



**THE  
SCOUTING  
NETWORK**

**NEWSLETTER  
APRIL 2008**

**THE SCOUTING NETWORK**

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

[www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk](http://www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk)

## FA CUP GIANT KILLERS

There's no evidence that David had done his homework when he knocked out Goliath to pull off the world's first giant-killing. But it's a fair bet that when he put a stone in his sling and aimed at the big guy's forehead he wasn't just being lucky.

This has been the year when a good many Goliaths have dropped in a heap on the floor while the little guys have danced with delight. This weekend's FA Cup semi-finals are a case in point, with three teams from the Championship alongside Portsmouth will give a completely fresh look to a Wembley weekend.

First of all let's declare an interest, The Scouting Network are absolutely thrilled to know that at least one of our client clubs are going to appear in this season's FA Cup final, because both Barnsley and Cardiff have made good use of the company's resources this season, for assessing opposition as well as looking at potential players, but beyond that we think the fact that for the first time since 1995 the Cup won't be won by one of the 'big four' is also a cause for optimism for the whole game. It's proof that care, professionalism and proper preparation isn't just the province of the big boys, it happens now right through the whole football structure.

At TSN we'll stay strictly neutral on Sunday's semi-final, and wish the best of luck to both clubs, but it is fair to say that Barnsley's achievements in knocking out two of the Big Four on their way to Wembley have been pretty exceptional. Oakwell manager Simon Davey has rightly enjoyed the occasions of first beating Liverpool at Anfield, then turning over Chelsea on his own ground, but there was a lot of planning behind both results, as well as good fortune.

He told us: "When you play against the big teams like Liverpool or Chelsea you always know that one moment of absolute magic from one of their players can beat you, and you have to work to be as tight as you can to prevent that. But it's also essential to make sure that at the same time you don't give them any cheap goals from free kicks or corners, and that was one of the things we used The Scouting Network reports for.



"It also helped us decide on the best way to go into the game. A lot of people suggested that we should play 4-5-1 against Chelsea, but I felt that Kayode Odejayi and Istvan Ferenczi could unsettle their back four and decided to go for it. It meant we were thoroughly prepared to play against both of them, and after that you know you will always need a bit of luck and for your players to perform at their absolute peak, and on both occasions that was what happened.

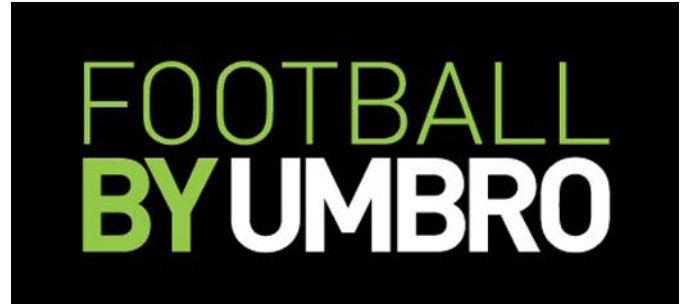


"We think that players like to go into games feeling properly prepared and knowing about the opposition whoever they are playing. The FA Cup run has been a fabulous reward for us and something very special for the whole club to enjoy."

Cardiff also benefited from doing their homework thoroughly before they won at Middlesbrough. Coach Terry Burton says: "We have our own in-house analyst who works through DVDs of the opposition, but we also use The Scouting Network reports which give a good overview, and are particularly helpful for set-pieces."

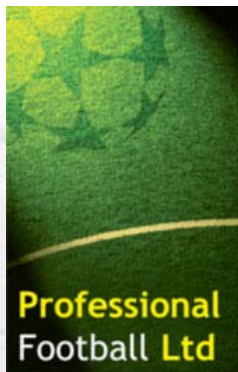
Many feel that this season's results have restored a lot of the magic of the Cup. At TSN we wish all at Barnsley and Cardiff a day full of special memories.





**OUT OF CONTRACT LIST 2008**

With the season coming to a close and approximately 800 players either going to be released or transfer listed, TSN will continue to provide a full list of players who will be out of contract this summer in early April for both UK and non-UK players. Following last years successful daily online released list during the month of May, any clubs who wish to take the opportunity to utilise these unique services, contact [supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk](mailto:supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk)



**NEW FOOTBALL BUSINESS**

Our experienced Head of Recruitment Andy Burman, is further advancing this side of the business and has set up a company called Professional Football Ltd, which will only provide services and support to professional clubs in the UK.

These services will include:

- Recruitment, selection & assessment of football and non football staff for clubs.
- Affordable performance analysis of teams, players & manager.
- Long term club development – success off the pitch regardless of performance on it.
- Sponsorship – club & kit.
- Staff training – internal & external short courses.
- Cost effective Contract HR & Health and Safety.

Andy will work closely with The Scouting Network and we wish him well with this much needed service within the professional game.

**ENGLAND'S YOUNGSTERS**

England's senior side might have suffered their first defeat under Fabio Capello in Paris, but the youngsters had a much better time in matches against France.

The Under 16s won the Montaigu tournament on penalties, with goalkeeper Jed Steer of Norwich, one of the young talents identified by Umbro as a potential star of the future, making a crucial save in the shoot-out after a goalless draw. Other Umbro endorsees Jamie Reckord (Wolves) and Adam Davies (Everton) also appeared in the four-team tournament which included Germany and the Ivory Coast.

Meanwhile in Tel Aviv Fulham goalkeeper Wesley Foderingham gave an excellent display as England's Under 17s drew 1-1 with France at the start of the Elite Round tournament, which also includes hosts Israel and Russia.

All four players are involved in Umbro's project to identify talent and build brand loyalty at an early stage, run since last year in conjunction with The Scouting Network to help identify the brightest prospects at Academy level.

