



THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK

NEWSLETTER
JULY 2009

THE SCOUTING NETWORK

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

GLOSSY MICHAEL OWEN BROCHURE

The bold move by Michael Owen's agents to try to find the right new club for their client has been one of the talking points of the summer, has the glossy 32-page brochure – the sort of thing an upmarket estate agent might produce to show the merits of an expensive country house - marked a new trend in the way players are bought and sold? It was certainly different, and provided a twist to the pile of videos and DVDs that regularly drop on the desks of managers and chief scouts.

For Wasserman Media Group to take such a different approach to helping the one-time World Cup hero move his career forward following the relegation of Newcastle was a brave step. It was always inevitable that news of the magazine style document would leak out, and that when it did it would invite less than flattering comments on the status of a player who has been one of the game's most deadly finishers for the last decade.

What was interesting about this one was that it was an effort to showcase facts about the player, rather than merely to provide a glossy sales pitch. Yes, of course, the document played up the merits of Owen's commercial appeal, his clean cut image and potential to create revenue off the field, but it also addressed his injury record and his playing record with pages of well researched statistics.

Sam Rush is Chief Operating Officer of Owen's agents WMG, a company who make use of The Scouting Network's services as part of their business of being knowledgeable about the game at every level. He tried to put the idea into context.

He said: "As one of the world's leading sports agencies, Wasserman regularly utilise comprehensive documentation and audio-visual material to illustrate the benefits of our clients. Although there has been interest from abroad, Michael has told us that he would prefer to stay in the Premier League. In the week after the season ended, we prepared a document showing all the information an interested club would require, and this was circulated to a select group. We saw it as a way of helping the clubs to understand the issues they might have heard discussed on the grapevine, which was why we also included a medical report and answers to frequently asked questions."

The Owen document inevitably sparked debate about how much such a high profile player still has to offer, but it also highlighted the importance of getting facts right about potential new signings.

Down the years clubs have bought players on all sorts of recommendations – everything from carefully researched reports after a dozen clandestine scouting trips to a wild deadline day gamble on the word of a trusted friend, and of course those notorious and beautifully cut videos. Now other agents might follow WMG's lead and use the printed word to help sell their clients' merits too.



I suppose if you take the comparison to an estate agent's brochure about a big house, you wouldn't complete the purchase without getting your own surveyor's report to make sure the wiring and plumbing all worked! Buying a footballer is a bit more of an inexact science, of course, because you can never quite replace the intuitive feel of a good scout at a game who knows what his manager requires, but having the right background information can reinforce that opinion and especially help satisfy the people who hold the purse strings.

The Scouting Network supports a number of clubs worldwide in this background process, utilising its award winning Support Centre to research player's background and provide impartial scouting assessments on players via its secure online database. This second layer of information helps clubs either target players or reinforces their own opinions beyond just the statistics of games played and goals scored.

At The Scouting Network we wish Owen well and would love to see him find the right club and return to his best. A World Cup final programme would be the very best glossy brochure to showcase his ability next summer!



WELCOME BACK

Welcome back to the start of a new season, with many clubs returning to pre-season training, all with high hopes for the coming campaign.

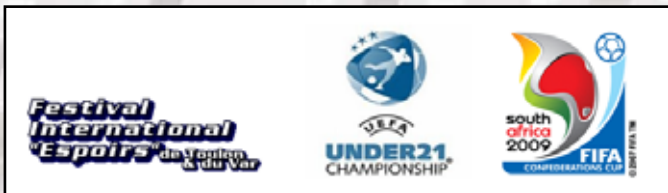
This has been a busy few months for the staff at The Scouting Network, with tournaments covered and new and current clients signed up for the coming season, however, we have decided to run the informative newsletter bi-monthly, although the website will continue to be updated on a monthly basis.



ONLINE RELEASED AND AVAILABILITY LISTS - JULY 2009

Following the success of the last two years rolling online list of released and available lists, TSN will again offer both client and non-client clubs access to this information on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 1500 via our website www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk.

For more information on how you can access this unique list and receive your login details, call 01527 585870 between 0800 and 1700 (Monday-Friday) or to log in at www.scoutingnetwork.co.uk



COMPLETED TOURNAMENT REPORTS

Over the past couple of months TSN scouts have completed the Toulon, Confederations Cup and UEFA Under-21 tournament reports, which are now purchased by clubs from 8 different countries. Assessments on every player and a recommended list of potential high-achievers has made these reports hugely popular with Chief Scouts around the globe.

Please see Products and Tournament Reviews on this website for costs or contact supportcentre@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk for your copy.



UMBRO FUTSAL CUP

Umbro's growing programme of worldwide tournaments has added another dimension with the Umbro International Futsal Cup to be held in Manchester at the end of August.

Futsal is the FIFA approved version of five-a-side, a fast game designed to encourage the development of skills by regular contact with the ball in tight areas. In fact with a name combining the Spanish words for football and hall – sala – it's the only small sided game that now has official sanction from the world's governing body.

