

Wishing all players, parents and friends a very Happy Christmas
and looking forward to seeing you all in 2009

FIRST TOUCH FOOTBALL COACHING KEEPY UPDATE

No.13

WINTER 2008



"More touches of the ball,
more involvement in the
game." Sir Alex Ferguson (on
why the younger players at
Man Utd's Academy play 4v4)

A THANKLESS TASK BEING A REFEREE

In today's game where every incident is shown from several angles by TV and Media, refereeing decisions come under intense scrutiny. As players, officials and fans we must show the referee the utmost respect for the job he is doing, because if we don't have referees we don't have a game. Referees must be able to do their job without being subjected to abuse by players, coaches or spectators. For this to happen a knowledge of the rules of the game would be of great benefit to players, coaches and spectators. For a detailed look at the laws of the game visit http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/laws_of_the_game.cfm?curpageid=168

PARENTS AND SPECTATORS

Parents have a big responsibility in showing the right attitudes towards referees. The aim is to eradicate touchline abuse in football, and parents can play their part by agreeing to, and signing, their club's Code of Conduct and abiding by it throughout the season. Parents also have a responsibility for their children's behaviour. The players will also be asked to sign a Code of Conduct, and parents can encourage their children to adhere to the players' code.

COACHES

Coaches have a hugely important role to play, as they are not only responsible for their own behaviour, but they can also influence that of their players and spectators, too. On a matchday, you'll be expected to work with your players, parents and other spectators to allow the referee to manage the game without being subjected to abuse.

PLAYERS

On a matchday, you'll be expected to work with your coaches and your captain to allow the referee to manage the game without being subjected to abuse. With the game losing thousands of referees every year, it's hugely important, because without the referees, the game isn't the same. Creating fun, safe football environments is central to changing attitudes towards referees. Many children and young people have a fantastic experience through football - some don't. This may be down to aggressive or pushy coaches and parents screaming and shouting from the sidelines. Respect highlights that this behaviour is unacceptable. We need to help coaches and parents understand the effect this behaviour can have and share positive ways to motivate young players. So, please play your part in respecting the decisions of referees.

Do you think you've got what it takes to be a Referee? Take the quiz and see Page 2



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www.firsttouchfootballcoaching.com

Please take time to view our updated web site which contains loads of information and photographs. There is something for everyone. We wish to emphasise that one of the main reasons we have invested in the web site is to provide you with information about scheduled games, travelling arrangements and changes to the coaching sessions. It is disappointing that coaches continue to receive so many phone calls/enquiries about these matters when the information is already available on the web site. Please use it.



If you have any ideas to improve the web site, you can e-mail us at firsttouch@btinternet.com

Think you know the rules ?

1. What is the minimum height of a corner flag? 5 feet ,6 feet, 7 feet? 2. May a football match be played on a square pitch? Yes? No? 3. May the goalkeeper wear a short-sleeved jersey? Yes? No? 4. Who is responsible for deciding how much additional time is added on at the end of each period of play? The referee? The 4th official ? 5. Must a referee always stop the game if a player is injured whilst play is going on? Yes? No? 6. May the defending team goalkeeper compete for the drop-ball? Yes? No? 7. How does a referee indicate to players and spectators that he has awarded an indirect free kick? One arm raised above his head.? Two arms in the air? 8. As soon as the referee blows his whistle for a penalty kick to be taken, can the goalkeeper move off his line? Answers on Page 12.



GET WELL SOON BOBBY Coaches and players at First Touch would like to wish our good friend and local referee Bobby Byrne a speedy recovery after his recent stay in Inverclyde Royal Hospital. Bobby has been one of the referees who has officiated at some of our 11-a-side games and is a regular at our Cappielow Tournaments.

FT MINI TOURNAMENT UPDATE

Over the past few months, on the last Sunday of each month, we have been running two inter-group tournaments where teams have been made up of Group 1 and Group 2 players, and similarly with a mix of players from Groups 3 and 4. This event proved to be very popular with players and parents alike, with some excellent displays of football from all teams. The winning team from the older group were the Panthers, with David Burrows being named Player of the Tournament and Ryan McGeehan, top goalscorer, for his age group.

Our youngest players showed fantastic potential and the worthy winning team was the Bears. Player of the Tournament was Kicker, Robert Wilson, and Adam Houlihan took the honours for top goalscorer. Well done to all our players and thanks for the great support by parents and friends.



