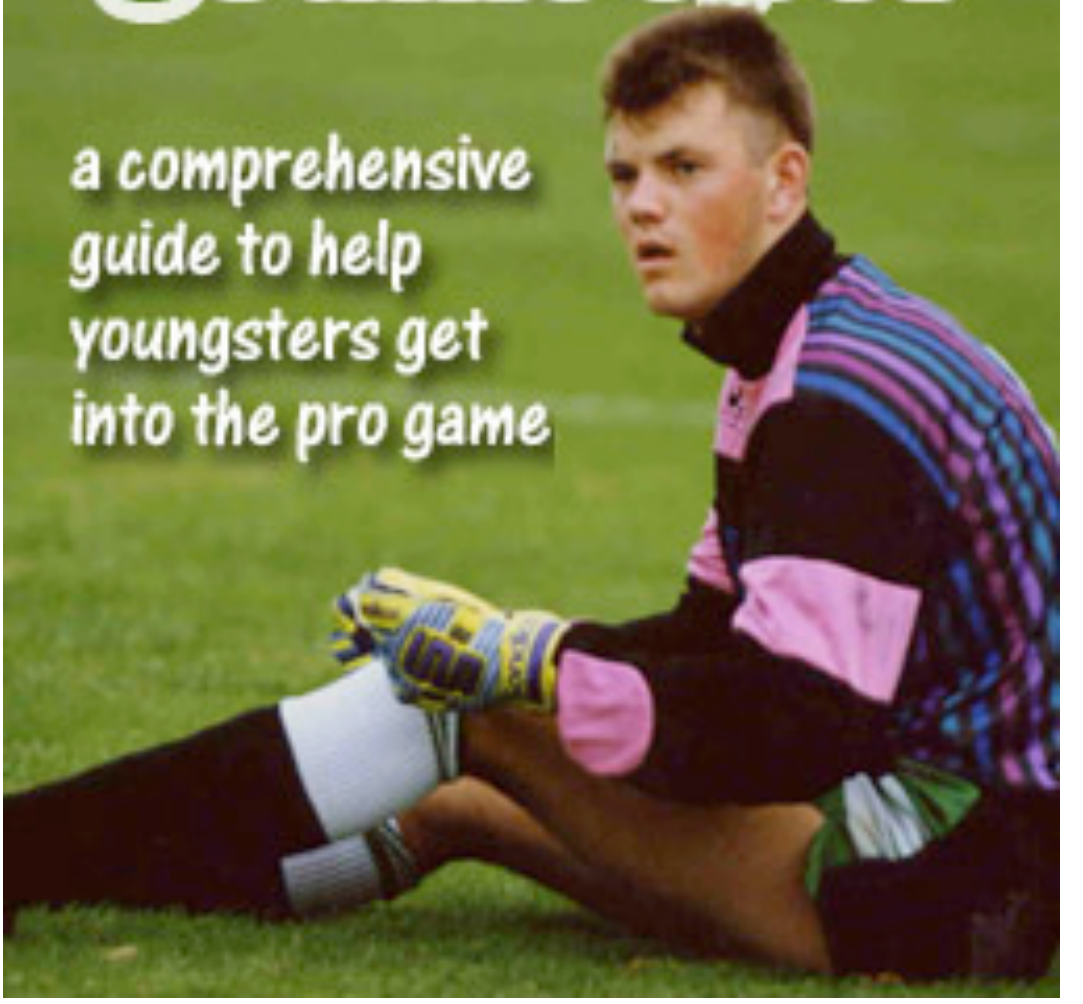
How to become a professional goalkeeper

a comprehensive guide to help youngsters get into the pro game



How to become a Professional Goalkeeper

All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

© Ray Newland 2009 – 2015

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used, reproduced or transmitted in any form without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Any use of materials in this e-book including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication without the prior written permission of Ray Newland.

Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to: 184 Roby Road, Roby, Liverpool, L36 4HH, United Kingdom.

Warning – the doing of any unauthorised act in relation to this copyright work may result in both a civil claim for damages and criminal prosecution.

This book has sold in **OVER 20 countries** to date.

I know certain countries call football, soccer in their country, USA and Canada for example.

But please note within this book, as I am from England, I will be referring soccer to football.

Okay lets gets started!

Dedications

I would like to dedicate this book to all the young hopefuls who are chasing their dream of becoming a professional goalkeeper.

And to all their parents, who are sacrificing their time to help their child realize their dream!

'If you shoot for the moon, and miss… you will still be among the stars!'

Always chase your dream!

Also check out the back of my book for my free gifts from me, to YOU!

Thank you:

Without doubt, the only people I can thank for me achieving my dream of becoming a professional footballer… are my parents.

I would like to thank my mother for all her love and encouragement and making me believe in myself and I would like to thank my father who was with me every step of the way, taking me from trial to trial, making sure I wrote those letters for trials and for giving me a kick up the backside when I needed it most!

There were many times, my father would work twelve hour days, Monday to Friday, and when most parents would spend their weekends lazing in front of the TV or down the pub, my father spent every one of his weekends chauffeuring me across the UK to help me chase my dream of becoming a professional goalkeeper.

Thanks guys… love you.

I would also like to say a **special thank** you to the legendary ex-Welsh international goalkeeper, Neville Southall, who took me under his wing when as I was at Premiership team Everton Football Club.

Nev took time out of his life to not only train myself, but the other youngsters at Everton FC. When the other professional players went home after their morning training session, Nev stayed behind more or less every afternoon to teach myself, Jason Kearton, Mark Deagan, Steven Reeves and John Clarridge.

At this time Neville was voted the *'Best keeper in the world'* but to me, he was the *'Best person in the world'.*

Nev will kill me for saying this, but he was a true gentleman and I cannot thank him enough for moulding me into a goalkeeper that became good enough to play professionally for nearly ten seasons.

Thanks Nev...

I will never forget what you done for me!

My Playing career:

(1988-89) Became an YTS Footballer for Chester City

(1989-91) Got released and then played semi pro for a few seasons with:

Winsford United (Unibond)
Newtown (Welsh League)

While at Newtown I also signed Non Contract forms with Everton FC, were I spent two great years

(1991 – 1993) Achieved my dream of becoming a professional, signing for Plymouth Argyle.

(1993-1995). I had a chance to sign for England legend Ray Clemence the then manager of Barnett FC, Unfortunately I moved to Chester City again, this time as a professional. I singed a two year deal but after 15 months, signed for

(1995-1996) Torquay United:

(1996-1998) I Got fed up with professional football and signed a two year deal for Vauxhall Conference side Leek Town, so I could set up my own business.

(1998 -1999) Was even more fed up with Conference league football, so my agent got me a professional contract with Wigan Athletic.

Unfortunately after only three months at Wigan and challenging Roy Carol for the number 1 spot, a freak training ground injury prematurely ended my career aged just twenty eight.

(1999 – Present day) I started Just4keepers (www.just4keepers.net , which is an independent goalkeeper coaching school and now the biggest of its kind in the world.

Too date this is the most rewarding thing that I achieved in football is setting up J4K.

Just4keeprers has helped OVER 750 Goalkeepers achieve their dream to get into professional football clubs.

No individual or organisation **WORLDWIDE** comes close to matching these fantastic results!!!

In fact I am the first and only goalkeeper coach in history to take a goalkeeper coaching concept into 22 countries and across 5 continents at the to me of writing.

There is also a 2 years waiting list for my goalkeeper coaching services.

I just love coaching keepers!



Here I am aged just 21:

This was my first professional game (For Plymouth Argyle) all be it, it was a Pre Season friendly against Tiverton Town FC.

I went along as cover for the ‘Ex England legend International Peter Shilton’ expecting to maybe get the last 10 minutes for a bit of experience. (Shilton was also my manager)

You could not even begin to imagine how frightened I was, when my name was read out to start the game!

I knew the photographer was taking the above picture of me, so I tried to put a ‘Confident’ look on my face…

However I was that nervous, I had two pairs of underpants on!!!

This book is in two parts, **'Part 1'** is all about my experiences of trying to become a professional so you will get an idea of what you need to do to also become a professional goalkeeper.

'Part 2' gives you ideas, **tips** and samples of all the correspondence that you can actually use to get trials at professional football clubs.

I have also wrote this book to try and **educate parents** on how to help their child to get into the professional game.

If you are a pushy parent you REALLY need to listen to my advice before you make it unbearable for your child.

I have also written this book as me, what you read is what you get! I have not had this proof read as I wanted to write this book from the heart!

So if there is some dodgy grammar or spelling mistakes, do not be too hard on me. lol

PART 1

Introduction:

Let me introduce myself. My name is Ray Newland and I was a professional footballer (goalkeeper) for ten seasons, until injury prematurely ended my career aged just twenty-eight.

That was in the 1999 –2000 season while at Wigan Athletic and since coming out of football, I have been very fortunate to have set up Just4Keepers a specialist goalkeeper coaching company that at the time of writing, is the biggest goalkeeping school in the world (please check out Just4keepers on google)

Over the past decade plus I have been running Just4Keepers, we have coached **over 50,000** goalkeepers, helping over 750 realise their dream of playing for professional football clubs and also helping many MANY goalkeeper get college scholarships in the USA.

So why can I help you?

The reason why I feel I can offer advice to young hopefuls is because I know **EVERY** method and trick needed to become a professional footballer. You see, I was not a natural player. In fact, as a youngster, I was not even a good average player.

My peers were head and shoulders above me, physically and mentally!

I had to practice, practice, practice, **PRACTICE**, and I actually turned out a better player than I should have been for my physique and ability level.

'You have to be in an academy to have a chance to become a professional footballer!'

This is what I was made to believe as a youngster growing up in my hometown of Liverpool, UK.

This drove me insane!

