

No. 37 / FEBRUARY 2019

Touchline

League
Football
Education

GETTING YOUR

MIND RIGHT

MARVIN SORDELL TALKS
ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE
OF PUTTING MENTAL
HEALTH FIRST



PLUS DEBUTANTS • FEJIRI OKENABIRHIE • RAINBOW LACES • TALENTTRANSFER



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



No. 37 / FEBRUARY 2019

WRITTEN BY JACK WYLIE | DESIGN BY ICG

TUESDAY 7TH MAY 2019
Bradford City FC
Valley Parade



WEDNESDAY 8TH MAY 2019
Burton Albion FC
Pirelli Stadium



THURSDAY 9TH MAY 2019
Woking FC
Laithwaite Community Stadium



Assessment Trials 2019

Players are provided the platform to showcase their talents in front of scouts from professional clubs, non-league clubs and Universities in the UK and abroad at LFE's annual Assessment Trials.

Those coming to the end of their apprenticeship or the end of a first professional contract (Under 19 year) are eligible to participate in a bid to find a route back into the game at an appropriate level.

All games will be filmed and streamed via LFE's Facebook page and YouTube channel, while individual player clips will also be made available on YouTube.

For more information, visit
www.lfe.org.uk/trials2019
www.facebook.com/LFEonline
<http://bit.ly/LFETrialsTV>



Higher Education

If you're thinking about going to University next September, LFE's Higher Education Guide provides extensive information regarding the UCAS application process, including Clearing and information regarding student finance and support.

www.lfe.org.uk/downloads/apprentice-downloads



USA Scholarships

For those considering heading out to the States on an American Soccer Scholarship, take some time to consult LFE's Guide to American Scholarships. The document offers step-by-step advice on eligibility, entry requirements and how to earn a scholarship, along with accounts from former apprentices regarding their U.S. experience.

www.lfe.org.uk/downloads/apprentice-downloads
www.lfe.org.uk/progression/usa-scholarships



The FA Youth Cup is reaching its business end with eight EFL Academies still chasing silverware at the Round of 16 stage.

One of the biggest scalps of this year's tournament came at the Wham Stadium, with **Accrington Stanley's** Charlie Ridge and Lewis Gilboay putting the home outfit 2-0 up inside six minutes against a strong **Leeds United** side, before eventually securing a 4-2 win after extra-time.

That result booked a fourth round meeting with **Liverpool**, where their run ended as Stanley suffered a 4-0 defeat to the U18 Premier League North leaders, who will host **Wigan Athletic** for a place in the last eight.

The Latics produced the performance of Round Four with a scintillating display at the KCom Stadium, hammering **Hull City** 6-2 thanks to a hat-trick from first-year apprentice Joe Gelhardt, as well as a double for Charlie Jolley, who also found the net in a 2-1 win against **Wolverhampton Wanderers** at Molineux in the previous round.

The lowest ranked club left in the competition are Sky Bet League Two **Bury**, who have won back-to-back ties on the road, winning 4-2 after extra-time against **Stevenage** before seeing off **Peterborough United** by a solitary goal.

The Shakers youngsters will next make the short trip to EFL Youth Alliance North West rivals **Preston North End** after they followed up a penalty shootout victory over **Charlton Athletic** with an emphatic 3-0 win against Category One Academy **Norwich City**.

Bolton Wanderers have been handed a third Premier League opponent in succession in **Leicester City**, having already sent **Newcastle United** (2-1) and **Crystal Palace** (4-2) packing, with Matty Argent-Barnes scoring in both games.

Derby County will test themselves against **Manchester City** in the fifth round after edging past last year's semi-finalists **Blackpool** before a convincing 3-0 victory over **Sheffield United**, while **Aston Villa** have also progressed thanks to four goals in two outings for midfielder Jacob Ramsey.

Elsewhere, there was third-round heartache for **Millwall**, who led until stoppage-time against **Tottenham Hotspur** through Billy Mitchell's sensational strike from distance, but eventually lost 2-1 after 120 minutes.

Meanwhile, Brad Lethbridge and Joe Hancott recovered a two-goal deficit for **Portsmouth** against **Liverpool** before a last-gasp winner ended their dreams of a giant-killing, while **QPR's** Armelindo Mema and Nathan Carlyle overturned a 2-1 reversal deep into extra-time to cruelly send **Rochdale** out.

However, there were a handful of upsets for EFL Youth Alliance teams in the third round. **Gillingham** pulled off a 2-1 away win at **Blackburn Rovers**, **Oxford United** overcame **Burnley** on penalties and Connor Heath's brace guided **Crewe Alexandra** to victory at **Bristol City**.



THE FA YOUTH CUP

LFE is supported by:



Academy Leagues Round-Up

North East Division

After three years of dominance from Mansfield Town, the North East division is in uncharted territory with the top six teams separated by just four points.

Bradford City are the current pacesetters after losing just one of their last 11 games, although Grimsby Town are hot on their heels having beaten the Bantams 2-0 in January, with Rumarn Burrell scoring his 12th goal of the season.

Hartlepool United are behind the Mariners on goal difference in third, while Mansfield have dropped to fourth after consecutive defeats to sixth-placed Lincoln City (2-1) and Doncaster Rovers (3-1) who are a win away from top spot with a game in hand.

Donny were unbeaten in 16 league games from February to November, but suffered 3-2 and 3-1 reversals to Bradford and Hartlepool before Christmas to relinquish control of the region.

North West Division

Wigan Athletic have been an imperious force this season, remaining unbeaten in all 24 fixtures across three competitions so far, leading them to top of the North West table, the fifth round of the FA Youth Cup and the EFL Youth Alliance Cup Northern final.

The attacking trio of Joe Gelhardt, Charlie Jolley and Kyle Joseph have been in devastating form, with the Latics netting 51 league goals while boasting the meanest defensive record having conceded just nine times.

Their tally of 40 points from a possible 42 has led to a nine-point lead ahead of reigning champions Rochdale, who have won five on the trot since a 2-0 loss to the leaders in November.

Elsewhere, Fleetwood Town are matching Dale's run of victories, which began with a hat-trick for first-year striker Kian Makepeace in a comprehensive 7-1 win over Port Vale, while they have since recorded four clean sheets in succession.

South East Division

The regular season is complete in the South East division, with Northampton Town claiming the title after amassing 50 points, finishing in style with a 1-0 win against third-placed Southend United.

That result meant the Shrimpers youngsters were shutout for the first time since April having netted 65 goals in the previous 19 league games, largely thanks to the scoring exploits of first-year apprentices Freddy Eastwood (13) and Charlie Kelman (18).

Seven wins from the final eight games sealed second spot for Peterborough United, while 2017-18 South East victors Milton Keynes Dons registered four wins in a row to end the campaign.

Defending Southern Merit League Two champions Leyton Orient only mustered two league victories, although one of those did come against the runaway champions as they overturned a one-goal deficit through Amin Benyoucef and Jaedon Phillips.

South West Division

Oxford United flew out of the blocks in August and preserved their lead throughout to end the regular season seven points ahead of nearest challengers AFC Bournemouth.

The U's lost just once all season, although they had to rely on two vital late equalisers to maintain that record and secure silverware. Jack Stevens headed home with one minute of normal time to spare of a 3-3 draw with Bournemouth, which was followed by an 86th-minute penalty from Fabio Lopes to snatch a point against Portsmouth.

Reigning champions Exeter City left themselves with too much ground to recover after an inconsistent start, but head into the Merit League phase high on confidence having triumphed in five of their final six matches, including a 2-0 victory over the second-placed Cherries as Cheick Diabate and Theo Simpson got on the scoresheet.

Elsewhere, Cheltenham Town were unlucky to miss out on a Merit League One berth on goal difference despite beating the two teams directly above them during the final few weeks in Swindon Town (2-1) and Pompey (3-2), with Olly Price finding the net in both games.