Cobras- Group 3-4 & Kickers Runners Up.

Bears- Group 3-4 & Kickers Winners.



Panthers- Group 1-2 Winners.

Group 1-2 Top goalscorer-Ryan McGeehan
Player of Tourney-David Burrows
Group3-4 & Kickers
Top Goalscorer-Adam Houlihan
Player of Tourney-Robert Wilson(Kicker)

Elephants-Group 1-2
Runners Up.



All our Governance Documents are on online.
www.firsttouchfootballcoaching.com



GROUP 4 IN THE SPOTLIGHT WHO ARE THE NEW BOYS?

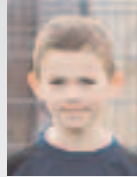
Coach Des McCole introduces his young guns to the rest of First Touch.



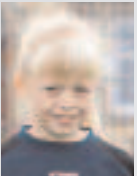
Adam McNamara
Always willing to try different challenges, playing in goal at the moment and doing very well.



Alexander Buchan
Always has plenty to say and full of tricks and turns.



Ciaran Marshall
Hillwalking or football?? Can he climb his way to the top of First Touch?



Amy Muir
The "lady" of the group, very shy and quiet until the game starts. Boys beware !



Chris McGeown
Already a very skilful player, and never has a hair out of place.



Callum Murdoch
Powerful, strong and strikes a good ball.



Johnny Gallacher
Youngest in the group and already showing great potential.



Max McFarlane
Creator of the "forehead turn". Feel free to ask Max for a demonstration.



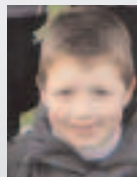
Ben McArthur
Full of energy and enthusiasm, following in the footsteps of his brother.



Paul Ramsay
Goalsnatcher in the box. Always playing to the camera !

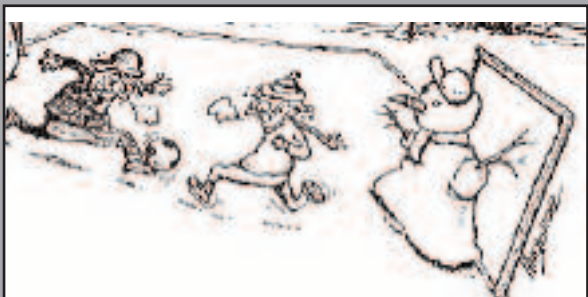


Callum Docherty
An all rounder. Even knows the rules of the game inside out. Is this a ref?



Matthew Barrs
Definitely the talented one (takes after his Mum).

WINTER SHUT DOWN



Based on experience over the past few seasons, the first couple of months of the new year are usually very disruptive due to adverse weather conditions. To provide continuity in our coaching programme we have decided to have a break from outdoor coaching. After the Christmas break, coaching shall commence at Greenock Sports Centre from 11-01-09 to 22-02-09 in the field turf hall 10am-11.20am. However, due to space constraints we can only accommodate 2 groups at a time, so coaching will be on alternate Sundays for each group. Starting with Groups 1 & 2 on 11th January 2009.

CAPPIELOW FESTIVAL SCRAP BOOK



On a fabulously sunny September Sunday, First Touch once again played hosts to our 6 monthly football festival, playing hosts to both local and national teams. Again a fantastic experience for our players to play on a senior football park which was in pristine condition as usual. All four of our teams had mixed fortunes but demonstrated some fine displays against our guests. Yet again, a very successful event.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY J BURROWS inverclydenow.com

