

Touchline

League
Football
Education

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THE MONEY MEN



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Education Support Fund

BY STEVEN SUTCLIFFE

Ten years since its inception, LFE's Education Support Fund will continue to operate throughout the 2016-17 season, helping clubs to improve their apprenticeship programmes and the support they offer to young players.

Apple MacBooks, iPads, filming towers, video cameras, microphones, mobile whiteboards, outward bound days, nutrition and cooking classes, lab sessions, speed testing and heart-rate monitors are just some of the items that have been acquired by clubs using the fund in recent years.

While full details of this year's fund will be communicated to clubs next month (October), LFE chief executive Alan Sykes is hopeful that clubs will once again take advantage of the fund and in particular look to bolster their IT capacities.

"Great strides have been made to increase e-learning resources and qualifications and clubs need to ensure that they are in a position to embrace these within their apprenticeship programmes," Sykes said.

"E-learning and supported learning provide numerous benefits and flexibility around the academic programme.

"We want clubs to utilise the fund to strengthen and enhance what they can deliver. Since it was set-up in 2006, this support has taken many forms and if a club finds a new innovative way to improve their programme we will support it, if we can. Ultimately, our key criteria will be how any proposal benefits the education provision and apprentices," he added.

Any queries should be directed to Alan Sykes on 01772 326 870 or email: asykes@lfe.org.uk



GOAL OF THE MONTH

Goal of the Month kicks-off again this month with the very best from the Academy Leagues.

So watch the best goals each month on our website or via LFETV on YouTube. The winner will be decided by public voting, so use the poll on our website or use the hashtags attached to each goal to vote via Twitter or Instagram.

WATCH THE GOALS AND CAST YOUR VOTE

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

Welcome to Touchline, brought to you by League Football Education



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



LFE is supported by:



Erasmus+

BY HEATHER SINGLETON

Player Placements

This summer, LFE's Erasmus+ player placement programme has provided a dozen players with the opportunity to train and play in Sweden. The twelve, all released at the end of last term, have joined up with five Swedish clubs; Ange IF, Bodens BK, Gotne IF, IFK Ostersund and Ytterhogdals IK.

Here's what a trio of that group have made of their experience so far:



Stuart Callaway

Apprenticeship at: Blackburn
Now: Ange IF

I am gaining good experience playing in Sweden and I'm learning a lot about life in general. I'm grateful for LFE's support, they helped me make my mind up to make the decision to take this opportunity and then made all the arrangements to get me here.

Things aren't going exactly to plan on the pitch at the moment but we're improving with each passing week and the lads and I have been really welcomed to the club and area by all the locals.



Josh Chatee

Apprenticeship at: Reading
Now: Ange IF

I am really enjoying my experience in Sweden, playing and meeting new people. It definitely makes you more independent and self-sufficient. In England players at academies have everything done for them, whereas here you have to stand on your own two feet.

Learning a different way of playing and new culture is helping me develop as a player and this has been a great opportunity from LFE to continue my development as a footballer.



Jack Butts

Apprenticeship at: Shrewsbury Town
Now: Boden BK

LFE were hugely supportive throughout my time as an apprentice. They offered much more support than I really expected and obviously that was really important, particularly when I was released and faced with looking at what was next. Those further opportunities entailed this chance to come across and continue playing football.

If you look at the map I'm right up in the far right corner of Sweden, which I've found to be an amazing country. I love the football and the culture. I am having to be very independent but everybody has been very friendly and I've been made to feel very welcome here.

Academy Leagues Round-Up BY JACK WYLIE

Youth Alliance

North East Division

Defending champions Mansfield are setting the pace in the North East section once again as they top the table with seven points from their opening three games.

At the time of writing the Stags have yet to concede a goal, but had also struggled to find the back of the net themselves, with their two victories courtesy of a solitary goal.

Doncaster are in the mix just a point behind after beating Lincoln City 5-1, while third-placed Rotherham's seven-game unbeaten run dating back to the latter stages of last season came to an end with a 2-1 defeat to Chesterfield.

