



"Young players need freedom of expression to develop as creative players... they should be encouraged to try skills without fear of failure." - Arsene Wenger

STABILITY AND CONTINUITY:

Two words that best sum up the past season. As many of you will be aware, the previous season was significantly hampered by the damage to the playing surface at the Battery Park and the resultant disruption to our coaching programme.

After much frustration and perseverance, we were delighted to return to our "home" ground in the autumn of 2008. As a result, we were able to offer continuous coaching to our players, and also host games against visiting teams.

Our Kickers have proved to be a very strong group this season and give us high hopes for the future of the organisation. Across the entire age range, we have watched with great satisfaction as a number of individuals have continued to realise their potential and we have been extremely pleased yet again to send boys to play games for, or take part in trials, with senior clubs.

Unfortunately, Morton decided to review their Youth Development Strategy which means, for this year, they are not planning to run an under 13's team. However, every cloud has a silver lining and the majority of our players who leave us this season, have agreed to form a new Gourock YAC under 13's team. This is fantastic news for the group who, only last week, were incredibly unlucky to come away as runners-up in the annual Kildrum Football Tournament which we attend with our oldest group each year. A marvellous display and a highlight of the year for this group.

We have also been very fortunate this season to add to our compliment of coaching resource; Paul Mills has joined forces with Craig Millar to strengthen our goalkeeping coaching, and we now end the season with a stronger balance of youth and experience by bringing on board Donald Morgan Junior and Chris Murray. This is great news for our future as it is not particularly easy to attract the right type of coach to an organisation which does not focus on competitive games. We hope to make some further additions to our coaching pool in the coming season.

Mick Harrington has, of course, continued to run specific fitness training on a Sunday morning before the "normal" coaching sessions. We are sure the current group 1 boys will finally agree that it has been worth it (?). As they say "No pain, no gain." Group 2 boys - you have been warned!



Ryan leads his team mates in a well organised celebration



Just round the next corner

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The Annual Stroll

Off the park, we had repeated

success in holding our annual Christmas Night out and the summer sponsored walk/barbeque. To date these events have raised a combined total of around £2,500. Well done and thanks to all who continue to support us.

Perhaps our proudest achievement away from football this year has been the launch of our new club website www.firsttouchfootballcoaching.com. This was a long time in the consultation stage but we are delighted with the results and would encourage each and everyone of you to use it.

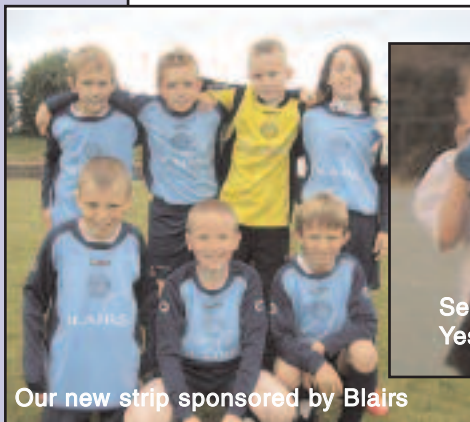
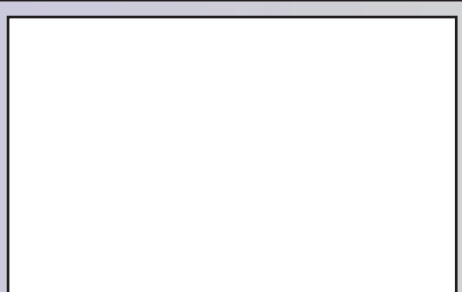
Although we are always extremely grateful for the tremendous support that we receive from our players and parents it would be remiss of us not to mention our gratitude to a number of stalwart sponsors of the club. They come up trumps every season and this year was no exception. So, thanks to Joe and Veronica Nelis of the Tontine Hotel, to Frank Lyne at L&A Motors, to Gianni Demeles at Gianni's Chip Shop, to Owen Quinn of Blairs Joiners.

This year we mark the departure of not only some of our longest serving players, but also their parents, who have supported their children and the club for at least the past six years. We wish them all the best and would like to say that we will miss their presence. In particular, we say "good-bye" to Pauline and Bill McKitrick who have been fantastic, yet very discreet, supporters of the club in many ways. Bill has delivered so many first rate articles for our newsletter and Pauline is always ready to roll her sleeves up and help us in any way she can.

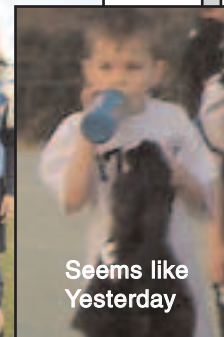
Finally, we must mention that we are indebted to Donny Morgan for the relentless efforts he has made over the years in helping us to raise the profile of First Touch by way of his input with advertising banners, flyers for events, the production of Keepy Update and, of course, the new website. Much of this would simply not have happened if it wasn't for Donny. On the plus side, Donny, we know where you live!

No thanking Jim Black this year - he hasn't done very much for us!!! Anyway, he's captured for another season unless Gregor does a runner.

We hope you all have a great summer break and look forward to seeing you in the new season.

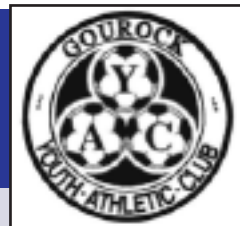


Our new strip sponsored by Blairs



Seems like Yesterday

Paisley & District Here We Come!!!