First Touch Group 1 - Ardencaple v First Touch

On a wild and windy October Sunday morning, our oldest boys made the early trip across to Helensburgh. With eyes like half shut knives (that was the dad's from the night before) all car windows in the convoy were down to blow away the cobwebs. By the time the whistle blew for the kick off, however, it didn't look like First Touch had really wakened up! This was certainly a game of two halves. The first 30 minutes of the game was spent in our own half, compared with a very determined and offensive style of play in the second period. Only 5 minutes into the game and an uncharacteristic error by Schmiecel resulted in a free kick to the home side only 5 yards from our goal line, which was duly converted. First Touch made life difficult for themselves for the remainder of the period, often playing too deep and giving their opponents too much space to run at them. After 20 minutes Ardencaple netted their second goal when an unmarked striker intercepted a pass back from Gregg Black to his keeper. Generally, not the best of displays in the first period. But what a turnaround in the second half. The back 4 of Black, Mitchell, McNamara and Issac played like lions, with Black and Mitchell working tirelessly in the centre of defence. Issac made life tough for the home side with a number of fine runs down the right hand side, linking well with Rogers in mid-field. On the left, McAlpine's passing was great and, indeed he placed a swerving 20 yard ball at the feet of Regan Williamson who took a couple of touches before slotting the ball past the home keeper. Game on. Another goal was not to be, however, despite a wonderful display of attacking football by our lads. The only thing that let us down was that we could have been a wee bit sharper in the box when we had our chances.

The second half was a great team effort, with Reece Williamson and Craig Kincaid commanding the centre of mid-field, and Brandon Lee, Craig Anderson and Matthew Begley causing the home defence real problems. Ben McNamara proved himself to be a versatile player, moving from the back to a striking role in the latter period. Despite his earlier blip Schmiecal pulled off some fine saves. When Conor McArthur came on in the second period, he was practically redundant but played with his usual confidence in goal. Considering this was the team's third run out at 11 a side this season, their second half performance restored a great deal of confidence and pride and they now look forward to their next challenge.

MATCH REPORTS



1999 Boys Challenge Match Sunday 2nd November 2008 by the Scribbler (Ben Barrs)

On a cold and windy Sunday morning (2nd November) a challenge match was agreed between the 1999 boys in DJ and Ben's coaching group (young guns) versus the 1999s lead by Des and Mick (rockets). Various outside commitments for the coaching staff meant that the management team was limited to Big Ben leading the young guns and rising star coach, Chris Murray taking the rockets. The match was set up over three twenty minute periods and as with many inter F.T. games the boys displayed a real aggression in tackles and commitment which is encouraging as long as it is matched with good football. In the first period the young guns showed excellent two touch football with Bally and Andy Ellis working well together up front, ably assisted by Matthew 'sniffer' McAuley who bagged his usual share of goals. Honours certainly went to the young guns in this period and they lead with a couple of goals advantage, suggesting a potential comfortable victory. In the second period however the tables were turned, mostly due to a strong midfield display from the Rockets via Knoxy, MacAulay and Adam Houlihan. Positional changes from Big Ben tested the young guns in this period and lead to some dissent amongst the ranks (Bally moaning!). The outcome at the end of the period was a narrow lead by the rockets. In the third and final period young coach Murray continued with his same positional set up whilst further changes were made by BB. Tom Semple cemented his excellent overall performance in this period with more goals for the rockets. Craig Bellew also encouraged the coaches by using his left foot on various occasions, one of which lead to a goal for the rockets. On the young guns side David Burrows continued his excellent season so far with many lung bursting runs from defence.

At the end of the game the rockets secured a convincing victory and the young guns were sent back to their corner of the battery to lick their wounds. Both players and parents alike apportioned much of the blame to Big Ben for fundamental errors in his line up against some great tactical awareness from the newly named Chris 'Mourhino' Murray. All in all this was a very good game and a useful building block for both teams for the various matches coming up against other teams.



'Mourhino' Murray

First Touch Group 2 V St Andrew's 98's November 2008.

This was the first game for the 98 group since our visit to Cappielow a number of weeks ago. The game was divided into 3 periods. In the first period St Andrew's started strongly, and scored a couple of early goals. To their credit FT fought back and managed to level the scoring through Ryan McGeehan. The second period again proved tough for our boys with St Andrew's having most of the play, however Craig Kincaid scored a good goal. The final period saw a number of changes in the FT line-up as a couple 97's, Matthew McAuley and Andrew Ellis were introduced. Both boys played well against a good St Andrew's side. Although slight disappointment with the display, it is hoped the experienced gained will help improve future performances.

In the third and final match the Kickers seemed to tire as they had put in a phenomenal amount of energy in the first 2 matches allowing Dunoon to win the final game, but on what was a wonderfully successful day scores did not matter. Each Kicker played terrifically well and we know that this young group are going to get better. C'Mon the Kickers!!!!



