



**THE  
SCOUTING  
NETWORK**

**NEWSLETTER  
FEBRUARY 2009**

**THE SCOUTING NETWORK**

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

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

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD SIGNING?

Manchester City's pursuit of Brazilian star Kaka might have been the most spectacular January transfer that didn't happen – but it certainly set the football world talking. City were said to have offered more than £100million to AC Milan for the 26-year-old former World Footballer of the Year with the same again to the player. In the end Kaka chose to stay where he was, and Milan backed away from the deal too, but it left the whole game asking how one player could be worth so much money.

But then that's not a new question, people have been throwing their hands up in horror right back to when Jimmy Greaves was the first £100,000 player and Trevor Francis the first to be sold for £1million. The same thing doubtless happened in 1905 when Alf Common moved from Sunderland to Middlesbrough for £1,000!

At The Scouting Network it set us discussing exactly how you put a price on a player when either buying or selling. Throughout January we've been helping clubs at every level identify the right people to recruit within their own budgets, but it is clearly not an exact science. Former Carlisle and Cheltenham manager John Ward has worked at every level of the game as either boss or assistant and gave us this guide to working out values.

He explained: "I obviously don't know the details of the proposed Kaka deal, but I did read that Mark Hughes said it would be a five-year contract at something like £20million a year, and that would fit the budgets of that size of club. Given the commercial potential, the impact one major world figure could have on their ambition, I could see the sense of it. There isn't a formula, because it is not an exact science, but clearly you always need to fit any potential transfer into the needs, budget and structure of your own club at whatever level you are operating.

"I've always worked on the three A's. That is attitude, ability and age. I choose to consider them in that order, but really you can put them in whatever order you wish. You need to decide the value the player will bring to the team, not just in his own contribution but how he can improve others around him. For instance will a midfield player who wins the ball turn your current playmaker into a better player because he is getting more possession? Then you have to fit that in to your budget. When you look at some of the buys being made in this window I'd pick out Jimmy Bullard who went to Hull at £5million, and Craig Bellamy to Manchester City at £14million. Whether we agree with those values, in both cases it fitted into what the club could afford. Hull went to their extreme for Bullard, but appear to have pulled out of signing John Arne Riise as too expensive.

"Wages are an important consideration. A player who comes in at considerably higher pay will cause friction among the good players you already have, and the player must fit in both as a personality as well as on the field and in the financial aspect of your club. So you do your homework. You wouldn't buy a second hand car without getting somebody to look under the bonnet. You check it out and you do it with people you trust. Otherwise you can get your fingers burned very quickly.

"When you are selling you want to get as much as you can, obviously, that's the bottom line, but you have to have a formula again. My best advice is to apply the formula you would if you were buying that player. Is that player necessary at your club? Have you got a player underneath that is being slowed down in his progress? If you get an offer that is substantially above your own valuation you would recommend it.

"For instance I think selling Bellamy was good business for West Ham. They have Freddie Sears, an 18-year-old who scores a goal or two, and now may get an opportunity. I don't know if that was their plan, but that's the idea you are looking at. Have you got that player to come and cover that you want to be pushing forward? If so you can say to your chairman: "If I get two or three million, you give me one, keep two, and I've got a player to come through. You can replenish your team in other departments and not necessarily the one you are selling from"

This interesting insight to the buying and selling of players is adopted around football, but of course the pressure on managers to get results also has a significant effect and sometimes John Ward's three A's gets lost in the process.



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## TSN FIFA U-20 QUALIFIERS IN RWANDA AND VENEZUELA



During January and February, TSN sent scouts to both the South American and African FIFA Under-20 qualifying tournaments, being held in Venezuela and Rwanda respectively, where they have begun providing impartial assessments on every player who takes part in the tournament, plus a list

of recommended high achievers. These reports will be available to client clubs in mid-February, but at a cost of £599 each for non-clients.

## TSN HELP NON LEAGUE CLUBS WITH THEIR SCOUTING



Although TSN is well known as the leading provider of scouting to Football League clubs, during the past couple of months our team of trained scouts have been travelling to some of the games lesser known venues, with visits to Thamesmead Town, Cammell Laird and Curzon

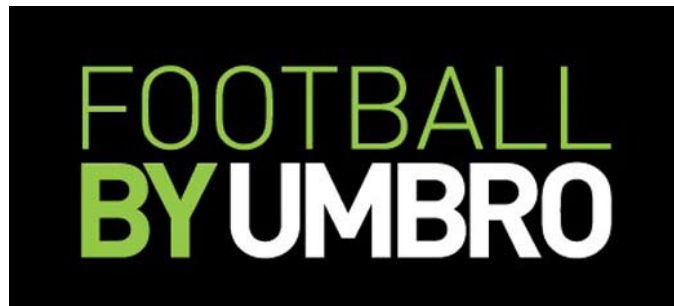
Ashton to name a few for our Conference and below clubs. These trips have provided additional scouting information for TSN on the growing list of players moving up from non-league in to the professional ranks.

## SUMMER TOURNAMENTS FOR 2009

Following discussions with our client clubs, TSN will be covering the following tournaments during a busy summer:

- 8-13 April** Montagui Under -16 Tournament
- 6-18 May** UEFA Under-17 Championship in Germany
- 2-11 Jun** Toulon International
- 14-28 Jun** FIFA Confederations Cup in South Africa
- 3-26 Jul** CONCACAF Gold Cup in Canada
- 21 Jul – 2 Aug** UEFA Under-19 Championships in Ukraine

If any non-clients would also want these tournaments covering on their behalf, please contact supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk or 01527 585870



## THE MADRID CUP

Umbro's family of international football tournaments has a unique new member – the Madrid Cup in Spain, which will invite teams to play in 7-v-7 and 11-v-11 competition at the magnificent 'Las Rozas' training camp – the venue used by Real Madrid and also the Spanish National team. The competition, from July 6 to 12, is open for senior men's teams and for boys from Under 10 to Under 19 – as well as girls in open age plus Under 14, 16 and 19.