North West Division

Usual suspects are challenging at the top of the North West division as last year's runners-up and 2014-15 winners Bury lead the way with a 100 per cent record after three games.

16-year-old striker Rob Harker netted braces in both wins over Morecambe and Preston before the Shakers condemned reigning champions Wigan to their third successive loss of the campaign.

Latics' new Under-18s coach Nick Chadwick has endured a tough start and still awaits his first point in charge since taking over in the summer.

Rochdale, Carlisle, Walsall and Burnley all remain unbeaten, trailing the leaders by two points, while Blackpool returned from their Dutch trip in style with a 5-0 victory over local rivals Fleetwood, which included an audacious chip from outside the area by Alwyn Flynn.

South East Division

There's goals galore in the South East section, with 88 strikes in 17 games.

Leyton Orient were runaway winners in the Championship Round last season and have continued that momentum with three convincing shutouts.

Tristan Abrahams has already taken his tally to seven goals from the three games, including a hat-trick in a 5-0 win over Gillingham.

Orient have won 13 and drawn two since last losing 1-0 to Luton in the first game of 2016. The Hatters are also yet to drop points, with Paul Driver's side involved in a 10-2 drubbing of Dagenham & Redbridge, with Freddie Hinds smashing a hat-trick.

South West Division

It's been a slow start for champions Plymouth Argyle, who have begun the campaign with two consecutive draws against Portsmouth and Bournemouth.

Despite Pompey beating Exeter 4-2 in the Youth Alliance Cup, it is the Grecians who are the early pacesetters in the league with seven points out of a possible nine.

Portsmouth are two points behind in second, ahead of Cheltenham on goal difference, who beat Oxford United a week after the U's produced an emphatic 4-0 victory over the winless Bournemouth.

U18 Professional Development League

Charlton Athletic are the team to beat after claiming silverware last year, but following an action-packed 4-4 draw with Leeds in their opening game, the Addicks then lost 2-0 to Crewe to continue their poor start.

Athletic beat Sheffield United in the final of the competition last term and the Blades have made a promising start, hitting Millwall for six to reach the summit of the table with two wins from two.

Five clubs are tied on four points, including Queens Park Rangers, who lead the chasing pack in second following a convincing 6-1 win against bottom-side Sheffield Wednesday.

Meanwhile, 2015-16 regular season winners Watford and Nottingham Forest have both been slow starters.

Forest have been on the wrong end of two 3-2 scorelines to Colchester and Ipswich Town, while Watford have played out 2-2 and 3-3 stalemates with Crewe and Barnsley, respectively.

U18 Premier League

North

Derby County flew out of the blocks by thumping Manchester United 4-0 as striker Cameron Cresswell bagged a hat-trick, but the Rams followed that result with a 3-2 defeat to Blackburn Rovers.

Wolves also had an opening day to remember as they put five past Sunderland and the Wanderers sit second behind Liverpool, who are the only side to maintain a 100 per cent record.

Newcastle pulled off a terrific display to beat Everton as substitute Thomas Allan secured a 1-0 win against last year's second-placed side in division one of the play-offs.

South

Norwich made a scintillating start to the season as Louis McIntosh and Kieran Higgs both scored twice in a 6-0 win over Swansea, but the Canaries were then brought back down to earth with a 3-1 loss to Brighton.

Fulham have also recorded their first win of the season after a 2-1 win over Leicester but West Ham top the table with a maximum six points.



Spain and Holland 2016

Bristol City, Oxford United and Reading's Under-18 squads jetted across to Madrid this summer, while Accrington Stanley, Blackpool, Blackburn Rovers, Ipswich Town and Shrewsbury Town's U18s took part in a similar trip to The Netherlands. In all, around 140 players took part in the Erasmus+ funded trips courtesy of LFE. Here we look at some of the best moments caught on camera.