** Information correct as of 30 January*

U18 Professional Development League North

Last year's Northern winners Leeds United have climbed to the top once again having hit some fine form with six successive victories since November.

That run included an enthralling 6-5 win over Crystal Palace, while second-year apprentice Niall Huggins kicked off 2019 in style by bagging a hat-trick against Crewe Alexandra.

Sheffield Wednesday had set the pace before Christmas despite losing home and away to Leeds, but two 2-2 draws to Burnley and Barnsley at the beginning of the New Year meant the Owls slipped to second having played a game more.

Meanwhile, Nottingham Forest are in contention just two points adrift of the top, but have also faltered in recent weeks with just one point from their last two fixtures.

U18 Professional Development League South

Ipswich Town are leading the chasing pack behind leaders Cardiff City, with five wins on the trot closing the gap to three points, although the Bluebirds have played a game less.

The two teams clashed in December, with the Tractor Boys registering a crucial 2-1 victory through Lounes Foudil and Matt Healy, while they then overcame third-placed Millwall 5-3 thanks to a brace from first-year apprentice Tyreece Simpson.

The Young Lions boast the Professional Development League's top scorer in their ranks in 14-goal George Alexander, who has struck three hat-tricks this season, but back-to-back losses to the top two have severely dented their title challenge.

U18 Premier League North

It's been an incredible campaign so far for Derby County, who are up to second in the Northern division after nine wins from their last 11 outings to leave them one point off top spot.

Their most significant victory came in November as they defeated league leaders Liverpool 2-1, with Morgan Whittaker and Jason Knight getting on the scoresheet for the Rams.

Blackburn Rovers enjoyed an upturn in results at the start of autumn to move up to eighth, with 3-2 and 4-1 wins against Sunderland and West Bromwich Albion, respectively, coming either side of holding Manchester City to a 1-1 draw.

U18 Premier League South

Aston Villa are the best of the EFL bunch in the Southern section, currently sitting in fourth position behind the leading trio of Tottenham Hotspur, Chelsea and Arsenal.

David Hughes' side recorded successive 5-1 victories over Southampton and Swansea City before Michael Tait doubled up in a 3-3 draw with Fulham, who have dropped to eighth.

Second-year Cottager Sonny Hilton enjoyed a memorable day against Reading as he took home the match ball after a 7-0 rout. Elsewhere, Norwich City remain bottom but did get off to a winning start to 2019 by seeing off the young Royals 2-1, with Finlay Barnes' second-half strike securing the points.





PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST

WITH
**MARVIN
SORDELL**

WRITER.
POET.
CHEF.
LINGUIST.
PIANIST.
**MENTAL HEALTH
AMBASSADOR.**

Marvin Sordell has reached some of the highest heights as a footballer.

At 27, the former Watford apprentice has played in the Premier League for two clubs, represented England at youth level and featured for Great Britain in a home Olympics during the London 2012 Games.

But football is just a small piece in the puzzle when describing the Burton Albion forward.

Writer. Poet. Chef. Linguist. Pianist. Mental Health Ambassador.

Sordell has many strings to his bow.

"It's healthy to have other things that you enjoy outside of your workplace," he told LFE. "I think that sometimes we forget that you start playing football because you love the freedom of running around and you'd come home from school or other things that might have caused you stress and you'd get a ball and kick it around.

"That was your hobby and your escape, so when football becomes your profession, it's no longer your escape, it's your life. Going into a club as a first-year apprentice is probably the biggest jump you'll make in football.

"From Under-16s to the youth team, you go from football being something you enjoy doing as a hobby to suddenly being your full-time work. You're training nearly every day and football is your job because that's what you're getting paid for, so you really are at the start of a professional career.

"When you're not going through the best time as a player, you need to have a different hobby or something that you can use to clear your mind, relax and be stress-free. If at the same time it's something that you can work towards career-wise then that's amazing.

"No matter how long you play for, there is always going to be a new phase of your life after football, whether that's at 18 or 35. Going into a new world can be very daunting if you don't prepare for it."

Sordell is more qualified than most to offer advice on the importance of mental health. Depression has been a recurring obstacle in his life, which at its most extreme led to a suicide attempt in 2013. ▶



"From when I was quite young I was always interested in learning," he added. "Writing just happened really and I've just fallen into it. I've always loved to cook as well and I've said that if I hadn't have forged a career in football then I would've tried to become a chef.

"There are so many things that you can explore and I think as professional footballers we're actually in a unique situation because we generally have some disposable income and we have a lot of free time.

"If you spend some of that time putting your energy into something that can help your future then that's going to be hugely beneficial and I don't think that takes anything away from trying to achieve great things in football. Being a well-rounded human-being is likely to help your football.

"When you're young, it's easy to think that you have to dedicate all your time to football, but in reality you can fit in a few hours a week to pursue other things that can benefit your life by making a positive impact on your mental health, which can then also aid your career because you're in a healthier mindset.

"We're footballers, but first and foremost we're people. As much as we want to develop as players, we need to develop as people. It's inevitable that football ends at some stage so life as a footballer is limited, but what you can do beyond the game has much fewer boundaries."

Now, the ex-England Under-21 international has formulated a work-life balance that enables him to perform on and off the pitch.

He has established himself as a key figure in Burton's team since joining in January 2017 and contributed to their recent run to the semi-finals of the Carabao Cup, although injury ruled him out of both legs against Manchester City.

Meanwhile, outside of football, Sordell has learned to play the piano to a competent standard, he is developing his grasp of the Spanish language and is close to becoming a published author, with his upcoming book 'Vulnerable Exposure' consisting of a mixture of poetry and prose.

"Being creative in many different ways has helped," he continued. "When you're judged solely based on the next training session or the next performance on the pitch then it can be difficult to be a happy person unless you have a separate identity away from the game.

"I also like reading about psychology and stories from people who are successful in sport. I've read about great leaders in history like Alexander the Great and great creators in history like Picasso and Shakespeare.

He said: "Players need to be as strong mentally as they are physically. You can build an amazing house, but none of it matters if the roof is leaking. If you're not healthy in your mind then it doesn't matter how great you are technically, tactically or physically because you won't be at your top level.

"I found it difficult to find a balance between football being my job and something that I love to do. When you're going through a tough spell on the pitch it can really take over your life and it can spiral into a major problem.

"At that time, you're very negative, very lethargic. I wasn't eating or sleeping well. We like to keep things bottled up regarding mental health and that's part of the problem, we don't let ourselves be vulnerable.

"Since I have spoken out, I've received so much support and positive feedback, so I can only encourage others that might be struggling to speak out and talk about things as much as you can. You'd be surprised how many people want to help and how many people are going through or have experienced similar things to yourself."

In a move to address player welfare concerns, the EFL has partnered with Mind - a significant first for English football - with the view to raising visibility of mental health problems in the industry.

Since being at his lowest ebb, Sordell has made a conscious effort to develop himself as a person off the pitch by using his spare time to focus on other interests in order to create an identity broader than just football, which he believes has ultimately helped to improve his emotional well-being.

I enjoy understanding how and why people become successful, I want to gain a better understanding of mental health and why I and other people feel a certain way.

"That's just me wanting to learn more and we're in a time where everything is so readily available to us, whether it's through reading books or articles or finding things online. We should use the tools at our disposal to progress and become more rounded individuals."

Having tackled his demons, Sordell is living with a healthier state of mind. And now his objective has shifted to helping others, taking up a role as an Ambassador for the charity CALM and expressing long-term ambitions to increase activity involving the Marvin Sordell Foundation.

"PLAYERS NEED TO BE AS STRONG MENTALLY AS THEY ARE PHYSICALLY."

"I'm humbled by the experiences I've had in life, the people I've met and what I'm able to do," said the former Bolton Wanderers and Burnley striker. "Being able to write and share my story and also give advice to younger generations of people is something I feel very committed to doing.