Please believe me, this is a myth and like millions of other children, I thought that if I was not at a professional football club's academy or centre of excellence aged eight, I **had no** chance of becoming a professional footballer.

So young hopefuls and parents will be relieved to know that even though it does help being at a professional academy or centre of excellence...

…it is not the end of the world if you are not!

In fact, there are cases were being at a professional football club's academy or centre of excellence can actually work **against** a youngster, which I will explain further into this book (see Academy hopping parents!).

Okay, going back to myself trying to achieve my dream of becoming a professional footballer and myself and other youngsters thinking we had to be at a professional football clubs academy.

Where does this myth come from?

I think over the years, this has been propagated from parents who do not understand the process of becoming a professional footballer.

And up until four or five years ago, professional football clubs were the only place to go to train to become a professional.

Many parents thought that this was the only type of specialist training that existed for their child.

I believe that parents had come to the **false** realisation that their child **must** be at a professional football club to have any fighting chance to make the grade.

However, over the past five years there have been more and more specialist independent football schools in operation, often run by ex-professionals and parents are **'100% right'** to put their child into these organisations.

Like Just4keepers.

Because:

1: The coaches are ex-professionals, so their child is getting taught by a doer… **not a theorist**. This is something that we will go into in more detail, as A LOT of academies do not have ex-players coaching for them (which is MAD!).

2: There is **NO PRESSURE** on their child. Because these coaching organisations are customer driven, (parents pay for their child to be coached) so parents know that their child will be getting the correct attention.

3: Most coaches are running these courses because THEY WANT TO, which means the coach enjoys what he does and has fun, thus the children have fun, too!

So do you get my point?

You do not have to be at an academy to become a professional footballer!

Because there is now enough independent specialised coaching schools around that are probably better than most football academies anyway!

So you can get developed anywhere now really!

Take Just4keepers. NO local professional club close to me geographically has beaten me in terms of getting young keepers into professional clubs!!!

I have beaten them all hands down!

In fact, over the years I have had literally **hundreds of keepers** come to me to be developed, rather than go to their local professional club.

Because they felt they had more of a chance becoming a professional with me.

And without sounding big headed, they were right!

I have more experience than 99% of goalkeeper coaches in professional clubs locally to me and I have contacts worldwide (So I am not limited to one club, like a coach would be if they coached for xyz fc).

So if you are not at a professional academy at present, **so what it's… no big deal** just find an independent coaching schools nearby and attend here.

Okay, so going back to me and my father thinking that I had to be at a professional clubs academy to have a chance of becoming a professional footballer.

As you can imagine when I got to the end of my last year in school and I was not at a professional football club, **I thought my chances had gone of becoming a professional!**

At the age of seventeen, I was in sixth form (had finished my final year and gone back to school) and I was playing for just my local Saturday team, oh and I was not getting any type professional coaching.

Also, what was disheartening was that the blue-eyed boys in our school team had already signed for professional clubs on YTS forms (2 year Apprentices).

So you can imagine that I felt very jealous of my fellow pupils, annoyed, and pessimistic, as I did honestly think at this stage that I had missed out on becoming a professional goalkeeper.

But little did I realise, that your career does not end at seventeen as a footballer… **it's only beginning.**

I am sure it was ex-England manager Graham Taylor, while he was manager at Aston Villa that he brought out a rule which stated that EVERY single player who signed a two year YTS scheme with his club, would be given a **guaranteed** one year professional contract at the end of it.

He believed **(and I wholeheartedly agree),** that he could not judge whether or not a player would make it as a professional until the end of the third year of his contract.

This would make these players at least **eighteen** (going on nineteen) years old.

So here you have it, an ex-England manager believed he could not make a decision on a player until the player was nearly **nineteen years of old!**

Now can you understand why I say, do not worry about getting into an academy aged 6,7,8,9,10, 11,12 ..... years old???

And before some smart arse says,

'Ahh, but this is only Graham Taylor, the man the English press dubbed turnip head. What does he know?'

Well, Graham knows more than 99.9% of academy and centre of excellence coaches, and 99.9% more than most professional coaches in the UK.

He is one of only a **handful** of people to manage top-flight football clubs, and one of the select few ever to become the England manager.

So I would say that this information comes from a man who knew what he was talking about!

I believe the MASSIVE mistake children (and their parents) make is that they get to the end of their school life and think…

'Well that's it; I am not a professional footballer , so I have missed the boat.!!!'

Not necessarily guys!

I believe that what happens at this crucial part of a child's life is that the child thinks…

'Right, I have not made it as a professional footballer. I better now choose another career!'

These children will then all of a sudden go to college to study becoming an accountant or join an apprenticeship scheme to become a plumber.

Then, (what I feel is sooooo sad…) **they forget their dream of becoming a professional footballer!**

Now even though I agree the above is a good idea to get a career in mind, it's also silly giving up on your dream!

Because who says you still cannot make the grade as a professional footballer? **Remember,** a child's career is only beginning at seventeen… sorry, as ex-England boss said, nineteen!

What we recommend to our students who come to the end of school and want to give up and find a career… is simply **DO BOTH!**

We recommend that they choose another career path, but still chase their dream of becoming a professional footballer!!!

We explain that they can study in the daytime Monday to Friday for a chosen career, but evenings and weekends can be left for the development of their goalkeeping.

As its better than sitting in and watching tv or going out and drinking in a pub or nightclub!

So if you are a sixteen or seventeen year old (or you are a parent t) and are reading this book now and you have just reached a stage of giving in, or wondering what to do next… you now know!

You can do both!

Have two irons in the fire!

So how on earth did I become a professional?

I have already stated, that I was not a natural and that I had got to seventeen years old and was still **nowhere** near becoming a professional and had nearly given up.

In fact, at this point of my life I was studying to become a technical drawer.

So how did I manage to become a pro footballer?

Well it all started at aged sixteen, when I began writing to football clubs asking for trials and also making many, many phone calls to clubs.

I did indeed manage to get a few trials, but I was unsuccessful, with many of the academy coaches of these professional clubs being quite rude really, telling me to forget my dreams as I was not up to scratch to become a professional.

Now this is were having belief in your own ability kicks in guys, because from the age of sixteen to eighteen**,** I must have received over 100 rejection letters and had personally had on average four trials per season with clubs, who all stated I was not good enough!

Did this discourage me?

To be honest, yes it did, but I had a dream and I **was not going to give up** until I gave it my best shot.

Then aged twenty, I went for yet another trial (for one long month) and eventually ended up achieving my dream and becoming a professional footballer signing for Plymouth Argyle.

And the icing on the cake was…

For years, I had all these nobody coaches telling me that I was not good enough and that I had little chance of becoming a professional goalkeeper. So you can imagine how good I felt when the manager of my new football club was the Ex England goalkeeping legend Peter Shilton?

Being a goalkeeper and having a legend like Shilton wanting to sign me, made me pinch myself.

As I signed the dotted line to become a professional, it suddenly dawned on me that EVERYONE of these so called nobody academy coaches who did not give me a professional contract **were wrong** about me because now the most **decorated English goalkeeper** that ever lived thought I was good enough to become a professional goalkeeper!

So did this make the two years of trying to become a professional goalkeeper worthwhile?

YOU BET IT DID!

So this is why I feel I can offer help and advice to young hopefuls, because I was not one of these players who got into an academy at aged six, went through the ranks and then signed a professional contract.

NO, I had to **WORK** for my professional contract and I used every method and trick I could find to help me become a professional footballer… and this is what I am going to teach you (and your parents) throughout this book.

Not only my tips and techniques that I used to become a professional, but new ones, because time changes in football, so you must keep up to date with the methods needed to open the doors of football clubs.

As mentioned previously, even though signing for a professional football club's academy or centre of excellence can have its advantages, it is not **VITAL**!

In my Just4Keepers coaching, I tell my students that if they are good enough aged 17 to even 22 that they have a chance of making the grade whether they went through the ranks of their local professional club, or whether they just played for their local Saturday club.

And to prove this point:

Going back to my blue eyed ex-school team mates who got shipped off to professional clubs aged 6-16 years old and got their two year apprenticeship with their chosen football clubs…

Unfortunately for these guys, in EVERY case, every one of them got released from their respected professional football clubs after their many years of so called PROFESSIONAL coaching!

These guys had been around professional football clubs since they were six or seven, and they were now thrown onto the scrap heap.

What was sad for these guys was that their respected football clubs had filled their heads with so much crap over their childhood years about how they will make the grade to become a professional and not to worry about anything else, sadly, these guys never worried about their education.

When they were cruelly thrown out the game aged eighteen plus, with no qualifications, their future was not so bright.

I still know three of these ex-school mates, two ended up as drivers. One became a HGV driver, one a bus driver and the third became a fireman.

Now I am not knocking these occupations, but I believe that these guys ended up in these jobs because from the age of six they were brainwashed

that they did not need to worry about their education, as football would be their life.

(Too be fair to professional clubs in this new era, they are much better in terms of telling their players to get educated.)

And yet there I was, without **any** professional coaching whilst growing up, who had been getting rejected for years by professional football clubs up and down the UK, going on to become a professional for over a decade!

So hopefully my little story will give you the belief that you **DO NOT** need to be at a professional football club from the age of six in order to become a professional footballer.

It's a marathon… not a sprint!

Why do the ones who come late often make it?

I have heard sooooo many stories of successful players who come into the professional game between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three…

Why is this?

I do not know really, I can only guess that these guys mature late (this was me).

Referring back to my blue-eyed schools mates: it's funny that these lads were all, from a very young age, physically very mature.

They towered above me in height and physical strength. However, by the age of eighteen, the roles had reversed and I was 3-5 inches bigger than these guys.

They seemed to stop growing at age fifteen.

So maybe this is the answer?

