberlain** did get to play overseas this summer: younger brother **Christian** was in the Portsmouth squad that went on the LFE tour to Holland.

Shaw et al were not the only former LFE apprentices in Brazil. Centre-back **Bailey Wright**, was called-up to the Australia squad on the back of an outstanding season for League One Preston.

Having made his Socceroos debut in the pre-World Cup friendlies, Bailey – who joined North End as a 16-year-old from Perth – made the cut for Brazil but did not get to make a World Cup appearance.



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Opposite page: clockwise from left to right: Bailey Wright, Preston North End & Australia; Lewis Cook, Leeds United & England U17s; Joe Gomez, Charlton Athletic & England U17s.

Right: Luke Shaw, Manchester United & England.

THE TOUR TRILOGY

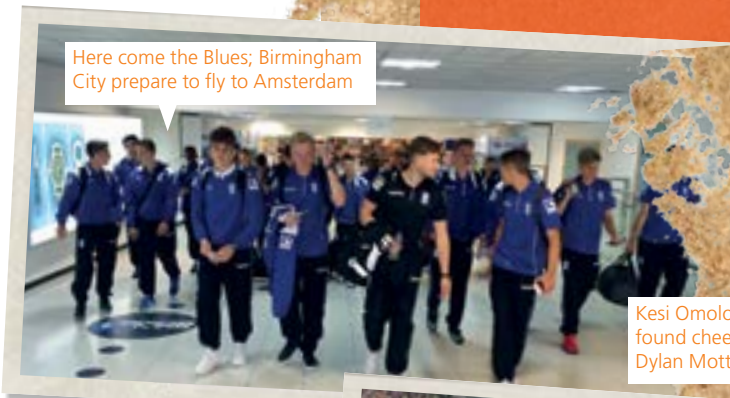
PRE-SEASON



The Netherlands

Bradford City, Birmingham City, Sheffield United and Portsmouth pitted their wits against Dutch opposition during pre-season.

While the Blues took the honours in the LFE tournament, fixtures against the likes of PSV Eindhoven, Feyenoord, Vitesse Arnhem and FC Twente ensured that everyone benefitted from the trip ahead of the 2014-15 campaign. Here are some of the best moments caught on camera.



Here come the Blues; Birmingham City prepare to fly to Amsterdam



Getting ready for training with Birmingham City



Kesi Omolokun & Sumaili Cisse found cheer in burying teammate Dylan Mottley-Henry in the sand



Though there was time to relax at the Johan Cruyff Shield game between Ajax & PEC Zwolle



Pompey get ready to work



Campione campione ole ole ole – Birmingham City celebrate



Coaching Club; Blades & Breda exchange ideas



Blues on Bikes - stopping off at Heeze Castle



Learning about the horror of September 1944 at the Airborne Museum, Oosterbeek



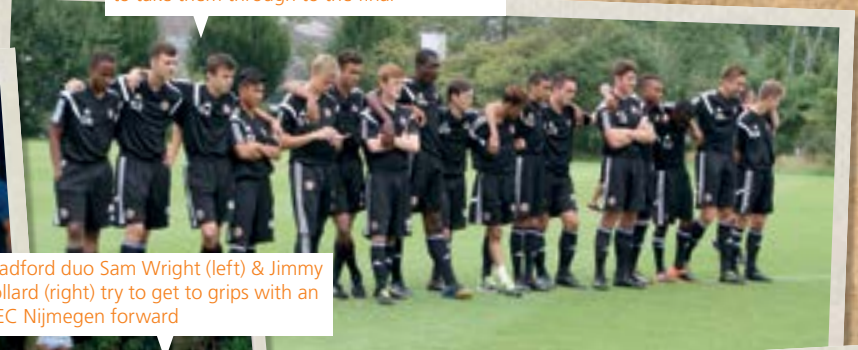
Pompey players line-up with Edwin van der Sar



Bradford duo Sam Wright (left) & Jimmy Pollard (right) try to get to grips with an NEC Nijmegen forward