"As you progress from being an apprentice, a lot of the responsibility of your life is shifted towards you. You might move out of digs or your family home and suddenly have to learn to be more independent. You might have more money and have to learn how to handle and invest that sensibly.

"That means you really need to grow as a human-being, not just as a footballer, so having other passions and hobbies is a great thing because it gives you an opportunity to grow an identity beyond the game.

"I never take my career for granted. I work hard every day but I also enjoy it and that's one thing I make sure not to lose sight of. You play the game for fun when you're young and then as you get older it becomes more serious, but now I've made a conscious effort to make sure I'm just enjoying it and see where that takes me." ■



The EFL have chosen Mind as their Official Charity Partner, with the aim of using the network of 72 clubs and community trusts to help ensure that no one tackles a mental health problem alone.



AIM FOR
ACHIEVEMENT
IN MIND



THE PFA SAFETY NET

AN INNOVATIVE ONLINE SUPPORT SERVICE TO HELP YOUNG PLAYERS DEAL WITH THE PRESSURES OF PLAYING ACADEMY FOOTBALL.

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STEP 2: Click on 'Register' to create an account.

STEP 3: Access confidential advice, support and animated material.

DENIS PROSE

BY MARVIN SORDELL

*Along the road I start to drive,
With Denis Prose right by my side.
He's only small but I notice him,
As I gaze and watch the sun come in.*

*The birds are singing.
The flowers bloom.
It's all so beautiful,
Until you give him room.*

*As the sky clouds over, he starts to grow,
But the car is still in my control.
Swerving anxiously from lane to lane,
Whilst the glorious sunshine, turns to grey.*

*This drive's becoming ever so tough,
And Denis Prose has had enough.
Big enough now to master the wheel,
Says, "I'm in control now, just trust me, deal?"*

*A passenger on my very own journey,
Reduced to watching raindrops so large it's unearthly.
I have no power, but no longer afraid.
Since Denis Prose took over, I've just obeyed.*

*He tells me, close your eyes until I say.
On this journey, you cannot stay.
I'll take you to, where there is peace,
And above all, a place to sleep.*

BANG!

*Now you can open.
But he's gone, as my eyes have just awoken.*

*I look in the distance,
See pearly white doves,
And the youngest to oldest,
Of all my loves.*

*This place is so peaceful,
But the silence is deafening.
Don't weep for me though,
I'm free! I'm in Heaven.*



DEBUTANTS



 **Tyler Burey**
AFC Wimbledon

1 Exciting winger Tyler Burey caught the eye in pre-season and broke into the first-team with two starts in the Checktrade Trophy against Stevenage and Chelsea Under-21s.

The second-year apprentice was then drafted into action in Sky Bet League One by new manager Wally Downes, playing in three games during December to contribute to AFC Wimbledon's survival bid.

 **Martyn Box**
Barnet

2 Seventeen-year-old Martyn Box joined the Bees in March just prior to starting his apprenticeship having left Brighton & Hove Albion and was soon thrust into first-team action during pre-season.

The left-back went on to make his competitive debut in September as a late substitute in Barnet's 1-0 victory over Maidenhead in the National League before penning his first professional contract a week before Christmas.

 **Reece Staunton / Raaece Ellington / Eliot Goldthorp**
Bradford City

3/4/5 Bradford City used the Checktrade Trophy as an opportunity to involve first-year apprentices Eliot Goldthorp and Reece Staunton, as well as second-year Raaece Ellington.

Midfielder Goldthorp fired the winning penalty after the Bantams had held Everton Under-21s to a 1-1 draw in September, while he and Staunton were both handed their first starts against Oldham Athletic a month later, with Ellington being introduced off the bench.

Centre-back Staunton had already made his senior debut as an Under-16, becoming the club's youngest ever player as a 15-year-old in the same competition last season, while Goldthorp has added to his appearance tally by featuring twice in Sky Bet League One.

 **Jordan Helliwell**
Barnsley

6 Jordan Helliwell, Barnsley's reigning Academy Player of the Year, appeared on the bench alongside academy team-mate Jasper Moon for the first two Checktrade Trophy group fixtures against Oldham Athletic and Everton Under-21s.

First-year defender Helliwell finally managed to get on the pitch at the third time of asking as an 87th-minute substitute during a 2-1 win against Bradford City. Kieran Feeney was also in the matchday squad for the meetings with Oldham and the Bantams.

 **Jack Clarke / Ryan Edmondson**
Leeds United

7/8 Winger Jack Clarke has made a major impact in Leeds United's rise to the top of the Sky Bet Championship, with a string of notable cameos since his debut against Brentford in October.


The second-year apprentice sparked a tremendous comeback at Aston Villa in December, scoring the first goal as Marcelo Bielsa's team overturned a two-goal deficit to win 3-2, while he recently starred in a 2-0 win against Derby County, celebrating his first start by claiming the man-of-the-match award live on Sky Sports.

Elsewhere, striker Ryan Edmondson has featured twice off the bench so far in the second tier, appearing in a 2-0 victory over QPR in the final game of the 2017-18 campaign before a brief outing against Birmingham City in September.

 **Kion Etete / Tyreece Kennedy-Williams**
Notts County

9/10 Striker Kion Etete has already established himself as a regular member of Notts County's first-team squad having earned his debut as a substitute in the Checktrade Trophy against Newcastle United Under-21s in October, replacing second-year defender Tyreece Kennedy-Williams, who was also making his senior bow.

Etete has since been involved in the FA Cup and Sky Bet League Two and celebrated his 17th birthday in style by penning his first professional contract.

 **Haji Mnoga / Freddie Read / Brad Lethbridge / Leon Maloney**
Portsmouth

11/12/13/14 Four current apprentices have been given first-team experience during Pompey's run to the semi-final stage of the Checktrade Trophy, including first-year defender Haji Mnoga.

The 16-year-old played the full 90 minutes of a 1-0 away win at Crawley Town before earning another outing in a 3-2 victory over Tottenham Hotspur Under-21s, with striker Brad Lethbridge joining him in the starting line-up.

Lethbridge made a second appearance alongside fellow second-years Leon Maloney and Freddie Read as Kenny Jackett's side saw off Southend United 2-0. Midfielder Read was also involved against Arsenal Under-21s, playing the opening 59 minutes of a 2-1 win.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ▶

DEBUTANTS



Adam O'Reilly / Ethan Walker
Preston North End

15/16 After a crisis of injuries and suspensions in December, Preston North End manager Alex Neil turned to the Academy to fill his matchday squad with the inclusion of first-year apprentice Ethan Walker for games against Millwall, Sheffield Wednesday and Hull City.

Republic of Ireland youth international Adam O'Reilly and 18-year-old Jack Baxter joined him on the bench for the visit of Aston Villa, where Neil finally handed debuts to his promising youngsters, with Walker and O'Reilly getting on the pitch for the latter stages of a 1-1 draw.

In the process, Walker became North End's youngest ever player in a league game - and third youngest in all competitions - at 16 years and 156 days.



Florian Yonsian / Juwon Hamzat / Harrison Hopper / Florent Hoti
Rochdale

17/18/19/20 Rochdale enjoyed a strong run to the third round of the Checkatrade Trophy and provided plenty of opportunities to their current apprentices, with forward Florian Yonsian making three appearances, including his first start against Leicester Under-21s.

Juwon Hamzat and Florent Hoti - who made his debut in September against Bury - were also involved from the first whistle that night, while Harrison Hopper was introduced with 10 minutes left.

Elsewhere, Lewis Bradley, Joe Dunne, James Neild and Fabio Tavares were all included in matchday squads, but are yet to experience their first taste of the action. In contrast, first-year apprentice Dan Adshead has now passed 20 games in all competitions and even wore the captain's armband against Leicester U21s.



