THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

EFL MAGAZINE

ISSUE THREE // WINTER 2020

EFL

INSIDE



PAUL WARNE
ACCIDENTAL MANAGER

WAYNE ROONEY

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEGEND

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WELCOME...

...to the latest edition of the EFL Magazine.

It is fair to say that much has happened since we published our last magazine in winter 2019, and so I would like to begin on behalf of the League's Executive by offering our collective thanks to all our colleagues at the EFL and to each of the 72 member Clubs for the dedication, professionalism and patience shown during what has undoubtedly been a difficult period.

In the absence of fixtures and in the most difficult of circumstances, EFL Clubs swiftly came together in response to the outbreak of coronavirus to support communities in need. Clubs' invaluable efforts to support the NHS, alongside the vulnerable and elderly, indeed showed that football never went away, something that is both highlighted and celebrated throughout this publication.

This edition of the EFL magazine provides an in-depth look at the key developments, opportunities and human-interest stories within the EFL, including content and features that are not available on existing EFL digital channels.

The content highlights the positive work taking place across the EFL, its competitions and, most importantly, in the community.

It also looks at the importance of iFollow for Clubs, at a time when all-important matchday income has been absent, as well as sharing best practice on fan engagement, as our Clubs come up with new and innovative ways to keep in touch with their fans.

Derby County captain and interim manager Wayne Rooney is one of the biggest and most recognisable names in world football and is the focus of our main feature, as he continues the transition from player to coach here in the EFL. We hear from those who know him best, and have watched him develop into both a man and manager.

As newcomers to the EFL this season, we also hear from Harrogate Town's Simon Weaver, who tells the heart-warming story of his club's rise, following their promotion to the EFL in the summer. From having just seven season ticket holders to playing in Sky Bet League Two, theirs is one of the game's true fairytales.



Given the rich history of our Clubs, it is also right that we provide a platform for some of the more experienced statesmen of the game, in the form of Leyton Orient's captain, Jobi McAnuff. Now in his third decade of professional football, his open and honest piece on love, loss and life lessons includes important messages for us all.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine and, as football begins to return to relative normality, please continue to stay safe and enjoy the stories that we have captured here.

MARK ROWAN
EFL Director of Communications

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CENTENARY YEAR 1920-2020



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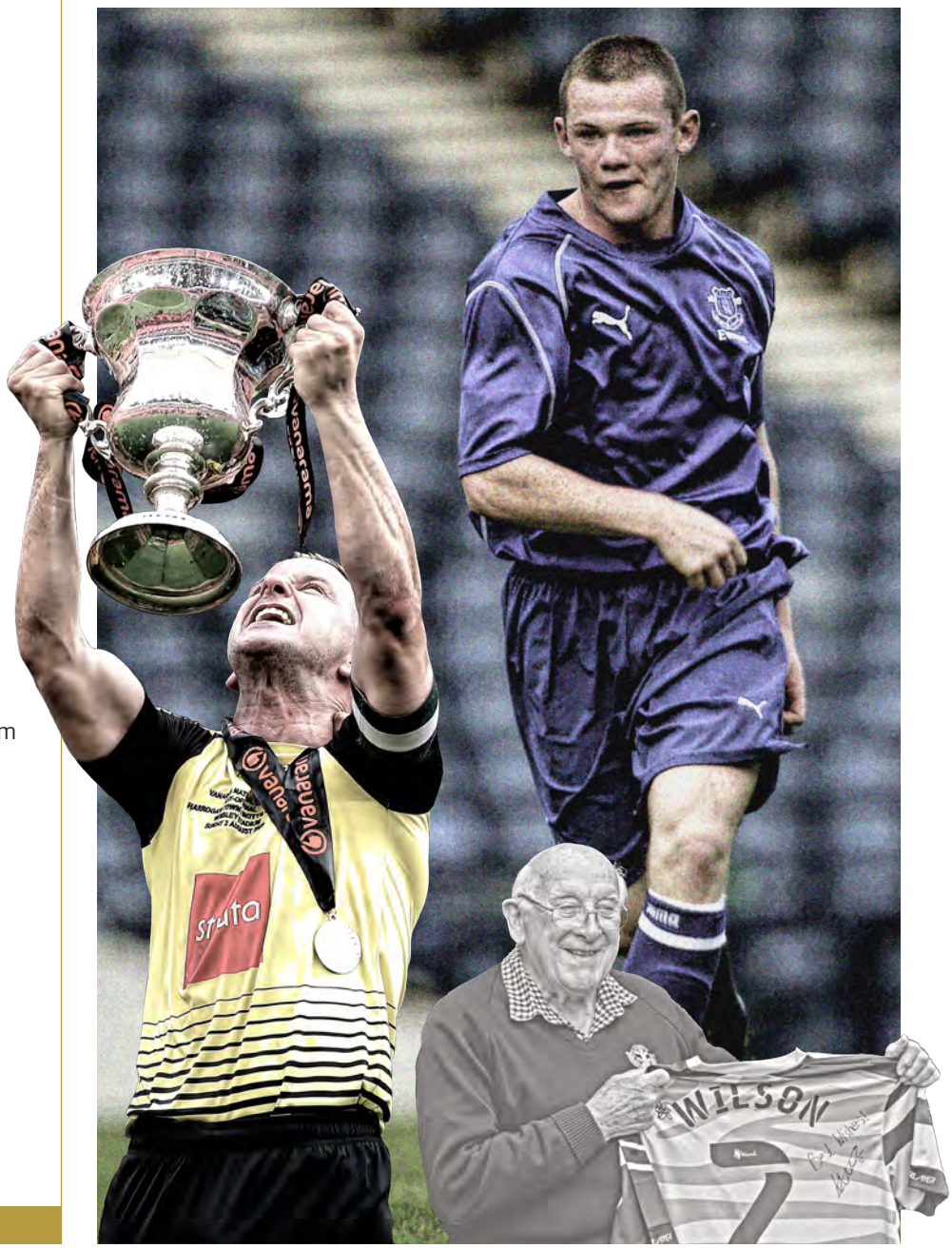
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A footballing career that spans two decades is bound to have its fair share of ups and downs, and in Jobi McAnuff those ups and downs have been the making of an inspiring man.


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A MESSAGE FROM

THE CHAIR



The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought about challenges which extend beyond the game we all love, and led to an unprecedented situation for everyone.

In the circumstances, regular and relevant communication has been more important than ever, and so I wanted to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to those involved with each of the EFL's 72 Clubs, who have acted with professionalism, pride and resilience throughout what remains a difficult time for us all.

In the absence of fixtures and in challenging circumstances, EFL Clubs came together to show that football 'never went away' in their swift, and valuable response to supporting communities in need.

In their efforts to support the NHS, while also delivering over 250,000 food packages, and making over 120,000 phone calls to the vulnerable and elderly, Clubs have demonstrated that they are more than just the 90 minutes on the pitch each week, open beyond 3-5pm on a Saturday afternoon. This effort should not go unnoticed or unrecognised.

It can only be achieved through the hard work and good work of the thousands of people working across the game and my thanks and appreciation goes to you all at this time.

Following months of uncertainty, I am pleased that a rescue package and distress fund for EFL Clubs has been agreed, and a resolution has been reached with the Premier League in ensuring that all EFL Clubs survive the financial impact of the pandemic. Hopefully Clubs are now able to address the financial challenges arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic with much-needed clarity and confidence.

The well-being of staff and supporters has remained at the heart of the EFL's efforts to respond to coronavirus and will continue to do so, and decisions have always been taken with your health – as well as that of the entire nation - in mind. This includes the matter of return of supporters to stadiums across the country; something that has provided a degree of light at the end of the tunnel as far as a return to normality is concerned.

Thankfully we have now seen fans return to live football, albeit in limited numbers, and I want to thank Clubs for all their efforts in ensuring stadiums are ready for the safe return of supporters.

The measures put in place are significant, but should ensure football presents one of the safest environments possible, and we of course must continue to work with all parties to ensure that fans can return in larger numbers as soon as it is safe to do so.

The finances are, of course, fundamental, with the contribution to gate receipts made by match-going supporters the mainstay of any club's financial business model, but it is also about the health and wellbeing of the 18 million football fans who make their way through EFL turnstiles every season.

Football is a communal activity, bringing together people from all backgrounds and I know that it is an outlet that has been sorely missed for many these past few months.

In the absence of fans in stadiums, we have endeavoured to bring live football direct into homes across the nation via our official streaming service, iFollow. At the time of writing, we have had over 1.5million streams this season alone, which speaks volumes for the continual and growing appetite for League football, both domestically and internationally. Such a large-scale operation has not been without its challenges but, again, its overall success is testament to the dedication of those behind the scenes.

It is often said that football is like a family, and it has been truly heartening to see and hear the stories of people coming together at such an important time, with EFL Clubs at the forefront of this work. Be it offering practical, emotional or physical support, the help EFL Clubs are continuing to provide is remarkable, particularly during what remains a challenging time for the game as a whole. As has been the case with the fans, much of this support has had to come from afar, making it all the more commendable.

As I said when I arrived at the EFL, the League and its Clubs matter to a great many people, and COVID-19 has truly brought that fact to the fore. I thank you for your patience and continued efforts, without which we may well have found ourselves in an even more challenging situation.

Please continue to stay safe as we continue our collective effort to return our game to normality, and I will personally look forward to seeing you when that is the case.

RICK PARRY
EFL Chair

NOISE AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Since March 2020, empty stadiums have become a familiar sight across the EFL. The anticipation of walking to the ground, the joy of revelling in a shared passion with thousands of others, the 90-minute rollercoaster of emotion, gone.

What always remained, though, was hope. With the possibility of full grounds now not such a distant dream, players, managers and referees tell us, in their own words, why the old saying is true...

Football without fans is nothing.



KENNY JACKETT
FIRST-TEAM MANAGER, PORTSMOUTH

The part that fans can play, on so many different levels, shouldn't be underestimated. Football is our national sport, and it is so for a reason.

If you look at the fantastic pyramid system that we have in this country, right down to the non-League level, as well as the attendances before the pandemic, it speaks volumes. People have a lot of community spirit and want their football club to be a big part of that.

Our game obviously generates both interest and revenue too, and that's vital. Clubs at the very top are global, but they're built on the foundations of a very passionate home support and will be aiming to look after people in their own area first.

Playing without fans has been strange; it's evened up the home and away advantage and the results are much clearer now in terms of being 50/50, home and away. It just goes to show how much fans do play a part, and home advantage is exactly that, it is an advantage. As a manager, we've certainly been able hear the noise from both benches and, at times, the Directors Box as well!

It's something we've have had to get used to, no doubt, and it's the same for both teams. Although football has carried on and you have to adapt with it, we do want to get to playing football in front of a live crowd. That's where we all want to get to.

We'd all love to see stadiums full again and I think we're heading in the right direction. At Portsmouth, we have a support base that is very good at getting behind us and, in Fratton Park, one of the most atmospheric grounds in the country as a result, in my opinion. On nights such as the Semi-Final of the EFL Trophy against Exeter City, when we were 3-2 down and with a Wembley final at stake, we came back to win that game in the dying minutes and the fans played a huge part.



There have been a lot of interviews from my colleagues within football; people from my side, as well as Chairmen/Chief Executives. We all feel allowing fans back is the right thing to do and it is encouraging, in terms of getting to a maximum capacity. There has been a lot of talk about social distancing in the stadiums as well, but we have to start somewhere. As time goes on, we can build it up.

Of course, we can't lose sight of the big picture; you have to look at the whole country and the NHS, and the Government who are making the decisions. But, when you get the opportunity as an industry to show them what we can do, we can do this in a safe and controlled manner and it can be beneficial to everyone.

We will do this with consideration for everybody, and I'm really looking forward to welcoming fans back.

"FOOTBALL, AND THE WHOLE MATCHDAY, IS DRIVEN BY THE FANS, NO MATTER THE RESULT"

SAM VOKES

FIRST-TEAM PLAYER, STOKE CITY



In Stoke, the football club is at the heart of the community. You see it throughout the week, but especially on a matchday.

We're so used to seeing the fans fill the car parks and having interaction with them before and after the games; it's hard, because you see how important this club is to them every single week. They are missing us as much as we're missing them, but hopefully it's not too long until they're back properly.

As footballers, we've been quite lucky, in some ways. It took a while, but we were able to get back to doing our job and get back out there on the football pitch, when other people didn't have that luxury. It certainly helped me to get back out there, and I know it's been very hard for other people who haven't been able to do that, and that's something that should be considered.

Football can play such a big role in the community but also on people's mental health and I think that's as important as anything here. We need to get back on track, because people need that escape and distraction.

It's certainly been very strange, playing without them. I think probably where you see the biggest difference is when big decisions need to be made by referees. For example, a big tackle being made or a corner being won. In those instances, the crowd can give you a lift, they can provide you with feedback and it can feed adrenaline, which I think makes a huge difference.

As a Stoke City player, it's great to play at home in front of our home fans and we've missed that massively, but I've always enjoyed playing away as well. I think some of my best memories have actually been scoring in an away match and finding the little pocket of our supporters in the ground to celebrate with. They're the ones who travel everywhere with us and that's what we miss.

When I've scored and there have been no fans there, I feel like I've just been running around in a circle trying to find the team-mates that set the goal up, rather than running towards the fans. I've never been one for back flips in front of supporters, but it's definitely different. It's one of the best parts of the game, celebrating with the fans when you score a goal to help your team.

For me, the strangest time was last season, and having to finish the campaign off in empty stadiums. Weirdly, it now seems to have become the norm, and some of us have forgotten what it's like to have fans in the ground because we've had to adapt to the empty stadium. But, obviously, it's been a huge miss.

Even watching old games on TV to see crowds in grounds is great to see, so it'll be amazing to have full stadiums again. It will give everyone a boost and I'm sure that first game will be unforgettable.

I've grown up watching and playing football and there's no doubt that fans make football matches, that's what it's all about. We can't wait to welcome them back when the time comes.

DAVID WEBB

REFEREE, EFL



I think every referee would say the same, we prefer the crowds being there. We're not affected by crowds in terms of our decision making, but I think football and the whole matchday is driven by the fans, no matter the result.

As a referee, getting a bit of stick from fans is part and parcel of the game; we're going to upset some fans no matter what decision we make! We take that with a pinch of salt and just get on with it, but I think if you asked every referee, all of them would say they'd rather have a full crowd than no crowd.

There have definitely been times this season when we've noticed the crowd not being there; normally on a decision around the outside of the pitch. If a corner, throw in or a goal-kick is given, we're used to seeing the reaction, and without fans there's obviously no reaction. That's been a bit surreal, because those are the times that we notice it the most.

In a strange way, there are a few little positives for referees here, because I like to talk with players throughout the game and think communication is important. We've had to use the current situation to our advantage, despite it not being ideal for many. As a group of referees, we did actually do some training on refereeing fixtures behind closed doors, because a lot of us weren't sure what to expect. A few of us have refereed games at training grounds, but very rarely and not for a very long time. It's safe to say none of us had ever experienced anything like this.

It's hard to explain, because there has definitely been a difference on some levels, but not necessarily on others. As referees, our sole focus is on the decisions within the game. With that, we're always in communication with the three other officials on the ground and so it's strange, because sometimes there can be a full stadium and we actually don't even hear the crowd, because we are focusing on talking to one another.

Where our biggest changes have been are probably in the build-up to a game. We'd usually have a lot of contact with the players or certainly the captain before the game, but we don't have that anymore. We have different changing areas, there are temperature checks, team sheets are done differently, the way we enter the field is different, Clubs don't come out together anymore and we as referees manage that with the two teams. We have safety briefings before each game which are new, but obviously the most important thing for everyone has been to ensure safety at all times. I think that football is one of the safest environments that I've seen, I really do.

It's a hugely positive step to have fans back, even just a few. People have different ideas on how many fans should be allowed back, but I think it's a positive step in the right direction. Hopefully it's a success and we can build on those numbers and start to get more fans back into grounds. As referees, we certainly want fans back, because football is a fans game.

I've been refereeing for 10 years now and you get so used to the crowd being there, it's part of the game. Football is ready for this; it's been planning for the return of fans for months and months. I've spoken to many football Clubs who have been gearing up to this for a long time. They're ready, and it's a really positive step for the whole country.

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NOT TODAY OR ANY DAY

Throughout the 2020/21 season, all players in the EFL will wear a 'Not Today or Any Day' sleeve badge on their shirts, to reinforce the message that discrimination in any form will not be tolerated.

This is the first time that the badge will feature on all players' kits throughout the season and will act as a constant reminder of the commitment by the EFL, its Clubs and players to eradicate all forms of discrimination within the game.

Launched in October 2019, the 'Not Today or Any Day' campaign aims to encourage behavioural and attitude changes at all levels of EFL football and ensure that a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination is embedded throughout Clubs.

Building on that awareness raised last season, the logo on player shirts aims to drive further visibility of the campaign and its message to millions of supporters of EFL Clubs worldwide.

Whilst progress has been made in this area, more remains to be done as we work with Clubs and stakeholders to tackle the issues, actively promote inclusion and diversity across our matchdays and in the wider communities that our Clubs serve.

The League remains committed to tackling racism and all forms of discrimination, standing with all stakeholders, players and managers who oppose prejudice behaviour in any form.

Through the EFL's established Equality Code of Practice, League-wide Inclusion Plan and ongoing dedicated security operations, it will continue to work with all EFL Clubs to further embed equality, diversity and inclusion throughout football.

> WHILST PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THIS AREA, MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE AS WE WORK WITH CLUBS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO TACKLE THE ISSUES, ACTIVELY PROMOTE INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY ACROSS OUR MATCHDAYS AND IN THE WIDER COMMUNITIES THAT OUR CLUBS SERVE

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DARE TO DREAM

For over a century, achieving promotion to the English Football League would have felt like a distant dream to those associated with Harrogate Town.

It's a town that, until recently, was perhaps better known for its tea rooms than the club's first-team dressing room, something which makes their debut campaign in Sky Bet League Two after 106 long years one of the game's true fairytale stories.