Bristol City Under-18s prepare for their journey from Heathrow to Madrid



Reading perform small-sided possession drills with Rayo Vallecano coaches



Craig Thordarson admires his footgolf skills



The Seasiders youngsters during a training session led by Sparta Rotterdam coaches



Rovers listen to instructions from NAC Breda coaches



The young Robins get stuck into a lesson learning some Spanish phrases



Oxford United's Charley Tuttle shows off his quick feet to the AD Alcorcon coaches



The Ipswich squad pose after winning the Zilveren Botter trophy



◀ Cameron Allen juggles with the ball during training



Stanley's youngsters get a history lesson at the Overloon War Museum



Rovers walk out to face Feyenoord



George Hughes, Chris Gallagher, Jake Kerins & Ryan Sears (L-R) enjoy a game of footgolf



The Royals players get a taste of sitting in the Atlético Madrid dressing room



Ciaran Donnelly and his Blackpool side enjoy a bike ride



▶ Tractor Boys keeper Nicholas Hayes gets down to the ball during training

How did our clubs fare?

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals For	Goals Against
29	10	6	13	42	38



Accrington Stanley

- W 2-1 ADO Den Haag
- L 2-3 FC Twente
- L 0-3 PSV Eindhoven



Blackburn Rovers

- W 2-1 Feyenoord
- L 1-3 Vitesse Arnhem
- D 3-3 NAC Breda



Blackpool

- D 1-1 Osnabruck
- W 1-0 FC Utrecht
- L 0-2 Excelsior



Bristol City

- L 0-1 Atlético Madrid (45)
- L 0-2 Oxford United (45)
- L 0-2 CF Trival Valderas
- L 1-3 Getafe CF



Ipswich Town

- L 2-3 ADO Den Haag
- W 1-0 FC Volendam
- L 0-1 AZ Alkmaar
- D 0-0 FC Groningen
- D 1-1 FC Groningen
- D 0-0 FC Volendam



Oxford United

- L 0-1 Atlético Madrid (45)
- W 2-0 Bristol City (45)
- W 3-2 CD Leganés
- D 0-0 AD Alcorcón



Reading

- L 0-1 Atlético Madrid
- W 3-0 Rayo Vallecano
- W 1-0 AD Unión Adarve



Shrewsbury Town

- W 4-1 MSV Duisburg
- L 0-2 FC Volendam
- W 12-1 Excelsior



THE MONEY MEN

With the transfer market going crazy it's been another summer when graduates of the apprenticeship programme have hit the headlines, with some high profile moves totalling a cool £80m plus...

JOHN STONES Everton to Manchester City (£47.5m)

The former Barnsley apprentice became the most expensive English player in history and the world's second most expensive defender ever this summer when joining Manchester City for £47.5m.

Not that the Tykes were complaining mind, with the transfer netting them a reported £7m via a sell-on clause they'd inserted when he left Oakwell to pursue his Premier League dream three years ago.

The 22-year-old England international signed a six-year deal at the Etihad to become City boss Pep Guardiola's eighth signing. "It's an ambitious club with a great manager so I can't wait to get stuck in," he said, on arriving in Manchester.

JOE ALLEN Liverpool to Stoke City (£13m)

Eight years on from completing his apprenticeship, Allen's moves to Liverpool and then Stoke this summer come in at a combined £28m.

A key member of Chris Coleman's heroic Wales squad that reached the Euro 2016 semi-finals, Allen's tika-taka style is likely to fit in well in Mark Hughes's reformed Stoke team that now employ a more fluid style.

LEWIS COOK Leeds United to AFC Bournemouth (undisclosed)

Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe completed a year long pursuit of the Leeds midfielder this summer to finally land his man. Cook, Apprentice of the Year in 2015 and The English Football Leagues Young Player of the Year last term, has been earmarked for the top from an early age.

Still only 19, Cook's maturity, class and vision belie his age and convinced Howe to pay around £6m up front with further add-ons that could eventually see the fee reach £10m for the England youth international.

MATT PHILLIPS QPR to West Bromwich Albion (£5.5m)

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since Matt Phillips was named as The League Two Apprentice of the Year in 2009 while at Wycombe.