Devon Arnold / Daniel Ojo
Yeovil Town

21/22 First-year striker Devon Arnold was rewarded for a prolific season in the Under-18s by receiving an inclusion in multiple matchday squads over the Christmas period before being brought on in the 88th-minute of a Sky Bet League Two defeat to Cheltenham Town on the first day of 2019.

Meanwhile, defender Daniel Ojo has spent most of the season working with the first-team and got the nod in the Checkatrade Trophy in November, playing the full 90 minutes of a 4-0 victory over West Ham United Under-21s.



Zain Walker
Bristol Rovers

23 First-year apprentice Zain Walker arrived at Bristol Rovers to start his apprenticeship after being released by Fulham and soon put himself in first-team reckoning with an impressive run of form in the Under-18s.

In November, the teenage midfielder became the first player born this millennium to represent the club, playing 52 minutes in a 2-0 defeat to Exeter City in the Checkatrade Trophy. Eighteen-year-old striker Harry Warwick also found himself in contention, but remained an unused substitute.



Liam McCarron
Carlisle United

24 Second-year midfielder Liam McCarron has already taken his appearance total to double figures in Sky Bet League Two, while he has also featured in the Checkatrade Trophy and FA Cup.

The 17-year-old signed professional terms in September and has gone from strength to strength ever since, finally earning his first league start in January after previously being restricted to a role off the bench.



Jonathan Ngandu / Jack Burroughs
Coventry City

25/26 Having joined Coventry City as a seven-year-old Jonathan Ngandu has made his way up the age groups at a rapid rate, becoming a regular in the Under-23s and earning his first professional contract immediately after turning 17 in October.

The attacking-midfielder stepped up to the first-team the following month, playing 72 minutes of the Sky Blues' Checkatrade Trophy defeat to Cheltenham Town, while versatile midfielder Jack Burroughs - who also penned a professional deal in October - was introduced as a substitute for the final half an hour.



Arvin Appiah
Nottingham Forest

27 England Under-18 international Arvin Appiah made his long-awaited senior debut in the Carabao Cup round of 16 as an 84th-minute substitute and showed a glimpse of things to come by grabbing a consolation strike in a 3-2 loss to Burton Albion.

The talented winger was then handed his Sky Bet Championship bow on New Year's Day, coming on in the dying moments as Nottingham Forest registered a 4-2 triumph over Leeds United.



Liam Smyth
Stevenage

28 Northern Ireland Under-19 international Liam Smyth became Stevenage's youngest ever debutant in October after being introduced in the second-half of their Checkatrade Trophy encounter with Charlton Athletic.

Later that month, the first-year apprentice was handed a run out in Sky Bet League Two during a goalless stalemate with Port Vale, which was shortly followed with his first professional deal before gaining a second league outing at the start of January.



James Rowland
Shrewsbury Town

29 Highly-rated midfielder James Rowland experienced senior football for the first time in November, coming off the bench for the final 20 minutes of a 2-1 Checkatrade Trophy win at Crewe Alexandra.

A fortnight later, the 17-year-old gained further action with a late cameo against Walsall before making his full debut in a 1-1 draw with Port Vale, with second-year apprentices Jack Leask and Kian Taylor featuring as unused substitutes.



Back in 2015, Fejiri Okenabirhie was at a crossroads in his career

FEJIRI OKENABIRHIE



The talented forward had earned a professional contract at Stevenage having made his first-team debut before the completion of his apprenticeship, but was released after a year and ended up dropping to the Isthmian League Premier Division with Harrow Borough.

Former Arsenal schoolboy Okenabirhie grew up playing alongside Gunners stars Alex Iwobi and Ainsley Maitland-Niles, but in his words, "everyone's journey is different".

Undeterred by the setback, the 22-year-old pursued a route into higher education to aid his attempts to rise back up the leagues, which has taken him from the seventh tier of English football to Sky Bet League One with Shrewsbury Town.

He told LFE: "When you're an apprentice, there are no guarantees that you'll get a professional contract, so to give myself the best opportunity to get back into education I decided to study an A-Level in Psychology, in addition to the BTEC.

"It was something I wanted to do and was able to do. It was quite tough at times to balance the two but I'm pleased I got them done and it didn't negatively affect my football because I still got a pro contract at the end as well.

"Education gives you something to fall back on in terms of giving you knowledge and opportunities for life after football, but it can also be beneficial in the present, not just for your future.

"As well as obvious transferable skills like self-motivation and time management, it keeps you sharp mentally and gives you something to focus on away from football. It's a way to relax your mind from those pressures, but also provides stimulation as you're learning new information.

"When I moved down to non-league, I had more time on my hands and wanted to make use of that, so I decided to start an Open University degree in Business & Management. Doing the course part-time doesn't affect your training schedule, so I started that just after I left Stevenage and I've been working on it ever since."

Alongside his studies, Okenabirhie has enjoyed a career renaissance on the pitch, spending just one season at Harrow before attracting the attention of Dagenham & Redbridge in the National League, where his impressive form led to an England C call-up.

He further established himself as one of the most exciting prospects in Non-League

by scoring a hat-trick against Wales and was awarded England C Player of the Year for 2017-18 before Shrewsbury came calling in June to end Okenabirhie's three-year absence from the EFL.

"You have to have belief in your ability, know what you want and then work hard to achieve it," he added. "When you're playing every week, every game is an opportunity for someone to see you and that's how you have to approach it.

"If your attitude isn't right then you've got no chance to make those steps because there are a lot of setbacks in football, like being injured or not being selected, so you have to be ready for them and show you're capable of pushing through them.

"If you're not mentally prepared to work hard or you're not able to use adversity and turn it into positive energy then that's half the battle lost. Mental strength is a massive factor in football. You have to take it upon yourself to take an honest look at your game and analyse where you want to improve."

Combining the role of player and student continues to breed success for the Shrews frontman, with 14 goals to his name in all competitions so far this season, including the equaliser in an incredible 3-2 FA Cup third round victory at Stoke City.

"It's important to not get too high or too low with success and disappointment," said Okenabirhie. "Have a strong focus on what you want to achieve and make sure you work hard to reach those targets. If you do that, then your ability will shine through and the rest will take care of itself as there are plenty of opportunities out there.

"Every player wants to play as high as possible, but everyone's journey is different. I've definitely matured as a player and a person. Football is full of ups and downs, you get setbacks, but you have to show a lot of resilience.

"As for my degree, if you're someone who enjoys learning then why not continue that? For me, the Open University route has made it very manageable and it doesn't get in the way of my football. You just have to organise your time, get that preparation right and then have the willpower to get on with it.

"Studying part-time means it takes quite a while to complete so you've got to stay motivated, but I'm enjoying the course and I'm coming to the last two years now. I can see the finish line and I'm still enjoying it as much as when I started."



DAN HANFORD

Now: Property Investment Sourcer at Fifty Two Group
Football: Southport FC

After being released by Rochdale, I had an open-mind and took the chance to play in Spain and then Malta. When you are trying to find a new club you realise how hard it is, but I did climb back into the EFL and signed professional terms with Carlisle United. I've since played for Gateshead and Southport. It is important to get your head into what is asked of you at college and then to go on and do further education, whether you are a professional or not. Football isn't forever and you can do both.



PAUL DERRICK

Now: Physiotherapist at The Regency Spire Hospital
Football: Retired

After Rochdale, I continued to play semi-professionally for Woodley Sports, Rossendale United and Trafford. I then focused on studying for a BSc in Physiotherapy at Salford University, with help from The PFA. After graduating I started working for Spire Hospitals based in Macclesfield as a full-time MSK Physiotherapist. Alongside this, I'm an amateur boxer and also coach a local youth team. The greatest football lesson is coping with setbacks - I learned the art of perseverance following my release. Despite not fulfilling my dream, I still look back fondly and am grateful for the experience.



