



ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER

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Around The Age Groups

U10s/U11s

In February, the U10s and U11s took part in the Pulcino Qualifiers at Thorp Arch in February. They won their play-off final but unfortunately it wasn't enough to qualify.

U12s

The U12s have started their Premier League Cup campaign, winning their first game and losing the second, leaving it all to play for in their final game this week.

Kaine Butler has been raising money for his friend, Mick, who has been diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia. Kaine and his two friends (right) took part in a 10-mile dribble from Bishop Auckland to Spennymoor on Sunday to raise funds to support Mick and his family. Great effort boys! If you'd like to make a donation, [you can do so here](#).



U13s/U14s



The U13s (left) travelled to St. Georges Park for a tournament against Liverpool, Wolverhampton Wanderers, and Brighton and Hove Albion. They competed very well throughout the day and managed to reach the final against Wolves. Well done!

An U13/U14 2010-born squad travelled to Barcelona to represent the club in the Promises Cup. The boys were a credit to themselves, and played some excellent football. It was a great experience made even better by winning the tournament, and all of the individual awards were also won by Middlesbrough players - Brooklyn Parker named player of the tournament and Isaac Collinson named best goalkeeper. Congratulations to all involved.



U15s/U16s

Our U15/U16 2008-born players also attended the Promises Cup, a brilliant opportunity to enrich the players' experiences of playing against teams from across the globe. The boys won two and drew one in the group stages, and after victory in the semis, were only narrowly beaten by Brazilian team ATC Sant Pol in the final.



The U15 Floodlit Shield draw has been made with Middlesbrough in a group with Blackburn, Stoke City and Manchester United. The games will be played during March and April.

Logan Edmundson helped his school win the Durham County Schools futsal final last week. Logan scored twice and picked up player of the match, well done Logan!

U18s

Frankie Coulson (left, with Michael Carrick) won the LFE Goal of the month award for his goal against Wolves in January.

U16 duo Tyler Smith and Isaac Greenup, have debuted for the U18s last month against Wolves and Leeds, while U15 Anton Palmer made his first appearance for the U18s in Saturday's 3-1 away win at Newcastle United.



U21s

Good luck to Bryant Bilongo and Terrell Agyemang, who have gone out on loan to National League sides Ebbsfleet United and Hartlepool United respectively. Bryant (right) scored and assisted on his debut, and Ebbsfleet have won four on the bounce since his arrival. Terrell also made an assist on his first appearance since returning to Hartlepool last week.

It has been great to see Sonny Finch (left), Joe Gibson and Pharrell Willis back after long injury layouts, and all three were on the score sheet in Friday's 3-2 win at Norwich City. Well done lads.

Recruitment

Congratulations to new recruit, Zayden Diagouraga (right, with Martin Carter), a right-sided centre-back.

The son of Toumani, who works within our Academy and is an ex-professional with almost 600 league appearances, Zayden commences Academy life with Middlesbrough after a brief spell with Leeds United.

Comfortable in possession and possessing lots of long-term physical potential, Zayden's potential was identified whilst on trial at Leeds and we are delighted that he chose us as his club to develop and progress. Well done Zayden and enjoy the journey.



Psychology

Sports psychology workshops over this month have been focusing on how and when we perform our best, creating 'Red Mind' and 'Green Mind' behaviours.

Green Mind refers to when players are performing at their best, while Red Mind is when they are not performing how they would want to.

These behaviours, which have been defined by the players, will help the boys and staff interact and work together to understand when players are in their Green Mind and, if not, how they can get back there.

Safeguarding

YGAM

All Academy players and staff have completed a training session with the Young Gamers and Gamblers Education Trust (YGAM), which looked at the harms of excessive gaming and how it could potentially lead into addiction. The session also included signposts for help and support. The feedback from staff and players has been excellent, and the next session will be aimed at parents – keep an eye out for the invitation.

We have reminded all the boys not to join in with online games unless they know everyone taking part or have the permission from their parents. They have also been advised not to game first thing in the morning before school and to stop gaming at least two hours before they go to bed.

Sporting Chance

The U18s attended a seminar delivered by Sporting Chance, looking at addiction. The seminar included the types of personalities prone to addiction, techniques on how to avoid potential addiction, and support available from the club and the PFA.

Dan James from the U18 group said "I enjoyed the seminar and did not realise how addiction can get hold of you, it was also good to know there is help out there."

Environment

A new orchard has been created close to the Pat Poinen garden at Rockliffe Park, with 19 trees planted including apple, pear and cherry trees. The orchard will be circled by wildflowers and will leave a legacy for this years U12s Christmas Truce Project.

Each tree will bear the name of a member of the U12 group that is shared with a name from one of the original Windrush Generation e.g. Jack Forbes (MFC U12s) and Jack Luckhoo (Windrush Generation).

The vegetables and herbs are growing well in the raised beds (right) and will soon be ready for harvesting. These will be presented to MFC Foundation to be distributed through the foodbanks of Tees Valley.



Education

February half-term saw the educational theme of “science” return. The week’s events were all around the musculo-skeletal system, focusing on two-joint muscles and how to limit potential injuries.



The boys (left) were split into two groups. One group focused on the skeleton, the names of bones types of joints and functions of the skeleton. The other group focused on major muscles, identifying their actions and what type of movement could increase the chances of injury.

The second part of the session looked at what type of activities would be appropriate for a warm-up. This information will hopefully help the boys to think about their own personal preparation for training.

Meanwhile, our U18s joined a partnership enterprise with young people from Taste of Africa who are considering moving away from home to attend university or for work (right).

The Academy lads shared their own stories about moving away from home and what it felt like living in a new community, and what mechanisms of support they required to help them through this transition. They were open and honest and said it can be hard especially the first few months.



The boys highlighted that building strong friendship groups is the key to settling into a new environment.

Alumni

The Academy hosted its second Alumni event at the Riverside Stadium, celebrating past scholars and players who have come through the Academy and since progressed in their careers in various walks of life.

U12 to U21 Academy players and their parents were invited to the event, offering insight to the youngsters about the diversity of successful careers available to them both in and out of the professional game.

Speakers at this year’s event included first team player Darragh Lenihan (pictured far right) - who was first scouted by and invited to Boro’s Academy as a 14-year-old - as well as Richard Kell (far left) a former Boro youngster and pro who is now a commercial airline pilot; Louie Evans, a former Academy player now working in Greece as a coach; and Paul Raven (centre left) an ex-pro who is now Head of Personal Development for the PFA.

Plus, the inaugural Academy Alumni Award was presented to Joe Fryer (centre right) who - after his own playing career was curtailed by injury - now works with the Academy as a goalkeeping coach inspiring the next generation.



Sports Science and Medicine

There have been some recent changes within the medical department and a new member of staff has been hired. Daniel Hodgson is due to start mid-April and will assume a role with the U18s with some input from the YDP. We look forward to welcoming Dan into the building.

All players from U12s – U16s will be given the opportunity to complete medical and movement screening soon. This will help identify any trends within age groups and inform programming going forward.

Gymnastics has started with the U12 age group. They are working with Keely Jo-Robson who is a gymnastics coach from Middlesbrough College, we are hoping this will help increase athletic performance and development.

Nutritional support for the Academy is ongoing and this has recently involved parent practical cooking workshops for the U15s - U18s at Middlesbrough College to educate on healthy choices and meals with high sports nutritional value.