WORDS: RYAN DALY


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Sometimes, all it takes is one individual to come in and turn fortune on its head and, luckily for Harrogate Town, that man was Irving Weaver.

Weaver replaced former Leeds United Managing Director Bill Fotherby as the club's owner in 2011 and, soon after, his plan started to take shape. Despite his work playing a huge part in helping the club to its current position, the 71-year-old is the first to describe it as a team effort, and certainly has never forgotten his humble beginnings.

"The deal for the club was concluded on 31 May; we went straight into a pre-season and I got a note to say that only seven people had signed up as season ticket holders for the upcoming season," Weaver recalls, discussing his first few days at the club.

"I remember printing the books off at home on my printer, cutting them up, putting them in an envelope and sending them off myself."

At this point, Irving's son, Simon, was already in place at the club. He took the managerial vacancy in 2009, two years before the takeover was completed, a post he still holds today.

Harrogate were handed a reprieve at the end of the 2009/10 season, with Farsley Celtic dropping out of the Blue Square North after being placed into administration; but Fotherby, who had just moved into his 80s, knew things had to change.

"Bill actually approached Simon and mentioned that he was going to speak to me about taking over from him. I am not sure why he thought I was the man to step into his shoes, but there you go," Weaver explains.

"I was hesitant about getting into football at the start because, as a corporate businessman, you know about all the pitfalls that can come with football finance and uncertainties – but there was an interest from my side and I did want to help Simon.

"He was in total shock and wasn't sure it was going to work, because football is a cruel game, but it has come together quite nicely and it is a bit of a family thing."



Working with family can have its challenges, but the Weavers have pulled it off perfectly. Their working relationship grew stronger after narrowly missing out on promotion from the National League North in 2016. The decision to turn full-time was a decision that they did not take lightly. Their attitude became 'win or lose, we do it together', and from that the Harrogate express train began to gather speed.

A new 3G pitch was laid after a side of the ground fell away due to its clay foundations, a fine metaphor for the rebuild taking place all around the club, one which led to them becoming National League North Play-Off Final winners.

However, the jewel in the crown would come on 2 August 2020, under the famous arch at Wembley Stadium, as Irving watched his son and his team put Notts County to the sword in another Play-Off Final. Next stop, EFL.

"To a certain extent, I think he feels that responsibility even further; that we are all pulling together," Weaver adds when asked about his family ties. "The longevity and sustainability has filtered through to the lads in the dressing room too.

"He has had to scrap to get where he is today, certainly in the early stages of his managerial career,





I REMEMBER PRINTING THE SEASON TICKET BOOKS OFF AT HOME ON MY PRINTER, CUTTING THEM UP, PUTTING THEM IN AN ENVELOPE AND SENDING THEM OFF MYSELF

and I am very proud of what he has achieved over the years.

"My wife and I have been supporting my son for 30 years, and to do it with him that day was a moment I will never forget. All those years, standing in the rain on a cold Tuesday night, they were worth it to see him have that moment as a manager.

"I know you have to have an element of professionalism on that kind of occasion, but it was a father and son duo who had just won a Play-Off Final, and it was just a very emotional time for us all."

The arrival of COVID-19 had, at one stage, threatened that dream day at Wembley, but Harrogate's is a story written in the stars, as Weaver recalls fondly.

"The momentum we had towards the end of the season was incredible, I think we went 10 games without a loss from November through to the start of things winding down, and I think we could have caught Barrow because they still had to come to our place and play us.

"Luckily, we managed to get that glory day at Wembley, which was amazing."

All club owners have a vision, all have aspirations and targets, but what makes the Harrogate tale all the more more special is that Weaver only wanted to go full-time to ensure his club would have a better chance of surviving in the National League. Never in his wildest dreams did he think that they would be competing against former Premier League sides such as Bolton Wanderers and Bradford City just years later.

But football gives anyone and everyone the opportunity to dream, whether you are an owner, a manager, a player or a fan. It would take a brave person to guess what the next chapter has in store for Harrogate Town but, as far as their owner is concerned, he's just enjoying the ride.

"I wanted to do things properly; I didn't like the idea of losses and I did not like the idea of panning into an easy rise. I wanted to win hearts and minds, and build a supporter base of continual support," he concludes.

"Our thinking over the years has not been 'let's get to the EFL', so I cannot say we are going to get here or there in a certain amount of time. Momentum is everything in football, and I think getting the crowd back will do us the world of good.

"I would say this season is one of those wait-and-see things in life. We know they say there is a 46-point target in League Two, Simon and I aren't looking at that and thinking 'that will do'.

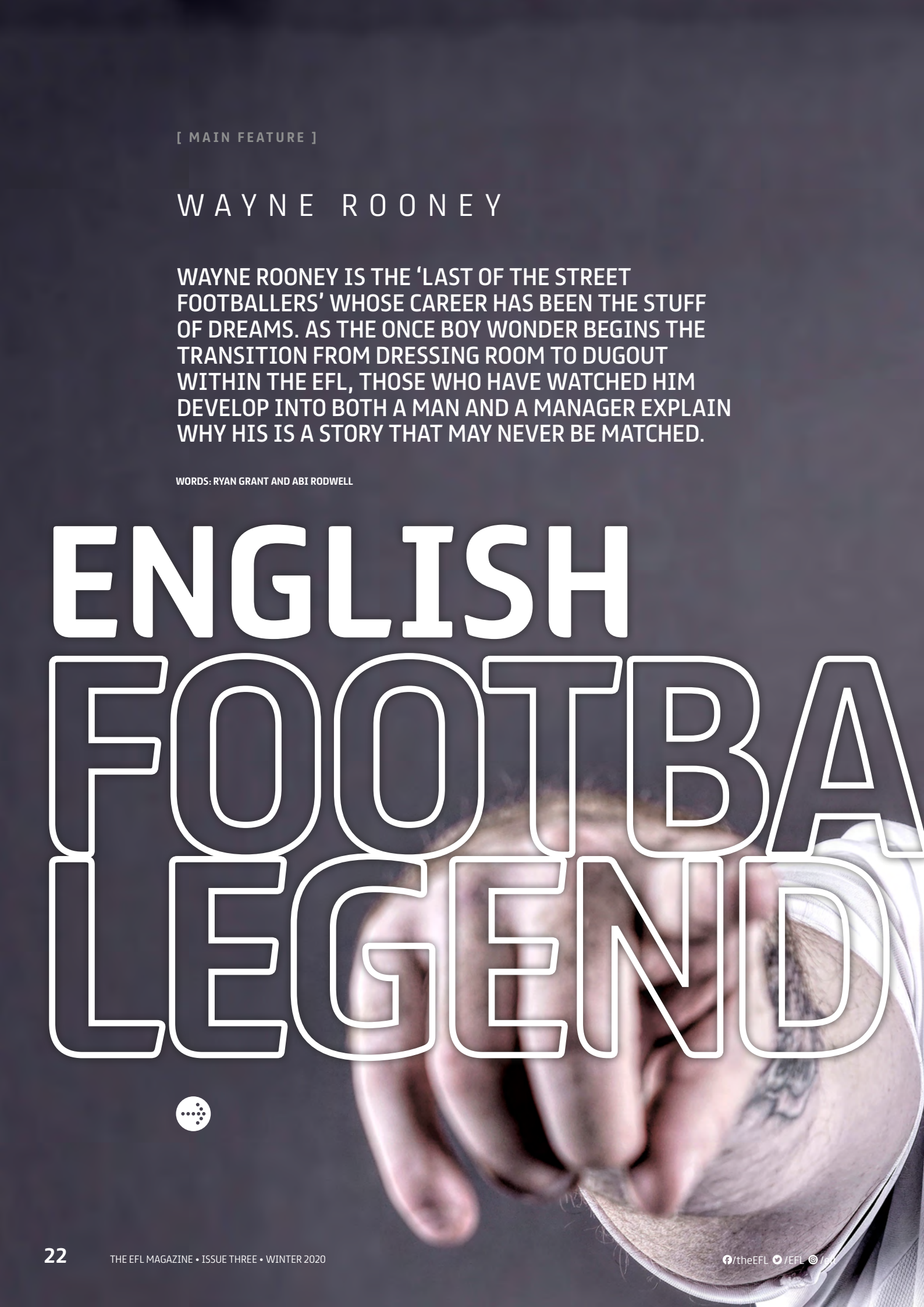
"I don't want to get relegated, because I am having a fantastic time."

WAYNE ROONEY

WAYNE ROONEY IS THE 'LAST OF THE STREET FOOTBALLERS' WHOSE CAREER HAS BEEN THE STUFF OF DREAMS. AS THE ONCE BOY WONDER BEGINS THE TRANSITION FROM DRESSING ROOM TO DUGOUT WITHIN THE EFL, THOSE WHO HAVE WATCHED HIM DEVELOP INTO BOTH A MAN AND A MANAGER EXPLAIN WHY HIS IS A STORY THAT MAY NEVER BE MATCHED.

WORDS: RYAN GRANT AND ABI RODWELL

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEGEND




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In many ways, it's easy for us to feel like we know Wayne Rooney on a personal level.

Part of the furniture for fans across the world for the best part of 20 years, we were told to remember his name upon his explosive breakthrough as a teenager, and he certainly hasn't let us forget it since.

These days, his famous name adorns teamsheets in the EFL, and it's here where Rooney's timeless tale continues to unfold...

Some players are defined as great goalscorers, whilst others can be described as scorers of great goals. Wayne Rooney, however, sits among an elite group of footballing icons who fall comfortably into both categories.

"Unique," says Michael Carrick, asked to sum up the striker in a word. "That's the only way I can say it. He's a legend of the game, and there's no-one else like him."

Carrick is better placed than almost anyone, having spent over a decade playing alongside him with Manchester United and England. In fact, more than half of Carrick's appearances for club and country were shared with the Three Lions' record marksman, making him Rooney's most common team-mate.



Arsenal v Everton 23/03/2003 Wayne Rooney celebrates his goal with Mark Pembridge (left) Joseph Yobo and Alan Stubbs

"I still remember the first time I saw him with my own eyes; he was really young at the time, but I knew he was something special.

"I could talk all night about how good he is. He's one of the best I've played with and has to be considered one of the all-time greats. Starting the way he did, coming onto the scene at such a young age and having the career he's had since... I don't think the goals even tell half the story."

Indeed, Rooney's playing career elicits memories for all of us, be it that first Premier League goal against Arsenal as a 16-year-old, the hat-trick against Fenerbahce on his Champions League debut or the iconic overhead kick against Manchester City.

As a player, he's won the Premier League five times, the League Cup three times and the Champions League once; he claimed the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year Award in 2002, the Golden Boy Award in 2004, PFA Young Player of the Year Award in both 2005 and 2006 and Premier League Player of the Season Award in 2010. And that's just the very tip of the iceberg.

"I don't remember anyone making such an impact on a tournament since Pele at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden," said former England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson at Euro 2004.

Arsene Wenger dubbed Rooney "the greatest young English talent I have ever seen," and upon signing him for Manchester United, Sir Alex Ferguson confidently stated "we have got the best young player this country has seen in the past 30 years."

Quite a reputation for a youngster and, without doubt, a sign of things to come. But, for some, the memories start even earlier.

More often than not, behind every key milestone and record broken, is an influential figure in a player's past. In this particular case, there are multiple, but one man who played as big a role as anyone in helping introduce a young Rooney to the world was former manager, youth coach and club legend, Colin Harvey.

Harvey made more than 320 appearances for the Toffees, before taking charge of more than 150 games in the dugout. He later returned to the club to manage the youth team, guiding them to victory in the 1998 FA Youth Cup. Another Everton man through and through, his loyalty to the club has always been beyond question.

It was during his time as manager of the youth team that Harvey spotted a nine-year-old Rooney, and he knew almost immediately that he was destined for greatness. He even talked him out of quitting the game altogether just two years before that famous goal against the Gunners. It's hard to believe that Harvey's first experience of watching Rooney in action was actually a chance encounter, but what followed was written in the stars.



"I was a coach at Everton Academy, and on a Sunday I'd always go to watch the Under-15s or Under-16s because they were going to be the next lot coming though," he recalls. Little did he know, the next star to rise through the ranks would be considerably younger than 16. The truth is, Rooney was turning heads before he'd even hit double digits.

"There was a coach called Dennis Evans, who was in charge of the Under-10 age group at the time," Harvey continues. "I remember him saying to me beforehand 'there's a special player playing for the Under-10s at the moment,' so I told him that the next time I was there watching, I'd come and have a look.

"There was a break in the Under-15 game I was watching because of an injury, so I walked over to where the Under-10s were playing to have a look and this kid picked the ball up on the half-way line and went on this slalom run, beating about four players in the process, before lashing the ball into the top corner. I turned to Dennis and said 'well, that's him then?'

"I stayed on and watched the rest of the game and he did exactly the same thing again towards the end of the match. You just knew straight away that he was something special. It was just the way he was; he was just born with this incredible and natural talent. There was no way I could forget his name after seeing that."

And so began the ascent of one of football's true greats. "The best English player of all time," according to Harvey.

Rooney would go on to become the Toffees' youngest-ever goalscorer with a brace in EFL competition, scoring his first senior goals in a 3-0 win over Wrexham in the League Cup.

The man who'd handed him his debut was none other than David Moyes, who himself had only joined the club earlier in the year following a highly successful spell with Preston North End. While Moyes would later manage Rooney for a second time at United, this was the beginning of a relationship that kick-started the striker's career.

"The first time I set eyes on Wayne, we were playing Tottenham Hotspur in the Semi-Final of the FA Youth Cup," he says. "Everyone had told me about this talented forward player and, of course, as I watched on that night, he scored. I said to him 'you'll be with the first team next season'; he just nodded his head and the rest is history.

That particular FA Youth Cup clash is one Harvey remembers well, for it might have taken Rooney down a different path.

"I'll never forget it," he says, laughing. "We were winning and Wayne had scored two completely different – yet equally brilliant – goals. They were both so clever and special in their own way.

Michael Carrick and Rooney with the FA Cup after their win against Crystal Palace in 2016

Rooney with the Premiere League Trophy







"Glenn Hoddle was the manager of Spurs at the time and he was watching the youth team from the stands. When I walked back out after half-time, he came to me and said 'we'll offer you £100,000 for him, right now.' I just turned to him and said '£10million wouldn't be enough.' That kind of money for a 15-year-old back then was almost unimaginable, but there was no way, absolutely no way."

It wasn't just Harvey and Moyes that he impressed that night, either. Fifteen-year-old Rooney was talk of the Everton training ground the following morning after catching the eye of the senior players, too.

"I remember all the lads being called into the coach's room one morning to watch something," Everton's Director of Academy and current Under-23s manager, David Unsworth recalls.

As a player, Unsworth made more than 300 appearances for the Toffees, becoming one of the club's finest servants. Having been in the side when Rooney first announced himself to English football, as well as in the dugout as a coach when he returned to Merseyside in 2017, and having watched on closely for all the games in between, Unsworth can certainly claim to have seen the former England captain at the peak of his powers.

"The coaches made us all watch some of the Under-18s' Youth Cup match from the previous night.

"Wayne scored two of the most amazing goals I've ever seen. One was a free-kick that hit the wall and came straight back to him before he lashed it into the top corner from 40 yards. For the other, he controlled a cross on the half-volley, before slotting it into the net with his left foot.

"We all looked at each other and said, 'oh my goodness, who's this?'"

From that moment, it was only a matter of time before Rooney excelled on the Premier League stage.

Sure enough, Rooney was handed his senior debut on the opening day of the 2002/03 season. Aged just 16 years and 297 days, he became the second-youngest debutant in Everton's history and, shortly afterwards, would score his first goals for the club.

"Once he was part of the first-team set-up, he was actually quite a shy boy, but he was certainly confident," Moyes goes on to say.

"He could do things that other players couldn't, and I remember one particular eight-a-side game quite early on. We had staff dotted around the side of the pitch and Wayne chipped the goalkeeper from an impossible angle; we all just looked up the line at each other as if to say 'I can't believe he just did that'. He had incredible ability and was able to cope with the physicality of the men's game."

> HE LOVED A LAUGH AND A JOKE IN THE DRESSING ROOM LIKE ANY YOUNG KID, BUT HE WAS QUIET. QUIET BUT TOUGH. THAT SAID, HE DID HIS TALKING ON THE PITCH VERY EARLY ON



Former Everton team mates Rooney and David Unsworth

Gold dust for Moyes, no doubt, but Unsworth now had a job on his hands in training...

"We used to try to kick him!" he reveals. "Even before he made his debut and was just training with us, we all used to say, 'who is this lad?' But he kept getting better and better. I remember me and Alan Stubbs trying to boot him in training because he was just so quick and so powerful. It was ridiculous how good he was."

After an impressive opening month of the season, seven further top-flight appearances followed for the teenage prodigy, before he truly propelled himself into the spotlight of fans across the nation.

Reigning champions Arsenal were the visitors to Goodison Park and arrived on Merseyside on a 30-game unbeaten run in England's top tier. With the game level at 1-1, Moyes turned to Rooney for the final 10 minutes.

What came next was a defining moment of brilliance. Goodison Park had just witnessed the birth of a footballing superstar – "Remember the name: Wayne Rooney."

"I remember thinking 'what on Earth has he just done?'" says Unsworth, who was also playing for Everton that day. He's one of the lucky 39,000 who can say 'I was there'.

"I was right behind it, actually, watching it from the perfect angle. You go from a good player to a great player when you score winners and even more so when you score them in the last minute. It was a fabulous, fabulous moment."

That effort made Rooney the youngest-ever Premier League goalscorer, a feat that would lead to a first England call-up just a few months later.

As time went on, it was clear to see that Rooney was the real deal. "The best young player in the country at the time," according to Unsworth and Stubbs, despite those kicks in training. A great goalscorer, a scorer of great goals and, most importantly, a terrific all-rounder.

The picture painted by those who watched Rooney play at a young age is one of someone born to play the beautiful game. Described by his former team-mates and coaches as a true street footballer, he's never lost his childhood passion.