After much consideration regarding the future of this year's group 1 players, given the fact that Morton is not running an under 13 team next season, arrangements have been made for the creation of an under 13's team at Gourock YAC. All of our leavers have been given the opportunity to join this team and we are delighted to say that, to

date, the vast majority have decided to take up the invitation. Furthermore, the team will be managed by a Billy McLarty and Stephen Houlihan, and Mick Harrington will put the boys through their fitness training (there is just no escaping him). This appears to be a very satisfactory outcome after a rather uncertain period and players and parents alike are delighted that the team will be staying together after they leave us. Gourock YAC under 13's will play in the Paisley & District League next season, which is affiliated to the Scottish Youth Football Association, and we are sure they will showcase their skills and techniques that have been developed over the past 5 years at First Touch. The boys will play on Saturdays and hope to see some of our readers at home games at the Darroch Park. Please lend them your support if you can. This group of players have been a joy to work with and really work well as a team. Two boys who also leave us this year but could only secure another season at Glasgow Rangers, of all teams(!), are Lewis Morgan and Ryan Sinnamon. Lewis and Ryan have shown a tremendous attitude to their football over the past 6 years and we have no doubt that they will continue to do likewise with their senior club. To all of our leavers, we wish you the very best and hope to see you on tele - or in the "Tele" - in years to come.

"Skills school - boys asked to practice tricks and turns every week and show them off for 5-10 mins. If they come up with a brand new trick that no one has seen before then it's named after them. Some great skills from this and at end of year we have 4 new tricks - the Mudge, the Hutton, the McDonald and the Cochrane." ...Coach Ben Barrs

"Over the year it was very encouraging to see the improvement in the boys basic skills, passing and movement. Great to see some of the squad naturally using both feet, especially big Knoxy. Young Ross scoring with his right foot (That was a highlight)" ...Coach John Hampsay



Group 4 Match Report – by Ben Barrs

Teams from Dunoon, Kilmarnock and Ardencaple joined two Group 4 First Touch teams (Rovers and United) on Sunday 11th May for the annual First Touch tournament at Greenock Morton's Cappielow Park.

After away games at Dunoon and Ardencaple recently the youngest FT boys were desperate to show their skills to a home crowd. The teams came out to a large support housed in the Cow Shed. The fine weather and excellent Cappielow surface allowed for some great football displays from all teams.

A strong Kilmarnock side proved difficult to beat and Dunoon's A team also showed their strength and game experience against First Touch. The FT teams enjoyed fantastic wins against Dunoon B and one of the best games of the day versus Ardencaple where a last minute goal allowed success for FT with Macauley Macarthur stealing the glory.

One of the most anticipated games of the day was the derby match of FT Rovers versus United. Rovers started well with great left wing runs and crosses from 'Roscoe' McKay producing early goals. Step overs from 'Nakamura' Rhys Gray and defence splitting passes from Adam Houlihan and Euan 'Knoxy' brightened up the game but an unbelievable overhead kick from Jamie 'the boy Hutton' Hutton stole the show and evened up the scores for United. Further skills were on display from all of the boys but eventually Rovers coach 'Big Barry' nicked bragging rights on fellow coach John Hampsey with a close 4-3 victory.

The feedback from all visiting teams and supporters was very good with everyone enjoying some great football played in the right spirit. Roll on next year!

Group 3 Match Report – by Des McColl

Teams from Dunoon, Harmony Row, St Andrews and Ardencaple joined two Group 3 First Touch teams (City and United) on Sunday 11th May for the annual First Touch tournament at Greenock Morton's Cappielow Park. First up was United against St Andrews, a local derby with Saints going 3-0 up in first 5 minutes. A typical slow start by FT but the boys rallied and pulled the game back to 3-3 and unlucky for us not to secure a victory. City were playing Dunoon and started well but two late wonder strikes meant a 2-1 defeat for our players. Next up United vs Harmony Row; a 3-2 victory for United with good football played by both teams. City at the same time were playing the Saints in the other derby and City recorded a fine 1-0 victory. The next matches were United v Dunoon and City v Ardencaple. United had a convincing 5-1 victory with Liam Donnachie scoring 2 great goals while playing as a striker. City also recorded a very good victory against a strong Ardencaple team. The penultimate round of matches saw United v Ardencaple and City v Harmony Row. The United match was end to end stuff with Ardencaple scoring in the last minute to equalise the game 2-2. In the other match City battled to a 2-2 draw against Harmony Row.

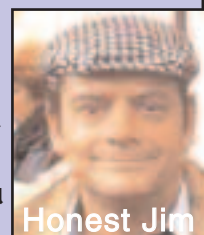
The final match of the day and FT royal rumble United v City. United started the strongest with Andy Ellis scoring at the back post after a fine move. United then went 2 up when Craig Kincaid scored with a fine long range drive. As the game went on City played the better football and Matthew McCauley scored a deserved goal but it was United who held on until the final whistle, winning 2-1. United completed the tournament unbeaten with 3 victories and 2 draws – the best record of all the teams who competed. Well done to all the boys from FT and the other teams who made it a great day for everyone.

Check out the website next month when you can see more Cappielow action photographs

A Touch O' the Barras at Gourock Garden Party

Sunday 15th June on the beautifully cultivated lawns of Darroch Park for the annual Garden Party where young and old stroll around buying home baking, play grass skittles and watch dancing displays. But hey, lurking round the corner to shatter the peace and tranquillity of the day is our very own Del Boy Black "assisting" Pauline and Tom McKittrick and Susan and Brian Doherty in flogging all sorts of football memorabilia to raise funds for First Touch and Gourock YAC under 13 team. Thanks to generous donations from local businesses and the efforts of our fantastic four in securing cut price goods, together with the usual generosity of parents including the most perfect hand me downs from Julie and Gary Sinnamon (every strip was labelled and even the socks were ironed!), there was an abundance of stock for sale. Enter the scene, Mr Black who, before we knew it, was selling anything and everything as fast as he could muster. Poor weans, who were only browsing with their families, had football tops put over their heads to secure a sale before they had time to say no. As they say, you can take the boy out of the Gibby..... All that was missing was three pairs of white sports socks for a pound! This was another great team effort. A combination of Pauline and Susan's sterling efforts in selling raffle tickets and the gents woeful selling patter (even Kenny McAlpine secured a few sales) helped raise almost £500 on the day. A wonderful achievement considering that it was organised with less than a week's notice. Chiara McKittrick deserves a special mention for working at the stall all day long when she could have easily filled her day doing something else. Once again, thanks to everyone who supported us. We hope to raise a final total of more than £600 which will be shared between First Touch and Gourock YAC under 13 team, the majority of whom will be from our current group 1 players. The money will be used to buy kit for the boys.

