



**THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK**

**NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2007**

THE SCOUTING NETWORK

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

Happy New Year

We wish you all a Happy New Year and with the hectic festive programme now over, it is now on to the January transfer window, a time of year which can make or break a clubs season, depending on how they use this opportunity to strengthen their squads.

We have tried to use the newsletter as a vehicle for promoting ideas and making others within the game aware of what is going on in the football industry, not just at the top level, but also further down the league pyramid.

The feedback we have received over the past five months has been excellent, ranging from Chief Executives finding out more about our services to Chief Scouts trying to gather information on prospective players. With your comments in mind, we would like to base future articles around that feedback, making it a forum for discussion on a range of topics, not just scouting.

Derek Bragg - Managing Director

AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS



As the New Year starts the African Cup of Nations will set a whole host of questions about the outcome of the Premier League. How will Chelsea cope without Didier Drogba and Solomon Kalou? What impact might losing Kolo Toure and Emmanuel Eboue have on Arsenal? What

damage could the prolonged absence of Yakubu do to Everton's hopes of gate crashing the top four?, but a quick glance at the provisional squads show that it isn't only the very biggest clubs in England who will feel the impact of the six weeks that their African players will be absent. Sides like Reading, Portsmouth, Spurs and Sunderland will also be looking anxiously at how their players are doing in Ghana, but right down to Cheltenham Town in League One who have seen Guy Madjo picked for Cameroon, where their players are heading off to join up with their international squads.

There were 21 English based players called into the provisional line-ups by The Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Cameroon alone – with others to follow as the likes of Togo, South Africa, Senegal and Egypt confirm their selections, which means English clubs at every level must keep themselves up to date with the names and availability of the emerging players who could be next in line to carve their reputations by moving to Europe.

As a measure of the importance of the tournament, The Scouting Network will have two representatives covering every one of the 32 matches played in Ghana from when the tournament kicks off on January 20, right through to the final on February 10. Graham Allner, who covered the last African Cup of Nations in Egypt, will be joined by Shawn Bishop from the company's newly opened office in South Africa and between them they will provide an assessment on every one of the 230 plus players who will appear.

The move is in response to the popularity of the report produced for the Egypt tournament, which picked out a number of players on the recommended list who went on to establish themselves in European football. Allner, The Scouting Network's Support Centre Manager, says: "We are aware that quite a number of our client clubs are looking closely at players from Africa, and there are another group underneath the more established names who are worthy of attention.



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"There's no doubt that Africa is a huge and growing source of talent. It's quite a fascinating tournament to go to. I can remember from the last time that it was difficult to judge players in the group stages because of the standard of some of the play, where there is often a lack of tactical discipline about teams, but you can certainly spot the raw talent. I remember making notes about Didier Zokora as being one to watch, at the time he was a new name to myself, but obviously he has subsequently come over here and made an impact with Tottenham.

"Our aim is to complete the report as soon as possible after the tournament to provide thumbnail sketches of every player, which can then provide clubs with impressions if they want to make further enquiries themselves."

TSN Managing Director Derek Bragg said: "The tournament comes at a difficult time for some club chief scouts because it is right in the middle of the transfer window and so it's hard for them to be away for long periods of time, therefore, I think that was partly why our report was so popular the last time, and we know there will be additional demand for this one.

"Certainly from feedback we've had it seems that clubs are beginning to feel that they must also be up to date with the best talent coming from Africa, and that's why we feel it important to provide a service that would meet that need".

To find out how to gain access to this report, please contact supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

TSN OPEN DOOR TO DVD's FOR CLIENTS

TSN is pleased to announce our new DVD service. We can now provide client clubs with full 90 minute DVDs on both domestic and International games, played around Europe and South America. These can be ordered directly through ourselves, and will be delivered to clubs within 48 hours of the request. This new service, arranged officially through broadcasters, will provide between 90-100% of the games in the following top leagues: England, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Netherlands and Poland, with approximately 50% of the games in Argentina, Brazil and Hungary. We will also be able to provide all the games from the Champions League, UEFA Cup and major International games.

To find out more about how to receive these good quality DVDs on teams and players in a timely, yet cost effective way, send an e-mail to supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk



NO HOLIDAY AT TSN

While the rest of the country put their feet up, the Christmas holiday season kept everybody in football working, which meant an especially busy spell for our team of regionally based and fully trained scouts. During December and the New Year, TSN carried out 232 team assessments for Football League managers/coaches and their chief scouts, providing a valuable asset to 47 of the 72 clubs. With at times more than two thirds of games per fixture list covered, this confidential, cost effective resource is unrivalled, with its quality and professional presentation.

To find out more utilising this unique service, contact supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk



TSN DATABASE KEEPS GROWING

TSN's new offices in South Africa – together with continued coverage of the final stages of the MLS Cup and College Final Four games in the USA – have added even more depth of information to the 1,500 unique independent scouting assessments carried out during November and December. Individual assessments on all those who played in those US competitions, plus the latest games in the PSL, have all gone into the vault of information which is now available to users of our Worldwide Player Directory.