MATT ELLIS

Now: Retail Manager at RRG Toyota
Football: Local

I manage a team of Sales Executives, who I support and coach how to sell cars, insurance and finance. At Rochdale, I learned how to be a team player, lead by example and earn respect through punctuality, enthusiasm and work ethic. I try to promote these as much as possible to my team at Toyota. My time as an apprentice was the best two years of my life, I made friends for life and have actually employed ex-teammates Joe Reidy and Rob Crank to work alongside me.

THE DALE

A DECADE ON



LFE's Life Skills Manager **Simon Williams** completed his apprenticeship at Rochdale 10 years ago. He caught up with some former teammates to find out where they are now.



BEN WHARTON

Now: Franchise Owner and Head Coach at Footytotz
Football: Radcliffe FC

Footytotz teaches football skills to children aged 18 months upwards. I work in nurseries, schools and run public sessions. We provide a basic introduction to football through fun games and themes based on children's stories. While at Rochdale, I developed basic transferable skills which I knew would help me to work with young children. Social skills have allowed me to grow the business through making contacts and having a friendly personality towards parents and children. When full-time football ends, something better may open up. I have built a successful business alongside 10 years of playing and earning at a semi-professional level and I have enjoyed every minute of it.

GEORGE BOWYER

Now: Youth Advisor at the Professional Footballers' Association
Football: Last played for Bamber Bridge

In my role at The PFA, I provide independent advice and guidance to academy players, trialists and parents/guardians of those who are at professional clubs. Football gave me a grounding - I know what is expected of me and I have high standards. It creates the ability to succeed outside of football when entering a new career.



REECE KELLY

Now: Director at Manchester School of Soccer and Coach Right UK (Based In Houston, USA)
Football: Retired through injury

I own two football coaching companies, one in the UK and one in the USA. Mental strength is the most valuable thing I take away from football. Looking back, most players are technical but what can set you apart is mentality. Being successful can be a question of mental strength during adversity. My advice for academy players is to set your standards high and always reach for the stars.



STILL AT THE CLUB...



KEITH HILL

Then: First-Team Manager
Now: First-Team Manager



CHRIS BEECH

Then: U18 Coach
Now: First-Team Assistant Manager



CHRIS BROWN

Then: U18 Player
Now: Lead PDP Coach



JOE THOMPSON

Then: First-Year Professional
Now: Professional Footballer



SKILLS SCHOOL

ACADEMY PLAYERS AT FOREST GREEN ROVERS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING THEIR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS WHILE HELPING THE COMMUNITY BY DELIVERING COACHING SESSIONS TO YOUNG CHILDREN FROM THE LOCAL AREA

The 'Skills School' initiative began in November, with the Rovers apprentices devising session plans, organising equipment and coaching the youngsters once a week, using the knowledge gained from their FA Level 2 Certificate in Coaching Football qualification.

"We're realistic about how many of our boys are likely to get professional contracts and we've been really honest with them from the start," Assistant Academy manager Vicky French told LFE. "As a result, we're very keen to provide anything that could possibly develop them as an individual and not just as a footballer."

"They completed their coaching badges in October and we felt it would be good for them to put that into practice. Our Skills School is a community programme for five and six-year-olds. The boys plan and run the sessions in conjunction with some of our Academy coaches, but primarily they are doing it on their own."

"We feel it gives them a really good insight into what it's like to be a coach and the preparation that goes into their sessions. Of course, it also stands them in really good stead if they're not successful in getting a pro deal."

The sessions are designed with the aim of being fun, creative and engaging, focusing on developing confidence, skill and technique, with significant peer-to-peer interaction and a mix of drills and games.

"I couldn't be prouder of the boys, they've totally stepped up to the mark," said French. "We've given four of our second-year apprentices the responsibility of leading a group, so they gain some teamwork and leadership skills alongside the coaching side of it."

"The feedback from parents has been fantastic and the parents of our apprentices love it because they see that we're giving them more than just football and college, we're trying to develop them as well-rounded people and give them roots after football, if necessary."

"We've definitely got a couple of brilliant coaches in the making that I can see going on to coach in professional academies and we will definitely do our best to support them if they choose to follow that path."

"Our next development step for our apprentices is to get them onto a refereeing course. We're working with our local FA to get them into those type of roles so that they can be multi-faceted."

Second-year apprentice Lewis Spurrier has already made his first-team debut and believes this sort of activity is good preparation for making the step up to the senior ranks.

"Getting involved in the local community is so important because we're not just a football club," he said. "We have a responsibility to set a positive example to these youngsters on and off the pitch, and the hope is that some of these kids will end up coming through the academy themselves in the future."

"You look at professional players and see them doing plenty of community work. That's where you want to be so you've got to do the things they are doing, if not more, so this sort of initiative is great practice for us and it's also been very enjoyable for us too."

"By designing our own session plans, it really gives an insight into what our coaches plan for us and it's easier in training for us to understand why they're doing certain drills. It's not just helping us to become coaches, it's also helping us as players."

Full-back Alfie Saunders also spoke highly of the project. The 17-year-old added: "Since I've started this process, I'm definitely more confident in speaking out around the group and giving instructions on the pitch, which then helps everyone else's performance, not just yours."

"The dream of every kid is to be a footballer and they look up to us and use us as role models, so it puts things into perspective. We can't take this for granted, you can't waste any opportunities and you've got to be professional in and around the club at all times."

"A lot of us live together anyway, but this provides the chance to combine the first and second years and forces us to communicate and work as a team, which has made us really close and bond as a group."



The ultimate goal for most apprentices is to complete their two years with a professional contract. However, the lure of an American Soccer Scholarship took Charlton Athletic Academy product Alex Willis down a different career path.

Having scored over 500 goals in the youth ranks, the 19-year-old striker declined the opportunity to sign on the dotted line, instead favouring a move to the other side of the Atlantic at Northern Kentucky University, where he has already netted 16 times in 17 games.

Here, the Horizon League Freshman of the Year talks to LFE about the transition from apprentice to student athlete, the importance of education and his ambition to become a professional footballer back home or abroad.

My first pro contract is something I'd always dreamt of receiving since I joined the Academy at eight years old. But I decided that the American Scholarship route was more secure than a one-year deal and had more potential at that moment in time, giving me the opportunity to play Division 1 College football in the States.

Pass4Soccer came in to give a presentation around September 2017 and I saw it as a good option while I still pursued a professional contract at Charlton during the second year of my apprenticeship. They put my video tape out to American Colleges and I was absolutely flooded with offers and coaches offering to fly out to England and watch me play for Charlton, which they did.

Alex Willis



"It's a life-changing experience and one I would highly recommend."

On the pitch

The accommodation and facilities at Northern Kentucky University are excellent. The changing rooms and our 'soccer' stadium facilities, from gyms to treatment equipment, are extremely good.

In the squad we've got boys from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Bermuda, New Zealand, Canada and obviously the USA! That's been one of the best parts off the pitch - making new friends from all around the world.

During the season, we play two matches a week. Much like any professional team, we will travel the day before to any away game and stay overnight at a hotel. We've been to a few cities, such as Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Columbus and Indianapolis.

The whole aim obviously is to win league games and we try to give ourselves the best, most professional preparation to do that. The media coverage is also excellent, with most of our games being streamed via ESPN, so you can get live coverage of the majority of our games.

The season went brilliantly for me. I was the top scoring freshman in the country and finished as the fourth top goalscorer in the country from all College players. I won numerous awards, including an NCAA Division 1 National Player of the Week award and was then placed 11th best freshman in the country in the post-season list.

It feels good to have my performances noticed by clubs here in the USA and hopefully by clubs in England too. As I've said, my number one goal is to be a professional. I'm confident if I keep scoring like I've always done, then an opportunity will arise somewhere.

P4S gave guidance on which universities would suit me but ultimately the final choices were mine. At the end of the season, P4S then helped and gave advice about practical things like flights, health insurance, travel insurance, etc.

