

Touchline



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10 YEARS EDUCATING EXCELLENCE

the 11

BY
ELAINE
BRAND



The Eleven came back into focus in October as LFE celebrated footballing and academic excellence. Here's who made our line-up...

- Jordan Holmes** AFC Bournemouth
- James Bree** Barnsley
- Max Lowe** Derby County
- Kabongo Tshimanga** MK Dons
- Callum Wood** Hartlepool United
- Regan Poole** Newport County
- Nyal Bell** Rochdale
- Louis Reed** Sheffield United
- Ryan Johnson** Stevenage
- Tom Smith** Swindon Town
- Louis Robles** Wigan Athletic

LFE's team of Regional Officers each nominate an apprentice on their patch, on four occasions during the season with winners receiving a certificate, a cheque for £50 and the distinction of an appearance on LFE's website.

GOAL OF THE MONTH

Three wonder goals have topped the monthly charts so far this term and judging by the stupendous competition - there's plenty more to come.

Over 5000 votes have been cast, with York City's **Ben Godfrey** (August), Middlesbrough's **Alex Pattison** (September) and Brighton starlet **Jordan Maguire-Drew** (October) the benefactors of the public's support.

Godfrey's long range effort against Fleetwood started the season with a bang while Alex Pattison's lung busting run and fine finish upset Manchester United as well as earning him a monthly gong.

And while he may not be a 'Saint', Maguire-Drew already seems to have developed a penchant for the spectacular, with some touting him as the South Coast's next Matt Le Tissier.



WATCH THE GOALS AND CAST YOUR VOTE

📺 lfe.org.uk/goal-of-the-month ▶ **LFETV**

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LFE was established by The Football League and The Professional Footballers Association



LFE is supported by:



FA Youth Cup

The story so far

BY **SIMON WILLIAMS**



Rochdale stand as the biggest winners of the competition so far following their 9-0 drubbing of Nantwich Town but Dale exited the competition themselves in a high scoring 4-3 defeat at the hands of Coventry City.

Fleetwood Town's progress past Accrington Stanley and Sheffield United has rightly been celebrated. The Cod Army have never reached the 3rd round before but now face the daunting prospect of a trip to the North East to face Sunderland.

With the 3rd round draw introducing Premier League and Championship outfits, the anxiety and excitement of the competition has cranked up a notch especially for those at **Oxford United**. Unlike their next opponents, The U's won't be preparing in the splendour of a new £200million training complex however they will be aiming to follow-up a 3-2 victory over Swindon by springing surprise at Manchester City.

Across Manchester, **Bury's** apprentices were narrowly beaten at Old Trafford. Zachary Dearnley's first half goal was enough for Manchester United to see off The Shakers.

Ipswich Town travel 15 miles to local rivals Colchester United for what promises to be a fiercely contested derby, The U's have already overcome Leyton Orient and Cheltenham Town.

Elsewhere, **AFC Wimbledon** will take heart from scoring 9 and conceding just once as Premier League Burnley come to town.

MK Dons travel to Nottingham Forest with goals on the menu. The high scoring Don's have hit 10 in two cup fixtures so far.

The FA Youth Cup is the most prestigious of prizes at under-18 level



Academy League and Youth Alliance Round-Up



We run through the top performers in each regional league at the half-way mark...

North West Alliance

Shrewsbury Town's 5-4 victory over high flying Rochdale is the sort of goal fest that would've been perfect for the television cameras. The Shrews, along with Walsall will hope to use their game in hand to hunt down North West Alliance leaders Wigan Athletic.

North East Alliance

Last season's North East Alliance winners Bradford City are facing stiff competition this year from Hull City. At the time of writing the two sides were scheduled to clash in a pre-Christmas dust-up. The Bantams have played a game less and trail the Tigers by three points.

South West Alliance

Bournemouth could be forgiven for thinking they have one hand on the South West Alliance trophy as they sit comfortably above Exeter City by nine points. Third placed Portsmouth might be 150 miles away from the Grecians but their recent 1-0 win over them brought them much closer together in the table, just three points separates the sides.

South East Alliance

If you want goals then the Hive on a Saturday morning is the place to be. One hundred and five goals have been scored in 18 games featuring Barnet this season.

Fortunately for the Bees the majority have been for rather than against and they occupy top spot in the South East Alliance just ahead of MK Dons and Luton Town.

U18 Professional Development League North

Only Birmingham City's superior goal difference divides them from Huddersfield Town. The two clubs have both banked 27 points in the U18 Professional Development League North and lie just above Coventry City who are two points adrift.

U18 Professional Development League South

Brentford are making quite an impression in the Southern equivalent. However the Bees are not out of sight with Cardiff City and Charlton Athletic hard on their heels.

U18 Premier League North

Middlesbrough stretched their impressive winning streak to five games and can look down proudly on the Premier League big boys from the top of the U18 Premier League North. Derby have probably been involved in the most spectacular game of the campaign though - playing out a 5-5 draw with Liverpool that left both coaching teams scratching their heads!

U18 Premier League South

Whereas in the South, Leicester City have one game in hand on pace setters Chelsea and if the Foxes manage to beat Southampton by a challenging margin of five goals they can replace Mourinho's starlets at the summit. Further down the table, Brighton's recent form has lifted them to fourth.

