



**THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK**

**NEWSLETTER
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THE SCOUTING NETWORK

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

THE CHANGING FACE OF SCOUTING

Time was when a chief scout would measure his work in the numbers of games he had seen every week. Watch the youth team in the morning, dash to a League game in the afternoon, then take in a late kick off in the evening. The aim was to see as many matches as possible to develop the widest knowledge of what was on your doorstep, and identify players through an intrinsic feel of their quality.

All that has changed, even for those working in the lower reaches of professional football the accent now is on seeing quality and not quantity, and the games are spread across Europe and the world. The growth of sports science and analysis of the performance of existing players has also created new demands for statistical information on potential new recruits.

The answer for many clubs in the Premier League has been the creation of a new role – the technical scout. His job is to use modern technology to amass as much information as possible about other clubs and players. He deals in facts, in statistics, in hard information – and in providing visual clips on DVD. So how does it work?

Barry Simmonds, chief scout at Fulham, has recently recruited Scott McLachlan to fill the role at Craven Cottage and is in no doubt of the value he will bring to the club. "I think more and more clubs have either already recruited somebody for this role or are looking to do it, and in the modern day it is essential," said Simmonds. "I was fortunate that our new managing director Alistair Mackintosh had experienced the set-up at Manchester City so when I spoke with him he was very supportive.



"Scott was doing a similar role at Southampton – although perhaps not as intensive as he will do with us – and has stepped into the position really well. When we are looking at players he will find all the relevant DVDs, but also the complete technical background. He'll

tell us his injury record, establish the times when he has or hasn't played and any reasons for the absences. He'll look at the managers he's played for, the coaches he's worked with, other players he's played with, and what types of games he's been involved in. He'll tell me the type of tactics he's been used to working in, they are all factors to give an indication of whether he will fit in to your set-up or not. You can't be right every time but you are trying to narrow down the margin of error."

So what has created this demand? Barry explains: "You only have to look at what Wigan have achieved. With respect they are a middle size club but have recruited successfully from Honduras and other countries way beyond Europe. If you don't look into the same markets you get left behind. We have the advantage we have an internationally minded manager, so that broad market is important to us as well.

"Perhaps the biggest value is that it saves wasted journeys. It's valuable for the finances of scouting to study players without traveling, but it is also valuable for time as well. It's sheer common sense that if you are watching one player you can't be watching another. In the old days you would see two games a day but now because of the traveling it can sometimes be one a week. The primary aim of the technical scout is to get information so that you go to see the correct games."

Interestingly the same principle that is catching on in Premier League clubs lies behind much of the work done by The Scouting Network for its client clubs around Europe, North and South America. Their managers and chief scouts also need to use their time to its maximum value.

Managing Director Derek Bragg says: "We get great feedback from our clubs on the value of having detailed information supplied by our Support Centre service about possible transfer targets, we can use a combination of our own database and contacts throughout the game to fill in many of the areas dealt with by the technical scout – and of course our DVD service can also find valuable visual information. It's just as vital for a League Two manager taking a player on loan for a month to do his homework as it is for a Premier League manager spending several million on a star signing and that's why the service has been so popular."



WELCOME – RAPID VIENNA, PRESTON NORTH END AND GALWAY UNITED

During the past month the TSN family continues to grow, with Austria champions Rapid Vienna and English Championship club Preston North End, signing 18 month contracts, whereas Eircom league side Galway United have also seen the benefits of utilising our unique scouting and support services. We wish all three clubs every success and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship.



GOODBYE – TIM JOINS SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

Club Liaison and Sales manager Tim Henderson, who has spent the last three years helping develop The Scouting Network brand has joined one of our client clubs, Sheffield Wednesday in a player recruitment capacity. We would like to thank Tim for his time and efforts during his time with TSN, wishing him every success in his new venture.



SUMMER TOURNAMENTS FOR 2009

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

- 8-13 April** Montagu 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



UMBRO FIVES

Umbro's commitment to football at all levels is underlined by its backing for the 2009 FA Umbro Fives tournament. The unique venture gives players from all over the country the chance to sample the thrill of playing on the hallowed turf at Wembley Stadium.

Teams from all regions are starting to register for the nation's most prestigious small sided tournament, which aims to find the best five-a-side team in the country, with the finals at Wembley Stadium on June 20, 2009.

Apart from the prestige and honour of actually playing on the hallowed turf, all finalists will be treated to the ultimate Wembley experience – including traveling in the England bus, access to the main player changing rooms and the thrill of walking out of the tunnel to compete for the 2009 FA UMBRO fives crown.