Matthew

First Touch Group 2 v Harmony Row Battery Park 20th November 2008

Another blustery night for FT's latest game in a run of recent matches, this time against Harmony Row Reds. A welcome return was made by Robbo and Barrzy who have missed a few of the recent games through injury.

The match started well with both teams fighting a strong wind but playing good football from back to front. Strong tackling and good positional sense gave FT a solid base to play some fine passing football. Excellent passing from the back via Calum and Zac led to good midfield runs but without an end product from the hard working Geeks. The first period of 20 mins ended in no goals but the second period gave the advantage of a strong wind to FT. Further good passing moves continued and culminated in well worked goal, with Robbo's pass was eventually volleyed home by Barrzy. Young Johnny 'the assassin' enjoyed a tireless performance for the FT midfield supporting the new front man 'sniffer' Macauley. Andrew Ellis made his usual by line runs with delivery from left and right feet.

The last 20 min period had the majority of goals with Harmony Row countering goals from FT. At 2 each the game could have went either way but an outstanding save from big Adam in the FT goal gave the boys the confidence they needed to score two final late goals for a 4 - 2 victory. A well deserved victory for FT but more importantly a game with plenty of good football throughout which even made coach DJ smile (once!).



Robbo



Calum

SEASON 2008/9 SQUAD PHOTOCALL

On Sunday, First Touch once again welcomed along national sports photographer Kenny Ramsay to take our new season squad photographs. These images are used to update our own web site and give the Keepy Update editorial team a head and shoulder shot of each boy just in case we need to show our readers who has had a great game, scored a goal or had a birthday! Kenny (pictured on the opposite page) shows off his book "Passport to Europe", the fantastic tale of how Lowly Queen of the South went all the way to the Scottish Cup Final and narrowly lost to Glasgow Rangers. The journey from start to finish and how they qualified for this season's UEFA Cup; a great read and lots of fantastic pictures. This book can be purchased from Kenny and in fact may come with an autograph by the man himself at no extra cost. On behalf of the players and coaches of First Touch we would like to thank Kenny and Jeremy Burrows (Inverclyde Now) for all the fantastic pictures they have taken for both the Keepy Update and also our website www.firsttouch-footballcoaching.com throughout the season.



Group 1

Reece Williamson,
Matthew Begley,
Ben McNamara,
Michael Burrows,
Conor McArthur,
Callum Blicow,
Reagan Williamson,
Rhuraidh Gillies,
Gregor Black,
Robbie McAlpine.
Michael Isaacs,
Thomas Sutherland,
Craig Anderson,
Reece Mitchell,
Brandon Lee,
Craig Kincaid,
Lee Rodgers.

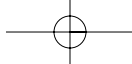
Missing
Jason Galbreath



Group 3

Jamie Hutton,
Adam Neill,
MacCaulay McArthur,
Euan Knox,
Lewis Brodie,
Thomas Semple,
Ross McKay,
Steven Edmond.
Craig Bellew,
Jack McEwen,
Rhys Gray,
Ciaran Murray,
Niall Gallacher

Missing
Adam Houlihan,
Jonathan Fairbairn,
Charlie Cochrane



A close up of Sports Photographer Kenny Ramsay

What age did you get your first camera.?

First camera in primary 6 for a school cruise to Venice and Rome. First real camera Olympus OM10 when I was 14 and used to photograph Andy Ritchie and Co in the late 1970's.

What was your first published photo and where?

My first pic in the Sun was from a Morton pre season friendly with Hearts on August 18 1994 when I was given a trial match to photograph. The Sun sent a motorbike man to pick up the film. Before that I worked for the Tele for 6 years.

Do you work every day ?

I work between 6 and 9 shifts per week and photograph around 130 football matches in a calendar year.

Apart from Football what other sports do you photograph ?

Boxing, cricket,athletics and a little rugby.

Who are your Favorite five players that you have photographed ?

Paul Gascoigne, Eric Cantona, Andy Ritchie, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Ronaldo

Have you ever been hit by the ball at a match ?

One or twice but Ray Wilkins once smacked a shot straight into my face when I was standing on the Stretford End at Old Trafford

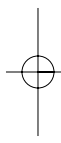
If you could have a 1 hour photo shoot with any footballer in the world, who would it be.?