Hopefully, reading my little story will make parents and young players realise, that *'Hey, I can make it as a professional footballer, and that Ray Newland can advise me as this guy had to do it the hard way!'*

I did have do it the hard way, and if I had my time again, I would not change a single experience of what I had to go through, as it has made me so much stronger mentally than the average player.

So let me now give you my tips and techniques on how I became a professional footballer.

Message for 'Academy Hopping' parents!

Important - *If you are a goalkeeper and you do not want to read about the advice I give to parents, skip to page 62.*

Okay before I educate young hopefuls to become a professional, first I want to digress and educate the parents!

I am going to be brutal with you here guys, and state some home truths; I will not beat about the bush, so hopfuly you are sitting down!

'Right… Don't live your life through your child's eyes!'

There are too many parents now, who drag their poor child to every academy and centre of excellence in their area when they are too young.

We call these parents in the trade**, 'Academy Hopping Parents!'**

We have all seen these parents who drag their poor child from academy to academy. To be honest, these parents need to **wake up** and realise the pressure they are putting on their child!

I have seen this too many times to recount, where a parent (mostly the dad) pushes and pushes his child because he wants his child to become a professional, even more than the child wants to themselves!

I can tell you horror story after horror story where parents have put their child on special diets, stopped them playing with their friends and banned them from playing other sports in school in case they get injured.

If you are like this as a parent, do your child a favour…

STOP RIGHT NOW!!!!

You are doing your child **no favours**, and you will quickly take any enjoyment out of the game for them.

Okay, you never became a professional footballer yourself and you wanted to… **but so what!**

This should not be an excuse for you to put pressure on your child to do something that you could not do!

Sorry to be to the point parents, but you need to **wake up** and stop putting the pressure on your child.

I know from first hand experience because one, my dad pushed me too hard to a degree and I was petrified of making a mistake as a youngster and two, I see this on a daily basis with Just4keepers with parents who bring their children to my coaching schools.

Some of the parents who attend my schools will tell you that I can be pretty ruthless with them, if I feel they are pushing their child too hard.
In fact, I have been so *'to the point'* with some parents that they have left my coaching schools because they did not like what I said to them.

But I will only ever be honest, and if a parent does not like some home truths, this is not my fault as I **genuinely care** about the goalkeepers who I coach and I do not like seeing them getting hurt or being put under unnecessary pressure!

Academy hopping parents *'Really annoy me* if I am to be honest.

Academy hopping parents can ruin their child!

Academy hopping parents bounce their child from one academy to another for many months or sometimes years, dragging their poor child to their chosen football club three times a week, through heavy traffic, only to return home late each evening. Then this poor child has to sit through their school day, absolutely knackered from the travelling, training and late nights.

And what is sad, **sorry annoying**, is that their education gets effected, which is 1000 times more important than playing for an academy!

Then when the child gets released by the academy, the parents are on the phone to every other

available football club to get their child into the next academy.

Then the whole nightmare starts again for the child.

I kid you not; there are some ten year olds I know, who have played **for more professional clubs than me!**

Parents think, because their child has played for most of their local professional clubs that this is a good thing… but it can actually have a negative effect!

Most parents who have been around professional football academies and centres of excellence will tell you, that the egos from some of these academy coaches are a 1000ft tall!

I have lost count of the times I have heard an academy coach say,

'I am not signing that player, he has been at x, y and z football club this season and they have not signed him! If they have not signed him, he definitely will not be any good for our club!'

So you can actually give your child a bad name, because if he keeps getting released by pro clubs, no club will want to sign him.

Also please think about what you are doing to your child's confidence.

If your child is getting let go by football club after football club, I **do not care** how strong you think your child is… it is only going to be negative!

Remember parents, I was let go by clubs consistently for a few years and I will be honest with you, it's heart-wrenching.

I also know professional footballers **(MEN!)** who have fallen to pieces because they were released by their club.

So can you imagine what a child would be going through?

And do you know what?

It's your fault, as a parent if this happens!

Other things you need to watch out for if you are an academy hopping parent is...

The academy coaches will mess you (and your child) about if you let them.

Parents who I have personally coached on this topic will back me up on this one.

If an academy/centre of excellence coach knows that they can have you eating out of their hands… **they will!**

And they will then mess you and your child about!

Parents think because they kiss the backside of a coach, this will move their child forward.

No, it will not!

This is what I teach my parents when I advise them over academies and centres of excellence, and if you take in what I say here, you will lessen the risk of embarrassing yourself and your child, and hopefully prevent getting messed about.

I say to my parents,

'If the coach thinks your child is not good, all the brown nosing in the world is not going to help them. BUT, if the coach thinks your child is good enough, you will know by the manner the way they speak to you and your child!'

'So there is no point in brown nosing the coaches, they will either think your child has got it… or has not!'

Also, many parents will back me up again when I say, if you do not kiss ass, the chances are your child will not be messed about!

Through my advice, I have had many parents who have said to coaches at professional clubs:

'Look, I will bring my child to your academy as long as my child wants to come. But the moment he tells me he is no longer enjoying coming here, I will pull him out, whether he has signed a deal or not.'

What you are stating is that you only care for your child, you are not going to kiss ass, and if you think your child is getting ill-treated or not enjoying himself you will pull them out of this club.

In EVERY case a parent has said this to a club, they have told me that they (and their child) did not get messed about, so it was a better experience for all.

I have had parents say to me when I have advised the above, *'I do not want to say that… the coach might think I am cheeky and release my child!'*

To which I reply, *'Firstly, do not be arrogant how you say this, you can be polite, and secondly, if the club release your child because you are honest, the truth is, they did not think that much of your child anyway! So you have saved yourself and your child potentially weeks of wasted time, Also do you think for one minute, that the coach will let your child go if they think he is the next Wayne Rooney?'*

As long as you are not bad mannered with the coach, if they have anything decent about them, they will respect your honesty.

Also, make sure that you do not chase after these coaches after every training session or football match to see how your child is getting on!

I will tell you that most coaches HATE this, and I have known some coaches who have released a

child because their parent was too much of a nuisance!

If the coaches have something to say about your child, they will come to you, you will not have to hunt them down every time you see them!

Is the coach good enough?

The moment a parent tells me their child is signing for a professional club, I ask the parent*, 'Who is going to be your child's goalkeeper coach?'*

'Why?' they ask*, 'Is this important?'*

I laugh and say, *'Of course it's important. Even if your child signs for Real Madrid, if his coach is poor, what is he going to learn?'*

I often get a blank look back from the parent!

True Story: A parent of mine came to me one day all excited because his son had just signed for a top premiership academy.

So you can imagine his face when I said, *'I wished you'd have told me this sooner, as I would have advised you not to sign!'*

'What do you mean, it's such and such FC!' he shouted.

I responded, '*I know its such and such FC and they are a massive club, but you have to look past their*

name and look at the goalkeeper coach who is going to be teaching your son. This coach has only played at a very poor standard, so what is he going to teach your son?'

His response again was, *'But it's such and such FC!'*

Again I said, *'Look, you have to look past the club and look at the individual coaching your child will be getting. I personally know this coach and as much as he is a nice guy, your child will go backwards if you allow him to train with this coach for one year!'*

The father again said*, 'But it's such and….'*

The father ignored my advise but the following year his son was released from the club.

I kid you not, this young keeper then came back to be coached by me at Just4Keepers and was not the goalkeeper he once was, he had seriously gone backwards.

He came back to Just4Keepers for about a month but got disheartened and left because goalkeepers who he had trained with 12 months earlier at our schools and who he was ahead of in ability were now 12 months ahead of him!

This was too much for him and he has now quit goalkeeping all together!

All because this parent would not listen to sincere and decent advice.

So try and find out if your coach has a good name for developing young talent.

This is the impact a coach who cannot bring the best out of your child can have. So parents, you better do your homework on the coach who is going to be coaching your child.

So parents, just because your child has signed for XYZ FC, this does not mean he is going to get expert tuition. In fact, in the majority of cases, you might as well leave your child with his local grassroot team.

He is with his friends and doing what a child must do… have fun!

And if his manager is Level 2 qualified, he will have the **same** qualifications and experiences of the majority of academy/centre of excellence coaches anyway!

I know as a parent myself, we want the best for our children, but sometimes you need to take a step back and make sure you are not putting your child under too much pressure.

Again I advise my parents not to let their child near an academy or centre of excellence until they are at least fourteen years old. This way, they would have had **all their fun** and at this age they will have a

better idea if they actually do want to become a professional footballer.

Lastly, this is why independent football schools (like Just4Keepers) are becoming more popular.

Parents know that they are putting their child in a fun environment with coaches who have **done something** in the game.

For example: At Just4Keepers, the combined professional playing experience of all our goalkeeper coaches is now over 1000 years at the time of writing.

No coaching school **in the world** has this collective specialist goalkeeper coaching experience Just4keepers has!

Their child is getting coached by doers, not theorists in a FUN environment.

Parents, please do not be an academy hopping parent, as you could make football painful for your child!

Also, do not be fooled by these coaching courses that promise trials!

Parents have been getting caught out with this for many a year now, and this is when a professional football club runs a coaching course in their area and states something like this,

‘Come to XYZ FC summer course… the best players could win a trial at our football club’

Over the past ten plus years running Just4Keepers, many of our parents have been suckered in by these courses and I do not know **ONE** student of ours who has gone on these courses and won a trial.

But, the same keepers that we have developed in Just4keepers and have gone on these courses, my coaching schools has helped them get trials at other professional football clubs???

What does this tell you?

Sorry tell a lie, I do know one of my students who won one of these competitions. He got his face in the local paper with the other winners stating he had won a trial at this pro club. This made this professional club look great!

However, his father had to chase and pester this club for them to give his son this promised trial.