It's the latest development in the company's successful World Tournaments project, a co-operative of the best and largest soccer tournaments from around the World to underline the company's commitment to the game at every level.

Madrid is just one of a global series of prestige events, including closer to home the Manchester International Cup which brings together 450 teams from 24 nations.

Full information is available on <http://www.worldwidesoccer.co.uk/umbro-world-tournaments.php>

*\*Umbro is a partner of The Scouting Network in a joint project to help the company identify the next generation of sporting icons like John Terry and Michael Owen to develop them as football's leading sportswear brand.*



## THE NOT SO VITAL SANTA CRUZ?

Sam Allardyce has made a significant impact since returning to football at Blackburn Rovers – the fightback to earn a draw with Bolton taking him to five games unbeaten in the Barclays Premier League. He's also done it without the man considered to be the club's key striker, Roque Santa Cruz. Rovers were determined to try to keep the Paraguay international at the club despite intense transfer speculation, but curiously OPTA's stats show he hasn't been so vital during this campaign.

Blackburn 2008/09		
	With Santa Cruz	Without Santa Cruz
Games	15	7
Wins	4	1
Draws	3	4
Losses	8	2
Goals For	18	9
Average Goals For	1.2	1.29
Goals Against	29	9
Average Goals Against	1.93	1.29
Win%	26.6%	14%
Points per Game	1.00	1.00

Despite having won 26.6% of their games with the Paraguayan playing as opposed to 14% when he hasn't, Rovers have still only picked up the same amount of points when he has featured. Moreover, they have conceded significantly more goals whilst he has been in the side, and at the same time scored fewer. More evidence comes through a comparison with the other two Blackburn strikers this season made before the Bolton game in which Santa Cruz came on as a substitute.

Blackburn Strike Force – Premier League 2008/09			
Player	Roque Santa Cruz	Jason Roberts	Benedict McCarthy
Appearances	14	16	14
Minutes on Pitch	1084	1130	624
Goal Attempts			
Goals	3	6	6
Mins per goal	631	188	104
Shots On Target	12	14	8
Shots Off Target	15	8	10
Shooting Accuracy	44%	64%	44%
Chance Conversion	11%	27%	33%
Passing			
Touches	635	492	333
Touches per game	45	31	24
Goal Assists	1	1	1
Key Passes	15	10	9

\*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 – Notts County



In an age when everybody demands instant success, the temptation for any manager is to worry only about getting his first team right. Win matches, and everything else within the club will be fine. It takes a braver boss to put his resources towards the long term future, but that's exactly the way that Ian McParland has tried to approach his time in charge at Meadow Lane. County, with their impressive stadium, have the appearance of a strong club, but the 47-year-old admits he got a shock when he went back to take charge 16 months ago.

"People will tell you we've made progress on the pitch – although not as quickly as I'd have liked because of a few key injuries, but the real progress has happened behind the scenes," he says. "When I came in the players were washing their own kit, there was no food for them, and on the medical side we needed to be a lot more professional. There was no reserve or youth team, and the School of Excellence had been disbanded about three years previously. We had a first team squad and a good stadium, but with respects there was nothing behind it. There were Non-League clubs with better structure. So we started up the School of Excellence again from Under 9s to Under 16s, and next year we will have ten scholars and be able to have a youth team, and also a reserve side – not in a League yet, but at least playing more games to benefit the fringe players and the lads coming back from injury."



It's a brave approach but one that McParland is passionate about. He says: "I played for this club for nearly ten years, and then did a lot of youth development work at Nottingham Forest with Paul Hart, so that's quite close to my heart."

"The way I look at it I hope I might still be here in five years time, but if I'm honest it's far more likely I will either have been sacked or will have moved on. What I want is that by then there will be players coming through from the youth set up, and I will have left the club as a proper football club again."

McParland of course was a major figure at County as a player during the 1980s, scoring 90 goals in 267 games – including the winner in a 3-2 triumph over Manchester United in 1983. He admits that's part of the reason for his idealistic approach.



"The club is close to my heart," he says. "I started there when I was 19 and had some great times, but I'd like to think my philosophy would still be the same if I went to another club. There are too many that like quick fixes, and maybe I'm living in Cloud Cuckoo land because there won't be another situation like Dario Gradi achieved at Crewe - few clubs or supporters have that patience, but as long as I leave it in a better state than I found it, that's my aim."

McParland's belief in being more professional has included using The Scouting Network's service for both team assessments of opposition and looking at potential new recruits, and his next aim is to move his players into more modern training facilities.

"At the moment we are training at Gedling Town and they are great to us, but we've got meetings planned to lease some land for a longer term so that we can then raise the money to do three pitches properly and have first class facilities. It's all part of making players feel professional. At the moment we do well because when we get lads on loan they don't want to leave – we look after them well with a good physio, with masseurs, a dietician and even a podiatrist. At this level those things are important to attract players because it isn't only about money, but about making them feel part of a proper club."

"On the field we are inches away – we've just had a few injuries to players at the wrong times, but next year we will have the kids in, we'll have more structure, and if this training ground comes off all of a sudden you are thinking this is becoming a proper football club again."

## CONTACT US

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