"One of my favourite stories was when Wayne had played for us in a game on a Saturday afternoon, and I got a report through on the Monday morning," Moyes reveals.

"It said that Wayne had been out after the game, playing football with his pals, just hours after playing in the Premier League for Everton. He was young, and it showed you his love for the game. Where he grew up, that's just what you did; it's where he learned his trade. I remember having to tell him he couldn't do it anymore, but probably more because I was frightened! When you look back at it, it's a really great thing... he was humble."

Humble. An oft-used word by those who know him, shared a pitch with him and mentored him along the way. Despite having a rare and natural talent that was always destined to take him to the top; as a youngster, Rooney was the model student, as well as a timid and unassuming youngster who just loved the game of football.

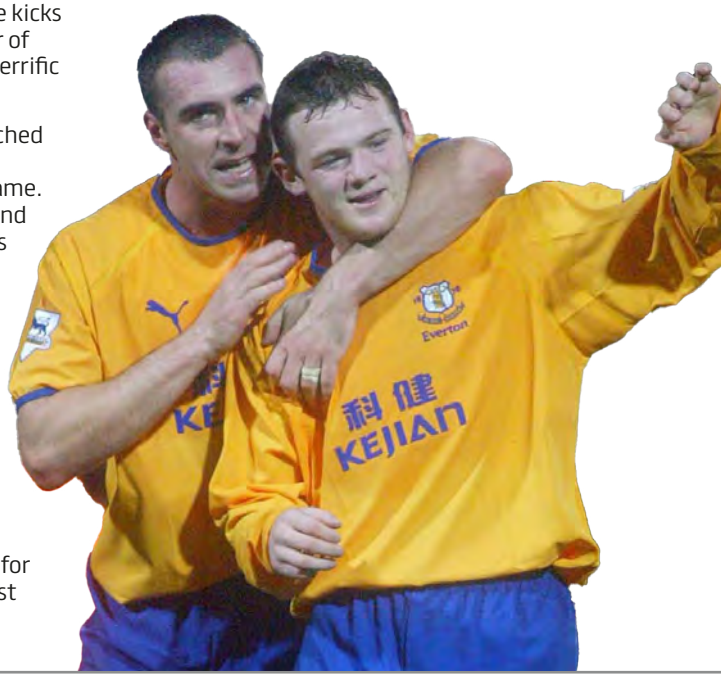
"You still wouldn't have messed with him though!" reveals Unsworth, laughing, when asked about Rooney's dressing room demeanour.

"He loved a laugh and a joke in the dressing room like any young kid, but he was quiet. Quiet but tough. That said, he did his talking on the pitch very early on."

"I always used to get reports from his school saying that he worked hard and applied himself well," Harvey adds. "He was the model student in that sense. There was never anything arrogant about him, he was just a really genuine kid who loved the game.

"I used to pick him up and drop him off at school in between training with us. He was very shy, but very polite. He knew how to behave around people. Despite being exceptional at what he was doing, he never let it go to his head."

Had Rooney's career underwhelmed following that goal against Arsenal, had his journey not lived up to its early promise, he'd still have achieved something that others could only have dreamt of. What followed though was perhaps beyond the imagination of anyone, including the boy wonder himself.







Rooney with the Europa League Trophy in 2017

Rooney in action for England in 2015...

...Harry Kane and Ross Barkley congratulate him on becoming England's leading goalscorer at the EURO 2016 Qualifiers

Like the moments that saw him acquaint himself with English football, the images of a fresh-faced Rooney holding up a United shirt with his name printed on the back in 2004 remain fresh in the memory. A move away from his boyhood club felt inevitable as interest naturally increased in parallel with expectation; but then, Rooney was no ordinary 18-year-old.

"Eventually, he'll have all the records," predicted United great Denis Law at the time, and the level-headed teen got straight down to business in the hope of proving him right.

"United and England's top goalscorer... he's had some career, hasn't he?" says Carrick, who was handed the captain's armband at Old Trafford when Rooney eventually left the club.

"When I first came United in the 2006/07 season, he was just unbelievable. I think people forget how quick he was! He was so fast and so aggressive when he ran at you, it was scary. Some of the counter-attacks alongside Cristiano Ronaldo that year were just amazing. I was almost chuckling away, playing behind them – I couldn't wait to give them the ball and see what they'd do with it. It was an absolute pleasure."

Like Harvey, Unsworth and Moyes before him, though, Carrick is keen to tell us the story of Wayne Rooney the man.

"I think what sums him up is this... he was captain when we won the FA Cup in 2016; it was his first trophy as captain of Manchester United, and he asked me if I wanted to lift the trophy with him. He was well within his rights to do it on his own, but went out of his way to ask me if I wanted to share that moment, which isn't something most people would do. He's so driven, he always gives everything he's got, and ultimately he just loves football. He's also very kind and generous with his time; he takes care of the staff and the young players, which is something people might not see so much."

That FA Cup triumph was one of 16 trophies Rooney won with United between 2004 and 2017. To reduce his achievements at the club to a sentence feels like a disservice to one of the game's giants but, such was his will to win, there are simply too many to delve into detail.

Some 15 years after his injury-time winner against Arsenal for Everton, it was fitting that his record-breaking 250th strike for United should also come right at the death, as he hauled them level against Stoke City. He would end his Reds career with 253 in total; a record unrivalled, alongside his 53 goals for England.

Now 35, there is no doubt at all that Rooney's record-breaking career has set him up perfectly to influence the next generation of youngsters. Following a brief return to Everton and two-year spell in America with DC United, Rooney joined Derby County as player-coach in January 2019, and has made no secret of his desire to try his hand at coaching and management. Where better to start than in the Sky Bet Championship, arguably the most unpredictable and competitive division in the world?

Passionate, committed and merciless on the pitch; eager, hard-working and humble off it. With more than 700 career appearances and more than 300 goals to his name, it's undeniable that Wayne Rooney's is one of the biggest and most recognisable names in world football.



"I'm a big United fan and used to sing his name in the stands," Derby's 20-year-old Max Bird admits. Having progressed through the Rams' Academy, Bird made his Championship breakthrough shortly before Rooney's arrival at Pride Park, and is now approaching 50 appearances for the side.

"When you are walking out of the tunnel with someone you have looked up to from an early age and he is now your captain, it's a dream come true. I know that's a cliché, but it is. As youngsters, we need to take as much from these opportunities as we can and not waste it."

Rooney commands a respect that few others have earned. It's easy to see what he would bring to any dressing room and, with that, it's no coincidence that a flurry of Derby youngsters have continued to impress with Rooney as their leader.

> WHEN YOU HAVE ACHIEVED EVERYTHING THAT HE HAS IN THE GAME, YOU COMMAND RESPECT. HE SPEAKS WELL AND HAS THIS PRESENCE ABOUT HIM. WHEN THE TIME COMES, HE'LL BE A FANTASTIC MANAGER





"It was completely unexpected, Wayne coming here to Derby, and now I'm training with him and playing alongside him too. I've learned so much from him in such a short space of time.

"He's leader on and off the field, he's helping my game a lot. When we play, I know that he trusts me, and I know I can trust him. As captain, he speaks when he needs to, but he is a very down to earth guy and a great person to have around the building. When we sit down for our pre-match meal, he often tells stories from his career. I could listen to them all day long. He has a huge impact on us youngsters."

Rooney conveys the same passion and enthusiasm he had as a nine-year-old Evertonian playing for the club he loves. His role may have altered over time, but his hunger has not diminished.

"He's got that total passion for football that's never ever left him," says Unsworth. "He loves playing, he loves training and he's not one of those players that has the odd day off here and there.

"When I played with him in the early days and when he came back to Goodison in 2017, he was always the first one on the training pitch and the last one off it. He has a love of the game that you can't teach or coach into someone. He's a street footballer; he'll play football anywhere, anytime and that will never leave him."

Even now, after matches, his ritual remains the same. He returns home to watch the game back, analysing each and every minute played, and his former team-mate has no doubts about his ability to take control in the dugout one day.

"When you have achieved everything that he has in the game, you command respect. He speaks well and has this presence about him. When the time comes, he'll be a fantastic manager."

It's a sentiment also echoed by Moyes and Carrick.

"I see a manager in him, and have done for some time," says Carrick. "He's got the character and personality to do it; he's got that drive and will to win. Without a doubt, he's also got respect from others for what he's achieved, and that will stand him in good stead.

"Maybe one day we'll come up against each other, you never know. What I do know is that I wouldn't want to fight him in the dugout!"

Moyes' parting words say it all. "A glittering career. Wayne Rooney is undoubtedly one of the finest players England has ever produced."

The beautiful game has enjoyed almost 20 years of Wayne Rooney. His dazzling emergence and subsequent career deserve to be ranked amongst the very best football has ever seen.

"There's no doubt at all," says Harvey, when asked if Rooney will go down as one of England's all-time greats.

"I knew as soon as I saw him that day as a kid that he'd be the player he was. I couldn't believe the strength, the vision and the raw talent he had. He was so special. Even now, he's still doing things people have never been able to."

While many of us may never know Rooney personally, his impact on the lives of fans, coaches and team-mates across the globe is undeniable. The EFL, and football, are lucky to have him.



An online life-line...

In generating much-needed revenue for Clubs and providing a key service to supporters throughout the pandemic, iFollow has been crucial in the most difficult of times.

WORDS: ABI RODWELL

As the safe return of fans to stadiums begins to gather pace, iFollow remains vital to both EFL Clubs and their supporters alike.





While online streaming is far from a new concept when it comes to sport, its introduction to live League football continues to represent an innovative development.

Following the introduction of the EFL's official streaming service in 2017, the appetite for League action has continued to grow, with demand for the online product increasing year-on-year. With the building blocks already in place at EFL Clubs, it has enabled the EFL to build on the product and make a series of substantial developments to improve the service for those at home.

In 2020, those developments have been more important than ever. With a national lockdown imposed in the United Kingdom following the outbreak of coronavirus in March, the country was surrounded by uncertainty. Up and down the country and including the thousands that pass through turnstiles each week, people were told to stay at home, preventing supporters from attending live football matches.

With fans tuning from across the UK and abroad this season, the 2020/21 EFL campaign has, as of the end of November, seen almost two million live streams broadcast worldwide. It's clear, then, that iFollow is providing much-needed support to both Clubs and fans during an uncertain time.

"Streaming matches isn't necessarily new to us," the EFL's Chief Commercial Officer, Ben Wright, says.

"We've been streaming matches overseas since 2017. We've also been streaming matches domestically for midweek fixtures since the 2018/19 season, so the infrastructure was already there for two seasons before the pandemic, which put us in the best possible position for this season."

Whilst there is light at the end of the tunnel as far as the return of fans is concerned, football behind closed doors has become a familiar sight.

In the face of the challenges presented, iFollow has provided an invaluable service to supporters as the only way to watch their team live, as well as a vital revenue stream to Clubs at a time during which their all-important matchday income has been absent.

With December bringing further hope and up to 2,000 supporters back into 'Tier 2' grounds, the importance of iFollow remains, as fixtures continue to be broadcast live for those at home.

"We are continually working hard to provide supporters with the best possible experience when watching from home, and we will continue to work hard to improve the product," Wright continues.

In 2019, together with IMG, the EFL introduced four-camera coverage at all Sky Bet Championship games, live commentary, replays, in-play

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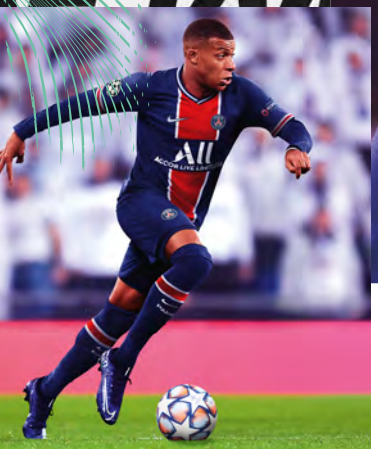
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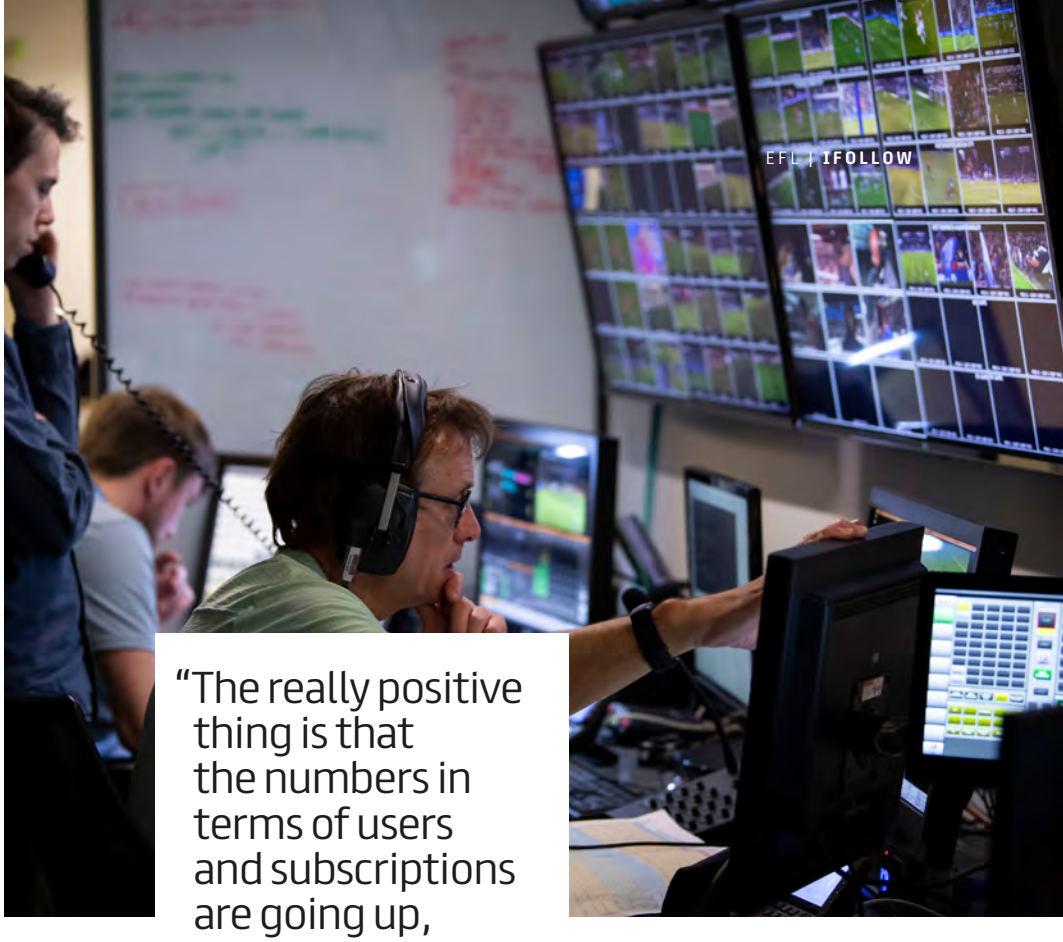
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PLAY HAS NO LIMITS

stats, team line-ups, divisional tables and a far richer suite of graphics and branding for all match coverage.

Further updates have enhanced the broadcast output for those watching at home, ensuring that supporters are buying into an experience that is closely aligned with traditional broadcast standards.

"On an average weekend, at the moment, we're streaming between 110,000-115,000 games on iFollow for the Clubs that we provide the service. We recently surpassed 1.5million live streams delivered to supporters at home and the really positive thing is that the numbers in terms of users and subscriptions are going up, which suggests confidence in the product and supporters' familiarity with the product is improving."





Even prior to football being played behind closed doors, sales of all iFollow products had risen, thanks in part to the improvements implemented. As the service continues to develop, numbers are continuing to grow, with Clubs seeing the benefits as increased revenue is driven back to them.

At the outset of the League's response to coronavirus, Championship Clubs were provided with over 200,000 codes for season ticket holders to watch the remaining 2019/20 matches live. Almost 70% of these were redeemed, saving Clubs refunding potentially millions of pounds in the process.

In the UK, match pass sales were 62% up year on year pre-lockdown, and all audio products were also up year-on-year. Unsurprisingly though,

"The really positive thing is that the numbers in terms of users and subscriptions are going up, which suggests confidence in the product and supporters' familiarity with the product is improving"

streaming numbers have surpassed all previous records since stadium doors were first closed.

November saw the service reach a significant milestone: more than 1.5million live streams across the Championship, League One, League Two, Carabao Cup and Papa John's Trophy, broadcast to supporters around the world.

"Our aim at the start was to not let any of our competitions go dark," Wright says. "And Sky Sports have been tremendously supportive in allowing us to stream games on iFollow.

"We wanted fans to be able to watch our matches in our competitions and we wanted to reward season ticket holder loyalty as well.

"The revenue from iFollow is by no way replacing the income that Clubs would normally make on a matchday from fans attending but, in the most difficult of times, something is better than nothing and iFollow has allowed us to do that."

November also saw a number of individual fixtures attract huge iFollow audiences, with more than 14,000 fans tuning in to watch Norwich City's clash against Millwall in the Championship – the highest-viewed game of the 2020/21 campaign at the time of writing.

With a full on-site production team at IMG production centre for every EFL matchday that takes place, full-time engineers monitoring all live streams, matchday customer service support and additional technical support within the EFL, it's no small operation preparing for each matchday.

"Our overall objective was simple," Wright concludes. "Don't let any competition go dark, reward the loyalty of season ticket holders and provide access for football fans of EFL Clubs to watch the games they want to watch."

We may only be halfway through the season at the time of writing but, with the EFL committed to developing the service further and giving supporters the best possible experience at home, iFollow will continue to push the boundaries, bringing supporters of EFL Clubs closer than ever to the teams they follow in these difficult times.

MOTHER OF THE POTTERIES

WORDS: ABI RODWELL

It's a popular opinion that not only has **Carol Shanahan OBE** instilled a new-found belief among Port Vale fans for the future of their football club, but she has also revitalised the mood of one of the UK's most disadvantaged areas.