Education Support Fund



DEADLINE FOR ESF SUBMISSIONS

LFE Chief Executive Alan Sykes has urged clubs to make applications for the Education Support Fund (ESF) sooner rather than later.

ESF grants provide significant funding to clubs each season to support and develop the education of apprentice players. Historically used to purchase sports science and IT equipment as well as team-building days, Sykes is keen to ensure that the fund aids clubs in the delivery of a blended learning programme.

"Clubs are welcome to send in applications now," said Sykes.

"I'd encourage them to do that and am keen to avoid a scenario where a club is not able to fully utilise the fund or misses out altogether because they've made a late submission."

Club's wishing to use the fund should let LFE know their intentions by **28 February 2015**. For further details please visit: www.lfe.org.uk/about/education-support-fund

Any queries should be directed to Alan Sykes on **0870 458 9250** or email: asykes@lfe.org.uk



Assessment Trials 2015

LFE's Assessment Trials provide another chance to stay in the game at a good level. They kick-off on **Thursday 30 April in the North** and will be followed by trials in the **South on 5 May** and the **Midlands on 6-7 May**.

Pass4Soccer USA Scholarships

The search has already started for US University coaches keen to bolster their soccer squads for the next academic year.

With big budgets at their disposal, many use the winter and autumn months to scour the UK, Europe and South America for players that can make the difference to their teams.

The good news is that British players with a background in the professional game are highly sought after, so a move to the States could be the ideal Plan B for apprentices.

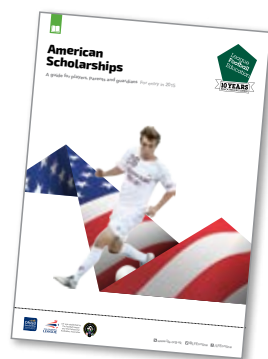
LFE's chosen partner in this area, PASS4Soccer has helped a multitude of players' gain scholarships over the last decade. Their relationships with University coaches often deliver academically, financially and from a sporting context:

Why a Soccer Scholarship?

DEGREE EDUCATION **LARGE CROWDS** **100% SCHOLARSHIPS**
PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT **PROGRESSION TO MLS / PROFESSIONAL RANKS**
SUPERB FACILITIES
MINIMAL/NO STUDENT DEBT **NEW LIFESTYLE**

More information is available via LFE's 'Guide to American Scholarships 2015' at:

www.lfe.org.uk or call **Simon Williams** on **0845 074 0561**



◀ Formerly of Preston North End, **Matt Dudley** is one of a number of players to start a new life in the US



Karlan Ahearn-Grant
Charlton Athletic

1 When Karlan was thrown into the Addicks side in late September, it was only four months since he'd left Harris Academy Greenwich, Charlton's partner school! A few days after turning pro on his 17th birthday he came on for the last minute of the win at Norwich and started the next game at fellow promotion-chasers Bournemouth.

Despite qualifying for Scotland, forward Karlan is the ultimate local boy, as he lives a few minutes' walk from The Valley. He retained his place in Bob Peeters' squad for four more games in Autumn, making one more start and an impressive impact off the bench in the televised game at Fulham.



Alfie Pavey
Millwall

2 Signed on loan from Millwall, striker Alfie made the first of three sub appearances in the Conference for Barnet a week before his 19th birthday. Although coming from nearby Eltham, Pavey, a tall and skilful frontman, was signed by the Lions from Maidstone United after a year on their college scheme.

The D



Courtesy of Brian Tonks

Courtesy of Keith Gillard



3



Harry Beautyman
Peterborough United

5 Harry made his League debut live on Sky Sports under the Friday night lights as Posh lost to league leaders Bristol City. Amazingly his Football League bow came four and a half years since he completed his apprenticeship at Leyton Orient. Thrown into the non-league wilderness by then boss Russell Slade, Beautyman earned his second shot at a league career aged 22.



Regan Poole
Newport County

6 First-year apprentice, Regan has enjoyed a rapid promotion to the County first-team squad this term and has already been on trial at Manchester United and Fulham.

The 16-year old was also called-up by Wales for their Under 17 UEFA qualifiers in October.



Levi Ives
Torquay United

3 Highly-rated left-back now in the second year of his apprenticeship, though he nearly quit the club due to homesickness last term.

The 17-year-old Northern Ireland youth opted to stick around though and made his Gulls debut in a 1-1 draw against Aldershot in August and started four games on the spin as November ended and December began.



Ben Harrison
Wimbledon

4 Left-back Ben came on as sub in a JPT tie at the start of September and was then thrust into the Wombles' defence in an injury crisis. He kept his place for four straight league games. The 17-year-old from Richmond is now back playing for former Wimbledon defender Alan Reeves' Under-21s side in the First Third Development League.

Debutants



Kwame Thomas
Derby County

7 A few months into his first year as a professional, Kwame made his first-team debut for the Championship-leaders in a 2-0 defeat at Leeds United. Spurned a glorious chance to bring the Rams back in to the game late on but has showed enough promise to suggest he'll be given plenty of chances by Steve McLaren.



Matt Stevens
Barnet

8 Dubbed the Conference's answer to Wayne Rooney, Matt made his Barnet debut at 16 years and 7 months as a late sub against Alfreton Town in September.

By the end of November, he had scored an astonishing 30 goals in league and cup! Signed from Reading this summer, Matt, from Camberley, has also impressed all the staff with his attitude and approach to his apprenticeship.