Finally, all of us at First Touch would like to thank Pauline and Bill, and Susan and Brian for taking it upon themselves to run this stall. They have been wonderful supporters of First Touch over the past 6 years or so and will be missed by us all (unless they fancy staying on as honorary members???!).)



Honest Jim



Chiara

“So many brilliant players, so much intelligent and entertaining football and yet another unforgettable memory.” – “Tachie “ Ace Reporter



The Big Match Report

WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008



Players' Player
Graham Brown
with Veronica
Nelis

Mr Owen Quinn and
Coaches' Player of the
Year Craig Knight



Alec Harrington
presents the
Parents' Player of the
Year. to young
Jack Harrington

This was an exhibition match where anything could happen and it most certainly did. The first period was neck and neck, no quarter given, fast, furious, free flowing football played with pace, pride and passion. Two supreme motivators – John and Des – guided their teams with skill and determination. Mick Harrington was under immense pressure as referee and outclassed the great Collina in the respect he got from teams and coaches alike. 20 minutes in, Jack McArthur found a gap in a solid defence and cleverly beat Paton, 1:0 to the Old Boys. Immediate reply from Grant who cut in from the left flank and hit the post. The first third ended honours almost even. Into the second period and play swung backward and forwards between two determined squads. A piece of magic from Brady Grierson put the Old Boys 2:0 up. Again an immediate response – this time Dylan Campbell – again the woodwork rescued the Old Boys. All the boys were playing at the top of their game with frequent changes of personnel and formation. It's worth noting that all the changes slotted in really well as both teams played like well oiled machines. Last third, the fireworks really began. Calum Roberts pounced to extend the lead after four minutes, 3:0. No way back... definitely no way when Big Dave McNeil blasted a thirty yarder to bury the Young Boys 4:0. We then witnessed the strength of character for which First Touch is renowned. Lewis Morgan picked up a loose ball on the edge of the box and found the corner of the net with an excellent snap shot, 4:1. Michael Houlihan ran through and hit the bar from twenty yards, and Lewis followed in to bury the rebound, 4:2. Ryan Sinnamon then hit a diagonal thirty yarder to make it 4:3. At this point the two sides were battling for every ball and tactical substitutions were everywhere. Sinnamon won a free kick and lofted the ball towards the penalty spot where Sharpe rose majestically to bullet a trade mark header, 4:4. The crowd were going wild with minutes remaining. Mick produced some brilliant refereeing with accurate observation of the highest quality to award a free kick thirty five yards out. Up steps Sinnamon, and with a touch of magic, sweeps the ball in at the far post, 5:4. Seconds left, the Old Boys are stunned, yet to their credit are battling for pride when John plays his ace card. He introduces A Trialist (N.McCole) who is given a few second to impress and he unbelievably skites a corner kick directly into the net, 6:4. The referee manages just enough breath to peep the final whistle and a memorable game comes to an end.



yet another GOAL

THE END OF AN ERA INVERKIP MARINA WEDNESDAY 25 JUNE 2008

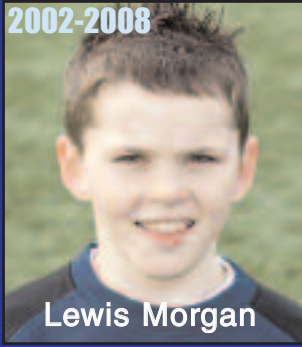
Following a breathtaking game at the Battery Park between two well organised and skilful teams the boys, coaches and families made the short journey to The Chartroom to celebrate the end of an era. Group 1 had just played their last competitive game together and now gathered to bid their farewells and celebrate their achievements. Over 120 people in total were present to mark the occasion and our appreciation goes to the staff of the Marina for providing an excellent buffet and extremely pleasant surroundings. Once gathered, everyone relaxed and enjoyed each others' company: memories were recounted, jokes revisited and plans made for the future. The players were starving and devoured their goody bags before the main events took place. Soon the squad took to the stage, and, ably compered by Stevie Houlihan set out a short play (written by David Jamieson) to provide a humorous insight into the secrets of the First Touch dressing room. Soup Campbell's portrayal of John was accurate and superb and the rest of the cast had their characters nailed to a T. Next, each boy passed the microphone and spoke eloquently of his fondest memory of his years at First Touch. This brought the house down. Stevie Houlihan then introduced Billy McLarty, to speak on behalf of the parents. Billy eloquently and sincerely offered his appreciation and thanks to the coaches for all their hard work and dedication and for passing on so many skills to our boys. Billy also singled out Jim Black for all the work, often unseen, which goes on behind the scenes. This year we had a break with tradition as the parents had worked out the real heroes of First Touch – the long suffering wives of the coaches – Jacqui McCole and Janice McClurg. Billy invited Paul McNeil and Ciaran Clifford to present the ladies with bouquets. John McClurg then took to the stage surrounded by his team of coaches. He praised Group 1 as a team with “nae stick oots” but a tremendous squad who had been brilliant to work with. John thanked the parents for their support and acknowledged the sponsorship of Owen and Isabel Quinn of Blair's of Scotland, Joe and Veronica Nelis of the Tontine Hotel and John Lodge for their long standing allegiance to First Touch. He thanked Neil Paton for the outstanding trophies, Donny Morgan, Jim Black and Ben Barrs for setting up such a brilliant website and producing so many classy editions of Keepy Update. Indeed the work of Donny Morgan deserves great praise when each boy was presented with a framed certificate which will be treasured forever. Neil McCole produced beautifully bound individual photographic booklets commemorating each boys' progress through the years and these too will be cherished in the years to come. This was an appropriate time to acknowledge the skill and quiet perseverance of Jeremy Burrows who has captured so many unique and memorable pictures of First Touch down the years. Next up came the highlight of the night – the presentations – unfortunately John Lodge was unable to be present and John asked Alec Harrington to deputise to present the Parents' Player of the Year. To deafening applause young Jack Harrington, our outstanding holding midfielder took the stage to receive his award from last years' winner Cameron Black. Mr Owen Quinn came forward to present the Coaches' Player of the Year to Craig Knight which was handed on by previous winner Craig Ellis. The audience were still applauding when John announced the Players' Player and the name of Graham Brown was received with thunderous acclaim. Veronica Nelis stepped forward to present Graham as we awaited a satellite link up with Brady Grierson last years' winner. John wound up the night by describing his awareness and appreciation of all the hard work and support given by so many people to First Touch. The families left, saddened that an important time in their children's lives was coming to an end, but proud that they had been part of a very special organisation. Group 1 will soon be renamed as the YAC U'13s, the boys will stick together, the parents will stick together and will continue the traditions of First Touch. It may be the end of an era but it is also a new beginning. Thanks to all at First Touch from the '96 Boys for making this possible.