Moves to Blackpool and Queens Park Rangers followed for the winger, who became a Scotland international while at Bloomfield Road.

Coveted by Tony Pulis for over a year, Phillips made a £5.5m move to The Hawthorns in July.

AARON TSHIBOLA Reading to Aston Villa (undisclosed)

Now 21, Tshibola joined Reading's academy as a 13-year-old and progressed through the club's youth ranks. He completed his apprenticeship in 2013 and made his first team debut twelve months later at Nottingham Forest before being dispatched on loan to Hartlepool.

Ironically, the midfielder who has represented England at youth level, made more appearances for the Pools than with his parent club before joining Aston Villa for an undisclosed fee thought to be in the region of £5m.

ROB HOLDING Bolton Wanderers to Arsenal (£2m)

Not many players end up being relegated from the Championship and then moving to the Premier League runners-up. However that was the situation that Rob Holding found himself in this summer.

In an otherwise dismal campaign for Bolton, Holding made 30 appearances during his first senior campaign and won the club's player of the season award, persuading Arsene Wenger to part with £2m to secure his signature.



The Debutants

BY GAVIN WILLACY



Tyreeq Bakinson Luton Town

1 Central midfielder Tyreeq had an incredible first season as an apprentice. Having struggled to get into the Hatters' starting XI as they began an FA Youth Cup run that took them all the way to the quarter-finals, Bakinson became a major cog in Paul Driver's side and then signed a three-and-a-half-year professional contract. On the last day of the season, he - along with second year James Justin - made his first team debut. Tyreeq, who has been at Luton since he was nine, spent pre-season with the first team and is hoping to add more appearances this term. First team boss Nathan Jones said: "Tyreeq fits the profile of the kind of player we like. He's got the ability, the fitness, the hunger, he's disciplined, he wants to learn and we feel he can get better."



Andre Dozzell Ipswich Town

2 Last season's Academy Player of the Year was rewarded for his fabulous season when he made his debut in mid-April, coming on as a half-time sub against Sheffield Wednesday. Andre was just 16 but ten months older than his dad, Jason, was when he made his Ipswich debut 32 years ago at 16 years and just 57 days. Remarkably, Andre scored the equaliser for the Tractor Boys, matching his dad's achievements in the previous generation! Former Spurs midfielder Jason remains the youngest goal-scorer in the top flight of English football, while Andre has been capped by England at youth level.



Connor O'Grady, James Murphy & George Hirst Sheffield Wednesday

8 9 10 Wednesday boss Carlos Carvalhal surprisingly gave debuts to three apprentices in their League Cup tie at Cambridge in early August.

Centre-back O'Grady impressed in defence, while James Murphy and George Hirst also got an opportunity. Hirst has a lot to live up to as his dad is Owls legend David, who played nearly 300 times for Wednesday in a decade at Hillsborough, before finishing his career at Southampton. David won three caps for England and now coaches in the Owls' academy. George, who hit a double on his international bow for England Under-17s against Germany, signed a professional deal in March and is on course to gain further opportunities.



David Kasumu, Brandon Thomas-Asante & Andrew Osei-Bonsu MK Dons

3 4 5 Rarely does a club field a first year apprentice in a senior game, let alone only a few weeks after they have left school. However, Karl Robinson, who has previously nurtured the likes of Dele Alli, deployed a trio of first year apprentices for their EFL Cup tie at Newport County.

His faith in the Dons' latest crop of young guns was rewarded when they came from 2-0 down to beat their League Two opponents 3-2, with the winner coming in injury time. David Kasumu played for over an hour, while Brandon Thomas-Asante and Andrew Osei-Bonsu both played the whole game.



Dennis Adeniran & Ryan Sessegnon Fulham

6 7 Fulham handed debuts to both Adeniran and Sessegnon, captain of England Under-16s, in the EFL Cup and saw it pay off as they won 3-2 across London at Leyton Orient. Second year Adeniran even got on the score sheet with the opening goal, heading past Sam Sargeant, who was making his Orient debut just a few weeks after finishing his apprenticeship. He was replaced just after an hour but left back Sessegnon played the whole game despite being only a month into his apprenticeship. He then followed that up by scoring against Cardiff a minute after coming on as a substitute, days before collecting his GCSE results.