Sheffield United U18 squad in the rough at Footgolf



Sheffield United's team spirit wasn't enough to take them through to the final



Portsmouth's Under 18 line-up before facing Vitesse Arnhem



Sheff United coaches develop novel technique to deal with the heat in Holland



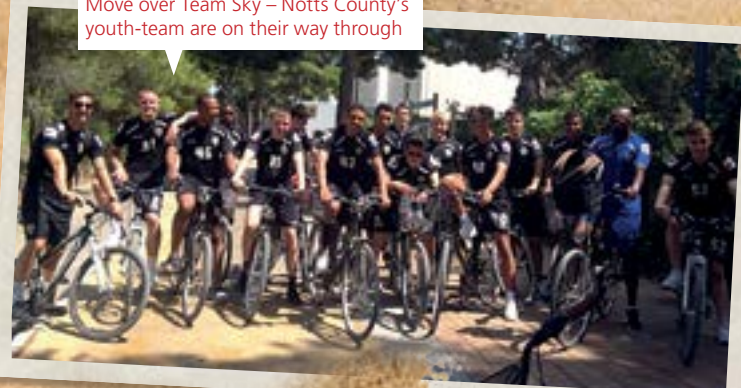
The Bantams take on De Graafschap

Watch video highlights from the tour on YouTube at LFETV

A view from the dug-out – Notts County's players at the Mestalla stadium



Move over Team Sky – Notts County's youth-team are on their way through



England

Finally... while half a dozen of our clubs found their feet on foreign soil – Middlesbrough and Derby County, both previous tourists to The Netherlands welcomed VVV Venlo & Ado Den Haag to these shores.



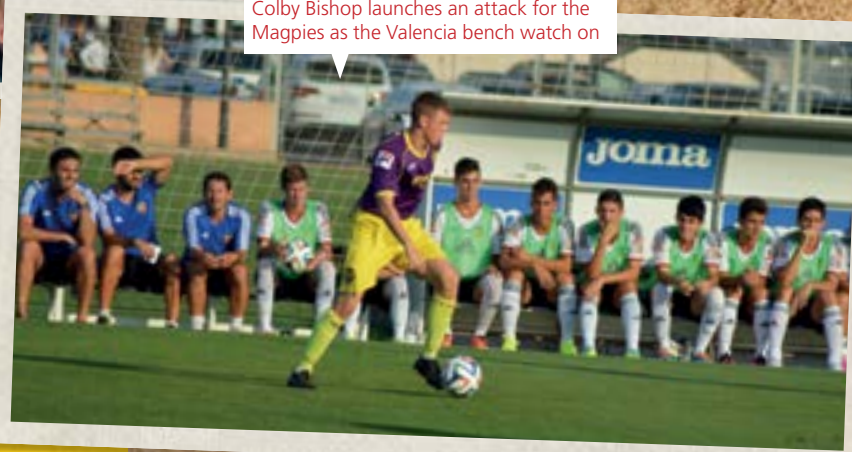
Venlo's players thank Boro's kitchen staff



Team huddle time for Forest



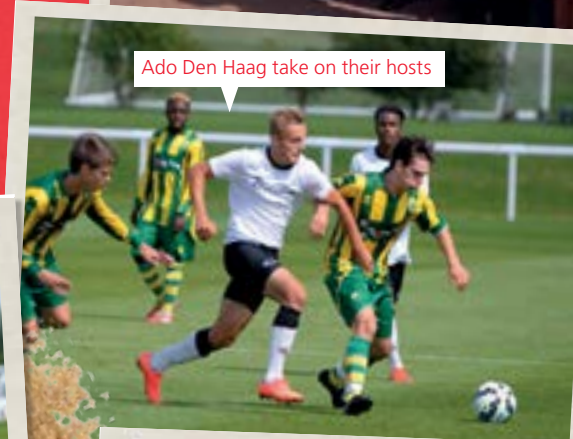
Colby Bishop launches an attack for the Magpies as the Valencia bench watch on



Canoeing was one of several activities enjoyed by the Forest & County youngsters



Ado Den Haag take on their hosts



Spain

Nottingham Forest and Notts County travelled to the outskirts of Spain's third largest City, Valencia to be looked after by Valencia CF & Levante UD.

While there was plenty of downtime to enjoy the local culture, training and playing in the searing heat provided its own challenges.

Results were mixed for the Reds Under-18's who fell to a narrow defeat to Huracan Valencia and drew with Levante before Kasheme Walton ensured the tour ended on the right note with a winning goal over Villareal.