"Do you want to be remembered for baking banana bread, or do you want to make a difference?"

That was the first question that Carol Shanahan OBE asked of her dedicated team when the coronavirus pandemic hit the UK.

With football suspended until further notice back in March, Vale Park - like football stadiums up and down the country - shut its doors to supporters. Based in Burslem, known as 'the Mother Town' to locals, its once vibrant matchday atmosphere was stopped in its tracks. No more pie and a pint, no programme seller on every corner and no lengthy queues outside the ticket office on a Saturday afternoon. Just quiet concourses and empty seats. At least it was.

Within days of going into lockdown, a community hub was set up at Vale Park, as it began to assist thousands of families across Stoke-on-Trent and, despite being the ambitious woman that she is, not even Carol herself could have predicted the impact it would have on the local area.

Sixty-two-year-old Carol and husband Kevin launched their IT company, Synectics, in 1992, employing 350 people and running systems all around the world.

After relocating to the Potteries in 2015, Synectics was awarded the 2017 Stoke-on-Trent Evening Sentinel Business of the Year Award, while both Carol and Kevin were awarded Honorary Doctorates by Staffordshire University in 2017.

But it was their passion for the community and new-found love for Port Vale that saw them make the headlines.

"I've always loved football, since I was a child," Carol reveals, speaking to the EFL.

"I love being a part of a group behind the goal, watching the team. When my husband and I started our IT company, we had 350 staff on different sites, but we wanted to bring everyone together and that's when we moved next door to Port Vale Football Club."

After forging a bond with the club, Carol took on the role as Chair of Port Vale Foundation, building on her community work. And it wasn't long before her interest turned to the football club itself.

"I started to build a relationship with the club," she continues. "I'll never forget us playing Sheffield United, I just fell in love again. We cheered together, we booed together, the emotion was fantastic and I've been to every single home match since."

But it wasn't all smiles on the pitch at the time.

"The club was going through a tough time, on and off the pitch" she explained. "Football wasn't good from a fan perspective; morale was low, the club was bottom of League Two and we were looking down the trap door.

"We went to an away game at Cheltenham and the atmosphere was bad. We wanted to help, but we didn't know how. I remember driving home and I don't think we'd even got as far as the motorway when I said to Kevin, 'we've got to do it, we've got to buy the club.'

"Port Vale is in one of the highest areas of disadvantage in the country, and I knew if we really wanted



I KNEW THE CLUB WAS KEY TO THE COMMUNITY AND, TO BE SUCCESSFUL, WE HAD TO BRING BACK PRIDE, POSITIVITY AND PURPOSE. SO WE BOUGHT THE CLUB!
“”



to help the community, we had to start with the football club. I knew the club was key to the community and, to be successful, we had to bring back pride, positivity and purpose. So we bought the club!"

A humble woman, with Port Vale in her heart, Carol speaks not only of her love for the town and the football club, but also the people of the Stoke-on-Trent community - an area within which her work and commitment has been truly noticeable.

"Running a football club is like running a family, there's no one way to do it," she adds.

"I believe there are three strands to every club: there's entertainment on the pitch, there's hospitality and there's community, which is matchday and non-matchday. For me, it's always been about keeping those three strands and making sure they are working to their full potential."

So, in came the Shanahans, and with the new ownership came stability, longevity and, most importantly, hope for Port Vale Football Club.

On the pitch, Port Vale was transformed from relegation candidates to Play-Off contenders in the 2019/20 campaign. Unfortunately, a curtailed season due to the coronavirus pandemic saw Vale's campaign cut short, as they finished just outside the Play-Off places.

Off the pitch, however, Port Vale has become the heart of the community, with Carol transforming the football club into a thriving community hub, where her and others have been assisting some of the country's most disadvantaged families for an extended period of time.

"When we went into lockdown in March, I got the leaders of the club, my IT company, Port Vale Foundation and the Hubb Foundation on a Zoom call together and asked, 'how do you want history to write us?'

"I asked if they wanted be remembered for baking the best banana bread, or whether they wanted to make a difference. Without hesitation, everyone said they wanted to make a difference."

And make a difference they did. After galvanising volunteers, local businesses and staff from Port Vale, her team set to work on transforming Vale Park.

"Who are the families that keep you awake at night?" Carol asked of all the headteachers in the local area. Within days, she had a list of children who were at risk of going hungry and missing out on vital support throughout the pandemic.

"We'd already built up strong relationships with schools and social services through my running of the Hubb Foundation, but we put out an open invitation as well. I'd rather more people get help than some missing out. As long as we're feeding, entertaining and helping those that need it the most, that's all that matters.

"We'd already grown the local church community group from about 30 people a day to 110 a day just by feeding people and putting on activities, so we had the contacts and got to work.

"We deep-cleaned the kitchen here at Port Vale, all the staff on furlough volunteered to help and we just started to produce food. Businesses and different food providers got involved, our matchday pie maker was sending us 500 pies a week, so we just made thousands of meals and froze them, before delivering them personally to families. The stadium concourse became the distribution centre, it was full of freezers and the kitchen was producing on average 1,000 meals per day.











"It was all about engagement. We wanted to help anyone we could and let them know that we were there for them."

By October, Carol and her team had produced, packaged and delivered more than 170,000 meals to more than 50,000 people across Stoke-on-Trent - of which approximately 35,000 were children. And, at the time of writing, they're already planning Christmas Day meal provision for any families who want it.

So, it's no surprise really that in the 2020 New Year's Honours List, her services to the community and significant contribution to the UK's COVID-19 response were deservedly rewarded with an OBE.

"It's been quite a time, really," she says, laughing. "I didn't tell my husband until 24 hours before it went public, because he can't keep a secret! I wasn't telling my daughter either, but it turns out she'd given some information about me in the nomination process, so was also keeping the same secret from me.

"It's a shame we couldn't celebrate like we normally would have, but we did at least have a home game at Vale Park that day.

"If you look at what drives me, it's the community. I'm as pleased for the club and for the charity as I am for myself. It's all about the work that they've done; I'm so proud of our achievements."

The local business owner joked in a recent interview with the Stoke Sentinel newspaper that she's gone from one O-Level to an OBE, but it has all been part of her passionate mission to help drive social mobility in the city.

And they're looking after their own, too. Throughout a time when supporters have been asked to stay at home, Carol and husband Kevin never felt closer to them.

"Between me, Kevin, the players and the manager we've rung every single season ticket holder to check in with them. Now more than ever, engagement is important.

"I see football as a faith-based system. I don't view it as me owning Port Vale, I view it a bit like running a church and our fans are our congregation. With no fans, you have no football club. They're a huge part of this organisation and that relationship with them and the community is really important. It's what drives success.

"It's a Port Vale family here and our aim at the start was to bring back that sense of pride to Vale Park."

Now, she is determined to make sure the club's progress off the field continues to be matched on it.

Her parting words sum her up; optimistic, ambitious and devoted to the cause.

"Our ambitions for the future are to make Vale Park the centre of the community here, for whoever needs it. It will continue to be a focus for us. The long-term idea is to have some form of community engagement on the stadium site every day of the year.

"Our ambitions on the pitch and as a football club are just to be better this week than we were last week. I often ask myself, 'what would we do if we were a Championship club?' and we do it because that's where we should be aiming, and that's what our job is."

With or without football, one thing is for sure; in Carol and Kevin Shanahan, Port Vale Football Club has owners to be proud of.

PLAYER TO COACH

WORDS: BILLIE MARSHALL

Earlier this year, the EFL, alongside the Premier League and the Professional Footballers Association (PFA), launched a new coach placement scheme aimed at increasing the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) players moving into full-time coaching roles in the professional game.

The Professional Player-to-Coach scheme will provide up to six coaches per season with a 23-month intensive work placement within EFL Clubs, with the first intake running as a pilot scheme, either in the club's Academy or first-team environment.

One of the Clubs selected for the first intake of placements was Exeter City, with Head of Coaching and Player Development at the club, Kevin Nicholson taking a keen lead in the Clubs involvement.

On taking part in the scheme, Kevin says: "It just looked like a massive opportunity in so many different ways. It was one of those kinds of email that comes across your desk, you have a read of it, and it plants a seed.

"There are very few BAME candidates down here. So to be able to potentially bring a coach in as a role model for those young BAME people in the area, the players that we have within the Academy, and there aren't a huge amount, but to be able to have that, to be able to show we are forward thinking, that we are equal opportunity, that we are open for people to come in, to be a part of what we do, to learn about how we do things, and then to go on, seemed like a huge opportunity to try and get involved in."

Whilst the scheme may have provided the opportunity for EFL Clubs, Kevin's vast experience from his playing days and current position had already yielded the ideal candidate within the club, with conversations on a similar role already in the works.

Occupying the role of Exeter City's Foundation Development Phase (FDP) Academy Coach and Under-10 Lead at the time, step forward Jon-Paul Pittman...

"Kevin knew that I wanted to go down this route of coaching. I'd had conversations with him before about where I see myself and what I want to do. So, when he saw this, he made it clear to me that it was definitely something that they support." Jon-Paul explains.



"As soon as I read the person specification, I thought, that's me. This job, this is me! So, I did my best working on my application and yes, luckily I've managed to get onto the scheme."

The 34-year old is hugely experienced at all levels of English football, coming through the Academies of Aston Villa and Nottingham Forest, before embarking on a near 15-year professional career at the likes of Wycombe Wanderers, Oxford United and Crawley Town.

He continues: "I personally think schemes like this will help, at least the premise of it. I'm sure time will tell how effective it is in getting more ethnic minority coaches out there and getting the experience. But let us not forget as well that the candidates that do make it on to the course, it's not a free ticket.

"You know you have to apply yourself; you have to show that willingness to learn and be reliable. Naturally, you're going to gain people's trust and there's going to be lots of networking going on. So yes, it's a two-way street, it's not just that you get the role and then you can put your feet up."

The League Two side have an incredibly successful youth system, with players such as Ollie Watkins and Ethan Ampadu now plying their trade in the Premier League at Aston Villa and Sheffield United (On loan from Chelsea), however it is not just those who have moved on from the club...

"For obvious reasons Ollie and Ethan get lots of plaudits and you know they're the two people that a lot of people speak about. But, if you look at our squad, our first-team squad just lately, I think out of the 33-man squad, 18 players are Academy graduates.

"It's just something you don't see these days. The model is there, the pathway for an eight-year-old coming into the Academy, like my son. All the way up, you know into the first-team - we're always looking at trying to bring the players through to play first team football."

Jon-Paul's role at the club is to continue that proud tradition instilled at all levels of the Grecians, but by working within the Academy set-up, that experience gained over a hugely successful playing career can potentially help shape the future of numerous youngsters coming through the system.

"Being in an Academy is really immersive because you have quite a lot of contact time with the players. You see them four times a week for at least three hours each time - you're really invested in seeing them do well.

"You're giving your heart and soul to make sure you're doing the best you can for them to develop. So as the Under-10s league coach I was just in charge of making sure that the sessions were planned correctly and that I was doing the best by the club, in terms of their principles and philosophy."

"The club has been great, and I don't think I could have picked



a better one. Obviously, they've had lots and lots of success of bringing players through, throughout the years, and everyone that I've spoken to at the club has basically echoed the same thing.

"That is great to have them on board and they love the idea of the scheme and what it's going to bring, so long may it continue."

The Professional Player-to-Coach scheme is a further example of the commitment undertaken by EFL Clubs and the footballing bodies to tackle the under-representation of BAME players and coaches in the professional game.

In December 2017, EFL Clubs made a major commitment to tackle the under-representation in first team football by extending an initial pilot (at 10 Clubs) of a Voluntary Recruitment Code to all 72 Championship, League One and League Two Clubs for a period of 18 months.

Whilst there is still work to be done, Jon-Paul believes we're starting to see change.

"I think it's a huge responsibility for them [footballing bodies], with the power and resources they have. I would say that they almost have a duty to make sure they support people in the game, not just players, you know. That support needs to be widespread to try and help people develop. And I think they're doing a good job of that at the moment."




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The EFL is delighted to welcome Papa John's as the new title partner of the EFL Trophy as well as the "Official Pizza of the EFL".

Papa John's joins EFL sponsors

The EFL has a unique reach into communities, offering local activation on a national scale, with Clubs spanning every corner of the country from Colchester to Carlisle and Plymouth to Sunderland, often sharing locality with at least one of Papa John's 450 branches.

Following the October announcement, to celebrate the EFL's new three-year arrangement with Papa John's and to boost Marcus Rashford's campaign to extend free school meals, Burton Albion players handed out pizzas for families in need during October half-term.

EFL Chief Commercial Officer, Ben Wright, said: "As we continue to navigate through the challenging times that the coronavirus pandemic presents, it is testament to the growing appeal of the EFL that we are able to attract new partners and invest the sponsorship fee into the competition through payments to clubs, which is important during this difficult period."

"We look forward to working with Papa John's over the next three years to build on the success of the competition and create Papa John's Trophy moments for us all to celebrate."



Papa John's matchday assets are now in place at Papa John's Trophy matchdays and on EFL and relevant EFL club websites. There will be opportunities to win match passes, signed merchandise and exclusive discounts on orders. The competition concludes with a showpiece Wembley Final, one of five EFL Finals held at the National Stadium every season.

WORDS: ABI RODWELL

How the next generation of managerial maestros found their feet in the EFL

There has been much talk about the importance of England's footballing pyramid in recent times, and with the likes of Dominic Calvert-Lewin, Jack Grealish, Jamie Vardy and Ollie Watkins - to name a few - all flying high in the Premier League, it's no surprise that English football and its players have made the headlines. But what about those in the dugout?

Talent levels throughout the footballing pyramid, specifically the EFL, continue to increase year-on-year, something emphasised not only by those excelling in the top flight at club level. A deeper look reveals just how much of an impact players playing in the EFL have had on the international stage for England.

For so long, EFL Clubs have afforded many the opportunity to put that first foot on the ladder, giving them a platform to shine and, most importantly, competitive first-team experience. And the proof is in the pudding. Of recent international squads announced by Gareth Southgate in 2020, more than half have come through the League pyramid or played for an EFL club. Its importance cannot be ignored.

So much can be said for the players on the pitch; young talent developed in the EFL, by EFL Clubs and in EFL competitions. Dean Henderson, Kyle Walker, Tyrone Mings, Dele Alli, Jordan Henderson, Kalvin Phillips, James Maddison, Dominic Calvert-Lewin, Harry Kane, Jamie Vardy - the list of those with EFL experience goes on. But the talent on the pitch isn't the only thing to be excited about.

Yes, you could make a number of all-star XIs with EFL affiliations, but who would stand in the dugout and manage these stars? Take your pick.

The Championship, League One and League Two are - and have been for some years - flooded with managerial talent. As with the players, these divisions are breeding grounds for the next generation of managerial maestros.

One look at the Premier League and the number of managers whose CVs are packed with EFL experience is clear to see. In fact, at the time of writing, 12 of the Premier League's 20 managers have EFL experience.

Brendan Rodgers cut his managerial teeth in the Sky Bet Championship with Watford, Reading and Swansea City. Sean Dyche managed Watford during their time in the Championship before taking Burnley to the Premier League. Roy Hodgson had a brief spell at Bristol City; Nuno Espirito Santo joined Wolves when they were a Championship side; David Moyes at Preston North End; Graham Potter at Swansea; Steve Bruce at Huddersfield Town, Birmingham City and Hull City, among others. Then, of course, you have the three recently-promoted managers from the Championship in Scott Parker, Slaven Bilic and Marcelo Bielsa. The list goes on.





Marcelo Bielsa, Nuno Espirito Santo

There is no suggestion, of course, that all of these managers were shaped by their time outside of the top flight, but it's certainly an experience that they all carry with them and will never forget.

On top of those already listed is Aston Villa manager Dean Smith, whose side's results this season include a 7-2 victory over Champions Liverpool, a 1-0 win over Leicester City and a 3-0 win over Arsenal – a string of



Success in South London saw Smith's boyhood club, Aston Villa, come calling in October 2018, an opportunity too good to turn down. Since then, he's never looked back

impressive results that, at the time of writing, saw them sit in the top half of the Premier League table. On the pitch, of Smith's starting eleven who played in that much-discussed victory over Liverpool back in October, there were a combined 778 appearances in the EFL, a stat that speaks for itself.

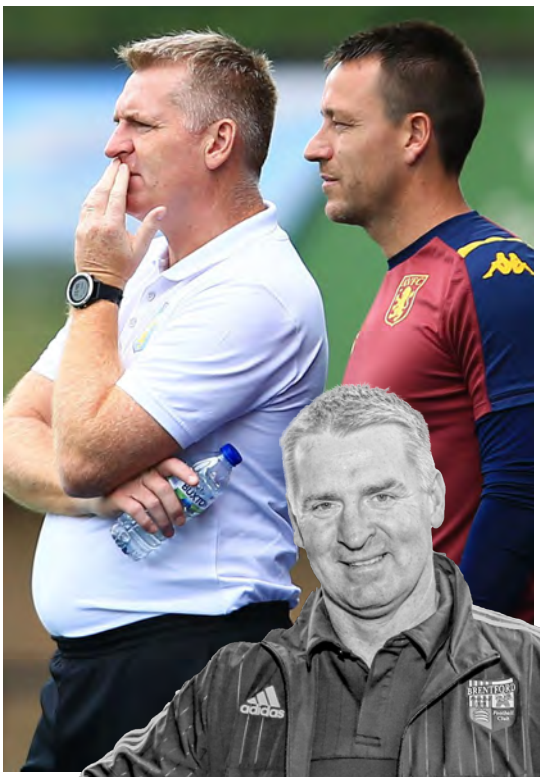
A closer look at Smith, however, shows that his managerial career began almost 10 years ago, at now-League Two club Walsall. Having initially been appointed Head of Youth at the club, he took the managerial reins six months later. Guiding them from the relegation zone to safety in his first few months, he also took the Saddlers to the EFL Trophy Final in 2015, before leaving to take charge of Brentford.

Success in South London saw Smith's boyhood club, Aston Villa, come calling in October 2018, an opportunity too good to turn down. Since then, he's never looked back.

