



REAL FOOTBALL

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YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

AN OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Welcome to the first edition of Real Football: Youth Development, a new quarterly newsletter focussing on the excellent work being done by the Youth Development departments of Football League clubs.

League clubs are the breeding ground for the next generation of football talent, producing the players that will go on to feature in The Football League, Premier League and on the international stage. Youth development programmes are about more than just producing footballers - they also ensure that young footballers are prepared for life outside football should their dreams of being a professional player not succeed.

LEAGUE BEGINS TALKS WITH YOUTH FUNDING PARTNERS

The Football League has opened discussions with the other football bodies and Government over a new funding package for its highly successful youth development programme. It is hoped that a new package will be agreed to succeed the existing £10m grant, currently in its final year.

Since 1998 League clubs have received an annual grant latterly funded by contributions from the FA, PFA, Premier League, Football Foundation and Sport England. The grant acknowledges the contribution being made to the national game by League clubs through the development of young players and also the positive impact such schemes have on local communities throughout the country.

Each season more than 8,700 young players receive professional

coaching from 2,200 trained staff at their local clubs. And the results have been impressive, in the last three seasons alone more than 400 young players have turned professional at League clubs and almost half (48%) of all current England youth internationals have been developed by Football League clubs.

However, with the PFA having already withdrawn its funding and Sport England yet to indicate whether its £2.5m annual contribution will continue The League is stepping up the pressure to ensure that clubs do not have to cut back on developing young talent.

The Football League's Director of Operations Andy Williamson said: 'The development of local players by local clubs for local supporters is the very cornerstone



England stars Darren Bent (top) and Jermaine Jenas (above) both progressed through youth programmes at League clubs.

of The Football League and it must be given every opportunity to continue.

'This programme has been hugely successful, not just because it has been responsible for generating so much young playing talent but also because it ensures that those who do not go on to make it as professional footballers have been able to continue their education and development throughout their time with a League club.

'It has become a prime example of how a public, private partnership can work in sport with the Government's contribution acting as a catalyst for funding from the football sector. For every pound of public money contributed football contributes eight pounds of its own.'



TERRIORS SHOW YOUTH IS THE FUTURE
See p3



LEAGUE CLUBS PRODUCE NEXT GENERATION

Football League clubs continue to be the breeding ground for the next generation of talent for the domestic and international game.

Current England internationals such as Darren Bent and Jermaine Jenas developed their skills in youth development programmes at League clubs before making big-money moves to the Premiership.

But behind them there is a new wave of young stars working their way through the international and domestic levels of the game.

The UEFA Under 19 Championships held in Northern Ireland during the summer showed the depth of talent available, with England naming seven Football League players in their 18-man squad and the host nation, six.

More recently half the latest England Under 19 squad have been developed by League clubs.

But it is not just international sides that are benefiting. League clubs are increasingly turning to their own youth programmes for first team players. For

A recent survey by The Football League's Youth Development Department showed that during season 2004/2005 50% of The League's 72 clubs recorded more than 100 first team appearances by 'home-grown' players.

instance, League 1 side Huddersfield Town have a first team squad of 25 players - 14 of whom have come through the club's academy.

A recent survey by The Football League's Youth Development Department showed that during season 2004/2005 50% of The League's 72 clubs recorded more than 100 first team appearances by 'home-grown' players (see table).

Richard Hodgson, Head of Youth Development at The League, said: 'These statistics show that The League's clubs are doing a fantastic job in finding and developing young footballing talent and that is beneficial to clubs and football as a whole.'



Striker Matt Fryatt has starred for Walsall and England.