After about **three months** of pestering, they eventually invited his son to their training ground.

This father will tell you himself, that when his son went to this club, it was nothing short of a shambles. Nobody knew who his son was, they did not know where to put him, and when he was eventually sorted out, there was no effort from the coaches to assess or coach him.

After a few weeks, the club released him.

Why did this club do this?

Most parents do not realise but there are two sides to coaching at professional football clubs (at the children's level).

There is the academy side and the coaching in the community side.

There are normally different coaches for each department and generally these coaches do not get on with each other.

The academy coaches tend to look down at the coaches in the community, as these coaches are generally paid buttons for the coaching, and to be honest, are either just kids themselves, or struggle to get a coaching job elsewhere.

And the coaches in the community resent the academy coaches because they look down at them!

The courses that professional football clubs run in school holidays are generally run by the coaches in the community. So when these coaches find a player, the academy coaches tend not to respect their judgment and then what happens is the above scenario: a player gets invited, but ignored.

So why do they promise trials, if they do not invite players, or when they do invite them, they are ignored??

Reason being: Parents do not realise is that most coaching in the community is **separate** from the main club in terms of finances. Each club differs in the way they finance 'Football in the Community,' but in a lot of cases, this department has to finance themselves and have to find funding from other different agencies.

They use the club's NAME to get people's attention so they can gain money and run private school holiday programmes.

People think it's the club of XYZ FC that is running these courses, when actually it's the coaching in the community, which is just an arm of the football club that is running these courses.

As coaching in the community relies heavily on the income they make from their soccer schools, they are going to use all the advertisement tricks they can to pull children onto their courses and the one that **never** fails for them is…

'The chance to win a trial!'

So you can imagine that a parent and child, who are lifelong supporters of XYZ football club, are going to be well and truly suckered into paying for the chance to win a prize to play for their favourite club!

These clubs know it's like taking candy from a baby with this advertisement wording, and use it to great effect all the time.

My coaching company actually did a mini experiment about two years ago.

We ran a FREE goalkeeper course on the same day as our local premiership club. Now even though the coaches in our organisation were **far more** experienced than the coaches at this local professional club, AND also they were charging about £95 and our course was FREE, there was still about twenty of our students (well, their parents!!!) who where suckered into going to this professional clubs course…

And not one got an invite back for a trial!

In fact a seventeen year old who went on this course told me in total frustration that in his group, he was getting taught by a girl coach not much older than himself.

He angrily said, *'Ray, what can a twenty year old girl teach me? She has not played the game long enough in the UK to be a coach!'*

I simply answered, *'Mike you have answered your own question; what can she teach you?'*

'I did warn you and your father that this club would not deliver what they promised; you only have yourself to blame for paying this club!'

You are paying for your child to be under pressure!!!!

Another thing that parents do not realise is that they are actually PAYING for their child to be on trial, which means that they will be under pressure!

As the child believes their every move is getting watched for the chance of this great prize of a trial with their favourite club, they are going to be giving it 110% percent!

If they make a mistake, this is going to ruin their day, as they will think they have lost their chance!

Me personally, I **cannot believe** how naive and daft parents are for actually paying for their child to be under this pressure.

But hey, it's their favourite football club, one of the first team players might just stick their head around the corner for five minutes and give their child a wave, and their child just could get that trial and become a first team player…

'Yeah, really!'

If your child does get picked up by a professional club, it will not be from one of these courses but rather playing for his Saturday or Sunday team with his friends, while having fun!!!!

So parents, you have been warned over this, if you get suckered in to paying high fees for one of these

courses, you have nobody else to blame but yourself.

If your child wants to go on one of these courses, fine, great. But it must be for one reason, and one reason only… **to have fun!**

If your child is having fun and impresses, who knows, he might get that illusive trial anyway.

My thoughts on academies

Throughout this book it seems like I am negative towards professional football club academies and centres of excellence… but I am not, **I am all for them.**

That might have shocked you!

No, I am for ANY organisation that develops children.

Like anything in life, there is good and bad.

The only thing that I do not agree with about academies and centres of excellence, is that a lot of them (not all) do not put in enough ex-professional footballers in as coaches.

I personally believe you can **only** get taught by somebody who has actually **achieved** what they are teaching!

It's frustrating that football is probably one of only a few occupations in the world that allows people who have not succeeded in what they are teaching… to teach others!!!!

Which I think is sad really!

To put this in perspective:

Imagine you wanted a life-changing operation and you heard that your surgeon has **never** operated before, but the doctors say,

'Oh, do not worry about your surgeon, we know he has never operated before, but he has a passion for operating, oh and he has watched EVERY episode of Casualty and E.R.'

Would this make you feel any better, and would you let this guy operate on you?

No way!

Okay, I know this example is probably a bit too extreme, so let's try a more relaxed example.

Your prized brand new Jaguar car needs some specialist work on its engine.

What would you say if the Jaguar workshop boss said,

'Hi Mr Jones, this is John your mechanic.

He has actually had no experience fixing cars but he loves driving Jaguars and hey, he has a collection of all his favourite Jags on his cabinet at home...

But to put your mind at ease, he has just taken a two week crash course on how to fix Jaguars!'

Again if you are honest, you would be out of that car workshop like a shot!

Your Jaguar is your pride and joy; it's so precious to you, you would only let an EXPERT go near it, wouldn't you?

And you would be 100% correct to think like this!

So why do parents let in experienced coaches get near their children?

Because after all, your child is precious and priceless to you, and is worth far more than any top of the range Jaguar!!!!

To be honest, parents do not realise their child is getting coached by someone who is not an 'EXPERT' and also, MOST parents are blinded by the fact that their child is with XYZ Football club, so they do not really care.

And hey, training is free!

In England especially people are so blinded when it comes to saving a buck. In other countries parents pay good money for their children to be taught by the best, which I think is sensible.

I have had parents say to me, *'Ray, we know my son's soccer coach at XYZ FC is not very god but it's free coaching!'*

I have lost count of the parents who have said this to me, and I think it is totally embarrassing that a parent puts a few pounds ahead of their child's development.

To me, this is baffling and so SO wrong!

It sounds like I am contradicting myself here as I am all for any organisation that develops children… But I hate it when these coaches who should not be coaching because of their lack of experience are let loose on children.

Another pet hate is the way academies or centres of excellence get rid of children when they no longer require them.

In fact, I have lost count of the parents that have come to me because of the way their child was unceremoniously tossed aside by a professional football club.

Seriously, I would say, easily 700-900 parents over the years!

These numbers are pretty scary aren't they and I bet right now a parent reading this book will be saying,

'Ray, you are soooo right, I too (and my child) have had this negative experience!'

I think if academies could get this side of things correct, the experience for the child would be much better.

However, there are two things that make this very difficult for a club:

1: The coaches doing the releasing of children have generally not played the game professionally themselves…

SO HOW DO THEY KNOW WHAT A CHILD IS FEELING?

There is **no empathy**, as they have not been in the position the child is currently in, so they do not know the pain they are causing them.

2: There are just TOO MANY children going through the system and it is very difficult for a club to sit down with EVERY single child.

Again over the years, parents have said to me things like,

'I am never taking my child to an academy or centre of excellence again, it was like a... cattle market…a conveyor belt of children.'

This leads me onto my next tip:

Mentally protect your child!!!!!!!!!!!!

There are two categories to this:

1) The parent's fault:

2) The academy/centre of excellence's fault

The Parent's Fault:

If you are going to let your child go to an academy or centre of excellence, please make sure you protect your child mentally. If your child gets released by a professional football club it can have a long term negative effect on them.

I have seen this just too many times, and it's painful for the child.

100% of parents blame the club for their child's sudden lack of interest in football when they are released, but 90% of the time it's actually the parent's fault!

As soon as a child gets into a professional club, they start saying to their child,

'This is your big chance, do not blow it.'

'No messing about!'

'You need to be more mature here!'
(Even though their child is only 7 or 8 years old.)

'You must put in 110% effort!'

'Do not make a mistake!'

'Do not answer back!'

Parents say all the above (and more) to their child, while they are driving, eating their dinner, taking them to school… even when they go the cinema as a family!

Now as a parent myself, I know the parent only wants the best for their child, but they do not realise they are:

1) Building their child UP, to be knocked down (in the child's mind).

2) Frightening their poor child to death.

What this does is take **every bit of enjoyment** out of football for their child… which is wrong!

But by far the worst thing a parent can do to their child is make them out to be something that they are not!

You know these parents, when you ask them the time, they say,

‘Yeah, my son plays forXYZ FC.’

These parents look for any little excuse to let the world know their child is training with a professional football club.

Now I know there is nothing wrong with being proud of your child, but there is a difference between being a proud parent and a parent who is soooo arrogant about his child playing for xyz FC.

Again you know the parents:

‘Arrgh, does your son only play for nobody juniors, well MY son plays for…’

These parents do not realise the long-term damage they could potentially do to their child!

I will be honest, I cannot stand this type of parent, because they are (albeit unknowingly) potentially destroying their child.

But you cannot educate this type of parent… trust me, I have tried!

I could tell you many stories, but I will pick one that sprung to mind while I was writing this section:

When I first started Just4Keepers, I called one of the parents because they had not turned up to my training session for about four weeks (I always do this out of courtesy).

Anyway the conversation went like this (I will use fictional names so as not to embarrass the child).

I said, '*Hi John. It's Ray Newland from J4K. Just making sure young Phil is okay, with not seeing him for a while?'*

'Never been better Ray, he has just signed for xyz FC, I am over the moon,' John answered in a very conceited manner.