Having moved to a new continent, I've had to become more independent and take more responsibility for myself as there isn't always the club or family members to sort something external out for you. However, it's made me more mature and less naïve as I've met people from all over the world and from many different backgrounds.

It's a life-changing experience and one I would highly recommend. You get the best of both worlds, in terms of preparing for the distant future with a degree, but also working every day to become a better player and striving to be a professional footballer.

Going to the USA doesn't mean your career is over - I think far from it. What you're doing is expanding your options, which is only a good thing. This leaves me open to being a professional footballer in the USA or in England. I have no regrets.



Off the pitch

It's massively important to take education seriously, there will almost certainly be a working life after your playing career. I knew that if I put in maximum effort to the BTEC - and now the degree I'm taking - it will give me the most options if and when I need them.

I'm currently studying General Business. It's quite a broad field and with degrees in the USA lasting four years, I can choose later to specialise more with my major in my final two years.

Just because you want to be a pro footballer, it doesn't mean you should neglect your education. On the other side, just because I care about education, I'm still determined that I can become a pro footballer.

Being able to work hard in the classroom and adhere to deadlines and maintain good grades is achieved by your discipline and determination. This is used on the pitch when training, such as shooting practice so I can score my next goal or being able to understand your role and performance in the team.

Time-keeping is another important transferable skill. Being able to hit academic deadlines, being punctual and keeping a professional attitude are all key attributes to becoming a footballer.

We train every morning and then study for two or three hours a day in the afternoons. It's a heavier workload compared to the BTEC, but after a couple of weeks you just get used to it. There's a lot more freedom in university, so it isn't like your GCSE classes!

My attitude to everything I do, both education and football, is always to give it my very best. I believe if you put in the time you will reap the benefits.

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#KICKITOUT25



RAINBOW LACES

Academy players at Wigan Athletic were provided the opportunity to increase their knowledge of equality and diversity with an LFE Life Skills session from Kick It Out, delivered by **Troy Townsend** and **Marcus Gayle**.

The workshop covers a range of important topics, including racism, homophobia, sexism, faith, disability, social media and the impact of acceptable/unacceptable banter in a changing room environment.

"Troy and Marcus do a great job in getting their message across," Latics Head of Education & Welfare Mike Hurn told LFE. "It's no nonsense, strong messages, but fully engaged with the boys. Lots of sensitive topics in there that the boys aren't used to discussing."

"They hear about them, read about them, see them on social media, but don't perhaps embrace them too much, so I think it's been a real learning afternoon for the boys."

In support of Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign, the session featured particular attention to raising awareness of LGBT equality and inclusivity in sport and society as a whole.

Hurn continued: "We're all about developing the person as well as the player and we fully embrace equality and diversity. We want the boys to be open-minded and embrace different cultures, different beliefs."

"We had a bit of fun with it with different ways of wearing the laces. It just makes them mindful of why I am wearing these, what's the purpose behind it and of course we will reinforce those messages throughout the next few weeks."

The Wigan apprentices expressed their enthusiasm to join forces with the first-team and the rest of the EFL clubs across the country, who all adopted rainbow substitution boards, corner flags, captain's armbands and laces in support of LGBT fans, players and staff at the end of November.

First-year apprentice Thelonious Aasgaard said: "You've got to learn that some people are different and if you have got a team-mate that is gay or bisexual, you've got to help them feel comfortable in this environment."



"It's really important, especially for the football community. Troy said there's not many people that have come out as gay or bisexual because in the past it's been a laughing matter in the changing room, so it's important we change that."

Meanwhile, Under-18s forward James Berry added: "I think it's a good thing because for other people watching, they'll know that we support the LGBT community and we know that it's not a problem."

"If you wear the laces it just makes people more comfortable around you. If they know that you support these kind of foundations then they'll feel more confident to be themselves around you and they don't have to hide who they truly are."

"It opens your eyes to other things that you might not be aware of, so having sessions like this is really beneficial for people like us in the football world because you could slip up on something that you never knew."

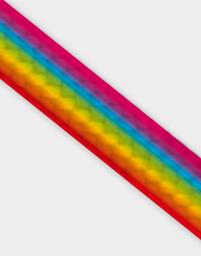
Adam Long echoed those thoughts. He said: "I've never experienced it before with someone coming out as gay or bisexual, but I reckon after that session if someone in our changing room were to do so, then everyone would be really supportive of it."

"Players have come out in the past and had to suffer from it which I don't think is fair on them at all and they don't feel like they can be themselves after it as well. To keep gay or lesbian people in football, we need to show that they are welcome."

The Kick It Out session is just one of many included in LFE's Life Skills programme, with other topics like finance, addiction, sexual and mental health also presented to academy players across the country.

"I have a huge value on these life skills sessions," said Hurn. "Anything and everything that these lads can get. Broaden them, develop their minds, make them into better people, give them a superior set of skills compared to others in their age group around the country that aren't in the football industry."

"The option to have these and the support from LFE is wonderful. I very much enjoy these sessions - the level of expertise, the level of enthusiasm from the speakers like those today is always great and is something that we really enjoy getting the lads involved in."



LIAM GOOCH

BY GAVIN WILLACY

Few apprentices step foot back in the club that released them, unless it's as a visiting player. Most quickly accept their fate and embrace the experience they had, treasuring their memories, remaining friends with former team-mates and staff. However, there are a special few that end up going back to work at the club that let them go.



Liam Gooch is doing just that at Luton Town - and working full-time painting the sets of blockbuster movies!

A goalkeeper at Luton from the age of 14, Gooch followed his apprenticeship with a season as a professional before being released in 2017. Two years later, he is coaching young hopefuls at the club in the evening, while spending his days at Warner Brothers Studios in Leavesden, Hertfordshire.

"My dad is Head of Department for painting there, which means he is in charge of the construction crews creating the sets for the films," Gooch told LFE. "I worked there one summer between seasons on the film Assassin's Creed and thought 'I could do this'. It was always in the back of my mind.

"I've been doing it for about eight months now. A normal day means getting up at 5am, getting down to Leavesden for about 6, and we start painting the sets around 7.30am. The art director tells us what she wants, then we make samples and once we get the okay we start painting.

"It might be making something look like marble, wood, or another certain texture, anything. We do the backdrops and then a specialist artist comes in to do the detail, like a street for example. The producers prefer a painted set to CGI because not only is it cheaper but also the actors find it easier to perform in front of a set rather than a green screen."

The 21-year-old is currently working on the set of *Cats*, the new movie version of the legendary long-running West End musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber, while the Hertfordshire studios have also hosted Hollywood superstars such as Nicole Kidman in *The Goldfinch*, Bruce Willis in *Motherless Brooklyn*, and Samuel L Jackson in *Shaft*. JK Rowling's *Fantastic Beasts*, the latest *Spiderman* movie, and the Oscar-nominated *Bohemian Rhapsody* were also filmed there.

Gooch even managed to learn an entirely different trade after leaving Luton. He continued: "For 18 months I worked as a chippy. My mate's dad ran a joiners and I worked there, learning it all, including cabinet-making. It was great. I like to learn on the job. That's one of the reasons I decided not to go to university.

"I was interested in joining the police at one stage, so was looking at doing Uniformed Services and then applied for Sports Science and Coaching and got offered a place, but that was really just a back-up option as I prefer to be hands on and be paid as I learn a job.

"I've gradually learned how to do it and will hopefully work my way up. The pay is good, and it's pretty cool seeing your work on screen months later. You would be amazed at what the sets really look like close up though - they are nowhere near as neat and clear as they seem on film!"

For the first half of this season, Gooch had three jobs. As coach of Luton Town Under-11s and part of the academy goalkeeping coaching staff, he is at the club up to four times a week. That put major pressure on his ability to commit to his third role as keeper for Cambridge City in Evo-Stik Southern League Division One. Something had to give.