FAMOUS DADS

BY GAVIN WILLACY

Not many apprentices witness their dad taking centre stage on Britain's most-watched TV show.

Yet Luton's Geo Craig experienced that scenario this autumn when his Dad, Mikey, appeared on *Strictly Come Dancing*, starring with 1980s mega-band Culture Club.

Fronted by celebrity singer Boy George, Mr Craig played bass in one of the biggest pop bands on earth in the mid-eighties - now the band is back together and Geo is working out what all the fuss was about.

"I knew they were famous by the time I was about seven or eight because people would stop Dad in the supermarket or stare at him, point and whisper 'That's the bloke from Culture Club'. It's only quite recently that I've fully understood how big they were," Geo told *Touchline*.

"I didn't have any initial intrigue - he was just my Dad. I've looked online to see what all the fuss was about but I see him as a normal guy. Watching him on telly is more funny than weird. The strangest thing is that he dances around on TV which he doesn't do at home."

Geo was born after Culture Club had split up following an astonishing burst of success which translated to seven successive top five singles, two number ones (*Do You Really Want To Hurt Me?* and *Karma Chameleon*) and four top 10 albums including a number one.

He realises he has benefited from his Dad being a successful pop star, as have his two older brothers, one of whom has followed Mikey into music, the other as a trailblazer for Geo in football.

Jazzy B of Soul II Soul, father of Mahlon Romeo (Gillingham) ▶



Father of Geo Craig (Luton) is Culture Club bassist, Mikey Craig ▲



& THEIR LADS

"My Mum works in a pharmacy in London so Dad has been a house-husband really, making the dinner, taking us to school, picking us up and driving us to football. It's not been hard for me to have a famous dad: rather, because of that it's made life easier for me because he was always there."

Older brother Milo plays bass in indie band Real Culture while Paco, once on the books of West Ham, now gets his football fix at Young Harris University in Georgia. "I'm following a different route to my dad so I don't feel any pressure to succeed. Milo probably feels that more than me."

The Craig household in Barnet - a few minutes' walk from Barnet FC's old Underhill ground - is usually alive with song. "There's always music on in the house," says Geo, "but it's usually my kind, not my Dad's. I love listening to music and used to play

the piano. I don't play anything now. Dad can do everything: play bass, sing, play a few chords."

Craig is not the only son of a pop star to come through LFE's programme. Gillingham defender Mahlon Romeo, now a first year professional at The Priestfield, is son of Soul II Soul lead man Jazzy B. When Mahlon played at Vicarage Road against Watford Under-21s in November, several middle-aged women couldn't resist a glance at the famous Dad at the refreshment kiosk during half-time!

Romeo was part of a group of well-known father and son acts at the Gills: midfielder Jake Hessenthaler's Dad Andy is a Gills legend, defender Josh Hare is son of Academy manager Darren and full-back Sam Muggleton was son of goalkeeping coach Carl, the former Leicester and Stoke 'keeper.

1. Gus & Diego Poyet

Gus Poyet was manager of Brighton when he attended parents evening at Charlton, where Diego started life as an apprentice. Now on loan at Huddersfield from West Ham, 19-year-old Diego, has won caps for England at youth level but could yet opt to play for Uruguay.

2. Mark Chamberlain & Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain

Since starring in League One while an apprentice at Southampton, Alex's career has blossomed. Following in the footsteps of Dad, Mark (Ex Stoke, Portsmouth & England) the Arsenal midfielder looks set to be a mainstay of the England side for years to come.

3. Des & Tyler Walker

Nottingham Forest have high hopes of second year Tyler Walker, who will do brilliantly to emulate Dad Des, who amassed 59 England caps and made close to 700 career appearances for Forest, Sampdoria and Sheffield Wednesday.



NEXT 20

While the sessions that Kick It Out deliver at Football League clubs have been taken to a new level by Troy Townsend this term - a number of former apprentices are also spreading messages of inclusion and equality in their local communities.

Steven Sutcliffe looks at the impact being made by nine former apprentices under Kick It Out's 'Next 20' initiative:

Carl Jenkinson

West Ham on loan from Arsenal

"It was nice to be asked to be involved in something I can relate to and it's about encouraging equality between everyone," said England international Jenkinson, in October when talking about his role as one of the 'Next 20'.

Danny Rose

Bury

Once of Barnsley now of Bury, Striker Danny Rose caused a commotion when he returned to his old primary school to take part in a special Q&A.

"It is vital to make the children aware of what Kick It Out is and to get them involved in what the campaign does in and around football. It's important that they understand that football is for everyone," Rose said.

Callum Wilson

AFC Bournemouth

AFC Bournemouth Striker Callum Wilson was signed up for the Next 20 while he was still at Coventry, the club he completed his apprenticeship at.

The 21-year-old forward's scintillating form for the Sky Blues earned him a move to the Cherries over the summer though he still found time to front programmes like 'Write to Unite', a creative writing competition intended to encourage children to display how football can unite people regardless of their background.

Daniel Powell

MK Dons

Midfielder Powell has made over 150 appearances for the Dons since graduating from their youth set-up. The winger-cum-forward was part of a delegation of apprentices to visit 10 Downing Street in 2009 to celebrate the success of LFE's programme.