I continued, *'Congratulations, my friend. Well, I am just making sure he is still coming to J4K, as it will be sensible to still train with us. Plus, I think it will be good for Phil to still train in a relaxed environment!'*

Now let me quickly digress here: Any advice that I give is not for my benefit just to keep the child training in my coaching business. Without sounding big-headed, I am financially free through my property business, so I do not need to coach for a living. Any advice I give is 100% genuine for the child or parent.

Anyhow, back to this dipstick father.

His father then interrupted, *'Why on earth do I want to bring my son to J4K? He is far more advanced than any goalkeeper in your classes. Nooooo, it's only academy football for my son now… nothing else is acceptable.'*

After I picked my jaw off the floor, thinking of Phil, I said, '*John, do you mind me be being honest with you?'*

'Sure,' he said.

'You really should not put your Phil on a pedestal like that; it's not fair on him if he falls off. I am afraid to say that there are many goalkeepers in my class that can comfortably compete with Phil. Phil is a great kid, and does have ability, but this club has only gone for him because he is very big for his age. When other keepers catch up to him in height in a few years, do not be surprised if he is released by this club,' I said, trying to be as sincere as I could.

I was hoping my honest words would sink in for Phil's sake, but the answer I got back was not very nice!

He shouted down the phone, *'Rubbish! You are only saying this because you want me to keep paying you his coaching fees!'*

Totally gob-smacked by now, I answered, *'Is that what you think, that I am giving you this advice for the few pound a week fees from you?'*

'Well, why else would you be telling me this?' he arrogantly answered.

Anyway there was a bit more conversation before I wished his son luck and put the phone down.

Now over the years, I knew parents who knew this John and it seemed it was every other week that one of these parents at my coaching classes was telling me a story about John, who was publicly making Phil out to be the next England No 1.

Some of the stuff I heard, I could have cringed for his poor son.

Anyway, as I predicted, unfortunately for Phil, his peers caught up to him in height and when other goalkeepers were growing upwards, he was growing sideways.

And to make matters worse, the Pro club he was at released him from his contract halfway through a season, So poor Phil had to endure going for trials with local grass root junior clubs to get back into playing again.

The new problem was that when he went for a trial with a local junior club, if the manager did not make him the automatic **number one** keeper for that club, his father would immediately take him out of this team, stating that he was too good to be number two.

The manager was only **rightly** trying to be fair with the keeper he already had, but John, again putting Phil on a pedestal, ruined it for his son!

I saw Phil a few years later and he would have been about fourteen.

I Warmly shaking his hand, I said, '*Hi Phil, how are you doing my friend? Who are you playing for?'*

He answered unemotionally, *'No one at the moment, but I think my dad has got me a trial for a team his friend's son plays for.'*

As he said this, I thought, *'Bloody hell, a trial for an U15 kiddies team! What happened to the days of just turning up and having a game with your mates?'*

This was his dad's fault; making him think he had to be on trial everywhere he went.

No wonder Phil did not seem excited about football anymore.

Phil then broke my trail of thought and said, *'I've asked my dad if I could come back to Just4Keepers, but he said your training centre is too far!'*

'It's only a 10 minute drive, Phil. Tell your dad you would be most welcome back at J4K!' I answered as I shook his hand goodbye.

As I walked away, I could not help notice the way Phil sat slumped over. He had no self-confidence or belief in himself and his bubbly character had disappeared.

These character traits were all abundant before his dad brainwashed him.

I could not help but get angry with Phil's dad. He had put this poor kid on such a high pedestal, that it was one hell of a drop when he fell off.

Such was the drop, Phil did not recover and I believe he will never recover from it.

By the way, John to date has not brought his son back to J4K and I doubt he will. I guess he is embarrassed by the way he has acted.

Also, I heard that he blamed the football club for his son's lack of development. But I know the GK coach at this club, and he is one of the best in the business.

No the fault firmly lies with John and now he has to live with the fact that he mentally tortured his son for about four years throughout his childhood.

I know this was a bit of a long-winded example, but seriously, I could write another 500 pages on the damage parents do to their own child. This was one of the worst examples, but I wanted to shock you as a parent, so you do not make the same mistake as John.

So parents, please relax and let your child enjoy their football.

What you should be saying to your child is this:

'Hey, it's good news you have signed for Real Madrid. However Steve, you do know that this might

not last forever? All I want you to do, is try your best and listen to the coaches. Also the minute you stop enjoying yourself, let me know and I will pull you out.'

What does this say to your child?

A lot really… that:

1: Well done for signing (so you have established he has done something great).

2: You are letting him know it will not last forever. So if he gets released, he knew this was going to happen, so he does not get disheartened.
Also if he does get another year out of the club, you can say, *'Wow, well done mate, I did not expect that, you must have really impressed the coaches, well done.'* (How does this make him feel???)

3: You want him to work hard by saying, just try your best.

This is a better way than saying, don't make a mistake!

4: You have also let him know, you will pull him out if he does not enjoy his time. This takes SO much pressure off your child if they know they are not pressured to stay somewhere they really do not want to be.

Can you see the difference how you can relax your child by saying it this way? It completely takes the pressure off your child.

2) The academy/centre of excellence's fault

Sometimes the coach at an academy or centre of excellence can mess with your child's mind.

Again, I have heard loads of stories were coaches have been out of order towards a child and to save another long-winded example, I will just name a few of the examples I have heard.

- A coach telling an eight year old to go on a diet
- A coach directly telling a child he is too fat
- A coach directly telling a child he is too small
- A coach ignoring a child
- A coach having favourites
- A coach who undermines a child
- A coach who states a child will not make the grade

These are only a handful of examples and academies/centres of excellence will state that the above does not happen, as they will have policies in place for coaches to follow.

And to be fair to them a lot of the time when things do get said, the professional club will NOT know what is going on, as this will be down to the individual coach.

It's a bit like your child's school: the school has good practice policies in place for teachers, but this does not stop the minority of teaches doing or saying silly things to their pupils

Now believe it or not, 95% of parents would let the above list go, as they think this is part and parcel of learning the trade of a footballer.

But I have news for you.

It is not!

Okay if your child is 15+ he will need to be able to start taking a bit of stick. But between the aged of six and fourteen, as a parent you have to make sure your child gets treated properly!

However some parents are either too scared, or have their tongue that far up the coach's backside, they do not want to upset them.

Well, you should be ashamed of yourself if you are a parent who allows your child to be ill-treated.

Another True story was a premiership club coach telling an eight year old being told to diet and the parents and granddad thought this was OKAY!!!!!

Well if this coach would have said this to me, about any of my children when they were eight, I am afraid that they would have needed an operation to take my foot from out of this coach's backside!

In fact, the parents of this eight year old never brought their child back toJ4K because I told them how stupid I thought they were, for allowing a coach to make their 8 year old child go on a diet.

Still to this day, I cannot believe they accepted this!

If you feel your son is getting ill-treated at an academy or centre of excellence immediately speak to the coach and if you do not get any joy, go to the manager of the centre.

If this club has anything about them, they will deal with your query immediately and make sure everything is okay for your child.

Most pro clubs, will act professional. But for the ones who do not… pull your child out of this centre **immediately!**

It's no big deal!

Your child is too precious to be messed about.

We have already established that life begins between the ages of seventeen and twenty two for a professional.

Just make sure your child goes to another soccer training centre. Even if you have to pay, this will be worth it, as your child will still develop his skills.

Remember, going to the right independent soccer school, **held by an ex-professional** will be just as good (probably better) than the majority of academies anyway!

But as a parent your biggest job is to…

Protect your child's mind!

As a parent you might think some of the things I have wrote about is a little to the point. But I only state this because I want you to protect your child.

I understand you want the best for him/her and still push them along but remember you are their parent and you need to make sure they have fun also, because they are not children forever.

One important statistic for parents to think about?

I once read somewhere that the average career life span of a professional footballer is only seven years…

SEVEN YEARS!

Not long is it?

So this underlines my point of not disregarding your child's education

So as a parent still push your child to play professional if that's their dream but make sure they have another career path in mind.

Still Part 1: (More of my experiences)

Do not worry about the No's!

I remember hearing a saying while in football that went something like this,

'In football when someone says no to you, this does not mean no… it means, not yet!'

This statement is true and false really. For example: a coach or manager could think you are a good talent, but maybe too young and is saying no to your age, rather than you ability.

Or you could be the right age and the coach or manager see you have talent, but at this moment in time you are not up to the standard they are looking for. This is where you roll your sleeves up, train even harder and go and see these managers and coaches, three, six or twelve months later.

The point I am trying to make here is you will get LOADS of no's as you try and become a professional goalkeeper and a lot of the time the people who have told you 'NO' will not tell you why!

So you might be in danger of believing that these coaches and managers think you are no talent!

Okay, you might not be ready for them at this particular point in time, but this does not mean they will not think you are the best thing since sliced bread one year later!

There are literally hundreds of stories in the professional game, where players who become football icons were turned down by football clubs as a youngster, only for the same club to pay millions for them just a few years later!

Can you believe Alan Shearer was turned down by Newcastle United as a youngster?

So as you develop your career, please do not be put off by all the rejections you will inevitably get!

I actually used my no's as **motivation.**

The more no's I got, the more it made me determined that I was going to become a professional goalkeeper. I had to prove that all the coaches and managers, who were downright nasty and rude to me, and tried to steal my dream, were wrong!

So no's can actually help you!

In fact, I can put my hand on my heart and tell you that I would never have signed for Plymouth Argyle (my first professional club) and pass the one month gruelling trail the then manager Peter Shilton set out for me, if I had not had the two years of no's.

This was because the pressure of trying to impress a legend like Peter Shilton would have been too much for me!

But because I had had that many trials over a two year period (and many no's) , I was sort of immune to all the pressures and even though I was trying to impress the great Peter Shilton, to me, it was just another trial: another 'no', or maybe 'yes'!

Thankfully this time, it was a yes!

This leads me on to the next tip, actually.