COMMERCIAL GOALS

Former frontman Pietro Palladino is now found bringing in sponsors, dealing with caterers and ensuring fans and guests are happy on matchdays.

The former Wycombe Wanderers forward is plying his trade for AFC Wimbledon as a Commercial Executive. Touchline caught up with Palladino at the start of this season.

"My main roles are in the commercial department, maintaining sponsors by looking after them, managing staff and hospitality on matchdays, generally trying to increase revenue, and putting on events," explained the diminutive Palladino.

"We had a pop-up shop when we got to Wembley for the play-off final, and we've just had a kit launch. I couldn't have timed it better - us getting promotion in my first season at the club. I even had a bus parade to organise!"

Palladino was a successful apprentice at Wycombe in everything other than gaining a pro contract. He impressed coaching and teaching staff immensely with his positive attitude, determination to progress in all areas and willingness to do extra activities to help take the next step in the game. That included studying for the BTEC extended diploma, securing distinctions in every unit.

"Some team mates in the academy were not that academic and for them it was football or nothing. They were banking on it," he added.

"None of my year group are still pros. I always had another plan and with the support of LFE, it got me into university at St Mary's in Twickenham. If I hadn't done the extra units



"I always had another plan and with the support of LFE, it got me into university at St Mary's in Twickenham. If I hadn't done the extra units I wouldn't have got in there and I wouldn't be where I am now."

I wouldn't have got in there and I wouldn't be where I am now. It was vital and I'm really glad I did it."

The year group below Palladino's was strong. From that cohort, Anthony Stewart is back at Wycombe after a spell at Crewe, Kadeem Harris is at Cardiff and Josh Scowen is also in the Championship now with Barnsley. But Palladino soon realised that organising sport could be the pathway for him, rather than playing.

"I played for a few non-league clubs, but after my degree I was elected into a post at the students union, organising all the fixtures for every sports club at the university, working with the presidents, sponsors and organising events," said Palladino. "That experience helped me get this job at Wimbledon."

"Being an apprentice made me grow up, take on a lot of responsibilities. It was my first full-time job and got me used to being punctual, disciplined, hard-working and looking after myself on and off the pitch. That stood me in good stead for work after football."

So does Palladino still pine for playing and wish he was out there on the wing for the Dons, rather than bringing in revenue to help pay them?

"Of course! I always wish I was out there. That will never leave me. But I enjoy being involved in football," he admitted. "I'm very happy here and it's interesting seeing a different side to the game. I enjoy being in the back office. I think being an ex-player gives me a bit of an advantage because I know what the day-to-day of being a pro actually involves."

With the go-ahead for a new stadium at their spiritual Plough Lane home getting closer and closer, Palladino knows the club are on the verge of something very exciting.

He continued: "Everything will change massively with the new stadium. It will be an amazing time to be at the club."

"I'm very happy here and it's interesting seeing a different side to the game. I think being an ex-player gives me a bit of an advantage because I know what the day-to-day of being a pro actually involves."



THE GRADUATES

BY STEVEN SUTCLIFFE

Apprentices from the not too distant past tell Touchline about their experiences and outline why developing a dual career is a good option for the modern day player.



DAVID MORGAN

Apprenticeship at:
Nottingham Forest

Graduate of:
Staffordshire University

Capped by Northern Ireland at Under-21 level, David Morgan freely admits that he didn't pay enough attention to his education as an apprentice and wasn't sure what he was going to do when he left the City Ground at the age of 19.

Loan spells at Lincoln, Dundee and Tamworth did not help him stay within the (then) Football League and he told Touchline that the situation he faced is not uncommon for young players, a summer waiting for the phone to ring.

"I left there (Forest) thinking I needed to move onto the next club but that didn't come as quickly as I thought it would, so I thought I better look at other things as well as football," Morgan said.