Dylan Lall

Ex Brighton & Hove Albion

Former apprentice Dylan took time out from swotting for A Level exams last summer to visit The Felbridge Primary School. The young forward who is heading to McGill University in Montreal in January said: "It was really constructive. I was surprised how much they actually know about anti-discrimination and racism and not just in sport.

"The children had some really good questions which were thought-provoking as well."

Gael Bigirimana

(pictured)

Newcastle United

The 2012 Championship Apprentice of the Year award winner started his career at Coventry City and was honoured to be named as a Kick It Out ambassador.

"It's a privilege to be a 'Next 20' ambassador because you get so many young players in England and so many talented boys, so for me to be chosen to do this is an honour," said Bigirimana.

Harry Maguire

Hull City

Became a mainstay of the Sheffield United team after earning his stripes while still an apprentice. Known for getting involved in community projects while a Blade, Maguire made the switch to Hull in the summer.

Ben Davies

Tottenham Hotspur

It seems like only yesterday that former Swansea left-back Davies, spoke eloquently to LFETV at our 2011 careers event. Now the Wales international is a £10million pound player well placed to support Kick It Out.

"I think it's a vitally important component in our society at the moment, to get Kick It Out's message across to young people," Davies said.

Jamaal Lascelles

Nottingham Forest - on loan from Newcastle

"A model apprentice" according to LFE's regional officer John Barton, Lascelles was one of the hottest properties in Football League last term. "Jamaal's an articulate young man who will be great for Kick It Out as one of their Next 20," Barton said.



**TOUCHLINE
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10 YEARS
EDUCATING EXCELLENCE



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LUKE SHAW

Apprentice at: Southampton

Now: Manchester United

Another to come off Southampton's famed production line which nurtured the talents of Theo Walcott, Gareth Bale and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain in their formative years. Eclipsed his current club and international captain Wayne Rooney to become the World's most expensive teenager when he signed for Manchester United in June for £30million.

Still only 19, the young left-back who endured a slow start to life at Old Trafford has won over Louis van Gaal and looks set to become a mainstay for club and country for years to come.

AARON CRESSWELL

Apprentice at: Tranmere Rovers

Now: West Ham United

Left-back Aaron emerged from Warwick Rimmer and Shaun Garnett's finishing school at Tranmere to take League One by storm. His sweet left-foot and set-piece abilities persuaded Ipswich to come calling and three impressive years in Suffolk did not go unnoticed by West Ham boss Sam Allardyce who snapped him up last summer.

ADAM MATTHEWS

Apprentice at: Cardiff City Now: Celtic

The 2010 Championship 'Apprentice of the Year' who hails from Swansea made his mark for Cardiff City while still on the apprenticeship. He transferred his talents to Celtic in 2011 and was soon rubbing shoulders with and defeating Lionel Messi and Barcelona in the Champions League.

10 OF THE BEST

Touchline looks at the players who have defined the last decade after emerging from the Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence with LFE



JORDAN HENDERSON

Apprentice at: Sunderland **Now:** Liverpool

Came through his apprenticeship with the Black Cats and was the subject of intense transfer speculation before he joined Liverpool for a fee in the region of £20million. Described as "the most improved player in the Premier League" by his manager Brendan Rodgers last season.

CARL JENKINSON

Apprentice at: Charlton Athletic
Now: Arsenal (West Ham on loan)

One of a host of players developed at Charlton's Sparrows Lane training complex that is now plying their trade in the top two tiers of English football. Showed determination to complete his education programme while a switch to Arsenal was in the offing. Yet to establish himself at the Emirates, the England international is currently starring in West Ham's charge up the Premier League.

ALEX OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN

Apprentice at: Southampton **Now:** Arsenal

Pipped to the 2011 League One Apprentice of the year award by Bayern Munich bound Tranmere apprentice Dale Jennings, however, he has flourished ever since. Helped set the Saints off on their meteoric climb from the third tier of English football to the Premier League and his potential was recognised by Arsene Wenger who paid £15million for his services.

CONNOR WICKHAM

Apprentice at: Ipswich Town **Now:** Sunderland

A man in a teenager's body, Wickham made his Tractor Boys debut aged 16 years and 11 days old (a club record) and was the match winner in England's Under 17's European Championship triumph over Spain in 2010.

Sunderland took him to the North East a year later and while his hefty £8million fee seemed to initially weigh heavily upon him, he was a key figure in the club's relegation scrap last year and was handed a new 4-year contract in December.

IKECHI ANYA

Apprentice at: Wycombe Wanderers **Now:** Watford

Honoured at the inaugural Football League Awards as the League Two 'Apprentice of the Year' but Scotland international Anya amazingly fell out of the game and was stacking shelves at Tesco while playing part-time with Halesowen Town before making a breakthrough in Spain courtesy of ex England manager Glenn Hoddle's now defunct academy.

The rest as they say is history.

JAMAAL LASCELLES

Apprentice at: Nottingham Forest
Now: Newcastle United (Nottingham Forest on loan)

Mainstay of the Forest defence last term who was transferred to Newcastle in the summer only to be loaned back to his former club. Lascelles who came through the apprenticeship programme at the City Ground has already been capped at every level by England up to Under-21.

NATHANIEL CLYNE (COVER IMAGE)

Apprentice at: Crystal Palace **Now:** Southampton

It seems like he's been around for an eternity but the former Crystal Palace apprentice is still only 23. Made his Eagles debut in 2008 and was Palace's player of the year in 2010-11. Moved on to Southampton in 2012 where he has steadily improved and was worthy of his recent England call-up.



