



**THE
SCOUTING
NETWORK**

**NEWSLETTER
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THE SCOUTING NETWORK

Worldwide Football Scouting & Consultancy Services

www.thescoutingnetwork.co.uk

SEVENTH HEAVEN – OR IS IT HELL?

Autumn is slowly turning to winter, the games are still coming thick and fast, and for managers the month of October is when they begin to learn about the depth of their squad. Some of the niggling injuries are looking more serious, a couple of players are close to five bookings, and a couple more are struggling for form and need a rest.

Those problems don't change from one season to the next, but this year there's an added twist to the demands with the introduction of seven substitutes for games in the Carling Cup and FA Cup to fall in line with the Premier League.

The Premier League themselves were following Europe by expanding the size of their benches this season. It was a change proposed by Tottenham and backed by the likes of Sir Alex Ferguson to give more option to use the players in their large squads, but has it really been a positive for the game as a whole.

Sir Alex was one of the biggest supporters. At the time the rule was introduced he said: "In the modern game with the players and the money available there should be seven subs. Big clubs might have 25 players and it's tough on some of them – for instance when we played at The Emirates last season I had my strongest squad and I couldn't find a place for Darren Fletcher who had been brilliant a few days before in Europe. It was a kick in the teeth for the boy."

At the other end of the spectrum, though, the clubs lower down the scale have a different worry. Bury manager Alan Knill admits: "I could see that when it comes towards Christmas it will be unrealistic for teams in our League to have seven subs in a Cup competition. To be honest sometimes clubs at this level struggle to put out five subs already – you sometimes have to fill the bench with young kids."



Hereford's Graham Turner, one of the managers who has played the loan system with great success, can see another problem developing. He said: "When I asked earlier this season about taking one of the fringe players at a Premier club the immediate reaction was: 'Well with seven substitutes this year he will be there or thereabouts for our first team'. That tells you it will have quite an effect on the availability of the fringe players at the top level.



"If that limits the opportunities for young players to get out and develop by tasting first team football it can't be a good thing. It definitely helps both the big clubs and their players if they go out for experience. A case in point would be Sir Alex who allows all his future top names to do so. Think of that group of Beckham, Scholes, the Nevilles and people like that who all went out and got a taste of first team football. More recently there was Fraizer Campbell last season at Hull. It could be said he came of age with games in somebody else's first team. Players need that first experience of football where the result is all important and on loan is the best way for them to get it."

Significantly both England Under 21 manager Stuart Pearce and the FA's director of development Sir Trevor Brooking have voiced the same concerns at the potential for the rule to limit the chances of promising young players to develop. And there have already been signs of a change in thinking. During Arsenal's 4-0 win at Blackburn, for instance, 16-year-old Jack Wilshere and 17-year-old Aaron Ramsey both came on in the last ten minutes, had there still only been five players on the bench neither might even have been changed. So is the new rule a good thing if it gives young players a safe introduction to Premier League football in a game that was already over – or a bad one if it restricts their chances to go on loan and play 90 minutes lower down the scale? It's a debate that may continue.





TSN PRESENT TO PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS DEGREE COURSE AT UWIC

On Friday, 26th September, TSN were invited to speak at the Performance Analysis of Sport MSc degree course, which was held at UWIC in Cardiff. The two hour presentation gave students an insight in to both the subjective and objective sides of performance analysis and player recruitment. Many of footballs current performance analysts have successfully completed the course, with others on the course already employed by clubs.



NAC BREDA, EVERTON, KIDDERMINSTER HARRIERS AND STEVENAGE BOROUGH TAKE UP TSN SERVICES

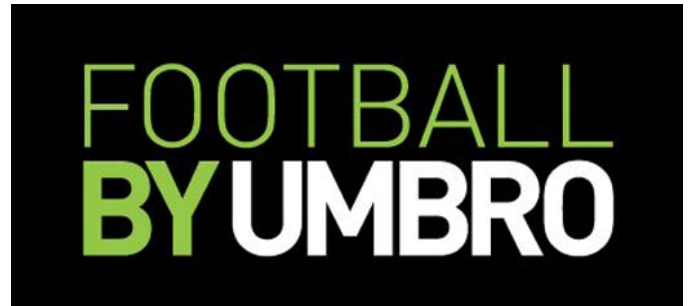
Over the past month NAC Breda have become the latest Dutch club to utilise the unique scouting services of TSN. With some innovative ideas of their own, we are pleased to welcome another forward thinking club from outside of the UK. (See October Newsletter for article on NAC Breda). Everton have also signed up and join the ever increasing group of Premier League clubs to utilise the whole range of scouting and support services on offer, plus two new customer's from the Blue Square Conference, Kidderminster Harriers and Stevenage Borough. We wish the clubs all the very best for the rest of the season.

ABERDEEN DEVELOP YOUTH SYSTEM WITH TSN



As part of our continuing support to client clubs, TSN has worked closely with Aberdeen to develop a workable youth storage and support system for the club, maintaining their own records of young players of all ages. The system allows the club to retain contact information on their own players, coaching

reports and an option to monitor trialist's throughout the season. Another version of this simple youth development system is currently being rolled out to other clubs, as TSN continue to meet the needs of its clients.