"When you're at Forest and you're a bright prospect, you're always thinking 'I'm never going to need that' but reality hits. When I got released I needed something else.

"A lot of people leave academies and they don't go anywhere, they can't go anywhere because they haven't played enough games."

Currently turning out for Nuneaton Town in the National League North, Morgan finally got fixed-up but also opted to enlist the help of The Professional Footballers' Association to pursue wider aims. Two years on, he celebrated a First-class honours degree in Professional Sports Writing and Broadcasting.

"I'm actually not sure that I want to go into Sports Journalism but the course sets me up for other things," he continued.

"I enjoyed it but you have to be realistic, to get to the top level of punditry you probably need to have played at the top level and be a recognisable voice or face. I'm probably looking at doing a PGCE to become a school teacher."



The PFA's Jason Lee congratulates David Morgan



DALTON HARRIS

Apprenticeship at:
Scunthorpe United

Graduate of:
University of York

Now 22, Dalton had already spent time working for Capita Asset Services and Hewlett Packard (HP) before joining the Close Brothers, an independent merchant banking group based in London known for market-making and corporate finance services.

His appointment within the Banks' Treasury department, as a dealer, followed immediately on from his graduation from the Business School at the University of York, with a degree in Management, earlier this summer.

"My course effectively lasted four years because I did a year on placement at HP in what was the third year of my course," said Harris, who left Scunthorpe United in 2012.

"Initially, I felt disadvantaged compared to other students who had done A Levels because I had no experience of writing academically, which perhaps wouldn't have mattered on some other courses but did on this one.

"However, I worked hard and quickly picked things up and enjoyed the breadth of the course. A degree is absolutely worth doing as long as you do something that you're really interested in. I don't consider myself to be naturally clever, like anything, you have to enjoy what you're doing and be committed to be successful," he added.

That success was aided by experience gained on several internships where he was exposed to working directly on sales strategy, granular forecasting, risk analysis and return on investment analysis.

Yet he happily admits that his first full-time job is already exceeding his expectations.

"This is probably the best job I could be doing other than playing football," he added.

"I'd originally intended to apply for a graduate position but the company approached me and said that they were rejigging things and would I be interested in a very specific non-graduate scheme position.

"I work on the money markets, assessing our cash position, government forecasts, looking at gilts, our lending to other business and I've been given quite a lot of responsibility and it's been far better and satisfying than I could've ever imagined.



HARRY HOOMAN

Apprenticeship at:
Shrewsbury Town

Graduate of:
Manchester Metropolitan University

A first team debut at 18 is a promising start under any circumstances but for Harry it was one of just a few highlights of his football career which was effectively ended by injury at the age of 22.

While the difficulties of being forced to relinquish a dream career are difficult under any circumstances, Hooman, to his credit, had already started to "invest in his future" by working towards a degree in Sport and Exercise Science, while he was still playing.

"When I first signed as a professional I had discussions with The PFA about continuing my education because I enjoyed doing it when I was an apprentice. I was aware being a footballer was a short career, so I just wanted to invest in my future really and carry it on," he said.

"Obviously it's been a much shorter career than I would've liked! I had a bad injury in my early twenties and I'm now just really glad that I took the time out to start a degree.

"When I first started I was desperate to commit 100 percent to football but the reality is that as a player you have plenty of time to do a degree or adopt other interests. You've got two days off a week, at least, you just have to organise that time better.

"I am probably the perfect example (of why you should) but it's the same for all players. You never really know what is going to happen, so, it's planning for the future really.

"I would like to stay involved in football. I am doing lots of coaching and scouting work and would like to stay down that route and bring my Sports Science into it," he added.

LifeSkills

BY JACK WYLIE

Another season has begun for academy clubs across the country and LFE's Life Skills sessions are well underway for the latest crop of apprentices.

The programmes continue to cover a range of topics in a bid to maximise the development of the young players both on and off the pitch, with workshops scheduled to be delivered throughout the year.