And to mark the launch Tottenham Hotspur stars Michael Dawson and Darren Bent put their managerial skills to the test as they each mentored a lucky London based five-a-side team.

The teams received first class training tips including help with skills, tactics and team fitness to ensure they each have the best possible chance of making it all the way to Wembley. They also received a brand new UMBRO team kit to guarantee they look the part.

More information on www.thefa.com/UMBROFives

**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.*



A SUBJECT THAT NEEDS TACKLING?

According to FIFA he's the best player in the world. He's also the current PFA Player of the Year and Football Writers' Footballer of the Year. The dazzling skills of Cristiano Ronaldo make him something very special, but Opta's stats throw up an interesting fact about the Manchester United wing wizard – he's attempted barely ten tackles in some 1,769 minutes of football this season.

Okay so if you've got the dazzling Portuguese star waltzing round defenders why would you worry about how many tackles he makes? But for other players it's an interesting insight in an age when every man is needed to work for the team. Here's Opta's table of the men who've made least tackles:

Player	Team	Time Played	Tackles Attempted
Cort	Stoke City	707	5
Babel	Liverpool	611	5
Davenport	West Ham/Sunderland	630	10
Ronaldo	Manchester United	1769	10
Evans	Manchester United	630	11
A Johnson	Middlesbrough	723	11
Hoyte	Middlesbrough	895	12
J Cole	Chelsea	975	12
Barnett	West Bromwich Albion	822	13
Silvestre	Arsenal	811	13

Among the wingers like Ronaldo and Liverpool's Ryan Babel are some surprises - Stoke defender Leon Cort, Calum Davenport of West Ham and Sunderland, and Manchester United's highly rated Johnny Evans have made very few attempts at tackling opponents. Of course that might mean they have stayed on their feet and made good interceptions – but it does show how Opta's facts and figures raise interesting questions about players and give a guideline into areas that need more analysis.



*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



FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITY

The demand worldwide for the unique services offered by The Scouting Network seems to grow every day. At every level of the game the world is shrinking and clubs, their managers and chief executives, need a source of information and assistance from other countries.



So TSN is proud to announce another step forward in meeting those needs with the creation of country specific franchises to allow the highly specialist and individual services that our English clubs have come to rely on to be replicated across the globe. The first contracts have been signed to begin operations in Portugal, Sweden, Holland and Belgium and there are other countries where we are close to agreements, but due to the specialist requirements, due diligence on the individuals is essential.

The first franchise to be launched was in Portugal, where Emanuel Curto is our representative. The 32-year-old marketing and management expert, with playing experience has had an immediate positive response from major clubs and says: "I've always felt that clubs here would benefit from a service to help them buy the right players and all of those we have already spoken to are very impressed with our ideas. I'm very excited about the way the project is developing."

In Sweden the operation is being run by Chris Sandford, a former Aberdeen player who became the scout for Ipswich in Scandinavia after moving there when he married. His business partner is former Everton and West Ham midfielder Nicholas Alexandersson, who won more than 100 caps for Sweden, and has quickly been opening doors at top clubs who are open to new ideas.

Sandford says: "It's an exciting time and I think as well as helping the clubs here we will add value to the service The Scouting Network provides worldwide by improving the information about Swedish players. For many clubs it is an untapped market, but Swedish players that do go abroad are generally very successful because they tend to be hard working, honest, and adapt easily to other countries and cultures."

Holland and Belgium is run by Sjaak Van den Helder, a former board member of the Dutch Players' Association who has worked in football since 1969 in a variety of scouting and technical roles at clubs including Vitesse Arnhem and FC Utrecht. He said: "The Scouting Network offers a unique service because it provides everything a club could ask for in one place, but it is also priced in a way that everybody can afford."

"Also the clubs here are very aware of the international market to buy players and need better information about players in other countries to help them make the right decisions. They want to be able to know more detail before their own staff get on a plane to Brazil or Scandinavia or other countries to help save them both time and money. It is very clear there is a great enthusiasm for what we will be offering."

The Scouting Network's managing director Derek Bragg explained: "It has always been our vision to build on our existing network of scouts throughout the world, and we have had great interest from clubs who have heard of our reputation, but I have equally been aware that the success of the company depends on maintaining the quality of what we do, and that can only happen when you have the right individuals, and the right number of people in place to provide the sort of personal service that our clients value so highly."



"That's why it makes sense to have a franchised operation in each country where the UK operation can be replicated to the correct standards, and we will know that our quality and reputation is being maintained for the benefit of the clubs who use our services. It will also mean over time that the growing amount of information created in each country on players at every level can be shared worldwide and that will enhance what is already a unique database that provides not just statistics, but independent, yet impartial scouting assessments on players."

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