



**THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK**

**NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2008**

THE SCOUTING NETWORK

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

WILL RESPECT HELP MAKE BETTER PLAYERS?

It hasn't been a smooth month for the FA's Respect campaign. A project greeted with universal approval in the calm and optimistic days of the summer, however, has now run into the inevitable winter storms. When you've just lost to a doubtful penalty decision, had a goal given against you that didn't cross the line or seen your star defender sent off for a tackle when he got the ball cleanly, it isn't easy to stay calm and controlled.

But that's the aim of the Respect agenda, and with four months of the season gone there are positive signs that the campaign has made progress despite the occasional – and probably inevitable – high profile rows that have cropped up. Several top referees have reported that whatever some managers have said or done, the levels of dissent among players have definitely improved. The message that the captain should be the only one to talk to the referee, and should also help with his own team's discipline, seems to have started getting through.

At the highest level it's interesting to note that Chelsea have dramatically improved their disciplinary record under the management of Luiz Felipe Scolari. After 20 games of the season they had just 15 yellow cards and one red between the entire squad, at the same stage last year the figures were 31 yellows and three reds. That will inevitably help them as the season progresses, the games build up, but they suffer less suspensions.

That was actually the intention behind the campaign which first drove the Respect agenda at League Two club Barnet, where manager Paul Fairclough and his players imposed the idea on themselves early last season. Struggling in 21st place they decided to cut out dissent, make the captain the only person who could speak to the referee and their reward was to end up finishing in the top half of the table. When officials at Soho Square decided to create their own campaign following a couple of high profile incidents, they looked to Underhill to help create the model that was launched at grass roots level then moved to the professional game.



Fairclough said: "We were quite proud that the FA picked up on the publicity around our initiative, but more important it was instrumental in helping us improve our results. Until then we had a blame culture, where people wanted to blame officials for this, that and everything. We decided to take a stance on it, and it helped the players become focused on what they were supposed to be doing as opposed to what the referee was or wasn't. I believe it not only improved them as individual players, but as people as well."



Discipline is clearly an important aspect to a player just like his ability to control or pass the ball and it's one of the added values of The Scouting Network's database that it keeps track of yellow and red cards collected by each player. The snapshot of the last year of a player's career provided by the Soccer Association statistics within the database gives an immediate warning of possible disciplinary problems in a potential new recruit.

The Scouting Network's Managing Director Derek Bragg says: "People outside the game perhaps think that scouting is just about going to watch a player, but it's also about doing your research on him. Yes you need to know about his talent, tactical sense and contribution to the team, but you also want to be sure you are bringing the right person into your club. The statistics supplied by Soccer Association help us give client clubs a snapshot of a players' disciplinary record, which is an important part of the due diligence process on any potential new signing."

It was never going to be easy to bring in the Respect campaign because it meant changing habits that had formed over a long period, but there are signs that it is making progress and discipline will be more and more a key issue in the future.



TSN (UK) 30 JUNE 2009 – CONTRACT EXPIRY LIST



TSN has now released its list of UK players who will be out of contract this summer to its 46 Football League and Blue Square Conference client clubs. The information has been gathered from a variety of sources, with 89% of senior professional footballers contract expiry dates available, both now in hard copy and via its own online database.

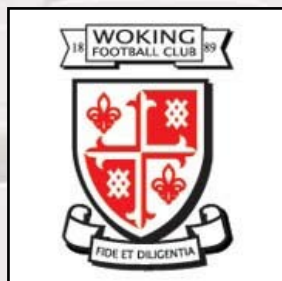
This document and access to the database can also be acquired by non client clubs, either by contacting us by email at supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk or the office on 01527 585870.

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY



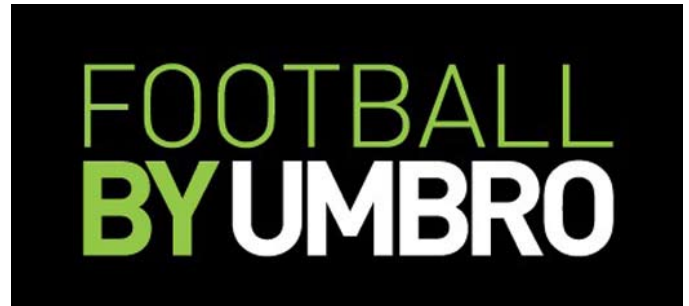
TSN CONTINUES ITS LINKS WITH NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY AND UWIC

During the month of October, TSN recruited two new client As part of TSN's ongoing links with the Sports Science and Performance Analysis degree courses at Nottingham Trent University and UWIC, TSN through November and December has and will be been providing valuable work experience to some of its students. Working in the football industry, seeing how information is disseminated throughout the game and meeting individuals at client clubs, have become key elements in their time with us and we wish them all the very best for the future.



WELCOME TO PHIL GILCHRIST AND WOKING

Woking have joined the growing number of Blue Square Conference clubs, who utilise TSN's scouting, support centre and database services. We wish Phil Gilchrist and his staff all the best for the coming season.



UMBRO PROJECT ON TARGET

Geoff McDougle, The Scouting Network's head of youth development, is on track to meet the ambitious target he set when he joined the company in the summer. The experienced former member of Sam Allardyce's Bolton backroom staff is spearheading the project to help Umbro identify the next generation of talent to help endorse the company's name as the UK's leading football brand.