2 players, the late George Best in and around Belfast and Eric Cantona who is an icon at Manchester United

Group 2

Aidan Conway,
Zach McEachran,
David Muir,
Calum Abercrombie,
Adam Cleary,
Ryan McGeehan,
Liam Donnachie.
Craig Robertson,
Ryan Ball,
Conor McGhee,
Matthew McAulay,
David Burrows

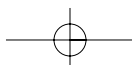
Missing
Adam Barrs,
John McDonald and
Andrew Ellis.



Kickers

Callum Franke,
Alan Devlin,
Jamie Black.
Jack McDonald,
Robert Wilson,
Rhys Gourdie
Aidan Marner,
Josh Couper,
Cian Houten,
Liam McGeown

Missing
Luke Gatens,
Sean McGhee,
Steven McDonald,
Tom Forrest



MATCH REPORTS



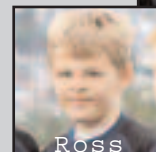
FIRST TOUCH GROUP 3 V HARMONY ROW 6-2 By Des McColl

First touch kicked off on a cold night for the hardcore travelling fans. Straight from kick off FT come out all guns blazing and nearly scored with a great 1-2 between Mudge and Jack up the right hand side, but Mudge's final effort was saved well by the HR keeper. Shortly after the FT keeper David pulled off a tremendous save at his right hand side, however from the resulting corner FT found themselves a goal down. HR continued to pressure the FT defence but our team held tight due to the great partnership of Knoxy, Charlie and Stiv. FT started to come back into it with Ross giving the right full back for HR a torrid time, cutting inside and shaving the outside of the post with a stinging shot. But disappointment for FT as for all their dominance they were caught with a sucker punch goal from HR and found themselves 2 down. However, we continued to pile on the pressure and were rewarded when a great driving run from Adam slipped the ball out wide right to Tom who then skipped passed the defender with ease before hitting in a great low cross which Ross slotted home (2-1).



Towards the end of the 1st half HR came back into it and made their pressure count to go 3-1 up. FT pulled one back started by some good interplay in midfield from Jamie, Tom and Adam finished by a darting run down the left flank who whipped in a cross which Mudge slotted away emphatically, high into the net, to make it 3-2.

Second half and HR went 4-2 up straight from kick off. David in goal then produces another fine stop to keep the score at 4-2, tipping the ball onto the bar. HR break up field again but with Charlie in particular getting in some strong challenges the attack comes to nothing. FT steady the ship with Stiv making that right back positions his own with some tough tackling with Knoxy in assistance in the centre of a stubborn defence. A succession of corners then ensues from FT but they can't turn them into goals. Minutes later Adam hits the bar with a rasping shot. However HR started to dominate the next 10 mins and scored a further 2 goals to make the score out of reach for the FT boys. In the last 5 mins FT had the bulk of possession and with a few minutes left a quick break from a HR corner resulted in a great 1-2 from Jack and Jamie in the centre of the park which produced a shot at goal that the HR keeper saved well. FT continued to press and there was one move in particular which involved every player passing the ball precisely to each other but the resulting shot on goal was just wide of the post. FT still continued to press but final score 6-2 to HR.



Team: David, Adam, Knoxy, Stiv, Charlie, Jamie, Tom, Ross, Jack and Mudge.

First Touch Group 4 v Helensburgh 4 - 4 1st November.2008

Prior to this group 4 away match, much of the talk in the football world had been about the remarkable 4-4 draw between Arsenal and Tottenham at the Emirates Stadium three days earlier. Few of the parents and relatives who travelled across the water in beautiful winter sunshine could have anticipated seeing a game to match the quality and scoreline of that epic North London derby.

After a cagey opening, First Touch began to take the game to their hosts and opened the scoring on 5 minutes when Alex Buchan beat the keeper at his near post with a low shot. Helensburgh stormed back and after a couple of near misses, equalized on 10 minutes with a fine shot low past Adam McNamara. The game then began to ebb and flow from end to end with some excellent passing football. Chris McGeown twice played in the diminutive Alex Buchan who forced one fine save from the keeper before lobbing his second chance over whilst Helensburgh hit the upright at the other end.



Midway through the match Helensburgh grabbed a second when a corner ricocheted in off the back of their striker before an excellent strike from 18 yards made it 3-1 for the hosts. Although things looked ominous, First Touch fought back and after a Paul Ramsay header was chalked off, Calum Murdoch made it 3-2 with a rasping right foot drive from 18 yards. Amy Muir was then denied whilst Calum Docherty cleared off his own line to keep First Touch in it at the end of the second period.