oh! Soupy



2002-2008



Lewis Morgan

"Thierry"

A real buzz bomb with tremendous pace and two greatfeet. After six years at First Touch, Lewis will continue developing his great skills with Glasgow Rangers

2002-2008

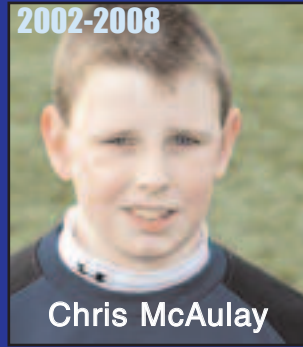


Ryan Sinnamon

"Sinny"

Midfielder turned defender, pacy, powerful and strikes a great ball. Ryan has been an exemplary player and worthy of his place with Glasgow Rangers.

2002-2008



Chris McAulay

2003-2008

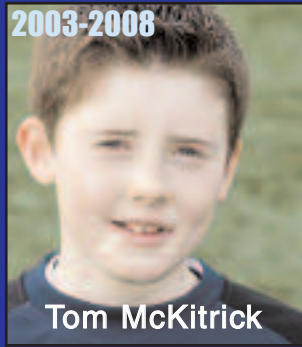


Michael Grant

"Granty"

An excellent left sided midfielder who can consistently deliver great crosses. Has brilliant work rate. Not to be messed with - a Tae Kwon Do champion.

2003-2008



Tom McKittrick

"Big Tam"

He's like a gall stone - difficult to pass and solid at the back! An excellent passer of the ball and instrumental in starting good moves from the back.

2003-2008



Jack McLarty

2003-2008



Dylan Campbell

"Midget"

Has worked really hard this year. A great player to work with, loads of energy and a good attitude.

2003-2008

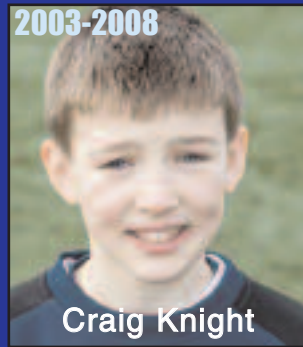


Graham Brown

"Broony"

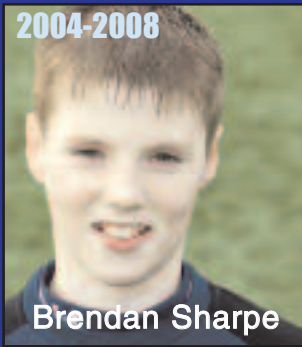
Overwhelming choice as this years **Players Player of the Year**, A really consistent player who has had a fantastic season. A great team player and very popular all round.

2003-2008



Craig Knight

2004-2008



Brendan Sharpe

"JT"

Sharp by name, Sharp by nature - loves to cut up the opposition, fancies himself as John Terry in bounce games

2004-2008



Jamie Mills

"Millsy"

A Stealth jet - quiet, agile, fast and deadly. A real prospect with loads of potential".

2004-2008



Paul McNeil

CLASS OF 2008 FIRST TOUCH FOOTBALL COACHING

"Chick"

It feels as though he has been here since he was in nappies. A great lad who performs extremely well and reads the game superbly.



Nicky Jamieson

"Nicky"

Cool, calm and corrected by big John (occasionally). – again. A real rock with Big Tam! Again likes to start moves from the back with his excellent passing



Shaun Campbell

"Soup"

One of the real characters in the group, always up for a laugh. Looks – and plays – like Edgar Davids and has a great eye for a killer ball (when he can see out of those David Glasses).



Aidan Gough

"Flying Eyebrow"

Like his long lost cousin, Vincent van, he's shown plenty of artistry in this final year. Another of our players with a fantastic work rate.



Ciaran Clifford

"Cliff"

Has made huge strides in his final year mainly due to his excellent work rate. Good passer of the ball and delivers a great cross.

"Dark Night"

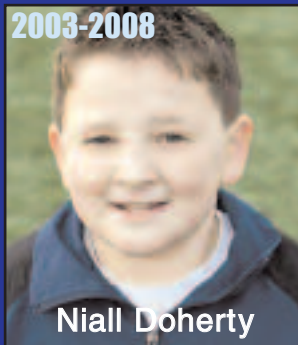
A great competitive spirit. Solid in defence and rarely lets any forward get past him. Wonderful pace and loves to get up the park. **Coaches Player of the Year.**



Jack Harrington

"Jacko"

A combination of Alf Tupper & Roy Race & Claude Makalele, a real midfield dynamo, **Parents Player of the Year!**



Niall Doherty

"BoBo"

Another joker in the pack always available for the pass. Reads the game well and has a good left foot, excellent team player.

"Peanut Jr"

The quite man of the group, Paul takes everything in his stride and has progressed well this year. A great work rate.