A TALE OF TWO HALVES FOR EVERTON

Everton's Christmas defeat by Manchester United underlined a serious cause for concern for David Moyes. His side were the form team going into Christmas, as well as progressing in the Carling Cup semi-finals and UEFA knockout stages, where they had been unbeaten in seven Premier League games since losing to Liverpool in yet another feisty Merseyside derby.

Pos	Team: Oct 27 to Dec 20	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Everton	7	5	2	0	15	17
2	Chelsea	7	5	1	1	12	16
3	Manchester United	7	5	1	1	10	16
4	Arsenal	8	4	3	1	5	15
5	Aston Villa	8	4	2	2	7	14
6	Portsmouth	7	3	3	1	6	12
7	Liverpool	7	3	2	2	6	11
8	Tottenham Hotspur	7	3	2	2	4	11

But the defeats to the two teams chasing the Premier League title crown underlined that the bulk of Everton's points in the first half of the season have all come against sides in the bottom half of the table. In fact after New Year's Day the Toffees' only win against a side in the top half of the table had come against 10th placed West Ham.

Everton	W	D	L	Pts	W%
v current top 10	1	3	5	3	11.1%
v current bottom half	10	0	2	27	83.3%

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

UMBRO WORLD TOURNAMENT

Organisers of the Pitea summer games in Sweden are on course to meet their target of more than 700 teams to play football in the land of the midnight sun. Last year 693 sides from 11 countries took part in the festival which is growing stronger thanks to the support of Umbro.

The tournament, which kicks off on June 27, is the first of this year's series of 11 UMBRO World Tournaments, and includes the unforgettable experience of playing late into the night under the midnight sun! But that's typical of the series which bring together a family of groundbreaking competitions around Europe – plus one in Canada - through Umbro's position as the premier supporter of grassroots soccer. Each tournament delivers the very best in organisation, facilities and world class service to give unique experience and education to young players. Each World Tournament can also help arrange essential travel and accommodation to provide a professional approach to the visit.

More information about the range of exciting options available can be found on www.umbro.com/tournaments, or e-mail worldtournaments@umbro.co.uk.



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

This month – Barnet FC



Paul Fairclough laughs when he tells you how he's taken Barnet into the European transfer market. The manager of the club with the smallest resources and budget in League Two has learned to become a master of scouting in his own back yard. And then suddenly this season he went all Continental by signing French defender Kenny Gillet from Caen. But it wasn't the result of a trip down the M20 to catch a ferry at Dover, or even the new high speed rail link to Paris from Waterloo. Quite simply the man who spent years as a non-League boss before finally breaking into the Football League ranks by getting Barnet promoted got lucky thanks to a chat with one of the game's down to earth big stars.



Fairclough reveals: "I know that for most managers searching for players means lots of miles and games, but I've always had a philosophy that if I can't find a team from within a 50-mile radius of Barnet then I've got a problem. It's a big catchment area so I aim to do all my looking for players within the M25. There's enough talent out there if you hunt hard enough. But I have made an exception this year by signing a French boy who has done very well for us, but to be honest we stumbled across him. We have good links with Arsenal and we played against them in a pre-season friendly. Gael Clichy played against us and said afterwards that he had a friend he thought was better than our left back. We invited him in for a trial and then he signed for us. In fact he stayed with Gael for about three months when he came over before he then moved into his own place."

That's about as exotic as life gets for Barnet, whose performances since they won promotion back to the League in 2005 have been a credit to the management skills of 57-year-old Fairclough. With average gates of barely 2,000 their existence consistently defies the odds.



Fairclough says: "It's a big challenge. We produce good players and invariably those players then move on. Every penny that comes in has to go back into the club on different aspects. For instance we've just sold Liam Hatch to Peterborough for £150,000, most of that money will go to helping bring the stadium up to standard, but even if I could spend £100,000 of it on a replacement I couldn't afford the wages for that standard of player. We have a tight wage structure and we have to stick to it."

There are envious eyes who think that Fairclough's other job – as boss of England's non-League team – should be an advantage. After all it gives him a network of FA scouts reporting on the brightest talents in the non League game. It doesn't work that way. "It's an interesting thought, but again the reality is driven by finance," he says. "If you look at somebody like Peterborough, I think they have seven or eight players that I've picked for my England team at one time or another. It actually works against me because when I cap players it makes other clubs aware of them and it also puts their prices up! Obviously I've got people out there helping keep my finger on what's going on and there are players coming through from the non-League clubs all the time, but the targets from outside the Football League that I can afford to bring to Barnet come from a different area again. For instance we've just signed Cliff Akurang who's been with Histon and Thurrock."

Fairclough's next aim is to restore the club's youth system that had to be stopped when Barnet lost League status in 2001, but the club's first priority is to make sure Underhill is up to Football League standards so they can stay in their traditional home for another season. "In the long term we're trying to find a site for a proper new home so that we can attract fans who want better facilities, unfortunately it's a lot easier finding players within the M25 area than it is suitable building sites!"

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