10 OF THE REST

Statistics have shown that not every apprentice in the last 10 years has gone on to fame and fortune as a footballer, yet an extensive number of players have gone on to achieve great things in other areas.

While it would be impossible to highlight every success story from the last decade here; Touchline has picked out a selection of those who've made a success of things off the pitch:

1. JOE GATTING

Apprentice at: Brighton & Hove Albion

Now: Hampshire County Cricket Club

Actually made over 50 appearances for the Seagulls before switching his allegiances to cricket. Hit 152 on his first-class debut for Sussex and spent 5 seasons in Hove before moving on to Hampshire last year.

2. GEORGE BOWYER

Apprentice at: Rochdale

Now: The Professional Footballers' Association

Arrived at The PFA from Spotland in 2011 to work in the commercial arm of the Union but is now involved in advising academy players, trialists and parents on Premier League and Football League Youth Development Rules.

3. MARK WRIGHT

Apprentice at: Southend United **Now:** TV personality

Never mind Strictly Come Dancing - Wright's nifty footwork was once on show at Roots Hall where he was an apprentice. Subsequently reinvented himself as a TV personality on The Only Way is Essex and I'm A Celebrity Get Me Out Of Here.

4. TOBY DAVIS

Apprentice at: Plymouth Argyle **Now:** Friskor Viljor

The first exponent of LFE'S player placement programme to Sweden, Davis 25 in January, is still playing and living in Scandinavia after heading there from Plymouth.





5. MARK SOBOLJEV

Apprentice at: Port Vale

Now: Mills & Reeve Solicitor

Signed pro while at Vale Park but was released and transferred his talents to the classroom earning a first class honours degree in Law at Staffordshire University. Initially went in to retail before finding a job in the legal sector. Now works in the corporate and commercial section at Mills & Reeve.



6. RICHARD JONES

Apprentice at: Sheffield Wednesday

Now: EDF Trading

Impressively attained A grades in Chemistry, Maths and Physics A Levels while with the Owls and went on to study Physics at the University of Durham. Graduated in 2010 and has worked in various analyst roles in the Energy sector ever since.



7. GEZ MULHOLLAND

Apprentice at: West Bromwich Albion

Now: Club Media Support Journalist (West Bromwich Albion)

Now writing headlines instead of trying to make them, Gez returned to the Hawthorns this summer to work within the club's media department, three years after being released by the Baggies as a player.

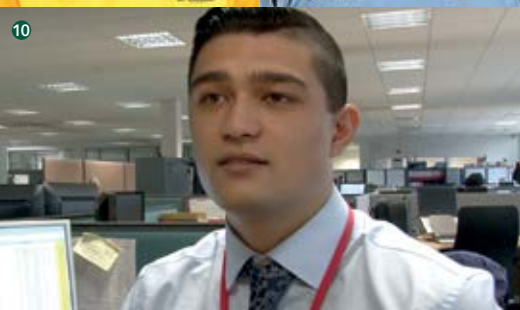


8. ASHLEY HARRISON

Apprentice at: MK Dons

Now: The Royal Marines

Worked as an engineer after leaving MK Dons in 2010 before enlisting with the Royal Marines in the summer.



9. STEFFAN JONES

Apprentice at: Cardiff City

Now: Cardiff Blues & Wales Rugby Sevens

A work in progress as a Rugby player according to the Welsh RFU website - though hardly a surprise as he was turning out for Cardiff City until the summer of 2011. Yet within 12 months the former centre-half now turned winger was featuring for Wales Sevens in the 2011-12 World Series in New Zealand and America.

10. FRED HOLTOM

Apprentice at: Preston North End

Now: Fujitsu

Fred is following a five-year plan which has taken him well down the road to becoming a management accountant. "I'm doing my AAT qualifications and move on to CIMA so my aim is to be qualified by the time I'm 25," Holtom told Touchline.

1



2



10 YEAR TIMELINE

2004

LFE begins (1)

2006

Website launched (2)

2006

LFE's provision is deemed 'Good' by the Adult Learning Inspectorate

2006

The Football League start to honour the achievements of apprentice players at their annual Awards Dinner (3)

2007

LFE's inaugural Assessment Trials take place at Bisham Abbey and Northwich

2008

First ever careers event hosted by LFE (5)

2009

European funding is secured to send Barnsley, Hartlepool & Rotherham on a pre-season tour to Sweden. A player placement programme is also initiated in Scandinavia

2009

Over 300 apprentices take part in community initiatives

2009

The Sporting Chance Clinic become the first partner to deliver on LFE's Life Skills programme

2010

LFE remember the Footballers Battalions as Chief Executive Alan Sykes travels to France with a delegation from professional football

2011

Cheyenne Dunkley collects the first ever Mike Johnson Award for his work on his NVQ (6)

2012

'Outstanding' LFE is hailed by Ofsted who award a full complement of grade 1 scores

2013

Estyn offer LFE the Welsh equivalent judging it to be 'Excellent' in all major categories

2014

Awarded the Matrix Quality Standard for information, advice and guidance

2015

The story continues...