Cameron Paton

"Cammy"

They say you've got to be mad to be a goalie, big Cammy proves them right. Great Shotstopper.



Michael Houlihan

"Houla"

Late starter at FT but what a finisher! He linked well with Sharpy and McLarty. A solid and powerful player with a big heart.



John McClurg



Neil McCole



Donald Morgan

Class of 2008 Scrap Book - Good Times & Great Friends.



"Aye Jack their a great bunch of lads!" "Too true Victor, no Street Corners for this gang!"



One team of 11 players made the long trek to Glenafton on a fine day for football .FT was in a group of 5 teams with our tournament friends Ardencaple drawn in the same group. Our first game was against Sygenta BC (eventual runaway winners of the group). FT touch came out of the blocks flying with Andy "Buzz bomb" Ellis causing them all sorts of problems, the game was end to end stuff with Ryan "Geeks" McGeehan coming close , both teams were well matched with no one in total control. A fine flowing move on the right led to Andy Ellis being brought down for a penalty with the FT boys arguing over who would take it. The "Management" stepped up and decided Ryan "Bally" Ball was to take it. With his usual Gallus swagger he shot past the post, the game finished a fair 0-0. FT were then on immediately against Baillieston BC. 4 changes were made to the starting line up and right from the off FT played great passing football which led to several good chances being saved by their goalkeeper. Again the goal didn't come. FT was totally in control. A long kick up the park led to a FT clearance hitting the on form David Burrows in the face! The FT boys stopped but the Baillieston striker didn't! He kept going and scored what proved to be the winner 0-1 , a defeat and burst lip for David was our reward for not finishing our chances. Up next after a break of 2 games and lunch for the referees (1 hour + total) was Ardencaple. This game started well with FT playing the best football of the day , the passing and movement was excellent with Adam "Big Barry" Barrs controlling the play from the back. Again no goals as the Ardencaple goalkeeper had the game of his life with some tremendous saves, one in particular from a strike by Liam Donnachie. Ardencaple got a penalty early on when David "the new Cat" Muir picked the ball up outside the box but he lived up to his nickname and pulled off a great save. The game finished 0-0 : an "injustice" as one parent described it. The last game against West Park and FT knew they had to win to qualify. A couple of changes made with Matty "the big man" McAuley up front to get goals ; the first 6-7 minutes saw the boys busy chasing a goal, leaving Calum "the Gazelle" Abercrombie on his own and doing some great defending at the back. After the "management" did some screaming and balling and a couple of changes, putting Aiden Conway on in defence ,the boys began to get back into shape and started playing again. Finally, a goal and what a goal! A Ryan Ball left foot strike from 20 yards into the top right corner gave us hope but it slowly faded when West park scored directly from a corner. With the game locked at 1-1 we were chasing the winner and a great through ball by Connor McGhee set Andy Ellis free on the goalie. At this point the ref blew full time 1-1. As we trudged off the park the other 2 games continued for at least 2 mins after ours ,with parents complaining the game finished early , or after 2 years of coaching with FT, am I becoming paranoid?? Apart from the outcome of the day myself and John Hampsey were pleased with the high quality of football played. One comment - all teams at the tournament had the goalkeeper launching the ball up the park but FT played all the football from the back as it should be. Well done to all the boys on the day ! **Group 3 Report by Des McColl**

The Bill McKittrick Interview



Instead of our regular feature of profiling a player each month in Keepy Update, we have made an executive decision this time round to feature our own Keith Jackson.

Always on call



Nickname: Used to be Eusebio, (ask your granda.) Now Tachie
Other job: Annoying the weans in school
Association with First Touch: Parent of Mikey and Tom and veteran scribbler
Who do you support? Maryhill Magyars, The Jags and after 25 years away from Glasgow, living here, The Mighty Ton.
Apart from your own boys, who have been your favourite players over the past few years and why? So many... everyone I've watched. First Touch has always been about the whole team performance.
What's your pastime when you're not writing match reports? Housework.
What has been your highlight/favourite memory during your time as a parent at First Touch? Eaten alive by midges at Glenafton, barbies at Lunderston, tryin to follow Des's directions to away games, John's rapport with referees and Bidges obsession with rain jackets during the heat wave.
What are you going to do with your time when you retire this year? Follow Group 1's progression through YAC 13's and Mikey and the '94 First Touch boys at Morton U15's.

MATCH REPORTS

**First Touch Group One 4 Antonine Boys Club 4
Battery Park Sunday 6th June 2008 By Ace (Bill Mc Kitrick)**



Honestly, it does not get better than this... well if Michael Grant's last minute thunderbolt had not hit the bar then...

But let's get back to kick off. First Touch started like they have been playing together for years (they have J.McC). The first 25 minutes showcased the best First Touch football this veteran scribbler has seen in seven years and there have been some outstanding performances. The other 50 minutes were pretty spectacular too.

A starting midfield of Brown, Soup Campbell, Harrington and Grant stamped their authority; ball winning, finding space, passing accurately. Moves frequently consisted of 8-10 passes and at this stage Antonine must have thought they were at under 15 level. The boys treated the ball like a guided missile and did awesome damage; 3:0 up in 20 minutes. Brown won a corner, swung it in and Sharpe out jumped everyone to head home. Antonine battled well, they are a class outfit but were unable to get to grips. Harrington was winning everything, Grant was marauding down the flanks, Campbell pinged a diagonal 30 yard pass, splitting the centre backs straight into Brown's run, he took a touch and calmly stroked the ball low past the on rushing keeper, 2:0. Confidence was high, the back four of McAuley, Jamieson, McKitrick and Knight were watertight and played high up the park. Jamieson won possession, drove into right midfield, shrugged off two challenges, found McLarty whose excellent control allowed a first time pass straight to Sharpe who ran through and angled a text book 20 yard diagonal low across the keeper into the left corner. A well deserved double to make it 3:0.