After losing to Levante 3-0 in their opening fixture the Magpies responded with a 1-1 draw at Villareal and then went one better with a 2-1 win over Valencia thanks to goals from Kenan Layton and Colby Bishop. Here are some of the best moments from the trip:

Sammi Skytte, Ryan Yates and Adam Crooks prepare to hit the water



The Rams ran out 3-2 winners



Boro academy boss Dave Parnaby talks to the Venlo players and staff



Forest celebrate Kasheme Walton's goal against Villareal



VVV train with Craig Liddle and Paul Crager at Rockliffe Park



BIG MONEY MOVES

With the Transfer window now firmly slammed shut Touchline runs the rule over several big moves for former Apprentices this summer

£4 million **Aaron Cresswell**
Ipswich Town to West Ham United

Came through the youth ranks at Tranmere Rovers and was regularly talked up as one of the best players in the Championship while with Ipswich prior to his £4million move to the Boleyn Ground in July.

The left-back was named in last season's PFA Team of the Year for the Championship.



£7 million **Jamaal Lascelles & Karl Darlow**
Nottingham Forest to Newcastle United

After impressing at the top end of the Championship last term Newcastle swooped to snap-up the Forest duo, described by manager Alan Pardew as "two of the finest young talents in English football outside the Premier League," for a fee in the region of £7million.



£2.5 million **Harry Maguire**
Sheffield United to Hull City

The will he, won't he transfer tug-of-war involving Sheffield United and Hull City rumbled on over the summer but with the deal appearing to be dead in the water, Steve Bruce eventually signed the promising defender for £2.5million.

Had been a permanent fixture at the heart of the Blades defence, making over 150 appearances for the club since his debut while still an apprentice in 2011.



£30 million **Luke Shaw**
Southampton to Manchester United

Eclipsed current club and international colleague Wayne Rooney to become the World's most expensive teenager when arriving at Old Trafford in June for £30million.

Named in the PFA's Premier League team of the year last term and still only 19, the young left-back looks set to become a mainstay for club and country for years to come.



£16 million **Calum Chambers**
Southampton to Arsenal

Despite starting just 20 times for the Saints, Arsenal parted with £16million to capture the England Under-19 defender who has since become a full international.

Gunners boss Arsene Wenger, known for taking a punt on young players with potential said; "The way he adapted to the Premier League last season at a young age shows that he has tremendous quality."



£7 million **Diego Poyet**
Charlton Athletic to West Ham United

The son of Sunderland manager Gus Poyet, who left the Addicks to move across London to sign a four-year deal with the Hammers.

"It's massive to come to a Premier League club. I wanted a new challenge and soon as I heard there was a chance of stepping up I had to take it," Poyet said.



£10 million **Ben Davies**
Swansea City to Tottenham Hotspur

Has not looked back since breaking into the Swansea first-team for the (then) injured Neil Taylor in 2012. Moved to White Hart Lane in July in a £10million swap deal that saw Gylfi Sigurdsson head back to the Liberty Stadium.

Not bad for someone who was turning up for first-team games at Swansea in his VW Polo, complete with wind-down windows – a source of amusement to the rest of the squad – less than two years ago.



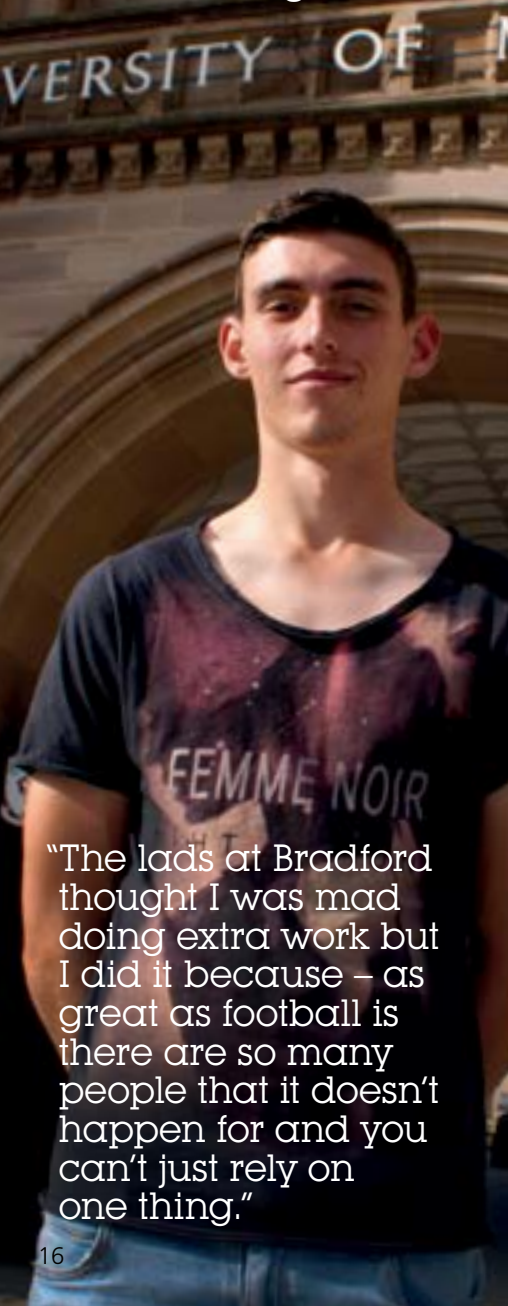
£7 million **Brendan Galloway**
MK Dons to Everton