With former Premier League winner John Terry as his assistant coach, a club-record 10 consecutive wins saw Villa go from 14th in the Championship to the Premier League via the 2018/19 Play-Offs and, in 2020, he took them to the Carabao Cup Final, where they narrowly lost out to Manchester City.

Now, although it is still early days in the 2020/21 campaign, his side have enjoyed an impressive start to the Premier League season, a 7-2 win over the Champions dreamland for any manager.

Speaking of dreamland, Frank Lampard occupied the opposition dugout in the 2019 Championship Play-Off Final at Wembley, as the former Premier League winner took his first steps in management with Derby County. He may not have won promotion on the day, but the former Chelsea man's debut season in the dugout did culminate in a sold-out Play-Off Final, following one of the most dramatic Play-Off Semi-Final comebacks in recent times.



MATCHBOOK.COM







Chris Wilder holds League Two Championship Trophy, right, celebrating winning the Blue Square Premier League Play Off Final





Frank Lampard after Derby County's Play Off win against Leeds United, in action for Chelsea, following his announcement as Chelsea Manager

Despite defeat to Aston Villa on the day itself, Lampard had done enough in his first season as a manager to earn the Head Coach role at Premier League Chelsea, the side he made over 650 appearances for, scoring a record number of goals in the process.

Head north to South Yorkshire and you'll find one of - if not the most - successful manager in Sheffield United's history in Chris Wilder.

In under four years, Wilder has taken Sheffield United from League One to the Premier League. Last season, the Blades finished 9th in the top flight, with a squad not all that different from the one which won promotion from the Championship the season before.

That is testament to Wilder as a coach, a man and a manager.

And where would he be without the football pyramid in its current structure?

Wilder, like many of his players, grew up in the EFL. Having previously been at Oxford United and Northampton Town, the Sheffield United boss has managed in every division in the EFL - and also the Conference - where he began his career with Halifax.

In a recent interview, he said: "English football is a unique situation in terms of the pyramid system and it's important that we look after that.

"Of course, there will always be focus on international teams and

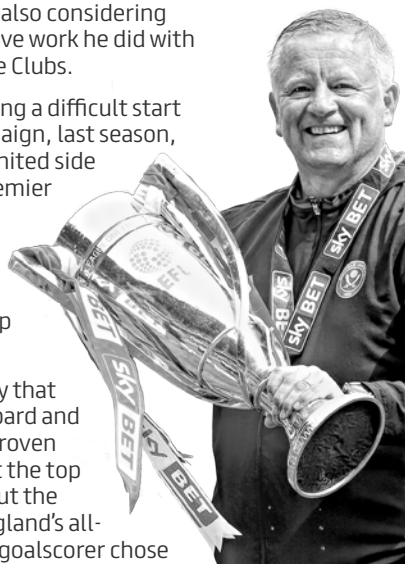


Above: Wayne Rooney talks tactics with former Derby boss Philip Cocu

Below: Chris Wilder with the League One Trophy

Premier League teams, but as I have experienced throughout my career, there are a lot of people involved and a lot of work goes on in these smaller Clubs. It's important that these remain."

It has been clear for some time that he is one of the best coaches in England, not only since his rise following Sheffield United's promotion to the Premier League, but also considering the impressive work he did with lower league Clubs.



Despite having a difficult start to this campaign, last season, he and his United side lit up the Premier League, and were a breath of fresh air to England's top flight.

It's fair to say that Smith, Lampard and Wilder are proven managers at the top level now, but the fact that England's all-time record goalscorer chose to join Championship side Derby County as both a coach and a player to start his preparation for a potential management career, speaks volumes.

With over 700 appearances and more than 300 goals to his name in club football - including a record 253 for Manchester United - Wayne Rooney is one of the biggest and most recognisable names in world football.

Now, there's no doubt that the former England captain can still play an important role on the pitch, as proven at Derby, but the fact that he - like a number of his former England teammates - has chosen the Sky Bet Championship to learn his trade in coaching speaks volumes.

"The opportunity to come back to England and play, but also take up a coaching role with the club was too great to turn down. I want to learn and to gain experience for when I do stop playing and go on to that next step," Rooney said when signing for Derby last season.

He has made no secret of his desire to try his hand at coaching and management, and where better to start, than in one of the most unpredictable and competitive divisions in the world?

Ultimately, it begs the question, where would these managers be without these invaluable opportunities and a platform to shine?

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100 YEARS OF DIVISION THREE

"If you stand still, there is only one way to go, and that's backwards."

Those are the words of the great Peter Shilton, who to this day holds the record for the highest number of League appearances with 1,005.

The EFL has long prided itself on being a forward-thinking organisation, and the year 2020 marked a century since the introduction of the Division Three, an important step for the League just 32 years after its formation.

There had been plenty of discussion in the years prior to its inception about the creation of a Division Three, due to the number of Clubs that wanted to gain – or indeed re-gain - their membership to the League.

The most notable of these was Lincoln City who, in 1911, had failed to gain re-election to the League and proposed the creation of a Division Three, which the Management Committee advertised to gauge the level of interest. Twenty Clubs applied, from all parts of the country, as well as two from Wales, but the matter was not progressed further.

Three years later, another attempt – led largely by Northern Clubs - was quickly rebuffed. But when League football resumed after World War I, it was with an additional four Clubs, making two divisions of 22, and the expansion continued apace.

The following season, the leading Clubs from the Southern League were invited to form a Division Three, and the rest is history.

The Northern Section continued to 1923 with 20 Clubs, but then two Clubs – Doncaster Rovers (Midland League) and New Brighton (Lancashire Combination) were added. The respective sections remained composed of 22 Clubs apiece until 1950/51, when two Clubs were added to each. These were Scunthorpe United and Shrewsbury Town (North) and Colchester United and Gillingham (South), bringing membership of the League up to 92 Clubs for the first time.

Only the champions of the Northern and Southern sections were promoted, with the bottom two in Division Two being relegated. This meant that 'Midlands-based' Clubs, such as Walsall, Port Vale and Coventry City were often shuttled between the Northern and Southern sections.

In 1973/74, an additional promotion place was given to Division Three, meaning that the top three sides were promoted to Division Two, and York City were the first club to benefit from this change.

From 1986/87, the third place was decided by a Play-Off. Swindon Town (who had actually finished third) beat Wigan Athletic in a two-legged Semi-Final and then faced Gillingham for the promotion place, also over two legs. After a 2-2 draw on aggregate, Swindon won the replay 2-0 at neutral Selhurst Park. From 1989/90, the finals were played as one-off games at Wembley, with Notts County beating Tranmere Rovers 2-0 in the first Wembley final.

The inaugural Members of Division Three in 1920/21 were as follows:

- BRENTFORD
- BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION
- BRISTOL ROVERS
- CRYSTAL PALACE
- EXETER CITY
- GILLINGHAM
- GRIMSBY TOWN
- LUTON TOWN
- MERTHYR TOWN
- MILLWALL
- NEWPORT COUNTY
- NORTHAMPTON TOWN
- NORWICH CITY
- PLYMOUTH ARGYLE
- PORTSMOUTH
- QUEENS PARK RANGERS
- READING
- SOUTHAMPTON
- SOUTHEND UNITED
- SWANSEA TOWN
- SWINDON TOWN
- WATFORD

NAME CHANGES

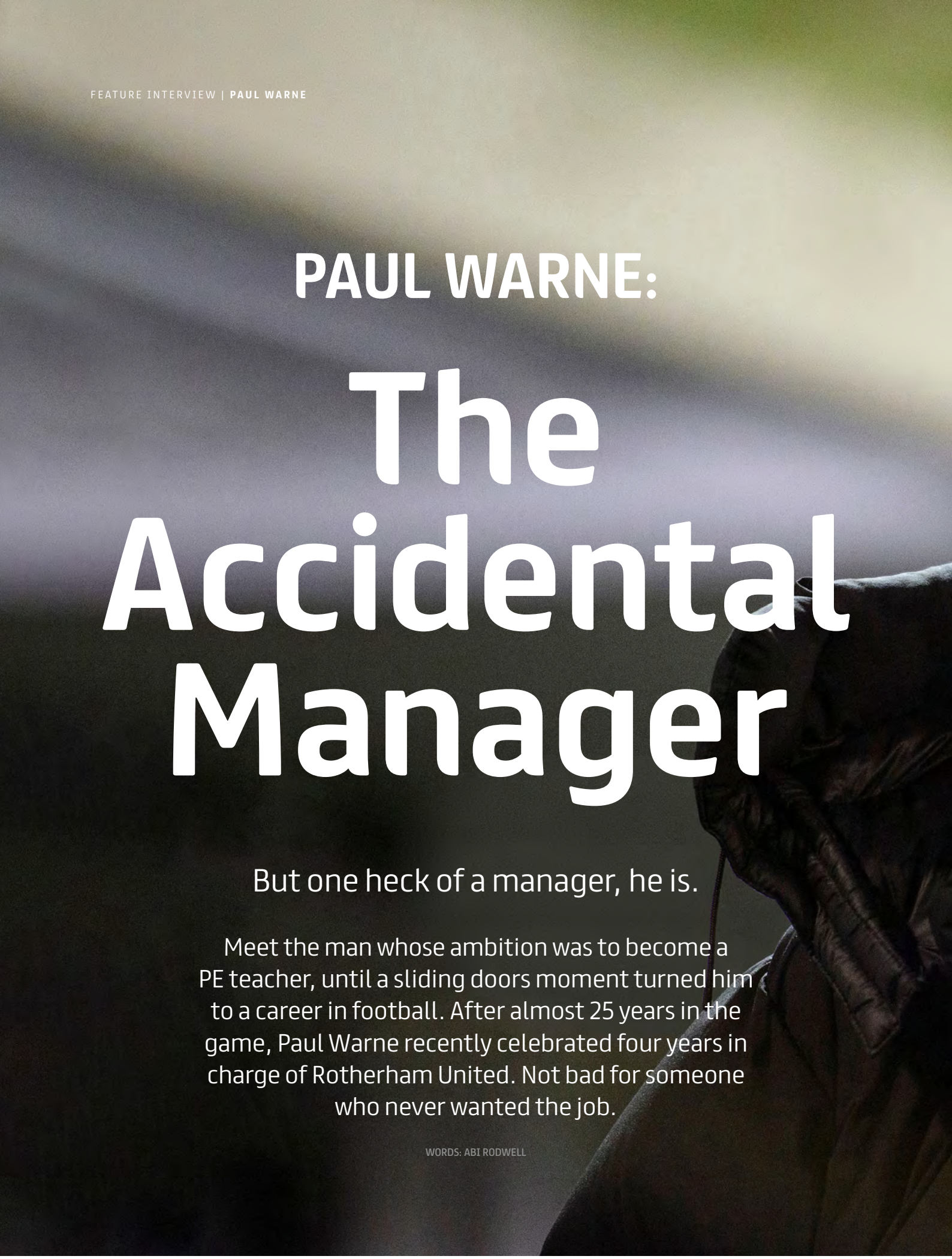
1920/21
DIVISION THREE

1921/22 to 1957/58
DIVISION THREE (NORTH) AND **DIVISION THREE (SOUTH)**

1958/59 to 1991/92
DIVISION THREE

1991/92 to 2003/04
DIVISION TWO
(following the formation of the FA Premier League)

2004/05-present
LEAGUE ONE



PAUL WARNE:

The Accidental Manager

But one heck of a manager, he is.

Meet the man whose ambition was to become a PE teacher, until a sliding doors moment turned him to a career in football. After almost 25 years in the game, Paul Warne recently celebrated four years in charge of Rotherham United. Not bad for someone who never wanted the job.

WORDS: ABI RODWELL





An hour of speaking with Paul Warne reveals a number of things about the Rotherham United manager. He is a man with a genuine passion for life, he cares about people in such a way that is admirable and there's no doubt that he wears his heart on his sleeve. Most importantly, though, he's one of football's good guys and the Millers are lucky to have him.

"Can you use a picture of me smiling?" he asks, before hanging up the phone.

"I always look grumpy in photos on the website. I'm a funny guy, don't make me look grumpy!"

Grumpy is certainly not a word that should be used to describe Paul Warne. In fact, after speaking to him at length, it's hard to believe that such photos of him exist at all.

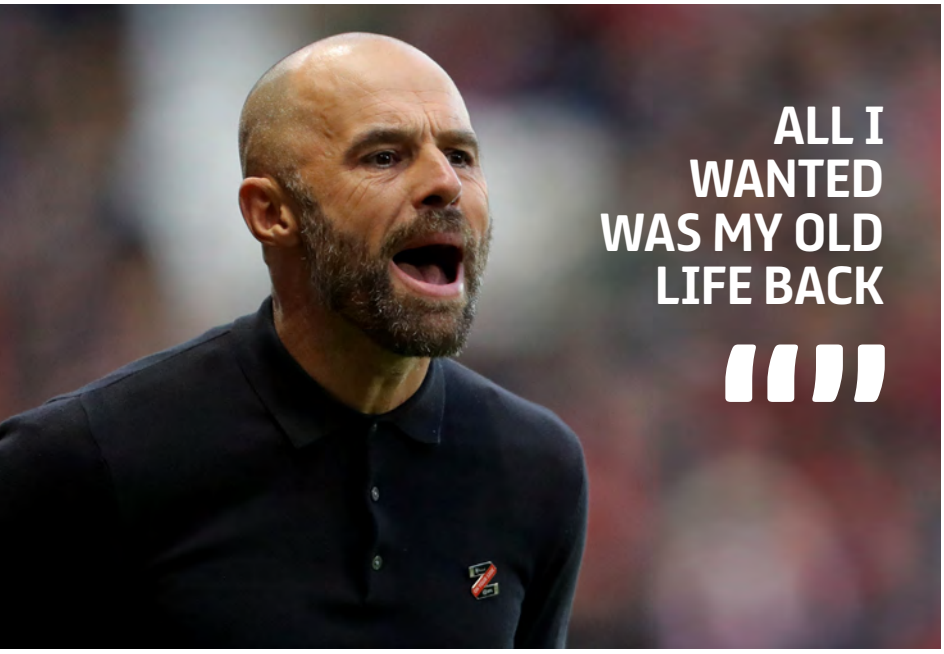
Turn back the clock four years, however, and you may have been speaking to a very different version of a man who, in 2016, reluctantly went from fitness coach to first-team manager overnight.

"It's well documented that I didn't want the job," Warne admits, speaking to the EFL. "I didn't train for the job and I didn't think I was suited to the job."

It wasn't what he expected, and it wasn't what he wanted, either. But having been asked by Chairman and good friend, Tony Stewart, to take control, Warne accepted.

"The club needed someone to take over temporarily, and I did it because I wanted to help the club during what was a really difficult time. The Chairman thought I had the attributes to be a successful manager, and fair play to him, because he had more confidence in me than I had in myself."

After agreeing to the challenge, what followed was a period of prolonged unhappiness for Warne. His months as caretaker manager were as tough as they could possibly get. With only three members of backroom staff – including himself - Warne found himself leading the warm-ups, taking the training sessions and doing the team-talks, and was tasked with the near-impossible as the club battled to stay in the Sky Bet Championship.



There's no doubt that, on the pitch, things were difficult for Rotherham. But, off the pitch, things were much worse for Warne.

"The longer the caretaker role went on for, the more I started to feel like I was in a locked room. I didn't know how to get out," he confides.

"I remember going into the training ground the morning after we'd lost to Sheffield Wednesday. The lads had given me everything, but we just weren't good enough and our relegation was confirmed, live on Sky Sports.

"I went for a run at about 7am and I phoned my brother. I remember crying down the phone to him; I couldn't do it anymore. I'd lost a stone in weight and I didn't have a stone to lose; I had ulcers all over my mouth, I was spitting blood every morning, I wasn't sleeping, I wasn't engaging with my family and I wasn't enjoying life. I genuinely believed that I was taking years off my life, and I still believe now that I've taken years off my life. It was just too much for me and I couldn't cope.

"We'd been relegated and I didn't feel like I had improved the team in the last five months. In fact, I felt that I'd had no positive effect on the team at all. All I could see was the negative effect the job had on me and my personal life and all I wanted was my old life back."

An alarming admission from the man who still sits in the Rotherham dugout today.

But perhaps the most humbling thing of all is the 47-year-old's admittance of the fear of failure. Like so many of us in life, Warne was – and still is, to some extent – afraid of failure. He didn't want to fail the club he loves so dearly. In many ways, from that vulnerability came strength, even if he couldn't see it himself.

"Every football manager works extremely hard; every manager takes the job home with them. I'm no different to anyone else in that sense, but I do have an emotional connection to this club.

"I've been involved with Rotherham United for the best part of 20 years, I didn't want to fail them. I didn't want my legacy at the club to be a failure and for the fans, my family and my children to witness that. I had a really successful time as a player and a coach at Rotherham, and the honest truth is that I didn't have enough ambition to beat the fear of failure at the time.

"As a manager, you have to be thick-skinned; you can't care what people think or say about you. That's not who I am. I'm a sensitive guy; I want to be liked, which is a terrible trait as a manager, but that's just who I am."

Warne's mind was made up. He would walk away from the dugout and return to his role as fitness coach, as Tony Stewart OBE promised him at the outset.

It's credit to Stewart, then, that Warne took the job at all. And how right the Millers Chairman was to persuade him to carry on, because one thing is for sure, Rotherham would be a poorer place without him.

"They just pushed the right buttons with me," Warne says, when asked why he took the job full-time.

"I say to my lads all the time 'don't ever live in regret', and that's what they said to me. They said, 'just do it; if you fail, you fail, but don't look back on your life and think, what if?'

"The club took a massive leap of faith in me. I felt physically sick at the thought of it, but they just convinced me not to be afraid of failure."

Four years later and Rotherham United's 'accidental manager' is now one of the EFL's longest serving.









A latecomer to the professional game at 23, he once alluded to himself as a 'managerial fraud'.

His introduction to the footballing world was certainly different, but spectacular all the same. He himself admits that he is "more than fortunate" with how he fell into professional football, calling it a "sliding doors moment".