After the break it was obvious Antonine's pride had taken a severe dunt. They came at First Touch with skill, passion and determination and an accurate ball over the central defenders allowed their composed and pacey striker to make it 3:1. Immediately McLarty sped in from the left, beat the keeper from 20 yards only to hit the post. This was like a heavyweight boxing championship. Antonine realised they had to raise their game and to their credit went toe to toe with First Touch. Mills, Gough and Houlihan came on as the game became even more balanced with quality play and narrow misses on both sides. Paton dealt with a barrage of shots very well and as the defenders' workload increased they kept their discipline under sustained pressure.

Into the final 25 and Dylan Campbell was introduced to test a well organised defence with his electric pace. Houlihan was constantly drawing two defenders to close him down allowing Dylan and Gough to exploit acres of space and this allowed Gough to speed down the right flank, lose the left back and have the time, space and vision to fire a high, diagonal 30 yarder into the left corner, 4:1. Despite the cries of "It was a cross!" Goughie has been doing this regularly in training. Antonine cleverly exploited our high back line with a well placed high ball from midfield over the defence to a speedy striker who gave Paton no chance, 4:2. This gave optimism and fresh drive to Antonine who went two at the back and stormed First Touch in waves. Paton was brave, commanding and stood firm but a ricochet bounced off an Antonine player and crossed the line without enough power to hit the net, 4:3.

5 minutes to go and Antonine threw everything forward. First Touch decided to match their style rather than slowing the game and seeing it out to their advantage. Total credit to every boy's fitness level on a senior sized pitch and also to an outstanding referee who never missed the correct call. I cannot remember a game at any level when a referee came through without a single criticism from player, crowd or coach well maybe John had a slight difference of opinion once or twice.

89 minutes; Antonine at full throttle, First Touch roaring back defiantly, a speculative driven through ball, spinning wildly, skites off a defender, wrong foots Paton and it's 4:4.

3 minutes of extra time gone and it's still Old Firm pace and Grant picks up on the left half way line and beats two and cuts in and the centre back comes across to close him down and Grant strikes a beauty from 25 yards, the keeper is beaten and... You know the rest.

This was football of the highest quality with superb technique, fitness and sportsmanship from both sides neither of which deserved to lose. Group 1 will be leaving soon and plans are well under way for them to form the nucleus of next seasons YAC U13. On this showing they should fear no one.



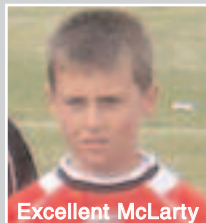
A brace for Sharpe



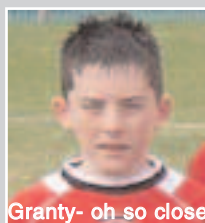
Brave Paton



Hard Houlihan



Excellent McLarty



Granty- oh so close



Goughie shot

Shot?
60%

Cross?
40%

First Touch Group 3 at Ardencaple 's John McGinley Memorial Tournament Helensburgh 17th May 2008

This was a tournament consisting of 12 teams from Dunbartonshire, Ayrshire, Glasgow and Inverclyde split into 2 sections with the winner of each section playing in the final. First Touch's first game was against Renton Craigandro and as usual this Under 10's team were slow to start a 4:0 defeat at the hands of a very strong Renton side, who were the eventual tournament winners (100% record).

The next match was against Dumbarton United by this time the boys had found their football brains and ran out comfortable 5:1 winners. In the next 2 games they continued playing good football and won both games 2:0 against Ardencaple and Helensburgh.

The final game of the section was the match of the day against a strong team from Ayrshire, Galston. This match was great entertainment with both teams playing football as it should be played, First Touch controlled the game for the first 10 minutes but couldn't score. Galston then started to take control and only a magnificent one-handed save from Dave "new cat" Muir kept the score line at 0:0 and that is how it finished.

With the sections completed each team then played one more match against the team from the other section in the same position. This match was against Langcraigs from Paisley the first touch boys had a 50 minute break before playing this match and once again they started slow 2:0 down in the first 5 minutes, the boys finally found their touch and Zack "attack" McEachran scored to make it 2:1 but with most of the play and chances the equaliser didn't come. All the boys deserve congratulations for playing football the first touch way throughout the tournament and should be proud of themselves.



The boys and coaches reflect on a great day play.



First Touch Group 1 at Kildrum Festival of Football Condorrat Cumbernauld Saturday 21st June 2008

First Touch took on some of the best teams in Central Scotland and won through to a thrilling final. This was the last competitive outing for Group 1 as the convoy of parents travelled through to Condorrat to play 5 strong teams, 30 minutes a game, top two in the final. First game against JBM (Cumbernauld) was a tight, hard fought battle with only 3 chances; 2 to First Touch - Grant, narrowly over, Soup Campbell, off the bar and 1 to JBM which went in, 0:1.

Heads up, second game v Seafar Villa and the boys are fired up, Soup tripped in the box, penalty. Up steps "Mr Cool" Harrington and calmly strokes it into the left corner. 10 minutes later Houlihan breaks through a tight defence, finishes low 2:0. A quickly taken free kick in midfield, three passes, ball to Gough in the box, neat finish, 3:0. At the end, a touch of complacency and it finishes 3:1. Next up, a strongly fancied and unbeaten home side, Kildrum United but First Touch hit top form.

