

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 18



WELCOME

This month has brought us some fantastic quality in games and training in both the PDC and APDC.

In the APDC, the U9's - U12's played a Home/Away fixture with Bradford City with the U10's and U11's playing there and the U9 and U12's hosting. The U13's playing both Redcar & Cleveland District and South Shields. The U14's playing Yorkshire Amateurs and the U15's playing a host of games in their JPL League. The U13's were also invited to a Emerging Talent Tournament at Manchester United where they won. A fantastic achievement and brilliant experience.

In the PDC, we had another round of fixtures in half term where the PDC played fixtures vs One Football and Love Life Academy. We'll have another round of fixtures for the PDC in the Easter Holidays where players will once again get the opportunity to represent Harrogate Town.

The U16's played our partner college, Ackworth School U18's winning 5-0 in a competitive game at St John Fishers.

We've had a few boys move on in the last month to Academy teams first trials, one of them being Josh Heyes. Josh has been offered a position by Barnsley to join there u15/16's. Josh has been with the PDC for the last 6 years and has improved each season with us.

We have a full fixture list coming up for both PDC. and APDC, so good luck and keep improving with each session and game.



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MEET NEW ACADEMY MANAGER

RICHARD JONES

HAVING RECENTLY BEEN PROMOTED TO BECOME THE CLUB'S NEW ACADEMY MANAGER, RICHARD JONES IS AIMING TO LEARN FROM PREDECESSORS JOSH LAW AND PAUL STANSFIELD WHILE IN CHARGE OF TOWIN'S YOUNG SCHOLARS.

THE FORMER HEAD OF EDUCATION & PLAYER CARE OFFICIALLY MADE THE STEP UP LAST MONTH. HOWEVER, JONES BELIEVES THE RECENT RESTRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMY STAFF CAN HELP MAINTAIN THE SUCCESS OF THE GROUP.

INTERVIEW BY NICKOLAS MCINALLY



Now a regular coach at our Player Development Centre, we sat down with Joel Barker, who has gone full circle from PDC player to coach in just a few years.

"It's a privilege to be sitting here today as the club's new Academy Manager, obviously I have been here from the very start and now I have had this trust placed in me.

"I joined the club in 2020 when we started the education programme alongside the football. I have had various roles and now to step up from Head of Education & Player Care to become the Academy Manager is something which I am really pleased with.

"I come from an education background but I have supported the club right since joining and hopefully now I can continue to give more and more back within my new role.

"Coming into the role, I benefit from a really good foundation which was laid by both Paul Stansfield and Josh Law before me. I have a really good relationship with them both and I know I can go to them both for advice whenever I need it.

"To lose someone like Josh is a huge loss for the club. However, we have a close knit group of staff here all with their own skills and strengths. Rory McArdle as our lead PDC Coach is a huge asset in terms of coaching and now he is supported by Josh Walsh.

"Walshy has been a huge part of the Player Development Centre for some time now so I think the academy side can benefit from his coaching ability as well.

"We have had Alfie Lee, Cadarn Taylor, Robbie Wilson and Oli Robinson who have

come through our PDC so it is nice to see that natural progression for lads coming through. Hopefully, we can continue that option to players in our PDC next season.

"The lads have another familiar face there to coach them moving forward. We are pleased to have another opportunity to promote from within and Josh comes in understanding the club's values and the style of play which we are looking to implement.

"Rory will lead on coaching but Josh will be a good voice to have alongside him. He knows the players and is someone who I have enjoyed a good relationship with in my time with the club."

Despite this success, Jones insists the club will continue to do all it can to ensure the players continue to develop the player off the pitch as well as on it.

"We are constantly trying to strike the right balance to be honest. We want to make sure that we utilise the expertise within our staff to ensure the lads here get as much from their time with the club as possible.

"We are a football club but we also want to make sure we get things right off the pitch too. That is a big reason why they are here as players and it's on us to make sure they tie in what they learn on the pitch with what they learn in the classroom.

"Obviously, I had vacated my role of Head of Education & Player Care but on the back of that, it was really important for us to make sure that role was filled by the right person.

"Kate joined us in September last year and we have been really impressed by her work since then. The education and

lessons she creates with the lads is helping them to engage with that side of their apprenticeship.

"We were really pleased when she agreed to take on that responsibility because she is a strong addition to the staff we have. She has really good experience in teaching and she has been able to support one of the lads to do their A-Levels while playing for us."

Having achieved league success in the previous campaign, Jones is pleased to see several scholars having the opportunity to experience men's football through the pathway of work experience.

"Player care is a hugely important thing in the modern football academy, we are looking at the transition up to men's football and how we can smooth that over where possible.

"This year, we have been able to get a lot of the lads out on loan to experience first-team football. Sitting here now, the majority of our second year lads have experienced men's football and last year that wasn't the case.

"With doing that, we have to make sure that we communicate well with the players and the families. They need to understand why they are being sent out on loan and what doors it opens up to them in the future.

"It's always beneficial for them to go out and experience men's football. Doing that can help them to see the wider picture, the end goal of these scholarships is to play senior football.

"Of course, we would like that to be here with Harrogate Town but that won't always





be the case. We have to make sure they are aware of what to expect before they sign a contract or before they go to represent a team on a more regular basis.

"They have to want to go out on loan at the same time, we have to explain that decision in a way in which they understand. We are sending them out to improve their skillset while also exposing them to an experience which should help them.

"They aren't going to be apprentice footballers forever, there is going to come a time where they have to go out and experience men's football. However, we have to make sure they are ready for that and we do that by making sure they have the tools to be a success."

In doing this, Jones also believes there is a benefit for the first-year scholars who are required to step up and play for the club's academy side.

"When we have lads out on loan, we have the first-year lads to step up and play for the academy side. This also means the lads coming back have to compete for their place because the first-years are doing so well.

"It's that healthy competition for places that we are looking to encourage. We are hoping that the first-years will be ready to go out and experience first-team football next season."

However, with this fresh approach, the club's Academy Manager is keen to receive

feedback from players to develop the approach moving forward.

"We have regular reviews to them on an individual basis, when the lads are going out on loan, we try to do one of them and we do another when they come back to see what they have learned.

"We find out if the loan has worked but if it hasn't we can sit down with them to learn why it hasn't. It's important for us to learn what we can improve on for the next circumstance."

With the new season fast approaching, Jones already has one eye on recruitment for next season.

"Over the coming months, we will be looking at recruitment for next season and that will be very important for us. We will look within our U16s team and within the local area to make sure we are getting as many local lads into the squad as possible.

"Of course, we want to use the assets we have at our disposal to improve the standard of footballers in the local area. The club's Player Development Centre is a fantastic way to develop players through the age groups and hopefully we can use that more and more moving forward."

While second year scholars approach the end of their apprenticeships, Jones hopes the club can provide a strong platform for whatever is to come next.

"Coming into this role, the big thing for me is to make sure the lads have a positive progression in their time with us. Their apprenticeship will finish but we want to give them the platform to go on to something from here.

"We have had lads in the past who have gone to part-time clubs, U23 level football, scholarship football in America but also lads who have started a completely different apprenticeship away from football.

"A lot of our lads have been spending time living in accommodation and being away from home for the first time. That is a challenge in itself and it's nice to see the progression they make in their time with us." However, Jones also praised the maturity shown by the group in preparation for what is to come next.

"The second year lads who are with us, they are very clever and exploring all their options. They aren't hanging their hats on getting a contract, they are looking at universities and potentially going to play abroad.

"To see them making those efforts is really pleasing. Their mindset and forward planning is a sign of how far they have come. The education they have received is fantastic and the maturity it has brought perfectly summarises what we aim to achieve."



U13 APDC WIN MUFC EMERGING TALENT TOURNAMENT



Town's U13 Boys APDC were triumphant at the Manchester United Emerging Talent Tournament this week.

Hosted at the former first team training ground, The Cliff, the boys were able to play on the same pitch as previous Premier League, Champions League and World Cup winners in an historic setting.

Playing a tournament format that included 11v11 and 9v9 matches, a tough start against North Lancashire and District Development Centre did little to dampen the boy's confidence. Wins against UFCA and Caernarfon Town catapulted the boys into second place, courtesy of goals from Stalker and Lamb. A second defeat to North Lancs threatened to derail their progress, but the boys held onto second spot to set up a final showdown with North Lancs. It was third time lucky for our

boys against their Lancashire nemeses, as Harrison's sublime strike from distance put Town 1-0 up with around 9 minutes left to play. A resolute and gritty display from all involved ensured Town held on to their slim lead to claim the trophy.

Commenting on the display, U13 Lead coach, Ryan Smith, was delighted with the progress shown by the U13 group; "What a fantastic achievement for the boys. The persistence and patience has paid off, culminating in this memorable day. The visit to The Cliff will hopefully have been an amazing addition to childhood memories, one which the lads can look back on with great pride.

"The work done by the boys themselves and the support from the coaching staff, in particular Ian Watson, Josh Falkingham and Tom Hullock, has resulted in great

strides being taken by the group in the last few months. Good takes time, better takes longer, but we hope that this tournament and other recent progress will be the springboard for this group to flourish in the coming weeks and months."



PICS FROM THE PDC V BRADFORD CITY



NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS



MARCH AND BLOXHAM VISIT SOCCER CAMP

First team players Josh March and Tom Bloxham were in attendance at our last Soccer Camp with over 80 children taking part across the week!

UNDER 8s VICTORIOUS

Well done to our Junior PDC U8s team who enjoyed a 5-3 win over Hull United recently. Goals came from Elliot Ramsey (x2) Ilyas Adnan and Jaxson Hopwood.



JOSH HEYES SIGNS FOR BARNSELY

Congratulations to U15s APDC player Josh Heyes who has signed for Barnsley!

How pleased were you to hear Barnsley were interested in you and wanted to sign you?

I was very pleased to hear that Barnsley were interested in signing me, especially knowing the environment I was going to enter was a Cat 2 Academy.

How has your 6 years at the PDC helped you develop as a footballer?

Since starting the PDC I could see my progression as a footballer, as the feedback and reviews from the coaches really helped me to focus on what I needed to work on. It really helped build my confidence and develop my leadership skills.

Have any coaches in particular helped develop and improve your game and how?

In particular, Tom Hullock and Josh Walsh really helped me with the development of my game. They were really approachable and helped me understand my role as a central midfielder through learning different patterns of play.

What advice would you give to someone in the PDC to go and achieve a move similar to yours?

My advice to others would be to always work hard, even if things aren't going your way.



CONNIE NETS HER FIRST TOWN GOAL

We caught up with former PDC player Connie Parkin after she got her first goal for the club in Town Women's recent 4-0 win over Redcar. [Watch the full interview](#)



U18S ACADEMY



A LOOK AT WHAT OUR SCHOLARS HAVE BEEN UP TO AWAY FROM THE PITCH RECENTLY...

JOE THOMPSON – Joe Thompson delivered a workshop to the academy players with the key message of resilience. Joe experienced adversity in a different light, as he battled cancer part way through his football career. A great inspiration to the academy players and great to have him back in.

SURGE PADEL – The lads had a different type of training session as part of team building at Surge Padel, Hornbeam. Pogdan was very accommodating and lads loved the experience of a different sport.

JOE LEESLEY – Former Town player, Joe Leesley delivered a resilience workshop to the second year players. He has first hand experience with the club and gaffer, Simon Weaver, having spent time at the club through their past promotions. He explained the importance of determination and ability to bounce-back from loans, injuries etc. He shared his experiences as a footballer and going both up and down the ladder of football levels.

EPIC GAMBLING MANAGEMENT – Simon Haworth (ex-pro) delivered a workshop regarding the risks of gambling addiction particularly being in a football environment – photo attached.

RED STAR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – Kersten and Nick both came in to explain the importance of budgeting, tax, investments and car insurance – all important factors at the stage the academy players are at. This included looking at professional footballers wages and take home pay. They offered advice on how to budget and invisible spending (such as tapping contactless) – outgoings that the lads may not notice, but all add up.



EDUCATION UPDATE

Second year apprentices coming up to their Sporting Excellence Professional Assessments. This is an opportunity for the players to showcase what they have learned whilst with the club. They have completed their multiple-choice exam with grades pending, and starting to complete their professional interviews and practical assessments.

FIXTURES & RESULTS 2023/24

Date	Opposition	Res	Scorers
AUGUST			
Sat 05	Notts County	LGE 2-0	Brodella (2)
Sat 12	Mansfield Town	LGE 2-0	O'Boyle, Brodella
Sat 19	Port Vale	YAC 3-3	Samuels, Barnes, Hindle
Sat 26	Hartlepool United	LGE 2-2	Smalley (2)
SEPTEMBER			
Sat 2	Hull City	PDL 0-5	
Sat 9	Mansfield Town	YC 1-2	Smalley
Sat 16	Lincoln City	LGE 0-3	
Sat 23	Burton Albion	LGE 0-1	
Sat 30	Doncaster Rovers	LGE 4-2	Lee, Bray (2), O'Boyle
OCTOBER			
Fri 13	Bradford City	YAC 1-1	Brodella
Sat 28	Huddersfield Town	LGE 3-0	Wilson, Brodella, Bray
NOVEMBER			
Sat 04	Rochdale	FAI 2-1	Bray (2)
Sat 11	Oldham Athletic	YAC 2-2	Samuels, Bray
Thu 16	Northampton Town	FA2 1-1	Samuels, Bray
Tue 21	Sheffield United	PDL 2-4	Samuels, Brodella
Sat 25	Mansfield Town	PDL 1-4	Nicholson
Thu 30	Brighton & Hove Albion	FA3 1-4	Bray
JANUARY			
Fri 05	Lincoln City	LGE 1-3	Bray
Sat 13	Huddersfield Town	LGE 3-4	Nicholson, Bray, Lee
Sat 20	Mansfield Town	LGE 0-0	
Fri 26	Bradford City	LGE 0-3	
FEBRUARY			
Sat 03	Grimsby Town	LGE 1-1	Bray
Tue 06	Rotherham United	LGE 1-3	Bray
Sat 17	Doncaster Rovers	LGE 2-0	Bray, Brodella
Tue 27	Burton Albion	LGE 0-0	
MARCH			
Sat 02	Notts County	LGE 0-1	
Tue 05	Grimsby Town	LGE 3-2	Lee, McClarin, Robinson
Sat 09	Rotherham United	LGE 0-4	
Sat 16	Hartlepool United	LGE 3-1	Wilson, O'Boyle, Samuels
Sat 23	Bradford City	LGE	

Town score shown first. Home games in Bold; LGE Youth Alliance North East; YAC Youth Alliance Cup; FA FA Youth Cup; PDL Professional Development League Cup

YOUTH ALLIANCE NORTH EAST

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Mansfield Town	18	11	3	4	43	20	23	36
2 Burton Albion	19	10	1	8	36	33	3	31
3 Rotherham United	18	9	3	6	44	39	5	30
4 Hartlepool United	18	9	2	7	37	34	3	29
5 Doncaster Rovers	19	8	3	8	30	28	2	27
6 Grimsby Town	16	7	5	4	38	21	17	26
7 Lincoln City	18	8	2	8	44	33	11	26
8 Bradford City	16	7	2	7	27	27	0	23
9 Harrogate Town	19	6	4	9	25	32	-7	22
10 Huddersfield Town	18	3	6	9	25	59	-34	15
11 Notts County	17	4	1	12	23	46	-23	13



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Summer Half Term

Tue 28th - Fri 31st May

Summer Holidays

1 Mon 29th July - Thu 1st August

2 Mon 5th - Thu 8th August

3 Mon 12th - Thu 15th August

4 Tue 27th - Fri 30th August

Autumn Half Term

Mon 28th - Thu 31st October

For more information email
daveriley@harrogatetownafc.com



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TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS
12PM-4:30PM

SATURDAYS
11AM-3PM (CLOSED ON HOME MATCH DAYS)

CLOSED ON MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND SUNDAYS
(OPENING TIMES MAY VARY, PLEASE CHECK TOWN WEBSITE)



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ZIP TOP OR SWEATSHIRT

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ADDITIONAL BUNDLE 1

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+BEANIE OR BOBBLE HAT

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ADDITIONAL BUNDLE 2

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+DUFFLE BAG+WATER BOTTLE

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