"I couldn't always get to training at Cambridge because of my two jobs," said Gooch. "I'm at Luton on Wednesdays and Fridays with matches on Sundays, and also do the futsal on a Thursday too sometimes.

"Cambridge were very good about it but the early mornings and late nights were taking their toll on me, I wasn't coping, so I had to knock something on the head. I've taken a break from playing for now. The stress has gone and I'm feeling good again.

"I really enjoy coaching the little ones at Luton, and helping out with the keepers, more than I was playing. But I'm not sure I see



myself going into coaching as a career. Ideally, I'll keep combining it with working in the film industry as that seems quite secure and there always seems to be work there."

Gooch could be forgiven for looking enviously at two of his old youth team colleagues, but that's not the case. Frankie Musonda is a squad member at Luton, while James Justin has developed into one of the stars of their Sky Bet League One promotion challenge and been called up by England Under-20s.

"I don't really see Frankie and JJ as they are gone by the time I come in to coach," Gooch added. "But it's amazing how far the club has come on since I was a first-year apprentice.

"The old training ground was a dump really but now the facilities are excellent, the club has an exciting future with the new ground getting planning permission, and it's a great place to work. I'm quite happy with how things are going now."

TALENT TRANSFER

CECIL JEE THOMAS

Fleetwood Town's apprentices reviewed the benefits of developing themselves in and out of football during an LFE Life Skills session delivered by Crawley Town Academy product Cecil Jee Thomas.

The 23-year-old was released at the end of his apprenticeship in 2014, but has used his transferable skills from football to become the poster boy for the prestigious Italia Conti dance academy, as well as an array of other showbiz commitments.

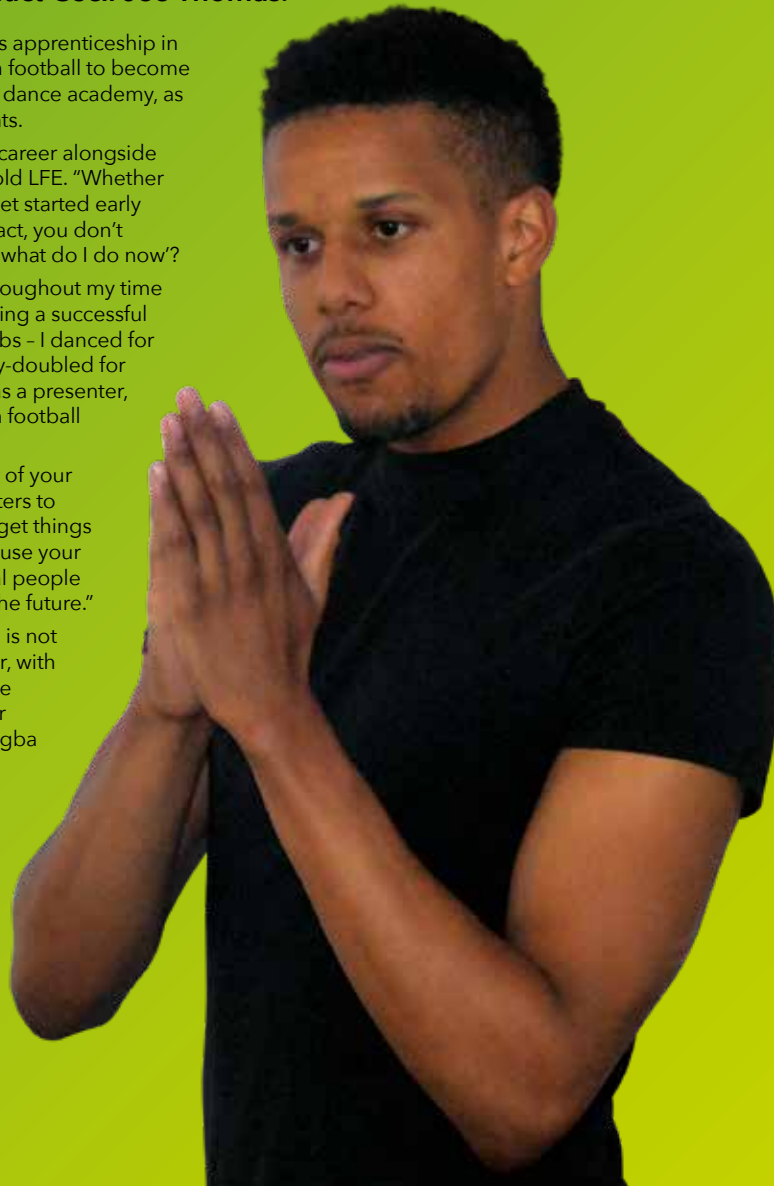
"I deliver a Talent Transfer talk about having a career alongside football and preparing for it early," Thomas told LFE. "Whether you're a first or second year, make sure you get started early because if you don't get a professional contract, you don't want to get dropped into the world thinking 'what do I do now'?"

"Luckily, I'd kept up with my dance training throughout my time as a footballer and I transcended into becoming a successful performer. I do lots of amazing shoots and jobs - I danced for Little Mix's 'Reggaeton Lento' video, I've body-doubled for Marcus Rashford, I've worked alongside ITV as a presenter, so I've just transferred a lot of my talents from football into performing.

"Football's not your full story, it's just a chapter of your life, so it's important to build a lot more chapters to finish the story. I want them to prepare early, get things in place, do education, look at other careers, use your standing in football to network with influential people and just create a career that can help you in the future."

Pursuing alternative options as an apprentice is not just preparation for life after football, however, with Thomas highlighting current players who have become successful in other areas during their playing career, like Vincent Kompany, Paul Pogba and Theo Walcott.

He continued: "There are a lot of skills that transfer from football over to plenty of industries. You're dealing with players that come internationally, so you have to talk to new players and be very vocal in the workplace. When you're on the pitch you have to communicate and be a leader, so there are so many skills that transfer."



"Mine mostly came through my athleticism, like being physically fit and able to jump high. Also, when I went down the leagues and played at a lower level, all of my stress and focus that I had in football that made me play badly just went away because I had my performance and dancing to focus on.

"So when I got on the pitch it felt like I had more freedom and I was at my best during this time, so the key is just to prepare because it frees up your mind and makes life so much easier."

Defender James Hill featured in Joey Barton's first-team against Leicester City in the Carabao Cup in August, becoming the club's youngest ever player in the process. Yet despite his success on the pitch, the 17-year-old admitted he is keen on exploring different interests.

"I thought the session was great because it shows that you've got to have an open mind," he said. "There's more to life than football, you've got to have your education to go with it and it's not the end if you don't make it in football because you have plenty of talents and there's opportunities outside of football for everyone. This session reinforced that there's no harm in being prepared.

"I've managed to make my debut and I'm doing very well right now but you don't know what the future holds, so I just need to make sure I'm on top of it and have alternatives in place.

"My dad is an ex-professional footballer and he's at the end of his career now. I'm interested in what he does, which is network marketing, so I'm quite keen on business and would like to pursue it further after my career or even alongside football."

Meanwhile, second-year apprentice Greg McCaragher added: "It was really interesting to find out about what aspects of life there are outside of football, so you don't feel like you're trapped. It's definitely opened my eyes as there are industries within football and also outside of football that we can use our skills to move into.

"Looking back to school, I was always interested in languages, so that can lead to jobs within or away from football, with jobs like a translator and stuff like that, so that's something that I'd definitely be interested in researching now."

"FOOTBALL'S NOT YOUR FULL STORY, IT'S JUST A CHAPTER OF YOUR LIFE, SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO BUILD A LOT MORE CHAPTERS TO FINISH THE STORY."

"You've got a lot of spare time as an apprentice, so one of the main things I took from the session is to make use of that time. Don't just go back to your room and watch Netflix, make better use of it and help your future by looking at different Universities or industries.