3



4



5



6



10 YEARS

EDUCATING EXCELLENCE



At least 40%
of players are handed
professional contracts
each season

**Ofsted graded
LFE as outstanding**
in all areas in our
2012 inspection



4500+ players have achieved all elements of the apprenticeship framework during the last decade



 = 25 players



550
Life Skills sessions
will have been delivered
by the end of the present
season. That's well over 100
a season since they began

95%
Retention

remains consistently
high on the
apprenticeship
programme

Sporting Chance



The Sporting Chance Clinic's recent visit to Preston North End was their twenty-fifth of forty, scheduled for this season and part of a wider collection of Life Skills offered by LFE this term.

Emotional well-being, equality, social media, sexual health and thinking differently about sports performance, make-up the full complement of a programme designed to provide players with the skills to succeed in life.

Former Cheltenham apprentice turned UCLan Journalism student Brad Poole reports from Deepdale:

When players press the self-destruct button few have done so in recent times without the presence of alcohol, drugs or gambling. All three remain destructive forces in the world of professional football where the line between success and failure becomes finer with each passing season.

I received this talk when I was in the youth-team at Whaddon Road and the topics remain pertinent today.

Presented by former professional footballers, the empathy and interest within a room containing fifteen or so 18-year-old footballers was immediate. One time Scotland Under-21 international Andrew Jordan, kicked-off proceedings.

Forced to retire from the game through injury at the age of 26, Jordan who has had to battle his own demons highlighted the highs and lows that players experience during an unpredictable career. His aim, "to establish some understanding of the warning signs," when things start to go wrong.

"Introducing the players to topics like gambling, drinking and drugs and catching them at a young age is really important," said Jordan.

"If players have a problem, the clinic has a clear support mechanism in place to give them all the help they need.

"If there's an issue around addiction or an addiction disorder, we can look at residential treatment. The other way we can help is by offering them counselling and sending them to see someone in their area to give them the support they need.

"With LFE we get this valuable opportunity to talk to players every single season and will work on a rotational basis so we see clubs every two years - capturing every single player on the apprenticeship," he added.

Former Manchester City star Jeff Whitley was next up to talk to the players. Whitley's drink and drug problems have been well documented in the press and the ex Cardiff midfielder who was capped by Northern Ireland on 20 occasions explained the difficulties he faced as a young player.

"I felt like I was fitting in (drinking), trying to be accepted but I didn't have the self-esteem to tell them (the senior players)," Whitley said.

"I wondered what they would do to me if I did."

"When I was at Cardiff, Dave Jones (manager at the time) said to me 'Jeff don't come in but we'll still pay you'.

"I had never taken any drugs apart from alcohol and cigarettes when I was playing until then but when he said that I thought 'I've never tried cocaine, I'll give it a blast'. When I did I thought 'wow, this is what I'm missing'.

"I was hooked that quick. If you're an addict you can get hooked on computer games, texting, eating... it doesn't matter what it is," added Whitley.

Whitley, whose career was ended prematurely, finally checked into the Sporting Chance clinic when he began feeling suicidal and concerned about his health and his cautionary tale benefited the players in the room.

Preston goalkeeper Ross Dalton said: "I think the day was helpful. Based on their experiences, if I ever come into a situation like that I will know what to do and know who to go to.

"Everything they were saying made sense. It's easy to be influenced when you're in that situation. I suppose they didn't do the right thing at the time but they have more than made up for it with the help they gave us - the other lads and I took a lot from the session."

BY **BRADLEY POOLE**



▲ Preston's young players are told of the pitfalls of the game

JOSH THOMAS★

While the lure of Disney draws many to Florida each year, former Nottingham Forest apprentice, Josh Thomas' presence is rather more permanent and he's applied his own sparkle in a fairytale few months.

The 19-year old swapped Nottingham for the Sunshine State and now studies and plays for Florida Institute of Technology (FIT).

The tricky winger spent ten years climbing through the age groups at Forest but in the summer of 2013, then manager Billy Davies decided there was not enough room to accommodate Thomas as a professional.

"I was devastated and left searching for an opportunity to show my ability," Thomas told Touchline.

"I trialled at Aston Villa, Derby County and West Brom but I ended up at Worksop Town.

A spell under boss Mark Shaw provided the youngster with experience of a non-league play-off final and a Young Player of the Year award.

"Mark knew how to get the best out of me and I found new confidence in myself to push on."

And that he did. With help from LFE, Thomas received a full scholarship - though the infamous SAT entry test almost proved an insurmountable barrier.

"I found it unbelievably hard but with the help of a private maths tutor I hit the required mark on my second attempt. Then it was just a case of arranging my visa, signing the contract and asking my Dad, nicely, to book a flight to Orlando."

His life in the States started in August and he settled quickly.

"I was paired in residence with a 6ft 3in defender from Gainesville called Zak. Next door are two Norwegians and one German, who have all also played for professional clubs," continued Thomas.

"Training is very similar to Forest, an early start every morning for two hours but in the heat of the sunshine which can be hard and humid at times."

"We then eat breakfast together as a team before heading off to class. I'm studying for a sports management degree. After class we train for another two hours.

"I couldn't believe how amazing the facilities are, everything you can imagine, the coaches have helped me to settle into my new life (they love the English) and the food is just like an all-inclusive hotel. There is so much choice and as much as you want!"

The big challenge for Thomas was to cement a place in the starting eleven and show coaches Robin Chan, Ryan Moon and Nick Robinson what he could bring to the side.