Houlihan plays a 30 yard inch perfect pass into Sharp who finishes on the run, 1:0. Harrington, who anchored midfield superbly all day, strikes a thirty yarder, top corner - candidate for goal of the tournament, 2:0. Houlihan hits the by line, cuts back, Gough tap-in, 3:0. Late on, Harrington finds Sharp, cool finish, 4:0. Kilsyth are next, boys are on fire, Brown hits the bar after 60 seconds. Campbell links up with Sharp - goal, 1:0. Sharp again, superb control and strength, corner finish, 2:0. Clifford through, beats three, difficult angle, cleared off the line. Brown threads a clever, diagonal pass releasing McLarty who slots in at the far post, 3:0. Last qualifier against Shawfield, McAuley, pass of the day, 30 yards to Dylan Campbell to finish, 1:0. Shawfield fight back, 1:1. Brown passes through to McLarty, deadly finish, 2:1. Shaun Campbell, clever lob, again McLarty who coolly takes the ball round the keeper, superb finish, 3:1. Gough corner, Sharp's bullet header, 4:1. Late consolation, 4:2 and First Touch are in the final. By now the boys had played 2 hours 30 minutes of quality football - each game had a 40 minute interval. It was now 3.25, the solid, composed back line of McAuley, Jamieson, McKitrick and Knight in front of Paton had been ever present and conceded just 4 goals in all that time.

The final and it's a re-run of the first game played at 10am against JBM. First Touch are playing the ball through them, Gough to McLarty, right foot, bang, 1:0. 3 minutes gone. JBM fight back 1:1. Loose goal kick, punished, 1:2 and First Touch are tested and Grant, still full of running delivers 2:2. First Touch are playing the better football, the clock is ticking down toward a penalty shoot out, the parents are twitching, JBM continue the long ball tactic and a mix up between keeper and defender allows a deflection into the net, 2:3 in the dying seconds. Heartbreak.

First Touch were applauded at the medal ceremony, congratulated and invited back next year. Hopefully, the new Group 1 will take their place with pride and match their breathtaking performance. The boys collected their runners up medals and gained a lot of admirers for their technical ability. They played the best football of the tournament and earned valuable competitive experience (the hard way). The lessons learned on the training ground were evident in all areas of the pitch, the boys played for each other and must take immense pride in their performances - their coaches and parents certainly did. A last most difficult decision remained - Man of the Tournament - I had 6 candidates neck and neck with 10 more a fraction behind and when coaches and players voted Nicky Jamieson he received the loudest roar of the day.

For us all, a day to remember.



Well done everyone.



Mr Blonde about to pass to Mr Cool.



Gooooaaalll!

Sharp caught the scouts eye.



THE NUMBERS ADD UP Saturday 31st May 2008, 5 miles, 200 people, 25°C - 6 Burgers, 4 Kebabs, 1 Lasagne (That was just Bidge !!)

Once again First Touch set off on our annual stroll from Battery Park Pavilion to Lunderston Bay. For the last few weeks the boys had been collecting cash from every possible source to supplement club coffers. At 11 am John McClurg rallied the troops and pointed us westwards. Players, coaches, parents, relatives, friends, babies in buggies, dogs on leads set off behind Davie Jamieson. It was hot, the hottest day of the year and some sparkling white legs were seeing daylight for the first time in decades. Earlier that morning a dedicated bunch of parents had transported barbecues, tables, food and drink to Lunderston Bay and with army-like discipline - Jim Black was in charge - were getting ready to feed the starving masses. As we sauntered through Gourock in baking sunshine the boys convinced shoppers,

shopkeepers, even the station taxi rank to drop their donations in the collecting buckets. Just on lunchtime we reached the picnic area at Lunderston. But this was no picnic; rows of flaming grills tended by Dads, sizzling sausages, kebabs, chicken, burgers, rows of tables, looked after by Mums, overflowing with rolls, pasta with tomato, lasagne, coleslaw, potato salad, cakes, biscuits, crisps and masses of other goodies, crates of soft drinks.

This was a serious amount of food which the walk and the sea air had given us the appetite to attack. As the temperature climbed higher, boys and (some) parents played football or

simply basked in the sweltering heat. A few organised games followed. Overall this was a chance to bether and enjoy each other's company, and above all to celebrate being part of a very special organisation. In a few short hours the final tidying up was underway, boys were being pulled out of the sea, and an enjoyable and successful tradition was over for another year. Everyone had played their part to provide a fantastic atmosphere, brilliant food and loads of fun with the one purpose of helping First Touch to prosper. Finally a most important number was added up. At the time of going to press we have raised the grand sum of £1,500 which we will of course, use to develop the organisation even further. Over and above our

appreciation to everyone who joined the walk, special thanks for contributions and support should go to Billy McLarty for transporting the barbeques and for all his sterling efforts in helping cook the food, to Kenny "one star Michelin" McAlpine, Joe Mitchell, Sean Campbell and Gerry Grant for slaving over the hot coals all day long (Joe and Kenny had been at Lunderston Bay since 9.30am), to our front of house manager Karen Ball, ably assisted by dinner ladies Veronica Morgan, Pauline McKitrick and Susan Doherty. And to Project Manager Mr Black, whose head was looking a tad burned by the end of the day, for all his efforts leading up to and on the day. Thanks also to Frank Lynn, Bryce Gillies and the Hampseys for the use of their barbequeues. Thanks to Gianni's, to Butcher Johnston Smith of Maitland's Lynedoch Street, Mark Farrell of Morton FC for Irn Bru, Cafe Continental for Juice and also to Gerry Grant for the tremendous supply of food. Finally, thanks to all of the players, parents and friends who turned out in their numbers to show their usual fantastic support.

Check out the website next month when you can see more Lunderston Bay photographs taken by Jeremy Burrows

Gourock YAC Sevens

Over the coming months, many of our players will continue to display their skills at the Gourock YAC sevens on Monday and Tuesday nights. As you may know, this annual event has been a main source of recruitment for us over the past few years. For those of you who attend on a weekly basis, you will see some familiar faces at the side-lines. Our coaches love to watch our own players show their talents whilst on the look out for new players, especially our Kickers who have the opportunity to play in match situations. If any of our older players happen to have some of the Kickers in their team, please take the time to include them, by making a pass or giving them praise. Remember you were the wee one's not so long ago!! Always remember it is your performance that you should focus on, not the result. Try out your step over, or Zidane, or shimmy. It brings a smile to the faces of your parents and the coaches who are watching (even Des!). Good luck over the summer holidays at the tournament.