Having graduated from Nottingham University with a Sports Science & Business degree, he completed his PGCE in the hope of fulfilling his ambition of becoming a teacher. "I haven't got there yet, but maybe one day," he jokes.

Before he knew it, the part-time footballer was signing professional terms with Wigan Athletic, and would go on to make more than 250 appearances for the Millers, finishing his playing career with more than 500 professional appearances to his name. A truly impressive career, during which Warne became a Rotherham legend, without even wanting to.

"When I was a manager standing in front of players who had all had much better careers than me, it just didn't feel right," he says. "I felt like a fraud."

Two relegations, two promotions – including a dramatic Play-Off Final win at Wembley – Warne has experienced more in his managerial reign than others might in a lifetime. And now, he's back in the Championship, competing against some of England's biggest football Clubs. An established manager in the game, you might say.

"Not really!" Warne laughs.

"I suppose I don't feel like a fake anymore. I'm more experienced in leadership, I've got thicker skin, I've learned that everyone is different, and my survival instincts have improved. I never used to be able to function after a bad result; I didn't sleep and I didn't eat. I've worked on that. If I don't function properly and look after myself, then I won't be able to give this team what it needs as its manager. I'm certainly wiser in that sense.

"I've experienced success and I've experienced failure. I can't underestimate how those things have helped me learn as a manager. I feel very lucky to have had the people by my side through everything.

"I can't believe it's been four years, to be honest. Me and my staff always put a cross on the calendar each month when it's payday, just in case. We've done that 48 times now and we haven't lost our job yet! It's gone quickly, but then, life does. You have to make the most of it."

Yes, as a manager, he is demanding and he wants to be the best. But, above all, he cares. To this day, he continues to surround himself with players and staff who share his values. "Good people," he calls them.

"I like to think that I was brought up well," he says. "I had two loving parents, two loving brothers and my moral compass is really good. That's important to me.

"I always try to surround myself with good people, and I like to think the fans know that about me. I hope they know that, win or lose, I give absolutely everything I can for this club. I'm a huge advocate of the work that's done in the community and the importance of the role that the football club and my

players can play. I've been involved with the club for such a long time now, I feel like I know everyone.

"I've got friends who are season ticket holders, I know the sponsors, I know the staff, and that's an amazing thing when you have success, but it's double the emotion when you're not successful. That's why, when we lose, I feel responsible for a lot of people's happiness and that's hard for me. I care so much.



ME AND MY STAFF ALWAYS PUT A CROSS ON THE CALENDAR EACH MONTH WHEN IT'S PAYDAY, JUST IN CASE. WE'VE DONE THAT 48 TIMES NOW AND WE HAVEN'T LOST OUR JOB YET!

"I like to surround myself with good people and the people of Rotherham United and the fans are brilliant people.

"I know I'm a bit quirky and overly emotional. I've had team talks where I've broken down in tears before, but that's who I am. It's important to treat players like human beings, not like footballers. Having that human connection with them is a great thing and, if it makes the players want to run through brick walls for me, then that's great. I'd do exactly the same for them."

After over an hour of refreshingly candid conversation, it's impossible not to admire Warne.

His enthusiasm on the phone is clear. His passion for the game, his passion for the club and his passion for his players is portrayed, as he recalls some of his most memorable times in the dugout from the past four years.

"Ironically, in all my time at the club, the second relegation season from the Championship was one of my proudest. That sounds strange, I know.

"The lads were excellent all season. They performed really well in every single game and that's all I can ask for as a manager. We got the best out of them all, but it wasn't enough.

"I remember we had a game at West Brom, it was our last away game of the season and we needed to win to have a chance of staying up. The night before the game, we were all in the hotel and I played the team the song 'Faith' by George Michael. Everyone got up and started hugging each other, thanking them for their efforts that season. I remember my coaching staff telling me that the players wouldn't like it, but I said, 'who cares?'

"It could have been my last game in management and that was what I wanted to do. We had that moment and I was proud as punch as their manager the next day. Yes, we lost the game and we got relegated, but the lads played out of their skin. I remember all the fans staying to clap the team off and they showed such appreciation to the side. It was a really proud moment for me."

But does he ever miss being just the fitness coach?

"Oh my goodness, yes!" he laughs. "I loved it. As a role at a football club, it is the joy of joys. But I don't regret where I am now, definitely not.

"There's no doubt that results in football affect your mental health when it's your job, but it's about controlling that. I often park up on the side of the road and sit in my car for an extra hour before going inside when I get home, to try and change my mindset. I want to go home and be a nice dad, a nice husband and be in a good place. So, there are good days and bad days; it's a really tough job, but I always do my very best."

It's been quite a journey for the 47-year-old in the dugout so far, so what do the next four years hold?

"What a question!" he responds.

"In 10 years' time I'll be 57. If I'm still alive then, I'll be absolutely buzzing!

"I like to think I'll still be involved in football. I hope that my four years so far at Rotherham have justified my existence in football management but, if I ever leave management, I'll be back on the lookout for fitness coach roles. That's if anyone will have me!

"I hope when the time comes that I'm not a football manager, I'll look back and think of all the great times and appreciate them. You don't often have the time to drink from the fountain of joy as a football manager, but it's important to look back and appreciate the good times."

A truly humble man, there's no doubt that Rotherham is in Warne's heart, a heart he wears so openly on his sleeve.

"You can't put a price on good people," he said, at the beginning of the interview. And that is exactly why Rotherham United is lucky to have him.

New Rules of Engagement

As any supporter will testify, the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted that without question nothing compares to the thrill of a live crowd, and watching the cut and thrust of a live match is a hugely missed experience.

Since the restrictions on supporter attendance back in March, fans have had to follow the football from home, with more than 700 matches and a thousand hours of live football missed, with regular routines disrupted as a result.

However the past eight months have also illustrated that our love of football is about much more than just the match, and there are many things that characterise the type of relationship we all enjoy with the Clubs we follow.

Nothing has demonstrated that better than the remarkable community response to the pandemic by EFL Clubs. The way in which the football industry has mobilised to play such a key role in difficult times has underlined its unique importance to the social fabric of the country.

So, without the ability to attend games, it's been even more important for Clubs to stay in touch with their fanbases. Without the usual touchpoints in and around the stadium, how have they done it? How have they been adapting their usual practices, and furthermore how they have ensured their supporters have remained actively engaged?

We caught up with Supporter Liaison Officers from Clubs across the EFL, to find out a little more about the various ways they have been keeping busy, and keeping fans engaged.

STOKE CITY

At Stoke City, Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO) Anthony Emmerson reflects on the past months. "It seems that we've all become experts on video calling, and giving fans the option to chat with me or a club official via Zoom or Teams seems like a natural thing to do," he explains.



The lack of face-to-face engagement with fans has opened up a range of new ways to converse, or certainly made them normal practice, illustrated by the Potters ongoing online dialogue with their Supporters' Council.

Anthony and his colleagues, including the club's Chief Executive, have maintained regular contact with the club's Supporters Council - a group that would usually meet at the bet365 Stadium on matchdays. Through the Council (a body of fans who are democratically elected to represent the interests of the wider support base) meetings have taken place with a supporter-designed agenda, including such topics as streaming, fan engagement, Season Card refunds, safe return to games and Project Big Picture.

The Club has also held several online meetings with their local Council, to devise plans for fans' return to stadia, specifically around potential test events. As Anthony testifies, having to engage via video conference has actually helped forge a closer working relationship in many ways, with the Club and Council in particular speaking regularly to discuss the safe return of fans.

"Although discussions I have can vary from basic introductions, welfare chats or club matters, I have also really enjoyed the more formal, structured meetings with a mix of colleagues and fans all logging in from work or home," Anthony concludes.

LINCOLN CITY

As many Clubs have got to grips with this new form of regular online fan engagement, at Lincoln City, they agree it's ultimately about

ensuring the fans feel involved, and the club's SLO Alan Long describes the ways he has tried to keep things as positive as possible for fans throughout the pandemic.

"In such uncertain times, it's really about giving our supporters the chance to talk to the decision makers at the club. Since March we have held fan forums on social media and YouTube, to give them a chance to speak to the Chairman, CEO and Manager and allow them to ask any question they like and feel part of what's going on.

"At the moment I'm getting ready to host our latest 'SLO Surgery' which is normally an open house for fans to come in and have a cuppa and just talk football or Club issues. This time though it will be on Zoom, so that could be fun!"

CHELTENHAM TOWN

Recreating the camaraderie and interaction fans would normally experience in and around their club on a matchday isn't easy but at Cheltenham Town, they realised what better way to stay united and facilitate that shared experience than to reminisce and celebrate their previous achievements online, with their supporters, as SLO Dave Beesley explains.

"With the emphasis being online engagement, we produced a series of digital events to celebrate the contribution of our past players. The 'Champions Weekend' celebrated the club's three title winning sides on the 30th anniversary of their first success, with members of the winning squads invited to take part to share their memories.

"A series of fan favourites were also invited onto a new show called 'The Boot Zoom' to share their stories from various decades of the club's history, attracting 10,000 online views and providing plenty of opportunities for our supporters to interact and share good stories from times gone by."

BRISTOL CITY

The positives to maintaining meaningful supporter engagement are evidenced no better than when a club's players and manager play a key role in that activity, as Bristol City SLO Jerry Tocknell explains.

"The players and management have been great over recent months helping us send out special personalised fan messages to help celebrate birthdays, reach out to anyone who may be in hospital to wish them a speedy recovery, or just to surprise fans and keep their spirits up. Recently the manager sent a message to a 91-year-old supporter who had recently suffered a fall, breaking his collar bone and several ribs. We received a lovely reply from his son-in-law who said the message was magnificent and had been a real boost for the family at what was a difficult and worrying time."

It's not just online engagement that has helped Bristol City maintain contact with fans, with COVID-secure stadium tours setup to keep families and young season card holders engaged, something that has been really well received.

"Recently we engaged with our U12 season card holders in several free events", explains Jerry. "I did some stadium tours, which allowed many of our young fans the chance to see behind the scenes at Ashton Gate stadium, a special chance to almost have the place to themselves!

"We posted a great video of one of the tours on YouTube, one of our U12s had produced himself, giving a bit of a commentary of what they got to see. It was a unique spin on the sort of content we'd normally put out, and while fans can't get inside the stadium on matchdays, it just helped to share some of the special sights around Ashton Gate. All in all the tours were extremely popular and we are looking to repeat them in early 2021.

"Keeping within the COVID guidelines we also invited a limited number of U12s and their parents to watch some games at our stadium, on the big screens in our restaurants though, not in the stands. It's been a great way to just keep up that level of interaction and engagement with the kids and families since the start of the season."

MIDDLESBROUGH

While EFL Clubs long for a return of fans, the fact remains that the pandemic has left an indelible mark on cities, towns and communities. The unique role Clubs can play to support people through these most difficult of times is clear, a fact not lost on Middlesbrough SLO Yvonne Ferguson who has witnessed first-hand the impact felt on those connected to the Club.

"Sadly, we have lost a number of our loyal season card holders through COVID-19 or other illnesses. Football has played a significant part in their lives and although we couldn't offer the support we would normally, we felt it was still important to support their families.

"We have offered to remember them in matchday programmes and in our Book of Remembrance. We've also arranged for up to four family members to visit their loved one's stadium seat on a non matchday, to enable them to reflect on the memories of them following the Boro."

As illustrated since March, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of Clubs' relationship with their supporters. What has also become apparent is the opportunity Clubs now have to think differently about their engagement strategies.

With the news that some fans will be allowed back to stadia at the start of December, the click of turnstiles will once again be heard on matchdays, and the hard work off the pitch by Clubs since March should mean they're better positioned than ever to welcome their supporters back, as Cheltenham Town SLO Dave Beesley surmises.

"We will continue to combine innovation with hard work to inform and entertain our supporters, and our approach will always seek to place our supporters and community of the heart of everything we do".



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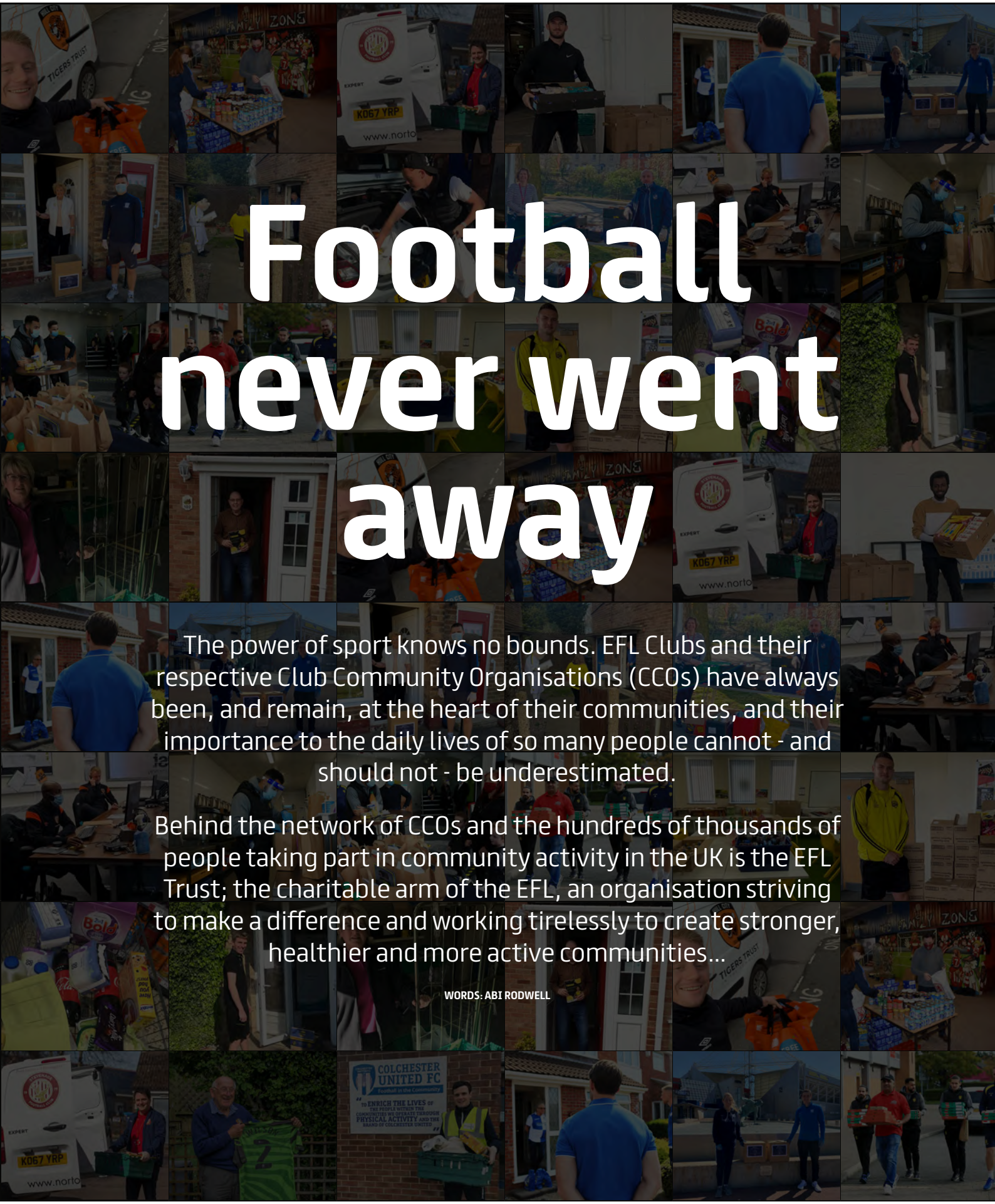
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Football never went away

The power of sport knows no bounds. EFL Clubs and their respective Club Community Organisations (CCOs) have always been, and remain, at the heart of their communities, and their importance to the daily lives of so many people cannot - and should not - be underestimated.

Behind the network of CCOs and the hundreds of thousands of people taking part in community activity in the UK is the EFL Trust; the charitable arm of the EFL, an organisation striving to make a difference and working tirelessly to create stronger, healthier and more active communities...

WORDS: ABI RODWELL



The power of football and its Clubs has been undeniable for some time, its importance and influence increasing year-on-year and extending well beyond the 90 minutes on the pitch. While a large focus within the EFL is what happens on the pitch, there continues to be a large emphasis placed on what happens off it. The power of sport continues to change lives for the better, thanks to work carried out by EFL Clubs and their CCOs. And as we continue to live in uncertain and challenging times, that work is more important than ever before.



With the 2019/20 season suspended in March 2020 due to the outbreak of coronavirus, and a national lockdown imposed on the United Kingdom, the country was shrouded in uncertainty. Cities fell silent, businesses struggled and loved ones were lost.

Up and down the UK, and including the thousands that pass through turnstiles each week, people were told to stay at home. The Government called on the public to ease the burden on the NHS and, when those in need of support required it the most, football stepped up.

"The easy thing would have been to close the doors and stand still, waiting for things to pass," EFL Trust Chair, John Nixon says, when asked about football's response to the pandemic. "But Clubs and CCOs didn't do that, they stepped up and showed some fantastic leadership and have continued to do so throughout."

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, EFL Clubs, players and staff came together to collectively show that, even when there is no football to be played, it remains at the heart of communities. It never went away, and that is something that the game can be proud of.

Nixon has been Chair of the EFL Trust for nine years, a position in which he has overseen the growth of an organisation that supports an ever-increasing number of people in the communities that football Clubs represent.

With a vision of 'stronger, healthier and more active communities', using the power of the club badge and the affinity that hundreds of thousands of football fans have to their team, the EFL Trust continues to play an invaluable role in tackling some of society's biggest challenges.





The League's 2019 Community Impact Study served to highlight the above, even before the outbreak of COVID-19. Alongside the EFL's recent Supporters Survey, it showed the enormous value and expectation placed on football by hundreds of thousands of people. It showed that football is an integral and traditional part of family and personal life and it highlighted just how important these Clubs are to their local communities, as well as their immense importance to local people.