You can contact Umbro's Player Recruitment Manager Andrew Mashiter by e-mail on [andrew\\_mashiter@umbro.co.uk](mailto:andrew_mashiter@umbro.co.uk)

**TSN TEAM**

- Derek Bragg - Managing Director
- Tim Henderson - Head of Club Liaison
- Graham Allner - Support Centre Manager
- Paddy Connolly - Database Manager
- Kevin Russell - UK Scouting Co-Ordinator
- Paul Bilecki - Head of Youth Identification
- John Connolly - Head of Club Liaison (Scotland)
- Shawn Bishop/Gary McNab - Head of Club Liaison (South Africa)
- Samantha Rich - Administration Support



## WELSH WIZARD LOSING HIS POWER?

Ryan Giggs is chasing a record tenth Premier League winners medal as Manchester United close in on the last few weeks of the title race – and in his 17th season he’s undoubtedly been one of the greatest players of his era. But at the age of 34 just how important is his contribution now? Opta’s statistics make interesting reading to try to compare his impact on this United team to the Giggs of old.

Before last weekend Giggs had appeared in 24 Premier League games with United winning 67 per cent of them. He has also broken the 100 League goal barrier this season, and become only the second player to score in every Premier League season since its creation in 1992 alongside Gary Speed.

Manchester United - 2007/08		
	With Giggs	Without Giggs
Games	24	7
Wins	16	7
Draws	4	0
Losses	4	0
Goals For	46	18
Average Goals For	1.92	2.57
Goals Against	14	1
Average Goals Against	0.58	0.14
Win %	67%	100%
Points Per Per Game	2.17	3.00

However, United have won all seven of the matches that Giggs has not played in, and looking back a few seasons, it appears that Giggs’ influence was much more important to the Red Devils. As recently as 2004-05 the team’s win percentage was lower without him than with him, and United scored only three goals in his absence.

Manchester United - 2004/05		
	With Giggs	Without Giggs
Games	32	6
Wins	20	2
Draws	10	1
Losses	2	3
Goals For	55	3
Average Goals For	1.72	0.50
Goals Against	20	6
Average Goals Against	0.63	1.00
Win %	63%	33%
Points Per Per Game	2.19	1.17

\*Opta, a partner of The Scouting Network, provide detailed statistics on all aspects of football that can help highlight tactical trends or player potential. For more information on Opta contact Mark MacCombie via e-mail on mm@optasportsdata.com or by phone on 0207 902 0612



# EVERY MONTH THE SCOUTING NETWORK NEWSLETTER WILL FOCUS ON ONE OF OUR CLIENT CLUBS

## This month – Blackpool



When the pre-season pundits wrote down the clubs expected to get relegated from the Championship, Blackpool were the first name on their list. Instead, with a few weeks to go Simon Grayson's side are within sight of guaranteed survival and proving that their success in last year's League One play-offs was the start of a climb and not just a flash in the pan. The progress has marked 38-year-old former Leicester and Aston Villa defender Grayson out as a rising management star and brought back the sort of interest that hasn't been seen at Bloomfield Road since the halcyon days of Sir Stanley Matthews.

Grayson, predictably, is still cautious about discussing the progress, but admits: "If at the start of the season you had offered me where we are now with six games to go I would have snapped your hand off. There's still work to be done, but we are very pleased with where we are at the moment."

So what are the biggest challenges for a small club like Blackpool rising into the Championship arena against bigger and richer sides?

Grayson says: "I think the biggest thing is that your players have to learn quickly, that the higher you go the more you get punished for mistakes. In this League somebody like Kevin Phillips, to take just one example, needs only half a chance and it's a goal, so you have to try to be aware of that, and at the same time be more ruthless about punishing the opposition when you get your own opportunities."

"I think as a manager you soon realise that you also have to be ruthless in what you are trying to do. You have to have no regrets, however, you don't want to scare the players, but they have to be fully aware of what the challenge is that's being faced every week. They are up against teams and players who on paper are better, but we've tried to take it as a great incentive to make sure that they stay in the division. A lot of ours have worked ever so hard to get where they are, and we keep saying to them: 'Make sure you don't give it up lightly.' That's what they have been doing."

Inevitably there have been some changes along the way, and Grayson, one of football's most popular characters, admits dealing with that has been one of the challenges for him as a young manager. He says: "It is difficult but it is part and parcel of the job. If you don't do that side of it you are going to fall down on your own job, and let people down at the football club. You have to keep moving on, we look at certain players, the likes of Andy Morrell and Keigan Parker were our front two when we went on the run of ten straight wins. They got us all our goals, but both have not played as much as they would have liked because you try to improve it, and need the competition for places. We've improved it with the likes of Paul Dickov, Steven McPhee and others throughout the squad, you have to make those decisions that benefit the club more than certain individuals"



"Have I surprised myself with that ruthless streak? Well I think I always had it, even as a player, I always wanted to make sure I came off best against my immediate opponent. I think you can be a different person on the field to off it, and it's the same as a manager, you can be different at work compared to away from it. I had a situation where I was reserve team manager before I took over the first team, that meant I was playing alongside people and had to be able to give them "rollickings" when it was needed, so that sort of got me used to the idea. Then when I got the first team job one of the first things I had to do was tell about 14 players that I'd played and changed alongside that they weren't being retained. You find you have to deal with those things because if you don't you are letting the club down."

Having got this far Grayson, who signed in December a contract until 2010, is already plotting the next stages for Blackpool. "The longer you can stay in this division, the more you can build infrastructure and financial stability to help the club move forward again. We're looking at the moment at improvements to both the stadium and the training ground to make the club more attractive to better players so we can move things on. We've done okay so far and started the journey, but you always have to look to keep progressing."

## CONTACT US

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