Hailed as the next Rio Ferdinand, The League One Apprentice of the Year signed a 5-year deal at Goodison Park in August with Everton acquiring his services for an undisclosed fee.

The England youth international made 17 appearances for MK Dons last term and is the youngest player ever to take to the field for them, aged just 15, when he came on as a substitute in 2011.



Touchline talks to three former apprentices finding their feet in new surroundings...



Stuart Morrison

Stuart Morrison is finding his feet again after leaving Bradford City in the summer of 2013.

A year on from his departure from Valley Parade, the young goalkeeper has just embarked on an undergraduate degree in Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Manchester after taking 12 months to consider his options and bolster his academic qualifications.

"Languages and Sport are the two things I'm good at so I'm looking forward to going through this course and learning Portuguese while improving my Spanish as well," said Morrison.

"I had a good level of understanding of Spanish from living in Gran Canaria as a child and I carried that on at high school while picking up French as well.

"I didn't just want to do sport related qualifications like the BTEC when I was at Bradford so I started doing an A Level in Spanish.

"The lads at Bradford thought I was mad doing extra work but I did it because – as great as football is there are so many people that it doesn't happen for and you can't just rely on one thing.

"Over the last year I've played part-time to try and give football another chance, while working sometimes 50-60 hour weeks in various jobs from kids coaching to bar work in hotels and I've combined that with studying.

"It's been a hectic year but that really helped me determine that this course is the right one for me.

"It was my first pick on UCAS and Manchester is a vibrant city that I'm really enjoying getting to know," added Morrison.

Austin Eaton

While an influx of overseas players have arrived at Vicarage Road over the last three seasons Austin Eaton, a former Watford youngster has taken a bold step in the opposite direction by signing for newly-promoted La Liga side Cordoba.

While the 19-year-old midfielder is unlikely to be faced with the challenge of going toe-to-toe with the likes of Xavi, Iniesta or Luka Modric in the near future, starting this term with the club's B team, in the Segunda B Division, he is excited by his new challenge that began on LFE's player placement programme to Spain almost a year after leaving the Hornets.

"I was obviously at Watford as a professional but couldn't see a path towards the first-team so I asked to leave," Eaton said.

"I went over to Chile for six weeks to train with a team called Catolica and decided against accepting a contract there. I had a brief trial



Alan Cozzi / Watford FC

with Derby but was then lucky enough to go out to Spain for three months in January as part of the League Football Education programme.

"That went well and I managed to get a trial with Cordoba.

"I went there for a week at the end of March and they offered me a contract which was fantastic because I have always wanted to play in Spain – so it was an opportunity I couldn't refuse.

So how is life in Spain?

"There are things I'm still adjusting to," Eaton added.

"We train twice a day here from 8:45 – 10:15am then again at 6pm and I'm obviously learning the language as well so it's frustrating at times when you want to tell team-mates things like 'man on' or 'squeeze up'. That will come though and I think my game (short and technical) is quite suited to the way we play – it's just a case of trying to do well in B team and hopefully getting some chances to play or train with the first-team."

"I had a brief trial with Derby but was then lucky enough to go out to Spain for three months in January as part of the League Football Education programme. That went well and I managed to get a trial with Cordoba."



Ben Davisson

Ben Davisson is making the most of LFE's relationship with Michael Page as well as the transferable skills he has gained from his time at Charlton Athletic after starting a full-time job in recruitment.

