



THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK

NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2007

THE SCOUTING NETWORK

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

THE SCOUTING NETWORK NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

We hope you find this months articles of value, bringing to you features from client clubs which probably affect the majority of clubs worldwide. The value of scouting will of course be a major characteristic of the newsletters, hopefully promoting the different ways clubs go about their process of player recruitment and opposition team evaluation.

The newsletter has been written to keep clubs informed from all levels of the professional game, whether it be from Middlesbrough in the Premiership to Halifax in the Conference, where we aim to touch a bit of every club in the process. We would be interested in any feedback you may have or articles that you feel would benefit the footballing community, by contacting us through our website.

TO CHANGE OR NOT TO CHANGE?

It was Sir Bobby Robson who famously began his reign as England manager by declaring his line-up the day before his first match against Denmark with the warning: "Here's my team and we're coming to get you". Some 24 hours later, and reflecting on a 2-2 draw, he was left wondering whether declaring his hand so soon was such a clever idea. Knowledge is power, goes the old saying and knowing an opposition team early can give coaches a big chance to plan. But should you switch your own tactics to cater for what the opposition is likely to do? Or should you concentrate on your own team and let the other side worry about you? It's a debate that has divided coaches and managers for years and probably always will. And it's interesting to know the different ways that clubs use the hundreds of team assessment reports that are produced both by The Scouting Network and by their own staff in the course of a season.

Blackpool manager Simon Grayson is one who admits to very keenly taking on board the information he gets. "It's fair to say that this year we have changed our system at times to highlight things that we are aware the opposition will do. Maybe last season in League One we could prepare our team with the idea that we could go out and win most matches by concentrating on our own strengths. This year we've changed slightly because we are facing better players in a different environment. "Our philosophy is still to get the ball down and play the game in the right manner, but if we know the other team, for instance, will play a diamond formation then we'll do some work in training to see ways we might exploit what we see as their weaknesses. I think you have to give your players ideas and information that can help them win a game."



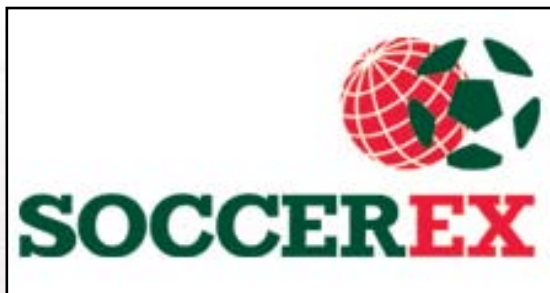
At Chesterfield, assistant manager Alan Knill takes a different approach. He says: "I use it more for knowing about the individuals that my players will be facing than the tactics of their team. It's not often we'd change the way we play to suit an opposition and at the moment we're near the top of the table so there's no reason to change the way we play. "As a defender in my playing days I would have loved to get the sort of information about a direct opponent that is available now. Which foot is he strongest on? Is he quick or slow? In our day you spent the first 20 minutes of the game working that out, and by then it could be too late! "We came down a division last season, so our knowledge of the players we are facing is not as good as we'd want. That means getting the detailed reports is a big help. "Our players watch the Premier League on the television and see the way those games are analysed to the ultimate degree. They like to feel they are getting the same sort of knowledge at their level. As coaches, if we have given them the information they need before the game we've done our job."

.... continued on page 2



Early Championship leaders Watford take another approach. Manager Aidy Boothroyd has employed Martin Hodge specifically to prepare details about opposition teams. Hodge says: "Everything about the way our club is run is very thorough and this is no exception. My job is to collate all the reports from the last games that The Scouting Network give us, plus my own information from both watching games and looking at tapes and then present it all to Aidy and his coaches. They'll ask me questions, it's my job to tell them about the opposition and then their decision about what if anything they might change to play against them. It's a great way of working. The traditional scout's role was always to write a report which went off and you never got any feedback from your work. What we do is create a totally open analysis of the side we're playing against where everybody can have an opinion before the manager sets the strategy."

Like everything in football there are no hard and fast rules other than the obvious one: You can't ever know too much.



TSN EXHIBITS AT SOCCEREX 2007

Between 26-28 November 2007, TSN will be exhibiting its scouting and consultancy services to delegates at SoccerEx 2007, which this year will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. With numerous top clubs and football related businesses present at the world's largest football exhibition, we are looking forward to promoting our unique services to the world game from stand 740.

SOCCER MANAGEMENT & SCOUTING COURSE

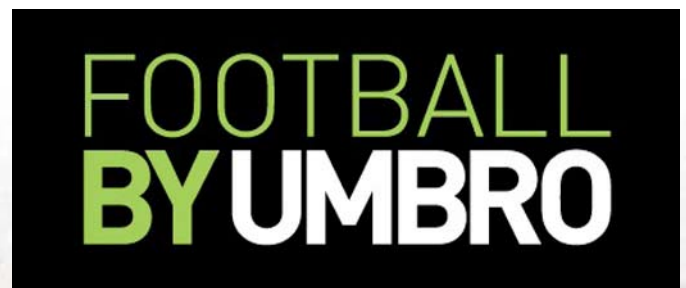
For two years, TSN has been developing and tutoring a Soccer Management and Scouting course to potential scouts, agents and coaches within the USA, via the successful sports education business Sports Management Worldwide. Over the past few months, this successful 8 week on-line internet course, has been rolled out to students worldwide, with shorter internal courses also available.