Touchline caught up with apprentices at Wolves after Matthew Smith (If U Care Share) had covered emotional well-being.

"I think it'll help me a lot because even if friends or anything come to me and ask me for help, I'll know what to do and I can tell them what to do," Northern Ireland youth international keeper Rory Brown said.

"It's made me more aware of things and how to deal with things in life. Especially being an apprentice and being so young away from home, I definitely know how to deal with things better now.

"At the very end where they said it's okay not to be okay, I think that everyone can understand that."

16-year-old Striker Dom Moan echoed Brown's comments and spoke positively about the life skills session.

"I thought it was a good session," he said. "It wasn't what I was expecting but it did stand out.

"I think the sessions improve us, not just as young apprentices, but as people as well. Not many people get the opportunities that we have."

The 'If U Care Share' session is designed to encourage young people to communicate their problems, instead of suffering alone.

Workshop leader, Smith said: "We all have emotions, whether they be positive or negative - but how we deal with them is the most important thing,

"The key message is just about talking about how you feel and maybe when things are getting a bit too much or you're struggling a bit more, it's just about talking about them struggles.

"We really do believe that having a conversation can save a life."

The charity has worked with LFE since the 2010-11 season and Smith admitted he is impressed with the resources provided to support players regardless of whether they end up as professionals or not.

"Before our involvement with LFE and the life skills programme, from the outside looking in you would expect apprentices to be coming in, putting in a few hours of football and then be sent on their way.

"But it's not like that at all. I can't think of any other apprenticeship scheme where lads are given the opportunities that they are through LFE and I think it's a fantastic set-up.

"It's a great opportunity that they have and it gives them so many different outcomes if the overall aim (of being a footballer) doesn't happen."



If U Care Share's Matthew Smith takes the session with Wolves Under-18s



Dan McKenna and Nyeko Sinclair are rewarded for their efforts



The team participate in one of the activities

Each season over 160 Life Skills sessions take place at clubs through LFE to add value to the Apprenticeship programme.

Here are the options for 2016-17:

The Old Favourites:



A hard hitting 90-minute session tackling issues around alcohol, drugs and gambling.



Training your brain for optimal sports performance.



Emotional well-being encouraging players to talk through their issues with others.



Equality and diversity training for the modern day player.



Sexual health awareness and respectful relationships.



Are you a risk or a role model on social media?

The New Entries:

Tobi Alabi

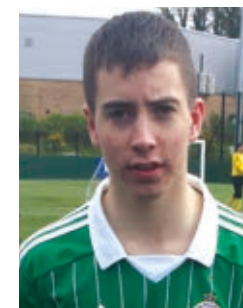
National Cardiac Health Awareness Programme



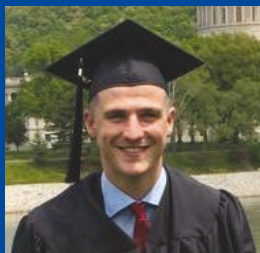
Former Millwall striker Tobi Alabi was forced to retire from football in 2013 after collapsing during a game. He subsequently set-up The Heart4More Foundation and is using his own experiences to promote cardiac health and show apprentices how to save other people's lives.

Charlie Fogarty

Anything is Possible



A former academy player at WBA and Birmingham City, Charlie, who was hit by a car and suffered severe injuries, uses his own experiences to reach as many players as possible to prove that 'Anything really is possible' with the right outlook.



THE AMERICAN OPTION



Former Hull City apprentice Jules Gabbiadini has a famous football name as the son of former Sunderland and Derby goal king Marco, but here he tells Touchline about how studying for a Degree and Postgraduate qualification in America could help him net a promising new career.

Firstly, let me start with my time as an apprentice. I loved my time at Hull, we had a great team which won the Youth Alliance League in my second year. We had a real old school Glaswegian coach in Billy Russell and he taught us all to grow up quickly and become accountable for our actions on and off the pitch. I made appearances for the reserves as well which was a great experience, though obviously it was a devastating day when I found out I hadn't been offered a contract and one I will always be disappointed about.