Football League Youth Development Club Starts 2004-05

	Starts	Subs
Barnsley	145	30
Blackpool	80	33
Boston United	38	9
Bournemouth	77	32
Bradford City	109	57
Brentford	103	41
Brighton & Hove Albion	185	50
Bristol City	80	36
Bristol Rovers	3	22
Burnley	61	17
Bury	160	53
Cardiff City	82	27
Carlisle United	92	33
Cheltenham Town	121	39
Chester City	76	32
Chesterfield	185	61
Colchester United	99	34
Coventry City	115	24
Crewe Alexandra	126	27
Darlington	48	41
Derby County	130	25
Doncaster Rovers	67	21
Gillingham	50	23
Grimsby Town	16	18
Hartlepool United	114	60
Huddersfield Town	216	33
Hull City	7	18
Ipswich Town	118	32
Leeds United	69	18
Leicester City	19	15
Leyton Orient	101	57
Lincoln City	11	20
Luton Town	108	28
Macclesfield Town	19	8
Mansfield Town	130	16
Millwall	103	39
Milton Keynes Dons	248	66
Northampton Town	95	61
Nottingham Forest	121	44
Notts County	181	53
Oldham Athletic	156	47
Peterborough United	63	26
Plymouth Argyle	92	7
Port Vale	155	36
Preston North End	38	21
Queens Park Rangers	31	23
Reading	14	22
Rochdale	42	42
Rushden & Diamonds	149	43
Scunthorpe United	117	75
Sheffield United	36	29
Sheffield Wednesday	167	45
Shrewsbury Town	112	33
Southend United	51	16
Stockport County	190	53
Stoke City	27	10
Swansea City	39	13
Swindon Town	111	35
Torquay United	22	24
Tranmere Rovers	114	37
Walsall	134	42
Watford	56	60
Wolverhampton Wanderers	22	18
Wrexham	111	40
Wycombe Wanderers	151	49
Yeovil Town	31	19

CLUB

FOCUS

TERRIERS SHOW YOUTH IS THE FUTURE

By Tony Leighton

Anyone requiring proof that English football's Academy system is working need look no further than Huddersfield Town.

With 14 of the Coca-Cola League 1 club's current squad of 25 professional players having come through the youth ranks, the Terriers are proof positive that Academies can fulfil a vitally important role.

Honed down the years by long-serving coach Gerry Murphy, now Academy Manager, the youth structure at the Galpharm Stadium has been developed into one of the finest and highest achieving in the country.

'This was proved by a recent survey conducted on player appearances during Season 2004/2005 which showed that the Terriers had the highest number of players graduating to first team level and was second to Milton Keynes Dons in terms of youth players making first team appearances.'

Chief Executive Andrew Watson, having himself been a trainee at the club two decades ago, knows as well as anyone just how much the system now in place is crucial to the very existence of Huddersfield Town.

Watson, who went on to play professionally for Exeter City before moving into the commercial side of the game, rejoined the club in his current capacity when, two and a half years ago, it was at its lowest ebb.

Being placed into administration had been followed by relegation to

the lowest tier of The Football League, and Watson was part of the team assembled by Chairman elect Ken Davy to guide the club away from the brink of extinction.

'There was a massive job to do,' recalls Watson, 'and one of the first things we had to address was the negativity in some quarters about the Academy set-up.'

'People were telling us that the system wasn't working and that with costs running at around half-a-million pounds a year it needed seriously looking into.'

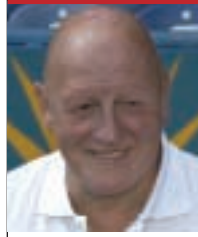
'Well, I knew the passion and

'Not only was the system working, but we also were sitting on a goldmine of player talent'
Andrew Watson

dedication Gerry Murphy had for the youth set-up after being coached by him myself when I was a youngster. So I went with him to a reserve team match at Guiseley one night and he pointed out several players who he felt would come through to the first team.

'I agreed with Gerry and, when I reported back to the chairman, I told him that not only was the system working but that we also were sitting on a goldmine of player talent! The boys we watched at Guiseley are now the cornerstone of our first team squad, credit to Peter and his staff.'

Within months the 'goldmine' bore fruition in the reluctant but financially necessary sale of home-grown striker Jonathan Stead to



Blackburn Rovers for £1.25 million.