OWEN STILL GOING STRONG

Newcastle's troubled start to the season is well documented, but despite all their problems it hasn't stopped Michael Owen getting back to scoring goals. The England striker's effort late on in the Carling Cup tie with Sunderland was his third from three full games and two more appearances from the bench. That followed on from the ten goals in 20 games he collected for Newcastle at the end of last season after returning from injury.

Owen has been wearing Umbro boots since before he first burst into the public eye with his spectacular goal against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup and has been one of the company's most important brand ambassadors.

Umbro are now working with The Scouting Network to try to find the next generation of superstars who will wear their boots, and introduce them to low key sponsorship to encourage loyalty to the brand. It is part of a long term commitment to the future of football.

*You can contact Umbro's Player Recruitment Manager Andrew Mashiter by e-mail on andrew_mashiter@umbro.co.uk



TROUBLED TIMES

To find Tottenham and Newcastle at the bottom end of the Barclays Premier League table at the start of the season may seem a surprise, but in both cases their early season problems have merely continued poor runs from the back end of the last campaign.

Premier League Table 2008									
Pos	Team	Pl	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Chelsea	23	16	7	0	44	14	30	55
2	Liverpool	24	14	8	2	39	18	21	50
3	Manchester United	22	14	5	3	47	15	32	47
4	Arsenal	23	14	6	3	45	17	28	48
5	Everton	23	11	6	6	29	22	7	39
6	Aston Villa	23	10	7	6	46	32	13	37
7	Blackburn Rovers	23	9		6	29	31	-2	35
8	Portsmouth	23	10	2	11	24	32	-8	32
9	Wigan Athletic	23	7	7	9	21	19	2	29
10	Sunderland	23	9	2	12	21	26	-5	29
11	West Ham United	24	8	5	11	28	42	-14	29
12	Middlesbrough	23	7	7	9	31	28	3	28
13	Manchester City	23	8	4	11	33	38	-5	28
14	Fulham	22	8	3	11	21	29	-8	27
15	Tottenham Hotspur	23	5	9	9	29	32	-3	24
16	Bolton Wanderers	23	6	6	11	19	29	-10	24
17	Newcastle United	23	5	6	12	22	43	-21	21

In fact Opta's statistics show that Spurs and Newcastle have both suffered a time to forget since the turn of the New Year. Their Premier League table of 2008 (compiled before the last weekend of September), shows how both have been struggling. Spurs did of course win the Carling Cup in February, but their League form has been dreadful, and other worrying statistics show it's their worst start since 1974-5 when they lost their opening four matches.

*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 – NAC Breda



Sometimes, everything just comes together at a football club in one beautiful, memorable season. Think of Manchester United winning their treble in 1999 as the ultimate extreme, but anywhere down the scale, every club will have a cherished campaign that they

look back on as being 'their year.'

Well last season was that one for NAC Breda, one of the group of Dutch clubs who have recently signed up to The Scouting Network's expanding European service. They finished third in the Eredivisie, the best league performance in the club's history, and all the more remarkable an achievement in a game that's dominated as much by money in Holland as in any other European country.

They filled their neat new stadium regularly (an average crowd of 15,699 in a modern ground that holds 17,000), played attractive football, and the only bitter disappointment was that because of the Dutch play-off system they didn't finish with a place in the UEFA Cup as a reward.

It was a year to cherish, but what comes next? "It would be good to say that because we did that our target now is to be second this term, but that would not be honest," admits chief scout Jeffrey van As. "In truth I think we will never be third again, because last season was a very strange one in Holland because some of the big clubs lost a lot of points in a way they would not normally do. We just had a year when I think almost every player had the best season of his career, and sometimes you are lucky to get those things that come together."

Breda have always been a bit of yo-yo club in Dutch football, maybe that's why they have one of the country's most passionate supporters. Their history is summed up by the previous best campaign in the early 1990s when the club went bankrupt and finished fourth all in the space of a few months, but the current regime are aimed more about stability and progress on and off the field.

Van As says: "Myself and our technical director Earnest Stewart have worked together for three years now and we understand the needs of the club and the team. We have the tenth biggest budget in the division so we have to be more clever in the way we find our players and put them together."

Success of course brings new problems. Van As says: "Last year every club came to Breda thinking they could beat us, coming to play football, but now every team is coming to us and defend, hoping to come for a draw. It's a new challenge for us to break that down and we are learning. It's always a challenge for any club that does well to keep improving for many different reasons.

That applies to their recruitment process too. As says: "Some of our players have been together four or five years, they know each other well, and they are a team of friends as much as footballers. When we look for others to join them we have to keep that balance.



"It means first of all we must find good footballers. We watch players on different levels because the youth process at clubs like Ajax and Feyenoord is very famous and we can find players who are not quite good enough to stay there. And also we look across the country and Europe which is where The Scouting Network is helping us to improve our knowledge, but just because you see somebody play football you don't know the guy, and that's our next question. We try to talk about his family and what kind of human being he is and that must be okay before we offer him a contract. We have the right mentality of players and that is the strength of our team. The players on the bench are also important, they are trying to come in but not angry or giving problems to the coach or their team mates. We've got a group of 20 now who want to go for it and that's the power of NAC Breda at the moment."

CONTACT US

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