Davisson who earned a two-year professional deal with the Addicks after his apprenticeship found his progress stunted by injuries and after spells at several non-league clubs he elected to take the plunge into recruitment after speaking to LFE.

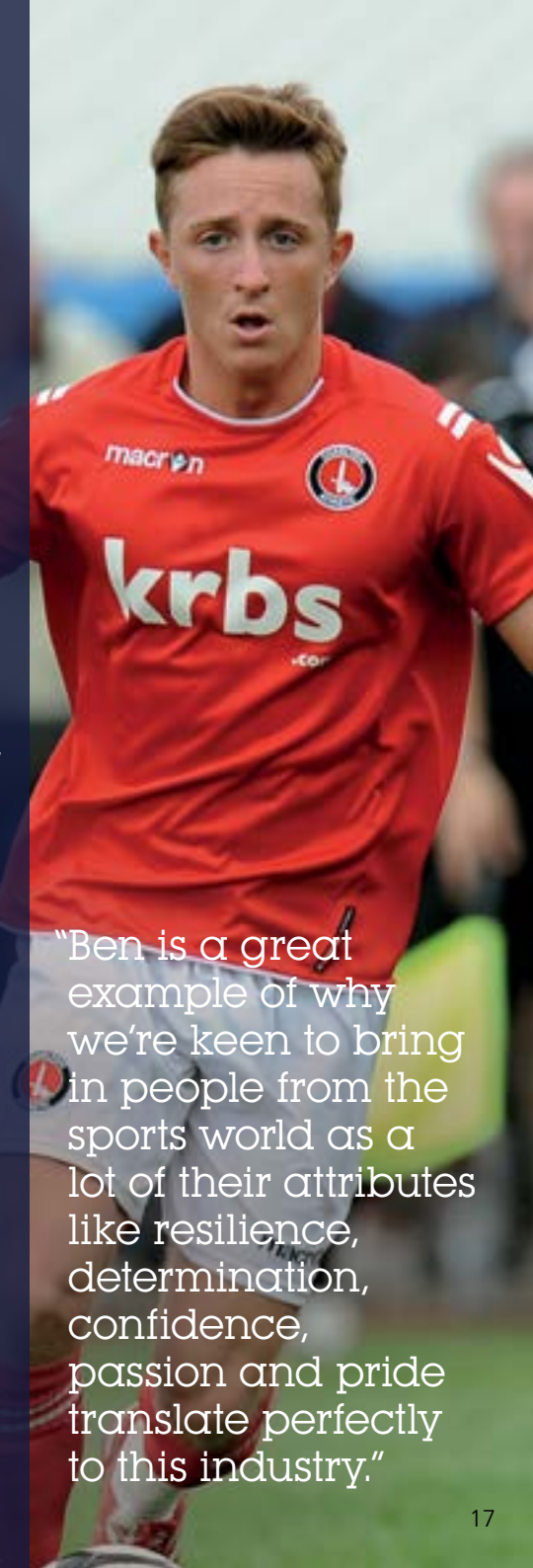
"I didn't have a job, I wasn't playing football, I had no real direction and was looking for a new career path when Jonjo O'Hara called me to talk about what I was doing and offer help as part of LFE's tracking and monitoring work," Davisson said.

"I told him that I was looking for a job in the city and he asked me what I thought about recruitment as LFE had a relationship with Michael Page. He put me in contact with Chris Bradberry (talent acquisition manager at PageGroup) and that was it really I was off and running.

"I was really committed to going through the interview process because I knew that even if I didn't get this job it might help me in the future. I then did a 4-5 week internship which gave me good idea of what the role entailed.

"While the first week or two was pretty daunting I've picked things up quickly and made incredible strides.

Bradberry who helped facilitate Davisson's new career added: "Ben is a great example of why we're keen to bring in people from the sports world as a lot of their attributes like resilience, determination, confidence, passion and pride translate perfectly to this industry."



"Ben is a great example of why we're keen to bring in people from the sports world as a lot of their attributes like resilience, determination, confidence, passion and pride translate perfectly to this industry."

If you're released by Preston North End as an 18-year-old the last thing you'd expect is to be turning out in front of over 85,000 people, for one of the biggest clubs in the world just two years later.

Yet that is Reece James's story.