First Touch pressed for the equalizer with Amy Muir excelling in her right wing back role and the goal duly arrived when Paul Ramsay shot high into the net from 8 yards. The hosts again applied pressure to Adam McNamara's goal and after a couple of fine stops, he was finally beaten by a high piledriver which he couldn't keep out with his brand new gloves.



With only minutes left, coaches Des McCole and John Hampsey could be seen tearing their hair out on the touchline such was the level of excitement and Des will surely be glad there was no fourth official to witness his incessant encroachment onto the park !! However, the First Touch spirit which the aforementioned Des 'Redknapp' McCole had clearly instilled in his fledglings was there for all to see as Paul Ramsay equalised with a low shot under the keeper in the dying minutes after being played in by Alex Buchan. An eight goal thriller then and just like Tottenham Hotspur, First Touch travelled home happy.

Team

Adam McNamara, Max McFarlane, Callum Murdoch, Ciaran Marshall, Christopher McGeown, Amy Muir, Callum Docherty, John Gallacher, Paul Ramsay and Alex Buchan

GOUROCK YAC PROVES FIRST TOUCH DOES WORK by Mick Harrington

After a good showing in the Kildrum tournament and an enjoyable prizegiving the 96s from last year left First Touch and ventured into the world of competitive football for the first time. Due to the uncertainty of the Morton Pro-youth set up, which most of the boys were destined for, it was agreed that it was in the boys' best interests to stay together and become Gourock YAC u 13s. Billy McLarty was appointed Manager with Mick Harrington and Stevie Houlihan assisting. We also have Graham Brown helping out at training and Bill McKitrick taking on the match secretary duties among other things.



As we got to our first session of pre season training the question was asked by Sharpie, "Do we have to still do running as we are not in First Touch anymore"? One lung busting hour later, during which there was not a ball kicked, Sharpie and the rest of the team got their answer. After a gruelling 5 week period the fitness that was evident the previous year was even better and after a few friendly games the team were running and passing the legs off their opponents. In their first league game against a strong St Mirren side the boys finished the game off in the last 15 minutes with a 3 goal burst to win 5-2. Since then we have lost only 2 games all season, one against a strong Blantyre Vics team in the Scottish cup and the other to a last minute goal in a closely fought game against League leaders Barrhead. The boys continue to play the game the way they were taught at First Touch but can also adapt to a more direct style of play when necessary (because now, the result **does** matter) and can now hold their own with their more physical opponents.

We have attracted a lot of interest from senior teams and were invited to play against Celtic's youth team at Barrowfield. After a hard league game on the Saturday, the tired legs were forgotten as we looked forward to the game on the Sunday. This was a great opportunity for the team to play against the best boys of their age group in Scotland. We lost this match but after a gritty performance, in which they matched their faster and stronger opponents for half the game, the whole team confessed that they had learned a lot from this experience. The only downside on the day was the abuse directed at the referee from the volatile away support, with the usual suspects, Jack and Victor (Harrington and Campbell), who have previous for berating Refs, leading the unruly mob. I thought the ref had a good game and must have been the first official in history to call every 50 - 50 decision in Celtic's favour. However I don't think the words: **Referee - Mick Harrington, Greenock** will appear on any premier league match programme. (Certainly not at Ibrox).

The team's performances this season and the way the boys have adapted so quickly to league football is very pleasing and, I think, is a great endorsement of the First Touch philosophy of not playing competitive football in their primary school years. As this group was the first complete team to stay together after First Touch they were always going to be the benchmark for this. I think they are a shining example that the coaching methods and ideas we teach at First Touch do work.



FORMER FIRST TOUCH BOYS PARADE AT IBROX

The Rangers Youth Academy were introduced to the match day crowd at the CIS Cup tie between Rangers and Hamilton Accies on 28 October. The exercise was designed to allow young players from Academy 10's to 17's squads to visit Ibrox and become familiar with the surroundings. It also provides the Academy players with a positive experience which may assist with retention and recruitment of the country's best young players. Finally it demonstrated the scale of the Academy and the number of players and staff involved to the supporters who may be unaware of the level of activity at Murray Park.