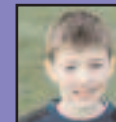
Photograph
Kenny Ramsay.

Congratulations to the following boys who celebrated their birthday in JUNE & JULY



12

Ryan Sinnamon, Jack McLarty,
Ciaran Clifford, Craig Knight,
Cameron Paton, Michael Houlihan.



Robbie McAlpine,
Craig Anderson,
Calum Blincow.

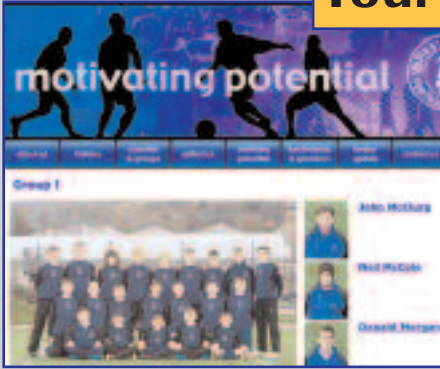
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9

Conor McGhee, Jonathan Fairbairn,
Craig Bellew, Thomas Semple.



Your Web Site Comments



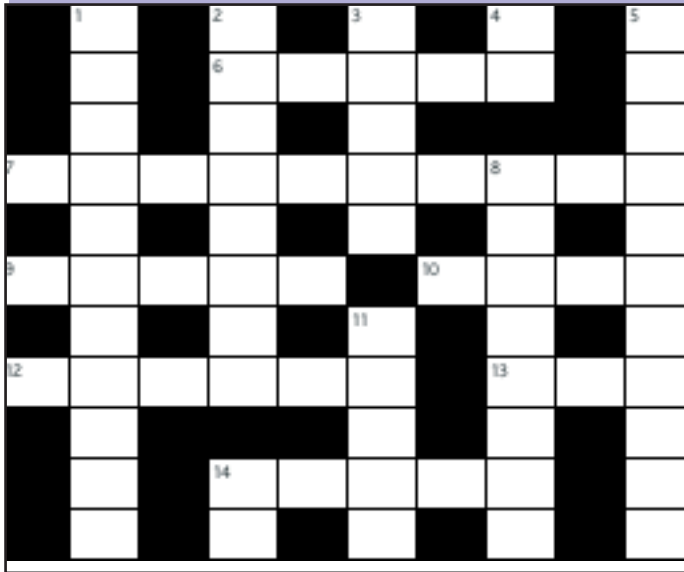
I liked looking back at all the Keepy Updates- Graham Brown Group 1

"Website.....Brilliant"
-Pauline McKitrick (Parent)
"Website sums up how good First Touch really is...Spot on"-Gary Sinnamon (father of Ryan)

The website is magic. It's still good to find out what is happening at First Touch. - Cameron Black, former First Touch player and now with Kilmarnock.

"I liked the photo of me"
-Ben McNamara Group 2

"I was interested to know how FT was initially set up and learning more about the coaches"
-Linda Sharpe John Terry's mum
"I enjoyed looking at the photos from Glenafton"-Chris McAulay



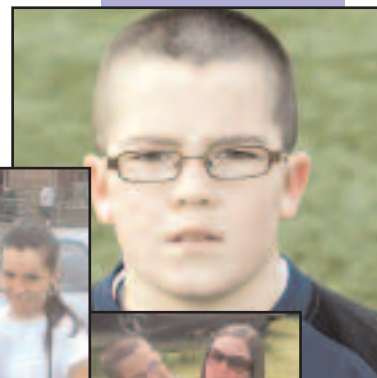
"It Was a Nightmare" DJ's first and last!

Sports Crossword



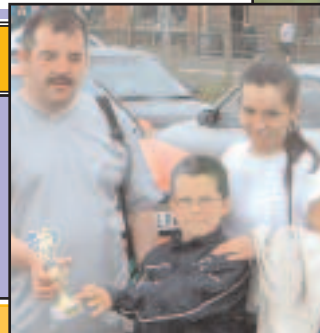
ACROSS 6.....Maradona
7 Stefi Graft, Paula Ratcliffe, etc.
9 Celtic found in deep water?
10Agassi, Tennis Star (5)
12 SirHillary of Mt Everest Fame (6)
13 Spheres (4)
14The Peril, Cartoo Character (5)

DOWN 1 Your reading it! (5,6)
2 Go on, take a chance (1,4,3)
3 Man City manager's Nationality
4 & 14.....,or not.....(2,2)
5 Beatrix Potter Character (5,6)



PLAYER PROFILE SOUP CAMPBELL

Well, where do we start and what can we say about this loveable rogue. This larger than life character will leave First Touch a quieter but less funny place to be. This lad has developed not only a great repertoire of jokes, but has turned into a smashing player who keeps his team mates motivated with his dressing room banter. Best of luck SEAN - yes, he does have a proper name.



Position **Centre midfield.**

Toughest opponent at FT **Dark Knight (He's fast, strong and solid).**

Fastest opponent at FT **Cant pick between Sinny, Lewis and Millsy they're all flying machines**
Team mate who makes you laugh and why? **Sharpie and Broony who make mad voices and both are hyper even more than me**

Best Coach **Des, strict but likes a laugh(once I think....only kidding Des)**

Greatest experience at FT **Playing in Glenafton tourney and versus Morton and Kilmarnock pro youth.**

Best thing about FT **The friends I've made, appreciate everything that all the coaches have taught me.**

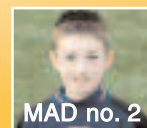
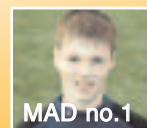
Fav Team **Celtic**

Fav player **Artur Boruc**

Fav TV prog **Family guy**

Other Hobbies **Golf.**

Ambition **To sign for Celtic and one day play in an "Old Firm" game versus Sinny and Lewis.....Watch this space!!!!!!**



www.firsttouchfootballcoaching.com
Our web site is now online.