Manager Peter Jackson was not happy that he'd had to sell his star player, but he had already seen the quality of youngsters coming out of the Academy and was confident that he could build a

'We like to think we are helping to produce rounded characters as well as good footballers'
Gerry Murphy

team around them. He also used some of the money to invest in Pawel Abbott from Preston North End who was the club's leading goalscorer last season.

Jackson, who had begun his second spell at the Huddersfield helm when the club was still in administration, was proved right - at the end of his first season the Terriers won promotion through the play-offs with six of the players who took part in the Millennium Stadium final having come through the youth system.

'When I took over,' says Jackson, 'there were only eight professionals on the books. With no cash at the club that meant bringing in players on free transfers and developing the young talent we had coming through the Academy, and to date we seem to have got things right.'

'The fact that we've now got so many ex-youth team players in the first team squad is testament to the work being done with the youngsters and I honestly feel that we've got the best-run Academy in England.'

'I honestly feel that we've got the best run Academy in England'
Peter Jackson

'I've given chances to quite a number of our young players and not one of them has let me down. It was partly through necessity that we had to go down this route, but if it carries on proving as successful then I don't think we'll have to buy our way out of any division.'

The conveyor-belt of talent being nurtured by Academy manager Murphy and his staff works its way through a carefully structured set-up that sees boys as young as six-years old being brought into the system.

Two products of Huddersfield's academy - Jon Stead (left) now playing in the Premiership with Sunderland and Town legend Andy Booth, now back with the Terriers



(Continued on page 4) ►

LEAGUE APPRENTICES TO BE HONOURED

The Football League is launching a set of new awards aimed at honouring the best apprentice players at its clubs.

The awards will be won by the young players who make the biggest impact, with young players in the Coca-Cola Championship, League 1 and League 2 being judged throughout the season.

The award in The Championship will be sponsored by Wickes, the Official Home Improvement Partner to the Football League Championship, and will be called the **Wickes Apprentice Trophy**.

'The Football League Championship has a great record of producing young talent. The new award from Wickes is a fantastic opportunity for young players who have come through the youth development system. I'm sure it will be a keenly contested award.'
Stewart Regan

The winner of this trophy will also receive £5000 for his club's youth development system.

Football League Championship Commercial Director Stewart Regan commented:

'The Football League Championship has a great record of producing young talent. The new award from Wickes is a fantastic opportunity for young players who have come through the youth development system - I'm sure it will be a keenly contested award.'

As Wickes Commercial Director, Jeremy Bird explains, it is hoped that the award will reward young talent in the Championship: 'We fully understand the value of apprenticeships, our industry depends on them for the future just like football, so it makes sense for us to support youth development on the pitch as well as on the building site.'

Players in League 1 and League 2 will also be recognised with awards from The Football League, in conjunction with League Football Education.



CLUB

◀ (From page 3)

FOCUS

'We've got a number of Development Centres spread around our catchment area,' explains Murphy, 'and it's lads from the local and surrounding areas that we concentrate on.'

'We've got a good network of scouts, but if you cast your net too wide you can miss the talent that's under your nose and we certainly don't want to do that.'

'Once the boys get up to Academy age and become apprentices they have an education and welfare programme that sits alongside their football work and we like to think we are helping to produce rounded characters as well as good footballers.'

'We are fortunate insofar as we have a board of directors who are very supportive of the youth set-up and Peter Jackson also works very closely with us.'

'The fact that so many of our Academy boys go through to play first team football obviously helps the club at the top level, but it's also very useful in the recruitment of promising youngsters.'

'When boys and their parents see there's a clear route through to the first team, rather than having lads get to 18 and then hit a brick wall, they are more inclined to come to Huddersfield than some clubs that might seem more glamorous.'

Glamorous or not, Huddersfield Town - now pushing for promotion to the Coca-Cola Championship - are a shining example of the Academy system in operation.

'We're immensely proud of our youth structure and the way it works' says Andrew Watson, 'and we are determined to build on our successes in the years to come.'



Stars of the Future (above) - Huddersfield Town Academy Squad 2005/06

Young stars aim to win new award (left)

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