So, when the global pandemic hit and the country adapted to new restrictions, it was no surprise that the footballing community rose to the challenge. In doing so, it made a significant difference in local areas across England and Wales.

"It was like the whole country had stopped breathing," Nixon adds. "Schools had stopped, offices and shops had shut and, of course, football stopped. There were no games, training stopped and people were being told to stay at home. No-one really knew what to do; it was very surreal.

"It was a difficult time. Almost all of the Trust's programmes involve participation and contact with other people, so they had to stop initially. No-one had ever delivered a virtual programme before, but the only way forward was to introduce virtual programmes in as many areas as we could. We didn't want to lose the engagement we had with people; we felt that was really important."



A staggering 36.6million people live within a 10-mile radius of an EFL club, a radius which encompasses four in 10 residents who fall in the most deprived population groups and, with 880,000 people participating in community programmes delivered by EFL Clubs in 2019 alone, the reach of these Clubs and difference they can make is, undeniably, life-changing. They are far more than just football Clubs.

"We actually put more resource into certain areas when the pandemic hit," Nixon goes on to explain.

"We knew that, long-term, when we eventually do come through this, we need to be in a stronger position as a charity. The EFL Trust is one of many charities supporting the Government's plan to 'build back better' and the aims are simple: adapt to the current crisis, be ready for life beyond the pandemic and be sustainable beyond the pandemic. For us, the coronavirus pandemic was certainly not the time to stop doing things, but instead to strengthen the organisation."

So, as individuals struggled and communities called out for support, football began to show its importance more than ever. But, how?

"We didn't want anyone to be further isolated than they needed to be. Football is so important to so many people," Nixon says.

"We knew we needed to get back out there, doing what we are good at, and that's when we looked at the how. How can we deliver programmes virtually to people? Can we help the NHS with the reach we have? Can we deliver food and pharmacy prescriptions? And we just went from there."

With that, over half of EFL Clubs opened their doors to key workers, offering space and facilities in stadiums for much-needed testing and accommodation. In addition, Clubs have since delivered more than 29,000 items of PPE equipment and over 5,000 prescriptions to the elderly and vulnerable.



Over 640,000 food parcels have been delivered at the time of writing, including 26,000 Easter eggs and treats to NHS staff, vulnerable adults and children over Easter weekend. Subsequently, as one-to-one contact moved online or via telephone, more than 235,000 phone calls were also made to fans by EFL Clubs.

Port Vale transformed its stadium concourses into a kitchen and distribution centre to feed the vulnerable, producing 1,000 meals per day; Cheltenham Town players raised over £6,000 for a local charity; Plymouth Argyle and Peterborough United players did weekly food shopping and prescription collections for the elderly and vulnerable; Swindon Town launched their own COVID-19 app, containing supporting education, physical activity and mental health services; Wigan Athletic delivered 2,000 face masks to care homes and hospices, Brentford distributed more than 600 activity packs to help keep children active and Pompey in the Community continued to tackle loneliness in lockdown through their 'Keep Doing Good' campaign.

In the absence of fixtures and training sessions, footballers - who are idolised by fans young and old up and down the country - put their role-model

> Football brings normality to people's lives. Football Clubs give people hope and they give all sections of the community hope, they're absolutely vital to their communities
>
> **John Nixon, EFL Trust Chair**

status to good use, as they set out to make a difference in their respective local communities.

Instead of delivering goals, some delivered food parcels, some volunteered for the NHS, some ran online fitness sessions, while others made vital phone calls instead of tackles, all for the benefit of the most vulnerable members of society.

Fast-forward nine months, and with the 2020/21 season in full flow behind closed doors, EFL Clubs have continued to provide more of the same.

Marcus Rashford's appeal to make sure no child went hungry during October half-term was answered impressively by EFL Clubs up and down

the country who, despite going through tough times themselves, opened their doors to distribute thousands of free meals to children in need.

"Clubs and CCOs showed fantastic leadership and have continued to do so," Nixon says, proudly.

"Players are local heroes in their communities. For football fans, if you get to talk to a player from your club or engage with one of them, it can mean an awful lot to people. They do some fantastic work right the way through all communities.

"It doesn't all make national news, but they're all doing it. The work Marcus Rashford has been doing is fantastic; he's made significant changes at Government level, which says a lot about the power of football. There aren't many sports – if any – that could have that kind of impact on communities.





What he's doing is on a national scale, but that kind of work is happening right the way through at local level too.

"Some of the work that went on – and is still going on now – was overwhelmingly impressive."

With almost one million people participating in community-based programmes under the umbrella of an EFL club, Nixon highlighted the growth of the EFL Trust network as one of his proudest moments during his time as Chair. Projects spanning health, education, social mixing and inclusion and anti-discrimination continue to grow, as Clubs lead the battle against a variety of issues across the country. And there are no signs of it slowing, either.

"When I first took the position, we had a turnover of about £5million," he reveals. "Now we have a turnover of about £20million, so it just shows you how much we've grown. It's not just about the finances and the funding, our programmes have grown so much and staff are delivering more activities in the community than ever before.

"Now we're building for the next £20million. To have that stability and growth, and with that to know that we're making a difference, is extremely rewarding.

"One of the challenges the Trust has always faced is that it works extremely hard benefitting local communities but it doesn't always make the headlines. But the work of the Clubs during this time has been noticed and it's enhanced the reputation of that work.

"We want people to spread the message and keep talking about these community schemes in local areas."

Even now, every hour of every day, outstanding work is being carried out by EFL Clubs and their respective CCOs, in turn providing hope for so many people, at a time when so much hope has been taken away.

"It's absolutely vital to give people hope," he says. "Everybody needs something feel better sometimes and, if you're a football fan, football provides that. It's that simple.

"Football has the power to help focus people's attention on something away from their day-to-day life, for some people that'll never change. It brings normality to people's lives. I think that's what was so difficult for some people through the first lockdown; there was no football for the fans, people didn't have that escape and all people were doing was existing.

"That's why football's community work during that time was so important. It was a way for football to stay connected with its fans in local areas and it made a difference."

From the outset of football's response, the safety of its communities has remained paramount and adherence to Government advice has been at the heart of the collective delivery.

Nixon concludes with a strong message, the passion in his voice evident. With the pandemic affecting us all in different ways, these Clubs continue to show that they are, in fact, far more than just Clubs. The power of football is - and continues to be – a force for good, and an incomparable one at that.

"Football Clubs give people hope and they give all sections of the community hope, too. It's vital that we keep them going and, as an Executive, we've made some really key decisions throughout this pandemic to make sure that we don't let any Clubs fall down. They're far, far too important to their communities. We may not know what's around the corner, but what we do know is that our work has been invaluable to so many people."










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MANAGEMENT

Gainsborough Trinity
1980/81

Burton Albion
1982/85

Scarborough
1986/89

Notts County
1989/93

Torquay United
1993

Huddersfield Town
1993/95

Plymouth Argyle
1995/97

Oldham Athletic
1997/98

Bury
1998/99

Sheffield United
1999/07

Crystal Palace
2007/10

Queens Park Rangers
2010/12

Leeds United
2012/13

Crystal Palace
2014

Rotherham United
2016

Cardiff City
2016/19

Middlesbrough
Current

PROMOTIONS AND HONOURS

Scarborough
Promotion to Football League Division Four (1987) - Winners

Notts County
Promotion to Football League Division One (1991) - Play-Off Winners

Promotion to Football League Division Two (1990) - Play-Off Winners

Huddersfield Town
Promotion to Football League Division One (1995) - Play-Off Winners

Plymouth Argyle
Promotion to Football League Division Two (1996) - Play-Off Winners

Sheffield United
Promotion to Barclays Premiership (2006) - Runners Up

Queens Park Rangers
Promotion to Premier League (2011) - Winners

Cardiff City
Promotion to the Premier League (2018) - Runners Up

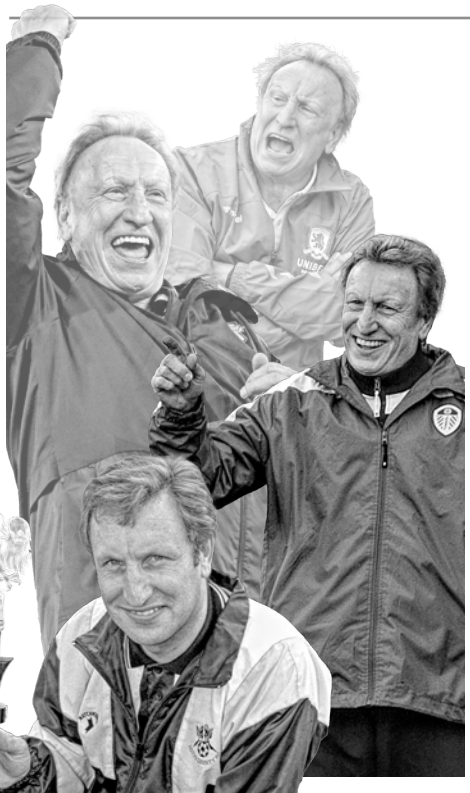


NEIL WARNOCK

1,500

GAMES IN MANAGEMENT





1,500 not out. One of the most unique characters in the history of the game, Neil Warnock is also one of football's most recognisable faces, having been involved in the wonderful game for more than 40 years.

After seemingly calling time on his managerial career following his spell with Cardiff City, a role which saw him become the first manager to win eight promotions in the professional leagues, he returned to the dugout once again, this time to manage Sky Bet Championship side, Middlesbrough.

Having recently surpassed the impressive milestone of 1,500 games in management, there is no doubt that the 72-year-old will go down in managerial history.



WORDS: RYAN GRANT

A footballing career that spans two decades is bound to have its fair share of ups and downs but, in the case of Jobi McAnuff, they have not only been extraordinary, but also the making of a truly inspiring man.

LOVE, LOSS AND LIFE



D ESSONS







"In a word, no. I can't believe it's been that long," the Leyton Orient captain says, when asked to recall his professional debut with Wimbledon in August 2001, the game that changed everything.

"Starting out as a boy and coming through the system, my goal was to get into the first team. I just wanted to become a footballer, and the fact I've been able to do that for over 20 years, to be able to call it my job for that long, it's something I'd never even have dreamt of. The magic of it isn't lost on me."

That debut, against Norwich City in Division One was, indeed, just the beginning. Over 750 appearances later for club and country, he's no longer a boy, but a man. Speaking from his home in London, the 39-year-old midfielder is assured, accomplished and, above all else, humble. He's a man who has been moulded by life experience, taking the good with the bad.

"Growing up, football was everything to me," he adds. "Kicking the ball on the street, going to the park every weekend, playing at school every lunch time – it was, and still is, my life. As young men, players have to sacrifice a lot; so to achieve that first goal was fantastic.

"It's sounds cliché, but you do dream of winning a league or lifting a trophy when you're a kid, playing in the playground. You dream of reaching the top and playing against the best players. I've played for Jamaica in some fantastic places and against some amazing players, like Lionel Messi. I've been promoted to the EFL and the Premier League... I'm lucky."

While the man himself may attribute an element of luck to his success, it's his unerring willingness to learn that shines through in his stories. His education has been continuous, because he has allowed it to be so.

Having broken into Wimbledon's senior side, his career would eventually take him to the very top, with Reading, but not before a generous helping of disappointment. The Premier League had been within touching distance for McAnuff as many as four times before he skippered the Royals to the top-flight in 2011/12, enough to make anyone wonder whether the world is working against them.

"I'd been involved in four failed Play-Off bids with four different Clubs before I eventually reached the Premier League with Reading, and you get to the point where you think it's never going to happen," he says with a smile. "To go through all that disappointment and not only achieve the goal but do it in the way we did, by winning the league, it certainly made the success taste even sweeter.

"It's part of football, dealing with the lows. Unless you're a top-end Premier League player, there will be more lows than highs, and it's how you deal with the lows that determines your success. It's important not to get too down when things don't go well, or too carried away when things are going well. There have been some really tough moments in my career; I remember going to the Play-Off Final with West Ham as a youngster having been regularly involved since joining the club, and getting a knock on the door on the morning of the Final [to say I wouldn't be involved]. That was a really difficult one to deal with.

"Losing in the Final with Reading was a huge blow too. I remember all my family being there and my dad telling me that everything happens for a reason, but after losing the biggest game of my life I couldn't quite get my head around it. The message was an important one: 'of course it's disappointing, but don't let it eat you up'. I used it as motivation to kick on the following season and the rest is history.

"I got a lot of great advice at a young age and it's stood me in good stead throughout my career. I was taught not to get carried away, in terms of classing yourself as a footballer. You quickly get told that until you've played 150 games you haven't established yourself. I was also taught that a footballing career goes by so quickly. I remember looking at the likes of Neil Ardley, Gareth Ainsworth and Robbie Earle and they all said 'before you know it, you're going to be my age', and it's something I try to relay to kids now, because they weren't wrong. It's been one big learning experience."

It's at his current club, though, where he has been hit hardest, both on and off the pitch. Now in his second spell with Orient, the first – in 2014/15 - brought relegation to League Two. All of a sudden, McAnuff found himself at the other end of the English footballing ladder; unfamiliar territory for a player who had spent his entire career towards the point of the pyramid.

His second spell, however, has been one of redemption. Back in East London, he took on the responsibility of captaincy once more, and led the O's to promotion back into the EFL in 2018/19. Another string to his bow, and yet another learning experience.

"Orient has been a bit of a mixed bag, going from some of my best times at Reading to some of my lowest points, with the relegation from League One," he continues. "I'd never played outside the Championship before and everything at Orient was geared towards going up off the back of their own failed Play-Off attempt the year before, so I never imagined that season would go the way it did. To suffer relegation was really tough; when you go through that disappointment, you take it personally. It really hurt; it was

tough on the fans and everyone at the club.

"When something like that happens, you get things thrown at you which you think are unfair. Of course, you have to take responsibility as a part of the team, and I know I was nowhere near my best on the pitch that season. To not be able to put it right the following season made it a difficult time, and there were questions about my character and motives, which is something I'd never accept. To have the chance to help the club get back into the League was a real factor in the decision to return; I didn't feel that the fans had seen the best of me, and it's another case where we all had a real objective. We all came together to get the club back into the EFL and, to say we did that in two years, it's a real achievement and one I'm proud to have been a part of."

"I've mentioned the highs and lows of football, and the weeks prior to Justin's passing were as high as I've been as a footballer, winning the league and achieving that objective. The whole summer, you're buzzing, you know? You're in a real state of euphoria for weeks, and you're looking forward. To get the news that Justin had suffered cardiac arrest and then not receiving positive news after that, and ultimately getting the news that he had passed away, it's still hard to get my head around. We're still at the same training ground, we're still at the same stadium and we still have a lot of the same group of players.

"With social media being the way it is, photos and videos crop up all the time, and so I think about Justin on a day-to-day basis. I think about him, I think about us."



Then, out of joy, devastation.

If indeed there had been any questions over McAnuff's character, the next unexpected occurrence in his life was a tragedy that saw him emerge as a leader, more so than during any of his on-pitch successes.

In June 2019, the footballing world was left shocked by the sudden passing of Orient's promotion-winning manager, Justin Edinburgh, at the age of 49. A friend and colleague to McAnuff, Edinburgh's death came just weeks after he had guided the club back into the League.

"On a personal level, it's really affected me, it's been tough," McAnuff says. "I'd been fortunate, in that I hadn't really had to deal with loss before, not one as sudden as this. I'd lost grandparents, but that was expected because of old age or illness, but this came right out of the blue.

Following his manager's tragic passing, McAnuff offered support to Edinburgh's family, and was named a Trustee of the charity set up in his honour - The Justin Edinburgh 3 Foundation. The O's skipper has acted as a role model, an example to others, and speaks openly and honestly about dealing with loss.

"The one thing with Justin that I'll always take with me, and the one thing that has helped me, is his attitude – not just to football, but to life.

"It's easy to say 'be positive and puff out your chest' but he epitomised that on a daily basis, and wouldn't accept anyone doing the opposite. If you weren't willing to go with him and be positive, he just wouldn't accept it, and that's what's helped me and helped us as a group. It's that mantra that, no matter how bad things get – and this was as bad as I've



felt in my life – you have to crack on and keep moving forward. He wouldn't want anything less. His family have done an amazing job with the Foundation that I'm proud to be a Trustee of, and that follows in those same footsteps. There are dark days that we have to deal with, but we use his mentality and outlook to get through it, and it's something that will stick with me forever."

McAnuff's career is one that has been littered with undeniable achievements and defined by unimaginable setbacks.

Since the life-changing day at Selhurst Park at the turn of the century that kick-started his career, he's constantly sought inspiration from others. Now, there can be no doubt that he's become a source of inspiration himself.

If his time as a player has taught us anything, it's to expect the unexpected, and you can bet that regardless of what the next chapter holds, he will continue to take learnings from his experiences and use them for good.

"Would I like to be a part of something that can effect change when I hang up my boots? Of course I would," he concludes.

"I'll be honest, I've been playing as though it's my last season for the last four or five years. I don't tend to look beyond the end of the season, and certainly won't start now. First and foremost, I'm just enjoying myself as much as I can. Whatever comes next, I just hope I enjoy it half as much as I have done my playing career."

> It's part of football, dealing with the lows; and it's how you deal with the lows that determines your success
>
> "

THE BEES' KNEES

WORDS: RYAN GRANT

Much like the insect from which the club takes its nickname, Brentford's impressive new home is a hive of activity, and its inhabitants' collaborative work is part of something far bigger during uncertain times.





Brentford is a club that is going places, quite literally.

Within a whisker of the top-flight in the summer, the West Londoners have certainly impressed on the pitch in recent times. Away from it, they've begun a new era in modern surroundings, all while making a conscious effort to remain the heartbeat of the local area.

Just a stone's throw from the famous Griffin Park base which had previously played host to fixtures for well over a century, the Bees' new nest quite literally has community in its name, something which has become an increasingly integral part of the Brentford Football Club philosophy.