Know when to quit!

Plymouth was actually my last throw of the dice and if it had been another 'no' I would have packed up my dream of becoming a professional goalkeeper!

I would have got an apprenticeship somewhere, maybe gone back to college and continued to play semi-professional.

But the point is. I still would have played even if i had given up trying to be a pro!

So I had YEARS of trying and many 'no's and the **last throw of the dice** made my dream become reality. This is how close I came to not becoming a professional goalkeeper!!!!!!!!!!

So when do you know when to stop chasing your dream of becoming a professional player?

This is a difficult one, to be honest, because unfortunately for most people, the dream of

becoming a professional player is not going to happen.

I do not want to steal anyone's dream in this section, but there will be a time when you may have to draw the line and give up chasing your dream of playing for your favourite premiership team.

True Story: There was a guy I knew through a friend, he was a lovely lad and was desperate to become a professional footballer. Nearly every football club that I was at, he would call me and asked if I could get him a trial.

Anyone who has played professional football will tell you, just because you are a professional player at a club, it is still very difficult to get trails for friends.

Anyhow, I did hand over his CV as promised at my respected clubs, but unfortunately he was never invited.

One day I was in my hometown with my wife, and I heard someone shout me - it was this guy.

After I explained I had lost my career through injury, I was gob-smacked to hear he was still writing off to clubs for trials. Now I had just turned twenty-eight and he was at least twelve months older than me!

I listened open-mouthed in amazement as he told me he threw away his education and took up any odd job to pay him a wage, while he kept himself fit waiting for his big chance and he explained how he

would quit his jobs on the spot, if his boss would not give him a week off, if he did manage to get a football trial.

He then told me that he was about to send a CV off to every football club in the old third division, as it was then. I listened to him, as he excitedly said that if he did sign for a professional club in this league, he would look forward to earning at least £1000 per week!

I looked at my wife, as if to say, what planet is this guy on?

I turned around to him and said,

'John (this was not his real name)*, I do not know any player in the third division on a £1000 per week, so it's going to be difficult for you to earn this. If you do sign for a club, you will be lucky to get a 12-month contract and £350 per week!'*

'Dear me, £350 per week, I get more than that in my present job!' he answered.

I thought that I had convinced him in a nice way that as a 29-year-old man, the chances are he was not going to make the grade.

But my jaw hit the floor when he told me that he was going to chase his dream anyway.

Now hand on heart, I sincerely hope he achieved his dream but I have not heard from him since and

or have not seen his name around the professional circuit, so it looks like he unfortunately never realised his dream.

Why do I tell you this?

Because there does come a time when you have to look in the mirror and say, '*Enough is enough. I gave it my best shot; it's now time to move on!'*

I actually said this to myself on the train travelling to Plymouth but thankfully I was successful.

This leads me on to the next tip…

Have two irons in the fire!

I think the mistake most young hopefuls make, is that they think they should either try to become a professional footballer, or go after another career.

The mistake they make is…

They do not realise they can do both!

See the mistake I (and my 29 year old friend) made is we burnt our bridges to become a professional footballer.

I myself stopped my education and threw everything into becoming a footballer. Thankfully, I managed to live this dream and was fortunate enough to have played in front of thousands of people each week.

But what would have happened if I did not achieve my dream?

Well to be honest, I dread to think!

But when I got injured aged twenty-eight, the mistake of me giving up my education hit me like a sledgehammer when I could not get a decent job after football.

You see, football was all I knew, so when I came out the game there was no one to turn to. The football clubs, the fans, the media, the professional footballer association, who had all been such an

important factor of my life, did not want to know me anymore… **I was very much on my own.**

There was no longer going to be thousands of supporters chanting my name, this was now long gone…

And the only job I could find was packing blood for a living!

This was a very depressing time in my life. However, thankfully I have successfully built two businesses that make me five times the wage I got as a professional footballer!

So why I am telling you this?

I would not want **anyone** to go through what I had to go through when I came out of football.

What I should have done… and what I am advising you to do, is always have at least two irons in the fire.

Give yourself options.

What I tell my students, is try your best to become a professional footballer, but still be sensible enough to have another career in mind.

For example: say for your second choice career you would like to be an accountant.

There is no reason whatsoever why you cannot do your studying to become an accountant of a daytime and in the evening and weekends, you put all your efforts into training and playing to become a professional footballer.

And if you are lucky to become a professional studying accountancy in evening school.

…because you now have the best of both worlds.

But the secret here guys, is to always give yourself **at least two options**.

This way you will not end up packing blood for a living, or like my 29 year old friend's friend, having mediocre jobs while chasing a dream that should have stopped maybe 8 years earlier.

Football gets less competitive the older you get.

Previously I mentioned that life begins at seventeen to nineteen for footballers, and there is another reason it gets better at this age.

There is less competition!

If you go for a trial aged nine at a pro club, I will bet you my bottom dollar that there will be easily another one hundred nine year olds, also going for this trial!

If you go for this same trial aged eighteen, there will only be a handful of other eighteen year olds.

However, even though the competition is less, the standard is much, much higher!

So this is a reason why you must keep the faith, as it actually gets easier as you get older with you not having to battle against the other thousands of players, who gave up the game at age sixteen.

But remember, you better be working hard at your game as the majority of other players hanging in there, will be of a good standard and you have obviously got to be able to compete with these guys.

Foreign Players

This is a sore point with me, because even though the foreign flux of players has helped our game, I believe it is also ruining it!

I will be honest; I do not think that I have watched a full premiership match in over five years now!

I just **cannot be bothered** watching grown men, throwing themselves on the floor and rolling around as if they have been shot just because another player comes within ten yards of them!

I think they are embarrassing and are a bad influence on young children watching.

Another reason why I am not keen on this foreign influence is competition for our own players.

The amount of mediocre foreign players now in our leagues is annoying!

Do not get me wrong, there are some world class foreign players in our leagues, but this is the minority and the majority of them are NOT as good as our own home grown talent.

So this underlines the importance of not neglecting your education!

Over the years, my coaching company has developed some great young talent, who quite comfortably could have made it to the professional ranks. However, the local professional clubs I contacted on their behalf were not interested in even looking at them!!!

One of my local professional clubs once had a seventeen year old foreign goalkeeper on their books, who I was told, was on a hefty weekly wage.

I said to one of the coaches at this club,

'I will bet you £10,000 that I will have at least three local goalkeepers just as good as this import and they will be willing to play for their beloved club for a fraction of this keeper's wage!'

I just got a shrug of the shoulders from this coach.

This coach knew that I was right, but never had a say at this professional club.

Oh, by the way, this foreign goalkeeper was the same nationality as the first team manager at the time…

Say no more!

So you have to realise, that you are in competition with players all around the world and places at professional clubs are limited.

Also did you know, that most English professional football clubs, have coaching academies in other countries?

So they can develop talent and bring them to England.

Sad, annoying, mind boggling… but true!

So this is why it is important to have options and never neglect your education.

There is no loyalty in football

I have heard many tales over the years where a player has been at a professional football club since they were six or seven, come right through the ranks and got to their final year, with great reports from all their coaches.

Then, when it MATTERS, his club releases him because a foreign player has come in at the last minute and taken this loyal player's role and position.

This player had given this club, all his childhood playing days, had been 100% loyal, but then, all of a sudden, is let go by this club for a foreign player who will be no better than he?

Over the years, I have heard horror stories like this many, many, **MANY** times over.

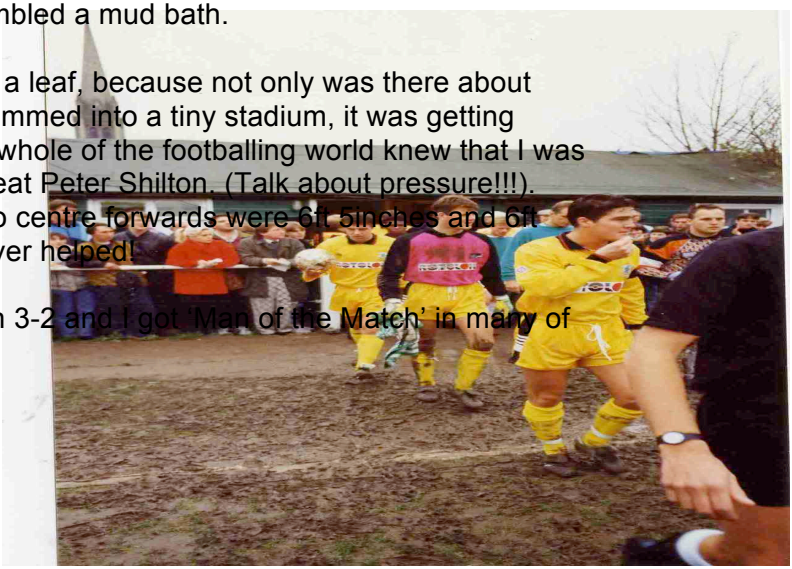
So I repeat myself to parents and budding players, do not neglect your education.

You might have what it takes to make the grade as a pro footballer, but this might not be enough to stop you getting tossed aside.

In closing Part 1, I want to encourage any youngster to try and achieve their dream of becoming a professional goalkeeper because it is the best occupation in the world but please remember, it is VERY Tough so always have another iron in the fire just in case you do not make the grade.

was me making my **Professional Debut** aged just 21 in a goalkeeper Jersey!

s the FA CUP 5th round (I think?) against Dorking Town FC e pitch resembled a mud bath.



shaking like a leaf, because not only was there about 0 people crammed into a tiny stadium, it was getting sed and the whole of the footballing world knew that I was tising the great Peter Shilton. (Talk about pressure!!!). Dorking's two centre forwards were 6ft 5inches and 6ft es… this never helped!

vent on to win 3-2 and I got 'Man of the Match' in many of k's tabloids.