The youngster played a starring role in Manchester United's US tour. With 86,432 in attendance he hit a double for the Reds in their 7-0 thrashing of LA Galaxy and impressed against Roma days later.

He has since featured for the Reds against Valencia and was one of a handful of players to emerge with any credit from the 4-0 hammering administered by MK Dons in the Capital One Cup a month ago.

However things may have turned out very differently for the 20-year-old had the Reds not stepped in to offer him a deal two years ago.

Now highly regarded at Old Trafford, James then 18, had made enquiries with League Football Education, about the possibility of heading out to America on a 4-year soccer scholarship.

"I spoke to Recce a couple of times in 2012 and again more recently in March when he wanted to assess his options in terms of studying in the States," said LFE's Simon Williams.

"He sent me his CV and was genuinely interested in that route but United offered him a contract – which was an amazing turnaround. He then called me earlier this year, which was out of the blue because he was doing well at United but he just wanted to touch base in case they let him go."

James's determination to ensure he had a back-up plan in place prompted that contact after his experiences at Deepdale, where he did not fit into Graham Westley's plans.

However North End's loss has been United's gain.

Last term the cultured left-back was a key-man for the Reds Under 21 side and boss Warren Joyce, is not surprised by his progress, insisting, that James is far from a 'flash in the pan' and is well placed to take advantage of Louis van Gaal's willingness to give young players a chance.

"I'd seen him play for Preston, was impressed with him and I'd mentioned his progress to his brother Matty (now Leicester City), so when we knew they weren't going to offer him a deal we got him in straight away," said Joyce.

"Sometimes certain players don't fit the requirements of a manager but we knew what he was about and thought he'd fit in. He's composed, good on the ball and is extremely consistent – you have to hand it to him because he's made the most of an opportunity – grabbing it with both hands and that's what you have to do.

"I wasn't surprised by his performances in pre-season and it's not a case of him being a flash in the pan – he's a very good player who has performed consistently for over 12 months.

"With the new manager arriving everybody started this year with a clean slate and a lot of the younger players have already been given opportunities to train with the first-team squad. The manager wanted to see those players and Reece is one of a few that have stepped-up and impressed them with his attitude and quality," Joyce added.

REECE JAMES



"You have to hand it to him because he's made the most of an opportunity – grabbing it with both hands and that's what you have to do."

What they've been tweeting

Follow us: @LFEonline 

With so many current and ex apprentices on Twitter, we've picked out some of the best tweets we've seen recently:

Jack Willbye celebrates winning LFE's goal of the season

Jack Willbye @willbz15
 Buzzing to have won academy goal of the season!!!! Thank you everyone who voted for me couldn't of done it without you!!!! #itfc

Henry Winter captures Wayne Rooney offering advice to youngsters Harrison Reed and Paul Digby

Henry Winter @dcfcacademy
 Rooney goes straight over to talk to #eng U20s Harrison Reed and Paul Digby at SGP



Diego Poyet's tweets catch up with him in the form of Andy Carroll

Diego Poyet @diegopoyet7
 Feel stupid for the tweets I made when I was 16, the big mans going to kill me!! Sorry @AndyTCarroll



Ethan Wassall plots his fantasy XI

DerbyCountyAcademy @dcfcacademy
 @EthanWassall from @dcfcacademy planning his @LFEonline fantasy team for this years competition #nochancethen



Birmingham celebrate after winning the LFE tournament

Ian Smithson @smithers2204
 LFE Tournament: 2014 winners @BcfcDotCom @LFEonline #lftour



Midfielder Otis Khan looks ahead to the new campaign

Otis Khan @OtisKhan63
 Great first week of pre-season, glad to be back #sufc #blades



Jose Mourinho has a watching brief as Pompey U18's train on tour

Gavin Willacy @gavinwillacy
 Jose Mourinho joins @officialpompey academy manager Mike Kelly + Training Trips rep Stein watching #lftour



LFE Blogger Sam Dryden's Scotland bow caught on camera

Sam Dryden @SamDryden_
 Amazing making my international debut against Belgium on Tuesday! Hoping there's more experience to come!



Conor Chaplin lauds Pompey's pre-season experience

Conor Chaplin @ConorChaplin10
 Landed. What a trip away! 2 weeks with the boys in holland, been great experience. Ready and looking forward to season ahead! #pfc



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