The aptly-titled Brentford Community Stadium can hold 17,250 fans, including 2,930 in premium seats; it's just 100 metres from Kew Bridge Station and has five premium lounges. Griffin Park's red and white goal nets are still in place, as are the bricks from the Stable Block in the new North Stand. But it's the detail beyond the stadium footprint which is the most striking.

The move will create hundreds of new jobs and homes, a state-of-the-art public square and purpose-built educational hub, which will benefit the area and its people for years to come.

Having first become involved over 30 years ago, Lee Doyle – current Chief Executive at Brentford FC Community Sports Trust – has envisaged this for quite some time. The link between club and Trust is stronger than ever, with the new stadium development evidence enough that it looks set to continue to grow.

"It gives you goosebumps, actually, seeing it come together," he says, speaking to us in an exclusive interview. His work has helped see the club crowned Community Club of the Year on no fewer than four occasions.

"When you see the new stadium and badge glowing into the night, it's an absolute gift. We want to become a destination, and it's all coming together. We're extremely excited by it all."

Like many Clubs up and down the country, Brentford's wider responsibility and influence as a result of its community work is undeniable, with local outreach arguably more important than ever in the current climate.

Doyle and the Trust have been involved in the stadium planning from the very outset, with the build set to expand the Trust's efforts and, ultimately, give it a new headquarters.

"We've gone from having fewer than 10 people not so long ago to now having nearly 100 staff and volunteers," he adds. "We've been working for a long time with this vision in mind and expanded to such an extent in the old ground that we ended up having to move out. It's all part of a bigger picture for us; we've now got a base adjacent to the stadium, a two-floor building with a social, education and health hub on the bottom and offices above.

"The location is quite remarkable, it's extremely well positioned and has a real heart and soul already. It's been designed and shaped to be vibrant and I think it's given people a lot of hope.



EFL utilita KIDS CUP

EFL utilita GIRLS CUP

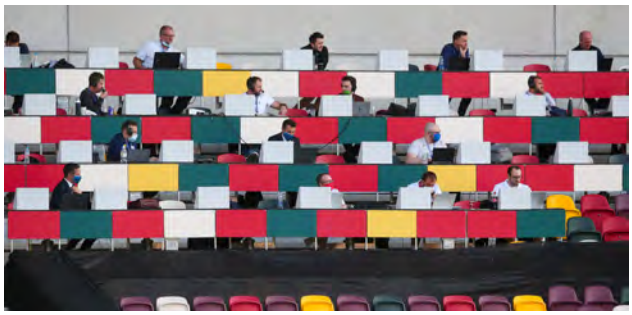
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"The wider footprint of that is Gunnersbury Park, an amazing £14million facility that we're a strategic partner in; we've got a partnership with the University of West London and we've even created a boating hub! It's all about using local resource and engaging local people.

"The impact on local business, not only within the stadium footprint but beyond, is massive too. When it comes to creating jobs, we want to be a catalyst for opening up opportunities for employment and training, and the Trust has grown significantly in that area."

It's a sentiment echoed by the club's Vice Chairman, Donald Kerr, who also happens to be on the Trust's Board, another symbol of the close-knit operation.

"It's a fabulous stadium, in every aspect," he says, proudly. "The sound system is the best of its kind in a new stadium, the resolution on the screens, the seating and legroom, everything.

"The people who have seen it first-hand have been blown away. The moment they arrived, they all said the same thing; 'wow'. It's light years away from Griffin Park, a totally different experience. The opportunities for catering and corporate hospitality... it's even got toilets, for goodness sake! Griffin Park was a fabulous ground, but it was 116 years old, and the new stadium is 21st century.

"For the Trust to be on site is a huge thing. It means we're back together again and reminds people that the Trust is part and parcel of the club. At the meeting we had in 2012 in order to get planning permission, we had 15 minutes to present and five minutes of that was taken up by what the club and Trust were doing in the community. We'd had an independent audit of the social impact of the Trust, and we found we were having a huge positive social impact on the local area, with tangible cost savings and so the Trust has been an integral part of the new stadium development. It's always been seen as the club and Trust being bound together."

Quite literally a half-way house between Heathrow Airport and London's West End, there's a clear feeling that the opportunities presented by the location alone are boundless.

"We live in an area with a lot of blue-chip companies and are going to them as potential partners with a new stadium that you fly over as you come into Heathrow and can see from the M4. It's an attractive proposition, and we've been going to them jointly, as a club and Trust," he adds.

"There's a strong belief in the model we have. Going east, there are a lot of Trusts but, going the other way, I don't think there's a Trust between us and Wycombe or Reading, so it's a great area to expand into. The future is bright, really bright. We're going into it with huge optimism, and we're doing it together."

Timing can be everything when it comes to football and, despite the first-ever fixture at the Brentford Community Stadium being played behind closed doors, this is a move which is generating hope, at a time when it's most needed.

Clubs and communities need their Trusts, and the completion of the Bees' new home is as big an indicator as any of their importance.

"This is a result of timing and, more than anything, people," Doyle says in conclusion.

"That's what's coming to light now, there's more awareness and people saying 'what is the club doing differently and what's the approach to club and community?' That thought process, that culture, has really grown.

"If you go back to the roots of this development, a lot of work was done by volunteer supporters. When it came to planning, we said 'we're more than a club, we're invested in our community' and we could prove that. The question to us was 'if we build this stadium, could the Trust do more?' and we said 'absolutely', so the whole thing went hand-in-hand.

"When you look at the need of communities coming out of COVID-19, I think we can be part of the solution. Thinking in wider terms, when it comes to club, Trust and stadium partners, we can also be a part of the CSR solution. Awareness and engagement is only going to increase further, and we'll be at the centre of that."

'Firmior', the Latin word for 'stronger', adorns the coat of arms for Brentford and Chiswick. With this development, its local club and Trust are just that, and you can be sure the buzz will continue long into the future.

Meet the mesmerising match ball taking flight across the EFL this season...

DELTA MAX

WORDS: RYAN GRANT





Mitre's newest masterpiece is a sight to behold.

Bold, innovative and eye-catching, it's a triumph of technology, and one which will have players across the country lining up to score a hat-trick in the hope of taking it home.

Founded in 1817 – some 71 years before the EFL – Mitre is one of the oldest companies of its type, its products the choice of the League for over four decades. The latest weapon in its arsenal, therefore, is the result of endless experience and countless calculations, the outcome of a thoroughly thought-through process, perfected over time.

Incorporating Hyperseam™ technology which allows for speed, accuracy, power and durability, the Delta Max's embossed grooves provide up to 400% more stability at speeds of 30-45mph versus a rivalled flat-panel construction. Ultimately, it means more precision for strikers, and a clearer flight path for goalkeepers.

The ultra-modern ball was revealed ahead of August's Sky Bet Championship Play-Off Final between Brentford and Fulham at Wembley Stadium and is in use across all EFL competitions in 2020/21, contributing towards the undeniable excitement and quality on display throughout the League every weekend.

It's little surprise, then, that the Delta Max is a source of huge pride for the team behind it.

"It's massively exciting and satisfying to see the ball on the field of play, after so much of the team's hard work has gone into it, especially when we see some amazing goals being scored with the ball - although we can't take credit for that!" Rohaan Nirmalendran, Mitre's Product Category Manager says.

"However, it's not only the Delta Max that we create, but also the Delta Replica and Delta Mini, that we take immense pride in seeing the next generation of footballers play with.

"Every component, material and aspect of the Delta Max is designed around maximising control, accuracy and power. From the internal make up of the bladder to the outer surface texture, it uses the most premium materials and unique construction techniques to deliver the best performance for professional players."

But how do you go about creating a revolutionary yet reliable match ball? With so much at stake on a Saturday, it's unquestionably a crucial part of the experience, and one that has to be right.

"Consistency is key," Nirmalendran adds. "When a player strikes a ball they need to be sure of how it will fly, the pace and timing of the pass, the way it spins or curls in the air, and then the way the recipient will control it. We know from research that seam depth, length and texture are the key ingredients to an accurate ball, which is why the Delta Max uses a 14-panel configuration, with deboss lines to create more surface texture that increases the flight consistency.

"We start with multiple concepts, based around trends, themes and inspiration, all with a link to football. We work as a team, between Design, Product and Brand Management, to filter and improve these concepts down to just a few, which we then pressure test with consumers and players. Once the concept has been agreed, we refine the artwork to ensure it works on the Delta Max panel configuration. It's incredibly complicated to get a design to flow seamlessly over multiple panels on the ball, creating the right amount of symmetry, contrast between light and dark colours for Hawkeye goal technology to work, but also for players to track the ball in-flight.

"We work with a large network of people, both internally and externally, teaming up with universities, material suppliers, testing labs and ball vendors to continually learn, adapt and improve the way we make our footballs. We spend time talking to Clubs and players, from all levels of the game, to understand what they want from a football, whether it's young aspiring footballers or professional players at the very elite of the game."

This season saw just shy of 600 goals scored in EFL competition in September alone, with players quickly getting to grips with the Delta Max within a competitive environment, and the culture of constant innovation at both the EFL and Mitre means more is on the way.

For every high-quality header, every two-yard tap-in and perfect penalty, science, care and expertise are the driving force.

"We're already busy testing, prototyping and developing the ball for the 2022/2023 season. The pace of change is so fast, that we need to constantly evolve to stay at the forefront of the game.

"Without the ball, the game doesn't exist, so we are delighted to offer that opportunity and enjoyment for all by working with the EFL. Seeing the Mitre ball being used each week by teams up and down the country, in some of the biggest and more high-profile games, means we are helping to create moments that live long in the memory for players and fans alike."

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Rip-roaring power. Spellbinding control.
Jaw-dropping accuracy. The new
Mitre Delta Max EFL. Prepare to mesmerise.

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Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the 2020 EFL Awards ceremony was cancelled. However, as in previous years an independent judging panel selected the winners following the conclusion of the 2019/20 season...

WINNERS

Sky Bet Championship Player of the Season
Ollie Watkins
Brentford

Sky Bet League One Player of the Season
Ivan Toney
Peterborough United



Sky Bet League Two Player of the Season
Eoin Doyle
Swindon Town

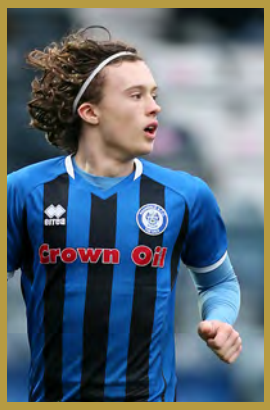
EA Sports Young Player of the Season
Jude Bellingham
Birmingham City



Mitre Goal of the Season
Charles Vernam
Grimsby Town

LFE Championship Apprentice of the Season
Jude Bellingham
Birmingham City

LFE League One Apprentice of the Season
Luke Matheson
Rochdale



LFE League Two Apprentice of the Season
Scott Pollock
Northampton Town

PFA Player in the Community Championship
Cyrus Christie
Fulham



PFA Player in the Community League One
Calvin Andrew
Rochdale

PFA Player in the Community League Two
Joel Grant
Plymouth



EFL AWARDS 2020

Ignition Sports Media Community Clubs of the Year

North West:
Wigan Athletic

North East:
Middlesbrough

Midlands:
Derby County

London:
Charlton Athletic

South East:
Crawley Town

South West & Wales:
Cardiff City

YouGov Sport Community Project of the Year Championship
Charlton Athletic

YouGov Sport Community Project of the Year League One
Portsmouth

YouGov Sport Community Project of the Year League Two
Cambridge United

Kin + Carta Connect Family Club of the Year Championship
Luton Town

Kin + Carta Connect Family Club of the Year League One
Peterborough United

Kin + Carta Connect Family Club of the Year League Two
Plymouth Argyle

Screwfix Moment of the Season
'Football Never Went Away'
Response of EFL Clubs to COVID-19 pandemic

Long Service Awards

In 2020, 45 devoted individuals have been recognised for continued and dedicated service to the EFL, with an EFL Long Service Award.

The Long Service Award recognises commitment, and is presented to any individual who has dedicated themselves to the service of football for a continuous period of 25 years or more.

Recipients range from catering assistants and matchday stewards to club Chairmen and Chief Executives, all of which have made a valuable contribution to their club over a prolonged period of time.

61 years

GEORGE BAKER
SUNDERLAND AFC
TUNNEL STEWARD

ANDREW JENKINS
CARLISLE UNITED
CHAIRMAN

60 years

DAVID DENT
CARLISLE UNITED
CLUB PRESIDENT

52 years

ERIC SMITH
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

48 years

MICHAEL DUNFORD
PLYMOUTH ARGYLE FC
CEO

46 years

GRAHAM PICKERING
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

42 years

SUE BLOOMFIELD
IPSWICH TOWN FC
PURCHASE LEDGER SUPERVISOR

41 years

IAN DARLER
CAMBRIDGE UNITED
STADIUM MANAGER AND HEADS GROUNDSMAN

MIKE RADFORD
EXETER CITY AFC
CLUB SECRETARY

STEPHEN SPEED
PORT VALE FC
GROUNDSMAN

39 years

CHRISTINE MANN
IPSWICH TOWN FC
LOTTERY MANAGER

36 years

MANDY BAYLISS
LEEDS UNITED
DEPUTY TICKET SERVICES MANAGER

PHILIP THORNS
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

34 years

JASON CRANE
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

GRAHAM CARTER
BRENTFORD FC
CATERING ASSISTANT

32 years

JACKIE CARTER
BRENTFORD FC
CATERING ASSISTANT

CHRIS PARKES
CHARLTON ATHLETIC FC
CLUB SECRETARY

BRIAN AUSTINS
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

29 years

GRAHAM COLBY
SCUNTHORPE UNITED FC
DEPUTY HEAD GROUNDPERSON

DOUGLAS CRESSWELL
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

JOHN FOSTER
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

KENNETH GOODY
IPSWICH TOWN FC
RESERVE KIT ACADEMY

ROY MORLEY
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

PETER RHOADES - BROWN
OXFORD UNITED
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

KEVIN SEALS
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

28 years

JOHN BUTTLE
LUTON TOWN
HONORARY LIFE VICE PRESIDENT

STEVE COAKLEY
ROTHERHAM UNITED FC
COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

29 years

KATIE HOLMES
LEEDS UNITED
HEAD OF TICKETING & MATCH DAY OPERATIONS

RUSSELL MEEK
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

VICTOR RUST
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

27 years

PETER BIRKS
DERBY COUNTY FC
MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT

KENDALL HODDER
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

PAUL MASON
WALSALL
HEAD GROUNDSMEN

GEOFFREY PARKER
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY STEWARD

26 years

NICK ANCEL
NORTHAMPTON TOWN FC
CLUB SECRETARY

26 years

JACKIE EVANS
READING FC
HEAD OF OPERATIONS & HR

JOHN FOWKES
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY SAFETY STEWARD

SARAH MCKNIGHT
CARLISLE UNITED
CLUB SECRETARY

MAURICE SAFFERY
GILLINGHAM FC
CHIEF CASHIER

PAUL SHEPHERD
DERBY COUNTY FC
ASSISTANT HEAD GROUNDSPERSON

BRYAN STABLER
READING FC
FINANCE DIRECTOR & COMPANY SECRETARY

FREDERICK WILLDAY
DERBY COUNTY FC
MATCHDAY SAFETY STEWARD

25 years

JOHN CARTER
GILLINGHAM FC
STADIUM MANAGER

NIGEL HOWE
READING FC
CEO

PAUL SCALLY
GILLINGHAM FC
CHAIRMAN

Carabao Cup | EFL

MAGIC MOMENTS

SO FAR THIS SEASON WE HAVE PROVIDED FANS WITH FRONT ROW CARABAO CUP CONTENT WITH OVER 5 MILLION VIEWS



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AFC BOURNEMOUTH
BARNSLEY FC
1887
BIRMINGHAM CITY FOOTBALL CLUB
1875
BLACKBURN ROVERS F.C.
ARTE ET LABORE
BRENTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB
BRISTOL CITY
CARDIFF CITY FC
COVENTRY CITY FOOTBALL CLUB
HUDDERSFIELD TOWN
LUTON TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
EST 1885
MILLWALL FOOTBALL CLUB
1885
FOREST
PRESTON NORTH END F.C.
PP
ESTABLISHED 1880
QUEENS PARK RANGERS
1882
READING FOOTBALL CLUB
EST. 1871
STOKE CITY
1863
THE POTTERS
SWANSEA CITY AFC
WATFORD
WYCOMBE WANDERERS
ACCRINGTON STANLEY FOOTBALL CLUB
AFC WIMBLEDON
BLACKPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
BRISTOL ROVERS F.C.
1883
BREWERS
CHARLTON ATHLETIC
CREWE ALEXANDRA FOOTBALL CLUB
D.R.F.C.
GILLINGHAM FOOTBALL CLUB
HULL CITY
1904
IPSWICH TOWN
FOOTBALL CLUB
LINCOLN CITY FC
MK DONS
OXFORD UNITED
PETERBOROUGH UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB
1934
P·A·F·C
PORTSMOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB
ROCHDALE A.F.C.
THE DALE
SHREWSBURY TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
1886
FLOREAT SALOPIA
SUNDERLAND A.F.C.
1879
WIGAN ATHLETIC
1932
BARROW AFC
AFC
THE BANTAMS
CU
CAMBRIDGE UNITED F.C.
CARLISLE UNITED
FOOTBALL CLUB
CHELTENHAM TOWN FC
COLCHESTER UNITED FC
CRAWLEY TOWN FC
RED DEVILS
EXETER CITY FC
FGR
1889
FOREST GREEN ROVERS
FOOTBALL CLUB
GRIMSBY TOWN F.C.
HARROGATE TOWN AFC
LEYTON ORIENT
1881
FOOTBALL CLUB
MFC
MORECAMBE FC
CENTENARY YEAR 1920-2020
NEWPORT COUNTY AFC
1912
exiles
1989
GRAHAM ATHLETIC A.F.C.
PORT VALE F.C.
1876
SCUNTHORPE UNITED F.C.
SOUTHEND UNITED
STEVENAGE
19
76
FOOTBALL CLUB
TRANMERE ROVERS
WALSALL FC