There are one or two main differences from traditional five-a-side. There is no restricted area for goalkeepers, no head-height rules, and teams in the games which last 20 minutes each half have a total squad of 12 players, including two goalkeepers, with rolling substitutions allowed at any time. One extra twist is that every foul conceded above five in each half brings an uncontested free kick from ten metres out.

Umbro, a partner of The Scouting Network, are committed to supporting the game's grass roots as well as their programme backing elite performers. The Manchester tournament has both a men's and women's open age competition, and has attracted teams from all over Europe. More details are on www.umbrofutsal.co.uk.

**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.*



SO NEAR FOR ENGLAND.... YET SO FAR

Stuart Pearce's achievement in taking England to the final of the European Under 21 Championship in Sweden was a major breakthrough for the country at international level.

It's 25 years since England last won the competition, when Dave Sexton was in charge and the team included the likes of Mark Hateley, and of course it's even longer since the seniors won a major tournament – something that Fabio Capello will hope to change next summer in South Africa.

But at least two years after the disappointment of losing an epic semi-final penalty shootout to Holland, Pearce proved he'd learned lessons from that tournament with the immaculate preparation for another semi-final that ended in spot kicks. However the suspensions collected in the contest against hosts Sweden to reach the final had serious implications for the eventual battle with Germany for the trophy itself.

Opta's statistics show how England dominated possession in the game, and won one more corner, but with their two centre forwards Fraizer Campbell and Gabriel Agbonlahor both suspended they didn't have the firepower to turn that into attempts on goal, managing just eight attempts against the 25 produced by Germany. England also passed the ball better than their opponents, with a success rate of 84.3% compared to 74.3%, but didn't achieve enough penetration with that passing to create chances.

No doubt Pearce and the FA will look at the lessons learned in more detail, but the figures illustrate how OPTA statistics can be used to analyse a game and help coaches understand the areas that need improvement.

England Under 21		Germany Under 21
0	Shots on target	5
6	Shots off target	5
2	Blocked shots	5
5	Corners	4
18	Fouls	15
1	Offsides	2
84.3%	Passing success	74.3%
19	Tackles	22
68.4%	Tackles success	81.8%
59.1%	Possession	40.9%
46.2%	Territory	53.8%

*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 – Oxford United



Ask any manager the hardest part of his job and he'll almost certainly give the same answer – having to tell a player he no longer has a future at your club. So imagine having to deliver that message to a whole group who have just delivered a record run of results. Yet that is the tough stance that Chris Wilder decided to

take this summer as he plans to take Oxford United back into the Football League. Wilder just missed out on a place in the play-offs at the end of the campaign after launching an amazing run of 17 wins from 23 League games from when he took over just before Christmas, but many of the players involved in that sequence won't be around when the new campaign kicks off next month.

The 41-year-old former Halifax manager explains: "It was a fantastic run, and we came from nowhere so the players could be proud of what they did, but as a manager you always look round and ask yourself if you can improve again within your budget. That's what I feel we have done.

"It would have been very easy to say to the players: 'You have had a fantastic run and can we have more of the same please?' But I felt I had the opportunity to raise the bar again, and if you have that chance as a manager you must always try to take it."

So in a summer when many clubs chose to wait to enter the market, Wilder was busy from day one and had seven new faces in his squad when pre-season work began.

"We let nine go which meant a massive turnaround and made it more important that we did our business really early. I wanted players in for the first day of pre-season, and wanted the ones I was keeping to have contact with the new boys as soon as possible. People imagine that we've blown other clubs out of the water with financial muscle, but actually that's not been the case. We've done it all in our budget. It's been more that it has been easy to sell the club to prospective players because they saw the momentum gathering at the end of last season, and were excited about the potential and where we could go. For me it was about identifying characters to handle the weight of expectation, and those type of players are excited by a challenge like this one. That counts for them more than money."

Wilder has worked with The Scouting Network since he was at Halifax, and used the database and support centre to help identify the players he wanted. "I think at Halifax we were the first club from outside the League to use the service, and I've always stayed in contact with them. When we needed to change things quickly it was an obvious way to go," he said.

Oxford are of course one of the prime examples of a good club where things have gone wrong off the field, and the current owners arrived too late to rescue them from slipping out of the League. Getting back has proved far tougher than anybody might have expected.

"It's a fantastic club, a proper club," enthuses Wilder who cut his management teeth in six years handling Halifax through growing financial problems. "I think what I went through in my previous job gave me great experience – I had to deal with things I'd never want to again. So from a personal point of view I really want to repay the opportunity I've been given now. In this League Oxford will always be tarred as big time, but there are proper football people here like Jim Smith and the chairman.



"We've poured our efforts into getting the first team right initially because that always leads things at any club, but we've already made improvements to the infrastructure by finding a better training base, and the next phase is to do more work with the youth team and to slowly look at every department. I'm always very aware that in this game the moment you stand still you go backwards."

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