As the squads lined up one supporter must have had the biggest smile in the stadium as standing in front of Coach McClurg was four First Touch protégés. These boys had started their football journey as youngsters at the Battery Park and now were standing centre stage at Ibrox. With a lump in his throat (half time pie) Coach McClurg enjoyed the moment as Robbie Crawford, Ryan Sinnamon, Lewis Morgan and Adam Frizzel spotted him behind the home dugout.



Adam Frizzel Robbie Crawford, Lewis Morgan Ryan Sinnamon,

TWO NEW STRIP SPONSORSHIP DEALS

We have always been very privileged by the sponsorship, donations and goodwill that we have received since we started First Touch. As a self funding organisation we simply could not organise and offer our coaching without that support. As our new season started the current credit crunch was taking a grip and there was an uncertainty about how much local support First Touch could rely on. We are glad to say however that some old friends and some new ones have stepped forward to give us a positive start with two fantastic new strip sponsor deals. There's no need to introduce Joe and Veronica Nelis, owners of the Tontine Hotel. Both have shown exceptional support over the previous seasons and this new strip deal blows us away. Our second strip sponsor deal is from James and Brendan Semple of TLC Pharmacy. James's son, Thomas plays for us. Thanks to our sponsors for there terrific generosity.



Veronica and Joe Nelis of Tontine Hotel continue their sponsorship bt handing over the new strip to Conor McArthur

James Semple of TLC Pharmacy is pic-tured with his son Thomas and goalkeeper Michael Burrows, both wearing the new strip.

Many thanks to Blairs of Scotland ,L&A Motors, Giannis, National Semi Community Care and Baronial Properties for again supporting us during 2008.

Pictures supplied by Jeremy Burrows(Inverclyde Now)

Skill Card - The Full Circle.

Practice makes better players over the Christmas break we are throwing down the challenge to all our players. They will be tested on their return and the best 2 boys in each group will receive a Michael Owen Soccer Set. So drop the selection boxes and pick up you ball and practice.

Fake to kick the ball to your left with your right foot.

Step around the ball keeping your foot low to the ground.

Bring your right foot back around the front of the ball and...

...push the ball away with your left foot and accelerate away.



Tip - Ask Santa for a soft indoor ball and you will always be able to practice .

LEGEND DJ PUTS ON HIS BOOTS AND RETURNS TO ACTION



On a cold and wet Sunday afternoon on 26th October our very own Davy Jamieson (coach of Group 2) played in the Pollock Juniors Legends team. (Yes Legends!) versus an SPL Legends team. The game was to celebrate Pollock's centenary year and took place at Pollock's Newlandsfield stadium in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd.

Pollock had ex players such as Fraser Wishart and Chick Charnley playing for them and hosted various past Scottish Cup winners including DJ himself. The SPL Legends included past players John Brown, Andy Walker, Gordon Durie, Tom Boyd, Brian Martin to name but a few.

In the first half DJ took a right midfield position which required furrows up and down Pollock's heavy pitch. Some fantastic early touches and long runs had many in the crowd chanting for DJ's return to the present Pollock team. As the half ran on however DJ's runs diminished and the his lack of distribution invoked a completely different set of chants from the crowd (especially the small contingent of supporters from Greenock)! The fist half ended with some great goals by each team and a 2-1 score line in favour of the

SPL Legends. In the second half there was no surprise when DJ was not included in the Lok Legends starting line up. As the second half continued more and more of the ageing players seemed to be hit by the sniper on the top of the Newlandsfield stand. Hamstrings snapped and groins were pulled, each one to a chorus of cheers from the crowd. As the last SPL Legend became injured a worried hush overcame the crowd with thoughts that game may have to be cancelled. One man however saved the day, rushing quickly out of the SPL dug out to cries of 'traitor!' You've guessed it – our very own DJ has switched allegiances and was now playing with the SPL select. After DJ got his various autographs on the park and a wee chat with his new 'mates' we got back down to the football. Our First Touch's superstar coach certainly didn't look out of place, adding his very own brand of football to his new team which lead to the game finishing 4 all. The game went to penalties and a young lad (Fraser Wishart's son) completed the win for Pollock with the last penalty.

As this intrepid reporter headed for home there was one final surprise in store which was discovered the following day. DJ attended a short function and presentation after the match including awards for man of the match. You've guessed it again folks, our very own DJ picked up man of the match to finish of a great day.