Part 2:

How to contact professional football clubs

Okay we have given you some food for thought on what it TAKES to become a professional footballer. I know I might have been a bit negative in part 1 but this was only to prepare you for what is a hard but worthwhile journey!

So, now over the next pages, (part 2) we are going to give you ACTION POINTS and actual techniques that you can put into **practice** to help you get into the shop window with football clubs.

I will give you techniques that I **personally** used to become a professional first, but as a **bonus** I will give you techniques that I have advised my students to use with success as time has changed and there are more options to now contact clubs.

So get your pen and paper ready for this section…

There are two ways to contact a coach at a professional football club, either by a worded correspondence (letter, fax, e-mail) or by phone calls… but it's knowing which is best.

I know that you could get picked up by a professional scout while you play locally and this is one way of getting into professional football clubs.

But the reason for this section, if you were like me (and MANY other players), and that is, you do not get invited to a professional football club for a trial..

So you need a way, to invite yourself!

Part 2, will teach you how to do this.

So what is better, ringing a professional football club or sending a worded correspondence?

Me personally I think ringing!

The trouble when you send a letter or fax is that a million other players have the same dream as you, and each day, every day, hundreds of letters will be sent to individual professional football clubs.

And if the clubs are honest with you, they will tell you that most of these letters go straight into the bin!

I know it is out of order from these clubs, but you have to look at it through their eyes, they just have not got the time to sift through them all.

True Story:

I remember an occasion when I played for Plymouth Argyle aged just twenty-one and I walked into the youth development officer's office. He was sitting at his desk and I am not kidding, there must have been over one hundred letters on his desk.

Jokingly I said, *'Fan mail, Nizzy? '* (Nizzy was his nickname).

My coach laughed and said, *'I wish it was. It's bloody more trialist letters!'*

He then started sifting through the mail carefully selecting mailings with his name on, then tossing them to one side, saying,

'Nizzy, Nizzy, Nizzy,'

Obviously picking out the mail that was addressed to **HIM!**

After he had sifted through what he wanted, he leaned forward towards his desk, got his waste bin in his right hand and with one big swoop of his left arm, guided all the unopened mail into his bin! Totally surprised with seeing at least eighty unopened letters go into the bin, I shouted,

'Bloody hell, Nizzy, that's out of order. That's kid's dreams in those envelopes. You should have the decency to at least read them. Now I know why I never got much response when I sent letters to professional clubs as a youngster!'

Nizzy, realising that I was less than impressed with his letter reading skills quickly said, *'Ray, there will be another hundred on my desk tomorrow, I just have not got the time to read every letter!'*

Again in disgust I said, *'No Nizzy, you are out of order, you should be reading them!'*

It's only now as I get older, that I realise it was impossible for Nizzy to read every letter, but it taught me one very valuable lesson…

…and that was to advise my students to **always, always, always** make certain that if and when they do send correspondence to a club asking for a trial, they make sure they get the NAME of the coach, otherwise it's most likely to end up in the bin, with the other un-addressed letters!

So am I saying, it's not worth writing letters to professional football clubs?

No, I am not, I think you should write letters, but you have to realise that you probably will not get a great response… but you never know???
Between the ages of sixteen and twenty, I must have sent over 500 letters to professional football

clubs. In fact, most football clubs I would write at least three times per year (I will explain later on why you need to do this).

So year in, year out, I sent letter after letter, getting many no's but also getting some successes in the form of trials (I was getting about three to six trials per year).

At the age of twenty, I wrote to Plymouth Argyle, who had ex-England legend goalkeeper Peter Shilton as their manager.

Peter replied to my letter, I went to Plymouth, had a one month trial and I did enough to gain my first professional contract.

So I had nearly four years of rejection before I hit the jackpot, and the bonus was… I signed for a manager who, like me, was a goalkeeper!

This kick-started my professional career!

So even though it can be very disheartening sending letter after letter, like me, you never know when you will get that lucky break.

Why write to clubs at least three times in one season?

Football is a very fickle occupation, and if you do not get results, people lose their jobs **very quickly.** Generally, when a manager goes and another

comes in, the new manager coming in brings in his own staff.

I will use Liverpool FC as an example. When Gerard Houllier was manager, he brought in many French players and staff and what happened as soon as Spaniard boss Rafael Benitez took over the reins at Liverpool?

That's right, he brought in his own staff and mostly I might add… there was a Spanish connection.

So whenever a new manager comes in, generally, the old staff are kicked out, and the new brought in.

And this gives you another opportunity to pitch your abilities to this continual flow of new staff!

So when you are on the hunt for a professional club, watch the papers and if you see a manager getting the sack, wait until a new one is appointed and send in your letters/correspondence.

When I was a child, even if a manager did not get the sack, I still sent the same letter to the same club, three times each year, which was the beginning, mid and at the end of each season.
I did this because there are always changes to backroom staff, that you may never get to hear about… and you just never know when your letter falls onto the lap of the right person.

I also remember getting a letter from Crewe Alexandra FC and the coach had written,

'If I invite you for a trial, will you please stop writing to me?'

I went for a trial with Crewe and was with them for nearly three months training with their youth set up, so this was worth pestering this coach. In fact, this coach told me the reason why he gave me this trial was that he admired my determination.

But being at Crewe, I was spotted by Chester City FC, who signed me as an apprentice for eighteen months. This is when I first started getting paid to play football, so by pestering the Crewe coach and getting a trial, it helped me to move on to Chester, which got me earning a wage playing football…

…which was greeaaatt!!!!!!

So was it worth sending this coach a letter every four months for about eighteen months?

YEP!

Another reason why it's good sending letters (even though you might not get a trial or response from a club), is that your name may get known.
For Example:
Say you sent a letter three or four times to a coach at XYZ football club and this coach never replied but was thinking,

'That bloody Ray Newland has written to me again!'

Even though you never got an invite to this club, this coach still knows your name!

And say just one day, you have a good game and a scout from XYZ FC spots you and mentions you to this coach.

This coach will say, *'Ray Newland? That pain has been writing to me for about a year now, and you say he is worth a look?'*

The strong chances are you will get a trial, because the coach has heard of you!

Shortly you will see some examples of letters that I sent to professional football clubs, and even a real life recommendation letter the legendary Welsh international goalkeeper, Neville Southall did for me.

On this note: If you can get a recommendation from a coach with authority and attach it to your letter, this can be worth its weight in gold for you.

True Story:

I must have written close to 500 letters **without** a recommendation letter in the early days, and I would say the statistics were like this (roughly):

- 85% did not reply to my letters.
- 5% would write, stating that there were no vacancies.
- 5% said they would send a scout to watch me (even though they did not know where I played???).
- 3% would write stating that I was not good enough (even though they knew nothing about me???).
- 2% offered me a trial.

Then I sent just eleven letters out with Neville Southall's recommendation letter stapled to my letter.

- Within the space of **one week**, I had five clubs offering me to play a trail game for them.
- One club offered to SIGN ME without even seeing me play (they had also personally spoken to Neville about me, though).
- Two clubs never got in contact.
- Three clubs asked me to go for a trial **'immediately'**. The one I picked was Plymouth, who I signed for.

This is the power of getting a recommendation letter!

Obviously the bigger the name of the person recommending you…

…the greater your chance of success.

Having your Sunday/Saturday league manager recommend you, is not really going to cut any mustard with anyone, so try and get someone with a bit of a reputation to recommend you.

- Maybe a school teacher
- A local football scout (who has credibility with clubs, because most have not)
- A coach from another academy, where you might have been released from
- Have you got a relative who has a connection within the pro game?

You get my point, try and get a recommendation from someone who could get the coach that you have contacted to raise their eyebrows, as this will give you more credibility than the 'Joe Averages' writing in.

Shortly you will see a copy of the EXTACT letter I sent to football clubs, with Neville Southall's personal recommendation.

This letter was responsible for getting the wheels in motion for me becoming a professional footballer.

Please Note: I never had a personal computer when I was young writing letters, so every letter was **HAND** written!!! (Over 500!)

Jeez, you have it SO EASY nowadays!

Because you can write a letter and just save to your computer and print out when you need to send or you have services like goalkeeper cv.

Ringing a football club!

Players (or their parents if the player is under sixteen), do not realise that they can actually ring a professional football club!

Players and parents get a bit nervous just thinking about having to speak to a coach or maybe a first team manager… but I have news for you, these guys are only human, so do not be afraid to speak to them.

I remember speaking to ex-Everton manager Joe Royle when I was released from Plymouth Argyle FC. He was Oldham Athletic FC's manager at the time.

And he was a gentleman!

It actually took me about four hours to pluck up the courage to call him, and it was a miracle he could not hear the fear in my voice.

But he was polite and courteous to my call.

The trouble you will have though is **getting to speak to them**, as they will have a secretary screening their calls and I will be honest, most coaches will not want to speak to you!

The mistake parents or a player makes, is that they ring up and say,

'Can I speak to the coach, please?'

What you are telling this secretary is that you are calling uninvited. And because nobody likes getting their day interrupted, this is where your conversation will end. The secretary will ask why you are calling and when you tell her, she will simply ask for you to send in a letter or email.

Ideally, you do not want this because a million other starry-eyed players (or parents of players) are also sending in their letters, too. You then have to rely on the fact that your letter will get opened, never mind read.

So how can you guarantee you speak to the coach or manager?

Well you cannot, and the chances of you getting to speak to them will be slim… but this is what you can try (This use to work me).

Pick say ten clubs you want to have trials with and pick a day to call them up. Once you have identified the clubs, get their phone numbers.

Once you have the numbers ring up these clubs and say to the secretary...

Example one: For parents ringing up for their child.