Geoff aimed to visit all 72 League clubs by Christmas, plus as many in the Premier League and in Scotland as possible, and at the start of December his list of those still to go is down to single figures.

He said: "Together with Umbro's Player Recruitment Manager Andy Mashiter and his team we've been going to clubs meeting the heads of youth – and in some cases the managers – to raise the profile of the company. We've been getting the message over about the quality of the footwear and the new models and ranges.

"Apart from two clubs we've had a really positive reaction. Our next stage is to continue identifying boys in the 13 to 16 age group with the idea they will be part of Umbro's strategy to build brand loyalty at an early stage in a player's career and this initiative has extended the project with great success."

*You can contact Umbro's Player Recruitment Manager Andrew Mashiter by e-mail on andrew_mashiter@umbro.co.uk



IT'S TOUGH AT THE TOP – AND THE BOTTOM!

Just when we keep hearing that the Premier League has three distinct divisions, so this season it's almost merged into one. In fact a look through Opta's statistics covering the 17 seasons since the Premiership was first created, show this is shaping up to be the tightest contest ever at both ends of the table.

With 12 games gone all the Big Four clubs are in with a genuine chance of the title, while Aston Villa were adding a real threat of creating a Big Five. At the other end just three points separated Bolton in 11th and West Brom in 20th. At the same stage last season the gap was 12 points, with Derby County already looking condemned to relegation.

After 12 Matchdays	
Season	Gap between bottom half sides
2008/09	3
2007/08	12
2006/07	9
2005/06	12
2004/05	7
2003/04	8
2002/03	8
2001/02	9
2000/01	12
1999/00	13
1998/99	9
1997/98	7
1996/97	7
1995/96	9
1994/95	11
1993/94	11
1992/93	6

The biggest gap between the best and worst sides in the bottom half at this stage of the season was 13 points, which has happened once; back in 1999/00.

Nevertheless, the last time the gap was anywhere near as tight at the same stage of the campaign, was way back in 1992/93, two of the three teams that occupied the bottom three places were relegated at the end of the season.

*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



BUSINESS PROFILE

This month – Athletic Logic



Once upon a time you had a manager, a coach, and maybe a bucket and sponge man - and perhaps somebody to sort out the kit. Later came a physio; and a bit of help from a doctor; then a fitness trainer; and so on until now there's a whole army of sports specialists trying to keep the top clubs at the cutting edge of every development. Between them all they hold vast amounts of information and knowledge on the club's most valuable assets – its players. But how does anybody make sure all that information is collected together? How can it be best shared, or kept securely confidential when necessary instead? How can the relationships between the vast amount of data be identified, and used for the benefit of the club and players? How does the club owner make sure the know-how stays behind when key personnel leave?

Those are the questions set, and solved by Athletic Logic, the company who have become the most recent partner to The Scouting Network's range of services. The Athletic Logic answer is a simple to use, yet leading edge sports software system designed for elite sporting organisations who want to establish a firm competitive advantage. The result is an integrated system with 29 modules ranging from medical screening, medical records, sports science, player management and administration to data mining and analysis – adapted for each client to meet their individual needs.

That sounds complicated, but really it's just common sense for the 21st century. After all, it's the staff who help keep the players in the peak of condition and should all be working together. It's common sense that the manager should have one place to go to find all their information and it's common sense that the club who pays all their wages should always own the products of their work.

The effects are dramatic. For instance studying individual fitness data has helped one of their clients, Geelong Football Club in Australia, reduce the number of re-injuries by 90 per cent

through identifying the causes of injuries and avoiding over-training. That's helped the club get their first team players on the field more often, and win 26 of their last 27 games to establish themselves as the leading club in the brutally competitive world of Aussie Rules football.

Athletic Logic are now based in Wilmslow near Manchester, where founder Touraj Vaziri and CEO Michael Fitton are working together to introduce the benefits of the system to Europe. It hasn't taken long, already Manchester United and Chelsea have signed as clients, and other top Barclays Premier League clubs are expected to follow in the new year. They have instantly understood the financial, as well as sporting advantages of a system that Geelong believe has saved five per cent per annum in player contract value, as well as delivering significant benefits to their sponsors through being attached to a successful side.

Complete Information

The top English clubs have been attracted by seeing how every single professional within the football staff are able to easily enter their own knowledge base. It means, for instance, that complete information on the Academy players can be already in the system when they step up to the professional ranks. It means the specialists in sight, podiatry, psychology or nutrition all pool their input on the progress of each individual player, plus the coaching and scouting staff can bring their own work into the same templates to help establish consistent criteria for recruiting new talent. The system will also fully integrate all the information brought by match analysis systems, heart rate monitors, Omega wave and other external systems – and complex data mining looks for trends to help spot and prevent the causes of injuries or fatigue.

The Scouting Network and Athletic Logic have worked together and now released the "Athletic Logic Lite" system to bring the best of scouting, recruitment, medical and sports science techniques together at an affordable price. It promises to be the first stage of an exciting partnership.

CONTACT US

The Scouting Network
Bordesley Hall
The Holloway
Alvechurch
Birmingham B48 7QA Tel: 01527 585870 Fax: 01527 61009

THE SCOUTING NETWORK
Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services



**THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK**