

TRUST MATTERS

Fans take on players as PST continues to put youngsters first

by JOHN KIMBELL

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It's fair to say there has been plenty going on with the Pompey Supporters' Trust (PST) since I last spoke to you in these pages.

Just this week we were involved in the *Fifa 16* Pompey player versus fan event at the club's training ground, which was a great success for all involved.

A Trust initiative, we invited members to enter a ballot to be part of a packed day of events and 30 were lucky enough to join in the fun.

There was a tour of the training ground, followed by a meeting with manager Paul Cook and assistant Leam Richardson.

The highlight, though, was playing video game *Fifa 16* against four first-team players – Conor Chaplin, Jack Whatmough, Adam McGurk and Adam Barton – who sat in the common room, showing their commitment to the cause by wearing full kit.

If you have a look at these EA Sports pro-player tournaments online, they do them at Real Madrid, Barcelona and some of the biggest clubs in the world.

It is a huge coup for us that James Salmon the marketing manager at *Fifa* just so happens to be a big Pompey fan and also a PST shareholder and member.

We have been really fortunate in that respect.

EA Sports have been a huge supporter of ours for a number of months and have been helping out with projects.

To me it is really funny when you look at some of those big teams and players they have done this with and who we are following – I think even Gary Roberts would admit he is not Cristian Ronaldo!

It is fair to say we are in lofty company. They will do some nice video content around it which gets shared across EA Sports and *Fifa* channels, all that kind of stuff.

It's great publicity for us as a club and for the Trust especially but most importantly our members have been able to enjoy themselves.



Pompey players Conor Chaplin and Jack Whatmough take on young Pompey Supporters' Trust members at *Fifa 16* in the Trust-organised player versus fan event at the Blues' training ground

Talking of members, we have now opened the vote for the inaugural Ken Malley fan of the year award.

The award is seen as an ongoing memorial for Ken who did so much for the Trust and we have now got a shortlist down to three.

Paul and Sarah Banks are jointly nominated alongside Samantha Piggott and John York.

The award is going to be made before the Wycombe game by Ken's daughter Susan.

All those who have been nominated will be hosted by the Trust in the directors' box.

To be honest, it is not really about the individuals as we have so many great supporters, it is more a nod of the hat to Ken who was a true fans' champion.

Elsewhere, in Trust and club-combined matters I am currently working alongside Clare Martin on the relaunch of the Junior Blues – the membership for young fans.

When I was a boy, Junior Blues was all the rage!

As a young fan in the summer you would really look forward to your membership pack coming and in my case a signed picture of Noel Blake or whoever – it was a highlight.

Pompey in the Community have

got the Nelson's Crew which appeals to out younger fans but since administration the club haven't really been involved in that side of things.

What I am trying to do is resurrect that and get Pompey back involved in the initiative so there is a bit more oomph behind it.

With my director's hat on I am trying to facilitate all of that and make sure it happens for Clare.

The idea is Junior Blues is still going to be run by the community but it is going to be a Pompey Junior Blues and a proper club, Trust and community project, which is nice.

That ties in specifically with the PST Next Generations project in trying to get younger fans back to Fratton Park again.

On that note, 19-year-old Bradley Saunders, a Next Generations leader, has been co-opted onto the PST board.

From a youth perspective he is massively passionate about seeing more young kids around Pompey with their Pompey shirts on rather than Chelsea ones.

As you can probably tell, our younger fans are a real focus for us.

And with exciting news to come about changes to the family section at Fratton Park in the near future that continues to be the case.

Blues boss has utilised loan market this season with all arriving on the south coast proving their worth to club

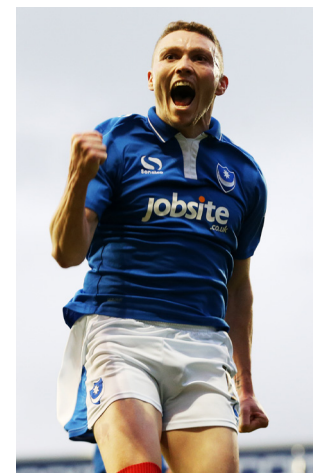
TEENAGE KICKS

with Ben Sturt

Hi fellow Pompey fans, my name is Ben Sturt. I'm 17 years old and I've been a season-ticket holder in the Fratton end for as long as I can remember.

I am also the youngest member of the Pompey Supporters' Trust's Next Generations group, which tackles all issues that may concern younger Pompey fans.

I hope you enjoy my weekly column in the Sports Mail, describing the goings on at our club through the eyes of a younger supporter.



Caolan Lavery impressed in a loan stay at Fratton Park PICTURE: JOE PEPLER

The loan market is a platform Paul Cook has fully utilised this season.

Cook has been shrewd in his temporary recruitment, and many have been successful and seemingly endeared themselves to the Pompey cause.

Too often the argument is that loanees don't invest themselves in their interim clubs, fully knowing they are under the ownership of their parent team.

At the start of the season AFC Bournemouth striker Jayden Stockley played a useful role, grabbing a dramatic equaliser against Morecambe and a winner at Bristol Rovers – those four points will be crucial come the end of the season.

Also joining in August was Matt Clarke from Ipswich, and despite his rotation with Adam Webster, he also has played a big part.

He will surely be a starter at Ipswich in the near future.

Aaron McCarey played a useful role covering injuries to Paul Jones and Brian Murphy.

But it was probably the steal of Caolan Lavery that would win a loan award – if it existed!

Lavery scored four in 13 appearances, but seemed to allow the whole attacking front line to express themselves.

How I'm sure we'd all love to see him make a return to Fratton Park in the summer.

Around the same time Marc McNulty was signed on loan from Sheffield United, the Steel City pair linked up well, but credit goes to 'Sparky' for continuing his impressive strike rate,

despite missing his partner in crime Lavery.

McNulty has bagged 11 goals so far, and in my opinion is the best finisher here since Jermain Defoe.

In January, Ryan Fulton was signed on loan from Liverpool.

The keeper made an instant impact in his professional debut by saving a Liam Sercombe penalty in the game with Oxford.

Although not completely mistake free, Fulton has ensured any nerves between the sticks have diminished. He commands his area with authority beyond his years.

Despite the games now trickling into single figures, I believe full-back Kieran Freeman can still play a part, but was always doomed to playing second fiddle to Ben Davies.

I'm not sure how Michael Smith is such a divisive figure, the Swindon loanee leads the line well and puts himself about – my message would be: Sign him up!

And who knows, maybe Conor Wilkinson can add to that impressive list of loanees – it's got to the stage of the season where one defining moment, one assist, one goal, can make all the difference.

This mastery of temporary recruitment must be applauded by Cook and his staff, all loan players this season have played an important role.

With all respect, they are miles ahead of the likes Alex Wynter, Paul McCallum and Cole Kpekawa, among many others, who have endured recent stints at the Park.