"Sometimes it can be a bit too much to just be solely focused on football and you need time to open your eyes to life outside of football and what other opportunities there are, so sessions like this are very beneficial."

FLYING THE FLAG

THE ENGLAND NATIONAL TEAM ENJOYED A SENSATIONAL YEAR IN 2018, WITH A WORLD CUP SEMI-FINAL APPEARANCE FOLLOWED BY PROGRESS TO THE KNOCKOUT PHASE OF THE INAUGURAL UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE



Fourteen former apprentices represented the Three Lions during the course of the 12 months, while Brentford academy graduate **Alfie Mawson** and Leicester City pair **Demarai Gray** (formerly of Birmingham City) and **James Maddison** (formerly of Coventry City) were all included in a Gareth Southgate squad, but ultimately failed to feature.

Of the 14 that were involved, five were capped at senior level for the first time. Here, LFE takes a look at those debutants.

CALLUM WILSON //

Wilson battled back from two serious knee injuries to establish himself as a prolific scorer in the Premier League, with a particularly impressive start to the 2018-19 season leading to his first senior selection.

The 26-year-old played 77 minutes against the USA, capping off a terrific all-round display by netting the third goal with a near-post finish to become Bournemouth's first ever England goalscorer.

BEN CHILWELL //

The 22-year-old emerged as Gareth Southgate's first-choice left-back towards the end of 2018 after initially being promoted from the Under-21s in September due to injuries, where he made his debut on home turf as a late substitute against Switzerland at Leicester's King Power Stadium.

Since then, Chilwell played the full 90 minutes of both Nations League games against Croatia, plus the 3-2 away win over Spain, while he also started the friendly with the United States.

JAMES TARKOWSKI //

Burnley defender Tarkowski played a crucial role in their qualification for the Europa League and was rewarded with his first international call-up at any level in March, starting in the 1-1 draw against Italy.

The 26-year-old was one of five standby options for the World Cup squad, but withdrew after undergoing a hernia operation before returning to the line-up in a 1-0 victory over Switzerland in September.

LEWIS COOK //

Midfielder Cook has been a serial winner on the international scene, claiming the UEFA European Under-17 Championship in 2014 before captaining England to victory in the 2017 FIFA Under-20 World Cup and 2018 Toulon Tournament.

The 2015 LFE Championship Apprentice of the Year then stepped up to the senior side with a cameo off the bench against Italy in March, although he will have to wait a while for his next cap after suffering a ruptured ACL before Christmas.

LEWIS DUNK //

Dunk has been a loyal servant to boyhood club Brighton & Hove Albion, amassing over 250 appearances for the club since his debut as a second-year apprentice in 2010.

Having been a consistent performer for Chris Hughton's team since their promotion to the top-flight, the centre-back was an unused substitute for two Nations League matches in October before starting in the 3-0 win against the USA a month later.

Player	Club	Caps	Goals
Jordan Henderson	Liverpool (formerly Sunderland)	48	0
John Stones	Manchester City (formerly Barnsley)	37	2
Dele Alli	Tottenham Hotspur (formerly MK Dons)	33	3
Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain	Liverpool (formerly Southampton)	32	6
Danny Rose	Tottenham Hotspur (formerly Leeds United)	25	0
Fabian Delph	Manchester City (formerly Leeds United)	18	0
Harry Maguire	Leicester City (formerly Sheffield United)	16	1
Luke Shaw	Manchester United (formerly Southampton)	8	0
Joe Gomez	Liverpool (formerly Charlton Athletic)	6	0
Ben Chilwell	Leicester City	5	0
James Tarkowski	Burnley (formerly Oldham Athletic)	2	0
Callum Wilson	AFC Bournemouth (formerly Coventry City)	1	1
Lewis Dunk	Brighton & Hove Albion	1	0
Lewis Cook	AFC Bournemouth (formerly Leeds United)	1	0





PERFORMANCE FOOTBALL

SPORTS UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2017

The Times and Sunday Times
good university guide 2017

BEST SPORTING UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD

*QS world university rankings
by subject 2018

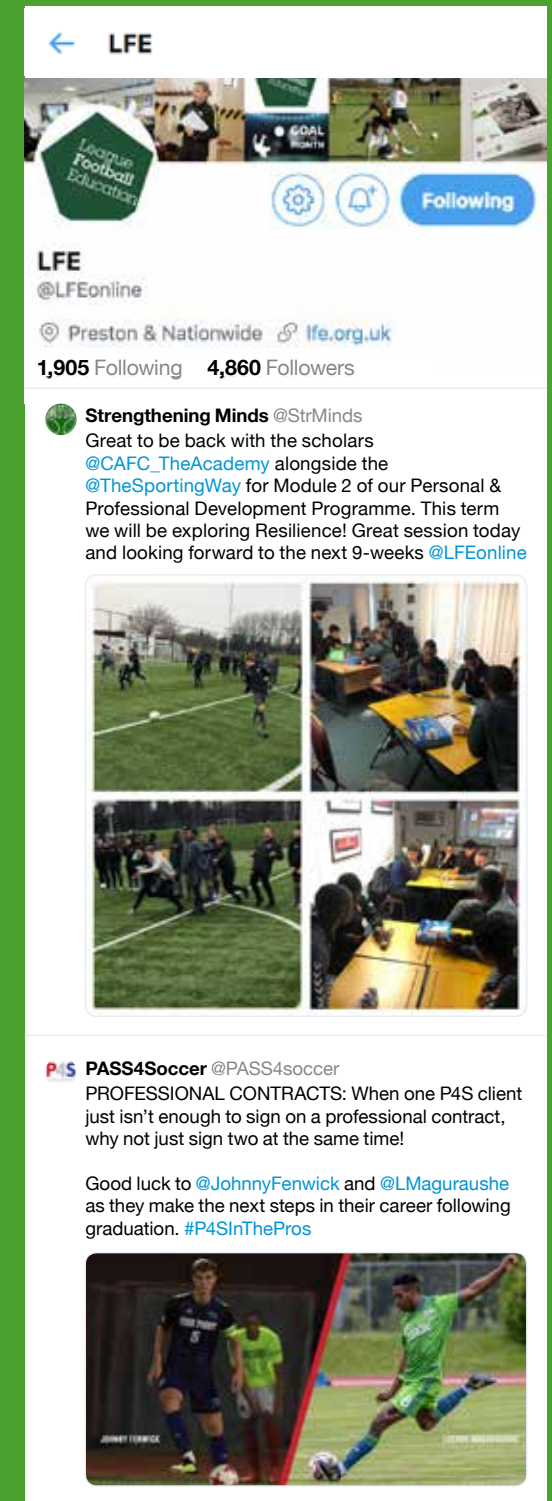
Loughborough University offers a
unique environment to develop in sport
whilst gaining a prestigious degree.

Loughborough Students Football Club
currently competes in:

- MFL
- FA Cup
- FA Vase
- Northern Premier Division (British
Universities and Colleges Sport)

Many graduates have progressed
into the football industry as either
players or supporting staff, including:

- **George Williams**
BSc Sports Science with
Management (2011-2015). Right
Back for MK Dons.
- **Matt Reeves**
BSc Sports Science 2006-2009
Head of Fitness and Conditioning
at Leicester City
Premier League and U20s World
Cup winner.



P4S PASS4Soccer @PASS4soccer
PROFESSIONAL CONTRACTS: When one P4S client
just isn't enough to sign on a professional contract,
why not just sign two at the same time!

Good luck to [@JohnnyFenwick](#) and [@LMaguraushe](#)
as they make the next steps in their career following
graduation. #P4SInThePros



1 IN 10 SUPPLEMENTS



May contain **banned steroids or stimulants** you won't know about.*

Don't take any before checking with your club doctor and on
www.informed-sport.com.

*LGC (2013) European wide study into supplement contamination