To find out more about these courses contact either
andrew@smww.com or
adminsupport@thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

TSN WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF

As TSN look to expand its service and services to clients, we have been fortunate to recruit John Connolly, who will look after and develop our clients in Scotland. John has a wealth of footballing experience, having played for St Johnstone, Everton, Birmingham City, Newcastle United and Hibernian, together with managing Motherwell, Ayr United, Queen of the South and St Johnstone in Scotland. John currently performs the role of SPL match delegate and will join up with Jon Harrison our current scout in that area.

TSN have also brought in Patricio Figuerio, an ex-player and now a freelance journalist based in Argentina, who will be responsible for both scouting and looking after the South American element of the Worldwide Player Directory.



UMBRO ENDORSEES

Throughout the month of October there have been several notable performances by UMBRO endorsees. Jason Lampkin and Adam Davies were both named in England's Victory Shield squad to play against Northern Ireland, with Jason starting the game. Adam has subsequently been named in the squad for the game against Wales at Telford on 2nd November.

England's Under 21 squad that played Euro 2009 qualifiers against Montenegro and Republic of Ireland featured six UMBRO endorsees - Joe Hart, Nedum Onuoha, Andrew Taylor, Fabrice Muamba, Billy Jones and Andrew Surman. Michael Mancienne was also named in the original squad, but was forced to withdraw through injury. Each of the players are consistent members of their respective first team squads with Joe, Andrew and Fabrice playing regularly in the Premiership this season.

Michael Owen and Gareth Barry featured for the England Senior team in their recent Euro 2008 qualifiers against Estonia and Russia and it is hoped that John Terry will return for the crucial final qualifier against Croatia on 21st November.



THE PREMIER LEAGUE'S BEST CENTREAL MIDFIELDER?

You can sit and debate it all night – who is the best central midfielder in the Premier League? And football people will rightly make decisions based on their own instinctive judgement or eye for the game, but now those views can be backed up by hard facts thanks to OPTA's statistics. OPTA are a partner of The Scouting Network and their figures make fascinating and informative reading.

Player	Steven Gerrard	Frank Lampard	Cesc Fabregas
Team	Liverpool	Chelsea	Arsenal
Mins on Pitch	545	540	791
Goals / Attempts			
Goals	1	3	4
On Target	7	5	10
Total Shots	16	11	16
Shooting Accuracy	43.8	45.5	62.5
Conversion Rate	6.2	27.3	25.0
Passing			
Goal Assists	1	2	6
Attempts Created	16	14	24
Pass	299	395	558
Accurate Pass	237	343	442
Passing Accuracy %	79.3	86.8	79.2
Total Cross	26	28	49
Dribbling			
Total Dribbles	10	7	10
Dribbles Won	4	3	5
Defending			
Duels	60	41	90
Duels Won	39	23	45
Duel Success %	65.0	56.1	50.0
Clearances	23	8	11
Interceptions	18	11	10
Discipline			
Fouls	4	3	7
Offsides	0	1	1
Yellow Cards	1	1	2
Red Cards	0	0	0

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 – Halifax Town



Halifax Town are about to get new owners and nobody is more entitled to be excited about the chance to take the club forward than Chris Wilder. When people talk about managers serving their apprenticeship, then former Sheffield United and Rotherham defender Wilder understands them more than most. He's learned his job in the hardest environment going. He says: "When I came into the job five and a half years ago the club was in administration, we didn't have any players, there were just five on the books, there was no training ground, no kit, and no pre-season friendlies organised. My brief was just: 'There you go, the first fixtures are in six weeks, get on with it!' It's certainly been an eye opening time ever since, but at the end of it you get a really good understanding and background knowledge about how a football club works and operates. However tough it's been I wouldn't swap it."

Managing a big name club in a lower division is never easy, ask Nottingham Forest in League One about the weight of history. For Wilder at Halifax it has been much the same. "I think people expect because Halifax has been a strong Football League club in the past and that we should be among the best clubs in the Blue Square Premier now," he says. "In actual fact given the circumstances the very fact the club has survived in this league is an achievement, let alone that two years ago we were ten minutes away from getting promoted in the play-offs."

"You have to recognise that the Conference is now a Fifth Division in all, but it's name. It's one of our achievements that we have been able to stay with that pace, and we've done it by working at our structure. I made contact with Ed Baranowski, who did fitness and conditioning when I was at Sheffield United in the early 90s and we created a partnership with the University to help improve our fitness standards."

"The next thing was our scouting system and that's where we got involved with The Scouting Network, who have helped solve what was a massive problem. We were having to rely on favours from friends and sometimes even family to get reports that were almost literally on the back of a beer mat. Now we are getting much better and more organised information and we know the players who are about. Identifying the right players to recruit has always been a key at this level or any level and this is now a big help to us."

Halifax have suffered the same problems that befall most clubs who run into severe financial difficulties, it damages relationships with local business and traders.



Wilder says: "A lot of what we have done has been about trying to rebuild bridges, the football club has had a lot of problems with the local community. For instance, the headquarters of the Halifax Building Society is in sight of our ground, yet they have never become involved and we've had major problems with the local council, even though they own the ground, that's why we're very hopeful about the new people coming in. They need to get 75 per cent of the shares to go ahead with their takeover and that should happen in the next few weeks. Then the plan is to go on building from the bottom."

"I've got the rest of this season and next on my contract and although I had offers last season to go elsewhere, I've met the new people and been impressed by what they want to do and I'm quite excited by the possibilities. They're not looking to take money out, but to develop the football club and go forward, which is great for me because all I want is to be able to be competitive with the other teams in our League. You can see these clubs move forward and grow, which is something I also want for Halifax Town Football Club."

CONTACT US

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