It's up there with one of the worst feelings you can experience. You spend years working towards one thing and then it's clutched away in a matter of minutes. It left a huge void as I hadn't thought about anything other than football. Thankfully, I'd done well in my GCSEs and worked hard on the education side of being an apprentice, which allowed me to go on to a scholarship to the University of Charleston, West Virginia.

The idea (of going to America) was first brought up by Paul Bartlett, my LFE regional officer. He had some contacts that helped smooth that path. I wasn't sure where I was going with my life, so it was one of those things where you say to yourself, why not?

I completed my Sports Business degree in three years, a year ahead of schedule (a standard degree takes 4 years here) and decided to use my remaining year of eligibility to get my Masters, which was paid for and enabled me to have another year playing at a good level. I thought it would make sense to do a

straight business qualification as my Masters to open up more opportunities in the future.

I'd love to still be involved in football but want to be sensible now I've earned these degrees. I may be able to earn more in a different career than playing non-league football. Ideally, I'd like to get a job that allows me to play semi-pro at the weekend. You hear stories like Jamie Vardy rising through the leagues but in football you have to be realistic. Very few have that sort of success. My qualifications offer other employment opportunities.

I'm not saying that players should not believe in their ability to earn a contract it's just that it doesn't hurt to explore other options. LFE can help and the earlier you start the better.

For me, America was appealing because you can play football at a great level and continue to train every day. You're treated the same as a professional in England and to be able to come out at the end with two degrees and no student debts is amazing.

I've had a great time and been part of two successful teams, just falling short of being National Champions. It's a life changing experience and not something that can be quantified purely by academic achievement. While you're out there you get to do some amazing things and I've got a friend on just about every continent now. I'm looking forward to seeing where my qualifications take me and I'll always look back on the experience as a happy one that will help me progress.

Dayle Southwell

BY STEVEN SUTCLIFFE

Not many players about can say that working in a Grimsby fish factory was the making of them.

Yet that's exactly the route that has been taken by former Grimsby apprentice Dayle Southwell, who joined League Two club Wycombe Wanderers this summer.

Fifty-four goals in two seasons with National League North side Boston United obviously helped, alerting several league clubs to his potential. However, released by the club he supported after spending ten years there from the age of 10, Southwell credits the character building job of "putting fish into big grinders" and packing fish food, as helping him to appreciate his chosen profession.

"When I went to Boston I knew it was going to be part time so I had to go out and get myself a real job. There's not a lot of jobs out there so I had to take what I could get in the fish food factory and grind it out," he said.

"The hard work paid off because I'm here now and enjoying my football. I was packing fish tank lights and making fish food. We were putting fish into big grinders and things like that so it was a smelly job and not one I enjoyed but you've got to do what you've got to do and I think I'm better for it now.

"Playing football every day, I appreciate it so much more now because when I was at Grimsby I didn't know what real work was but now I know what hard work is all about."

It was in every respect a world away from professional football, though working in the factory was a financial necessity.

"You've got to do what you've got to do to earn money. I used to come home absolutely stinking of fish," he continued.

"A lot of the days I would get out of my house at 8am in the morning, then go straight from work at 5pm to Boston for training and not get home until 10.30pm.

"Sometimes if I didn't have enough time to get a shower, my teammates at Boston would smell a bit of the scent on me. I've learned the hard way and it's made me realise how lucky you are to be a professional footballer, so I'm really glad I did it."

Jamie Vardy's rapid ascension up the football pyramid has shown that players can succeed after moving in to the professional ranks from non-league and Southwell admitted that he is an inspiration to players with aspirations of playing at a higher level.

Vardy joined Leicester from Fleetwood in 2012 and has gone on to win the Premier League title with the Foxes and be capped by England, scoring against Wales at Euro 2016.

He said: "You've got to be ambitious and when people prove that non-league to the Premier League can be done, you've got to look at that and think why not me as well?"

"If I can score goals, you never know where that will take you. I'll just carry on working hard and let that inspire me."





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