"I was given the number 7 shirt and asked to play wide right in 4-2-3-1 formation which was new to me but I've loved every second of it so far."

FIT won all four of their preseason games with Thomas contributing no less than five goals and five assists, a sign of what lay ahead for him and the Panthers.

"The season flew by, we finished second in our conference and qualified for the NCAA Cup," Thomas said.

"I scored in both the quarter and semi-finals to help us through to the final against the hosts, Lynn University who are ranked 4th in the USA.

"In front of a partisan crowd, I hit one in to the stanchion from 20 yards and as a team we battled to half-time at 2-2. They were awarded a penalty after the interval and while we lost our chance to progress to the Nationals, there was no disgrace in losing 3-2.

"My freshman experience has been indescribable and I'm weighing-up four offers to play in the Premier Development League next summer which I can't wait for."

Thomas' performances have earned him a string of accolades. He was named in the NCAA 2nd XI of the Year, in the NCAA Cup XI of the Year and most notably FIT Student Athlete of the Year.

"I do miss things in the UK - family, friends, Mum's Sunday roast dinner and Jeff Stelling but if you'd asked me a year ago about my future, I was unsure. I can safely say I now have a direction and am living the dream," he added.

"This lifestyle has opened my eyes to a bigger world than I realised was out there and I want to thank my family, Sean England, Simon Williams, John Barton and Nick Marshall for helping to make that happen."



"I do miss things in the UK - family, friends, Mum's Sunday roast dinner and Jeff Stelling but if you'd asked me a year ago about my future, I was unsure. I can safely say I now have a direction and am living the dream."



FACTFILE

About

Name

Josh Thomas

Twitter

@JoshThomas_11

Favourite player

Ryan Giggs

Born

Leicester

Honours

FA Youth Cup - Semi-Finalist

LFE Goal of the Month Winner
(November 2012)

Achieved ASE framework

NCAA 2nd & NCAA Cup XI
of the Year

FIT Student Athlete of the Year

2014 A YEAR IN PICTURES

JANUARY - MARCH ▶



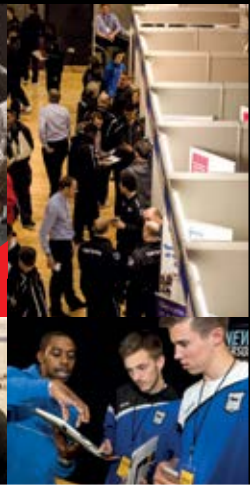
January Transfer Window

A host of former players moved in January including James Tarkowski - Oldham to Brentford, Martyn Waghorn - Leicester to Wigan, Dale Stephens - Charlton to Brighton

Football League Awards 2014

Left: Apprentice of the Year Championship - Mason Bennett (Derby County)

Below: Apprentice of the Year League One - Brendan Galloway (MK Dons) and Apprentice of the Year League Two - Brad Walker (Hartlepool United)



Create Your Legacy 2014

JULY - SEPTEMBER ▶

Pre-Season Tour 2014

Portsmouth, Birmingham, Sheffield United and Bradford jetted out to Holland on LFE's Pre-Season Tour



Lincoln City played Arsenal in memorial match for a local teenager who died in a car accident

AFC Bournemouth youth squad shaved their heads in the name of charity



Aaron McGowan receives the Mike Johnson award for the best NVQ portfolio

Offrande Zanzala collects the Donald Bell award



APRIL - JUNE ▶



Ipswich Town's Jack Willbye took 30% of the vote to claim the Goal of the Season crown



Assessment Trials 2014



Colchester United youngsters thoroughly enjoyed the PFA run driver awareness course



OCTOBER - DECEMBER ▶

Ex Preston youngster Matt Dudley and Matt Rickard from Plymouth help Oakland Mens Soccer team win the Horizon League Championship



Life Skills workshops get underway for the 2014-15 season



Troy Townsend poses with the Huddersfield management team after a Kick It Out session



Wycombe keeper Matt Ingram wins Football League Young Player of the Month



Cheyenne Dunkley

Rejection to Redemption

BY STEVEN SUTCLIFFE

While hundreds of young players are released at the end of every season – that doesn't have to spell the end. So we thought we'd run the rule over several players who have worked their way back to feature in The Football League after appearing to slide off the scale at 18.

Cheyenne Dunkley

A former winner of the Mike Johnson Award, while an apprentice at Crewe, Dunkley has slowly clambered back-up the football pyramid since being released by the Railwaymen.

Earning a degree at Loughborough University, while playing for Hednesford and then Kidderminster the 22-year-old centre half has captained England at C Level and was recently signed by League Two Oxford.

Speaking to the club's website after his most recent step up the ladder Dunkley said:

"It's a great move for me. I'm under no illusions, I know there are some very good players here but I want to come and work hard at my game, give it everything in matches and be part of a successful side here."

Harry Beautyman

If football was like snakes and ladders it would sum up Harry Beautyman's situation perfectly to a tee. Having showed promise at Leyton Orient he slid out of the Football League when Russell Slade elected to release him in 2011. He's been working his way back ever since.

Spells at Sutton and more recently Welling United culminated in an England C call-up and he signed for Peterborough United in November in a loan deal that will be made permanent in January.

Welling manager Jamie Day said: "I'd like to congratulate Harry on his move into league football. He has been first-class to work with and to manage. His attitude has been fantastic and he fully deserves this chance."