By Ben Barrs

KNOXY'S DAD" THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE "

I started playing rugby in Secondary School and then went along to Greenock Wanderers with a couple of friends and started playing for their U14's team. I then progressed to play for U16's and u18's before going on to captain the the 2nd 15 and eventually the 1st 15. At that time I was the youngest ever club captain in the club's history. We also went on to win the League Championship in the same year. At the age of thirty with a young family and work commitments it was more difficult to attend the regular training sessions which were essential to keep your fitness up. My theory was always and still is if you don't train hard you just get injured especially when taking part in contact sports..

Too young to join the coaching team, I decided refereeing was a good way to keep involved in rugby. All my mates and coaches said that I would be a great ref as I reffed on the park when I played anyway!!! The SRU put me through a few training courses and the next thing I new I was refereeing in the district leagues.. Things moved fairly fast for me with a lot of training, listening to my ref coaches, commitment and continual assessment I am now refereeing all over Europe, covering in the European Cup, Magners League and Scottish Premier League. The highlight so far has been officiating at 4 Internationals, being 4th official at two Scotland games, Linesmen at Romania vrs Russia in Bucharest and finally just last year I reffed my first U21 International Italy v Wales near Milan.

Knoxy also played with the mighty Caddlehill Street in the West of Scotland Churches league, a fact that he forgot to mention in his career highlights? Probably because he carried Coach Ben Barrs in a right wing combination which struck terror throughout the years the years.



Congratulations to the following boys who celebrated their birthday in November and December

11

GREGOR BLACK
REECE MITCHELL
THOMAS SUTHERLAND
JASON GALBREATH



NIALL GALLACHER
ROSS MCKAY

9



ADAM BARRS
AIDAN CONWAY
ZACH MCEACHRAN

10



MATTHEW
BARRS

8



DJ's Credit Crunch Quiz.

1. Name the St Mirren goalkeeper who played in the 1987 Scottish Cup Final
2. Tommy _____, ex Celtic, Dundee Utd, Irish internationalist
3. England's World Cup winning keeper.
4. Chelsea's bouncing goalkeeper?
5. What goalies should do for a rainy day
6. Winner of the men's 1987 Wimbledon single title.
7. Hard up cowboy
8. Ex Celtic, Hearts full back, now a football agent
9. Lincoln City home park

1. Campbell Money 2. Tommy Coyne 3. Gordon Banks 4. Peter Cech 5. Save! 6. Pat Cash 7. "Skint Eastwood 8. Dosh McKinnlay 9. Sincill Bank

Raffle Prizes Required

As you will be aware by now we are holding this year's Christmas night at Gourrock Bowling Club on Saturday 27th December. This will be our Fourth Christmas bash, with the other three proving to be a great success.

We are looking for donations of bottles to make up some Drinks Hampers as part of the Raffle. The hampers are always a popular prize. If you are able to help, please make your donations by phoning any of the coaches who will arrange to collect from yourself.

Referees Quiz Answers 1. 5 feet 2. NO 3. Yes 4. The referee 5. NO 6. YES 7. One arm raised above his head. 8. NO 9. When its kicked beyond the penalty area 10. YES

First Touch's ART ATTACK



Photograph by Greenock Telegraph

Artist and Parent, Robert Marshall (dad of Kerian in Group 4) recently astounded us by handing over a cheque for more than £500, from proceeds of a recent sale of his artwork. Robert also raffled one of his paintings which was won by Jim Black (not a fix). We want to express our sincere thanks to Robert for this wonderful and generous gesture.

Pictured left is Jim accepting his prize from Coach Neil McCole and Robert. Jim's daughter Olivia is standing alongside players, Gregor Black, Chris McGeown, Liam McGeown and Robert's son Ciaran.

PLAYER PROFILE AMY MUIR Group 4

Who is your favourite player? **Ronaldinho**
 What are your other favourite sports? **American Football and Basketball**
 What is your favourite team? **Rangers**
 Which famous person would you like to meet? **David Beckham**
 What do you want to do when you are older? **Play for Scotland Ladies Team**
 What area of your game would you like to improve?
Defending
 What is your favourite TV Programme?
The Simpsons
 What is your favourite dinner? **Cottage Pie**



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