Harry Beautyman



Adeoye Yusuff



Jonson Clarke.

Adeoye Yusuff

Adeoye Yusuff's tale is the stuff of "dreams" for many young players.

Cast aside by Stevenage two years ago, Yusuff who was working in a restaurant, while playing semi-professional football for Chatham Town, was snapped up by League Two club Dagenham & Redbridge in September.

Daggers boss Wayne Burnett took a punt on the 20-year-old forward after he'd fired 24 goals in 38 appearances with Isthmian League North side Chatham.

Despite his new circumstances, Yusuff, whose match winning double helped Dagenham to three points at Accrington Stanley, initially continued his work as a waiter, returning to his duties at Wagamama in Kent, after signing pro.

"When I signed my contract on the Friday I had to call them (Wagamama) and say I was going to be a bit late. I went back and worked until about midnight. The next morning I got the train to Dagenham East, came to the stadium and made my debut," Yusuff said.

"Being full-time is what everyone who plays football dreams of. To become a professional footballer just means the world to me," he added.

Jonson Clarke-Harris

Jettisoned by Coventry City at the end of his apprenticeship, how times have changed since Jonson Clarke-Harris attracted the most interest in a single player ever at LFE's end of season Assessment Trials in 2012.

The 20-year-old's form for Oldham last term prompted Rotherham boss Steve Evans to sign the frontman for a club record fee on transfer deadline day.

He has already started to repay that faith by scoring twice in four starts for the Millers, which included a stunning Yorkshire derby winner against Leeds in October with his first touches of the ball. He followed that with a goal against Fulham and Evans has publicly lauded the youngster.

"We beat some big clubs in the Championship to get his services. He has got all the attributes in terms of physicality," he said.

"People should remember his name, we think he is a special talent."

IN THE BOOK

with Farai Hallam



Former Stevenage apprentice Farai Hallam tells Steven Sutcliffe that despite being released by the Boro in 2012 he still has aspirations of one day performing at Old Trafford or Anfield.



BY **STEVEN SUTCLIFFE**

SS: Tell me about what you've done since leaving Stevenage?

FH: I now work for The Football Association across two departments. Football Development Grassroots is one and the other is the Referee's department.

SS: Why refereeing in particular?

FH: It's another good option for young players if they fall out of the game. I'd never tell a player to give up playing but it's a case of saying there's another way to perform at Old Trafford or Anfield. These days I'm still playing on a Saturday but I've started refereeing on a Sunday morning to build my experience.

SS: You obviously believe in that as I saw you passing on your message to players at LFE's last careers event.

FH: At the time you're an apprentice you may not realise it but whether you get a contract for a year, six months or not, refereeing is a potential career path that could be exploited. I'm happy to talk to young players - even if it's a word or two. I can pass on the benefit of my knowledge. Some might not be interested, for others it might be a case of something just clicking and them wanting to know more or how to start on this road.

SS: Is it a good fit for former apprentices?

FH: Coming from a playing background gives you such an advantage. You know how to talk to players, you're probably better at looking for things that some referees may not look for and your decision making is automatically instinctive. You might for example see a foul and be able to relate to the situation. I'm a centre-half so I can often spot things straight away and know what the player was trying to do.

I think there's a massive opportunity in refereeing for players.

SS: Can they go all the way to the top?

FH: A lot can go maybe further than they think as a referee. Often a lot of players don't really think of refereeing as an option - maybe as players it's not a role you associate yourself with but it's a potential career path. Ironically it probably offers more longevity than being a player as you can do it until you're 50 years old plus whereas you may only play until your early 30's.

If you start early enough there is a realistic chance you could get to become a Premier League or Football League referee.

What they've been tweeting...

WITH SO MANY CURRENT AND EX APPRENTICES ON TWITTER, WE'VE PICKED OUT SOME OF THE BEST TWEETS WE'VE SEEN RECENTLY:

Back to school; Charlton's academy feed goes into the classroom



CAFC Academy @CAFC_TheAcademy
Barney and Alex working as a pair to complete the Fitness Training unit. Great work lads.



Beyond the call of duty - Gavin Willacy gets frostbite watching Gillingham in FA Youth Cup action



Gavin Willacy @gavinwillacy
Good FAYC win tonight for @thegillsFc at freezing Priestfield 4-2 v Eastleigh. @GregCundle was a handful. @LFEonline



Grimsby's players haven't had one too many, even if the goggles provide the effect



Paul Bartlett @vonbartlett
Grimsby Town boys check out the 'beer goggles' in the Playing Safely workshop. @LFEonline @officialgtfc



Group effort - Cambridge Utd's apprentices sporting their If U Care Share wristbands



If U Care Share Foun @IFUCARESHARE
Group photo from our afternoon workshop with @CambridgeUtdFC and @LFEonline



Kabongo Tshimanga made 'The 11' and MK Dons Twitter Feed



MK Dons FC @MKDonsFC
PHOTO: U18s striker Kabongo Tshimanga was recognised for being named in @LFEonline's best XI for October last night.



LFE's man in Watford



Ian Smithson @smithers2204
Tremendous show of respect at Vicarage Road last weekend @LFEonline #gaveourtoday #watfordfc



Follow us: @LFEonline

Lest We Forget; Elliot Brown captures a moment of remembrance ahead of a Notts County U18 game



Elliot @elliottgbrown
#LestWeForget





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