'*Can you give me the name of the coach who is responsible for giving trials to 10 year olds* (or your child's age) *as I want to write him a letter?'*

Once you have the name of the coach, say thank you and **put the phone down**. You then do this until you have all ten names.

Example two: If you are 16+ and you are ringing for a trial, for yourself.

'Hi. I am 16 years old (or whatever your age) and I would like to write in for a trial. Can you give me the name of the coach I need to write to please?'

Again, once you have the name thank the secretary and put down the phone.

Once you have ten names, pick another day to try and speak to the coaches.

When you have picked your day, you ring up club one on your list and you say something like....

Example two: If you are a 16+ asking for a trial.

'Hi can I speak to David please?'

(Not David Smith, or Mr Smith, as you are trying to sound like you know him!)

Generally the secretary will say, *'Which David? We have a few.'*

You then say, *'Oh sorry, David Smith please'*

The secretary will then either put you straight through (if you are very lucky) or most probably ask,

'Who is calling and what's the nature of your call?'

You then say, *'My name is Ray Newland and I have been **asked** to contact David about coming in for a trial with your club'.*

Again, she will either put you through at this stage or ask, *'Who asked you to call him?'*

You can then say either…

(1) *'My manager, I think he is a scout for your club.'*

(2) 'A manager in my league called John. I do not know his second name but I think he is a scout for your club.'

(3) 'I was given his name by a manager in my league. I believe he is after a right back, and I am a right back'.

I know the above are little white lies, but if you are too honest you will not get put through.

At this stage the secretary will tell you to write in, ring back or put you through to David.

If she puts you through to David, when he answers you simply say,

'Hi David, you do not know me but I have been asked to contact you by a manager in my league who I believe is a scout for your club. He has told me that your club has some up and coming trials and that you could be interested in having a look at me?'

At this stage, he might just say, *'Can you write into me?'*

If he says this, do not be downhearted, at least you can address your letter,

Hi David

I trust you are well?

*It's Ray Newland here. A**s** **requested** I am sending you my details……..*

If David is going to read hundreds of letters and has to invite a certain limited number from these letters for a trial, who is he going to pick??

Will he invite players from the letters that come uninvited and headed ‘To the coach’ or is he going to invite the ones who have addressed his name on the envelope and made the first few lines of the letter **personal to him** like we have shown you in this example above?

You will have noticed that I printed the word ‘requested’ in **bold!**

The reason why I did this, is to show you I think it is important to mention this word, as you are reminding David, he has **asked** you to write in. So the chances are, he will invite a player he has **requested** to write in, rather than a player who has written an uninvited impersonal letter.

What happens if he wants to know who this guy was that gave you his details?

Well don’t panic your answer to this is, you do not really know him.

You were approached by this guy at your local field, who gave you his phone number on a piece of paper and asked you to call.

The coach will either:

1) Ask you to write in (as above)
2) Or ask you to come in for a trial.

He may, and it's **highly unlikely**, state you are lying and this man does not exist.

If he does, so what? You just be adamant you were given his details because he can NEVER prove you are lying.

You can then just thank him for his time and put the phone down.

Then just ring up the next coach on your list!

Example one: Parents ringing in on behalf of their children.

Parents can use the same examples as just explained for a 16+ ringing a coach, but you will obviously start most of your conversations,

'Hi, I am ringing on behalf of my son…'

But I stress, do not be scared to directly contact football coaches as most of them are just decent down to earth blokes, who will help if they can.

Writing Letters to clubs:

Going back to writing letters to football clubs, this is one of the old ways to contact clubs that has still never really gone out of fashion.

The great thing about a letter is that it is personal to the coach or the person you are sending it to, so will always give you half a chance of getting spotted.

We have already gone into great detail how VITAL it is to make sure your letters (or any correspondence to a coach must be made **personal**, otherwise the strong chances are it will not get read).

Below you will see a few sample letters to send to clubs.

TIP: Remember the coach has limited time to read any correspondence you send him. He has literally hundreds to read each week, so do not make your letters like a novel.

Make them short and to the point, so that the coach can scan through your letter and make a quick decision on you.

If your letter is pages long, they will end up in the bin!

Please Note: I have written these letters, as if the player himself was writing them. For parents who would be writing on behalf of their child, simple just start your letters,

‘I am writing to you on behalf of my son...’

Sample letter one:

Your address

Date

Dear Mr David Smith

I trust you are well?

As requested, please find my playing details enclosed.

My name is Ray Newland and I am a goalkeeper aged 16 years old, 6ft 1ich tall and 15 stone.

I have had trials with Liverpool and Leeds, and currently represent my school and county.

I currently play for my school, St Johns, on a Saturday morning, my county Merseyside, on a Friday night and I play on Sunday morning in the BGY league at Heron Eccles playing fields for my club, ‘The Anny’.

I am dedicated towards my development and train most nights. I also attend any course that can enhance my game. I am also mentally strong, command my area, am a good communicator and will not hesitate to go into any challenge.

I would be grateful if I could be invited to your next trial day, I promise you I will not let you down.

Yours sincerely

Ray Newland

THIS LETTER YOU ARE ASKING FOR A TRIAL.

Sample letter two:

Your address

Date

Dear Mr David Smith

I trust you are well?

As requested, please find my playing details enclosed.

My name is Ray Newland and I am a goalkeeper aged 16 years old, 6ft 1ich tall and 15 stone.

I currently play for my school, St Johns, on a Saturday morning, my county Merseyside, on a Friday night and I play on Sunday morning in the BGY league at Heron Eccles playing fields for my club, 'The Anny'.

I have had trials with Liverpool and Leeds, and currently represent my school and county.

I am dedicated towards my development and train most nights. I also attend any course that can enhance my game. I am also mentally strong, command my area, am a good communicator and will not hesitate to go into any challenge.

I would be grateful if I could be invited to your next trial day, I promise you I will not let you down.

Also, if you wish to send a scout to watch me, I have enclosed a fixture list of my next 10 games.

Yours sincerely

Ray Newland

THIS LETTER, YOU NOT ONLY ASKED FOR A TRIAL, YOU ALSO CLEVERLY INVITED THIS CLUB TO WATCH YOU PLAY. THIS IS GOOD IF THEY HAVE NO TRIAL GAMES COMING UP.

DO NOT FORGET TO ADD YOUR FIXTURES TO THIS TYPE OF LETTER!!!

Sample letter three:

Your address

Date

Dear Mr David Smith

I trust you are well?

As requested, please find my playing details enclosed.

My name is Ray Newland and I am a goalkeeper aged 16 years old, 6ft 1ich tall and 15 stone.

I have had trials with Liverpool and Leeds, and currently represent my school and county.

I currently play for my school, St Johns, on a Saturday morning, my county Merseyside, on a Friday night and I play on Sunday morning in the BGY league at Heron Eccles playing fields for my club, 'The Anny'.

I am dedicated towards my development and train most nights. I also attend any course that can enhance my game. I am also mentally strong, command my area, am a good communicator and will not hesitate to go into any challenge.

I would be grateful if I could be invited to your next trial day, I promise you I will not let you down.

Also, if you wish to send a scout to watch me, I have enclosed a fixture list of my next 10 games.

Yours sincerely

Ray Newland

PS: My school football team/ teacher Mr Jones, has also kindly left his personal number, so you can call.

He would be willing to give me a personal recommendation: His number is 123 4567. (You can also use local manager, county manager, etc for a recommendation and remember… the bigger the name the better!)

FOR THIS LETTER YOU HAVE NOW ADDED A PERSONAL NUMBER THAT THE COACH CAN CALL FOR FURTHER INFO ON YOU. IF YOU CHECK THIS LETTER, YOU NOW HAVE THREE OPTIONS TO GET YOUR FEET UNDER THE TABLE WITH THIS CLUB.

TRIAL, SCOUTED OR GETTING RECOMMENDED.

Sample letter four:

Your address

Date

Dear Mr David Smith

I trust you are well?

As requested, please find my playing details enclosed.

My name is Ray Newland and I am a goalkeeper aged 16 years old, 6ft 1ich tall and 15 stone.

I have had trials with Liverpool and Leeds, and currently represent my school and county.

I currently play for my school, St Johns, on a Saturday morning, my county Merseyside, on a Friday night and I play on Sunday morning in the BGY league at Heron Eccles playing fields for my club, 'The Anny'.

I am dedicated towards my development and train most nights. I also attend any course that can enhance my game. I am also mentally strong, command my area, am a good communicator and will not hesitate to go into any challenge.

I would be grateful if I could be invited to your next trial day, I promise you I will not let you down.

Also, if you wish to send a scout to watch me, I have enclosed a fixture list of my next 10 games.

Yours sincerely

Ray Newland

PS: Please find enclosed a recommendation from Peter Kelly on my playing abilities.

DO NOT FORGET TO ADD THIS RECOMMENDATION LETTER!

Okay the letters I have just shown you have been made quite personal because the coach told you to write in… but how would you start it if you were cold calling him?

Well firstly, you will STILL need to get his name, so you are trying to make it as personal as you can (even though you are writing uninvited).

But I started my uninvited letters like this,

Sample letter five:

Your address

Date

Dear Mr David Smith

I apologise for contacting you out the blue but I believe you are looking for goalkeepers my age. You will find enclosed details about myself and if I fit your criteria, I would be available ANYTIME for you to assess me.

My name is Ray Newland and I am a goalkeeper aged 16 years old, 6ft 1ich tall and 15 stone.

I have had trials with Liverpool and Leeds, and currently represent my school and county.

I currently play for my school, St Johns, on a Saturday morning, my county Merseyside, on a Friday night and I play on Sunday morning in the BGY league at Heron Eccles playing fields for my club, 'The Anny'.

I am dedicated for my development and train most nights, and attend any course that can enhance my game. I am also mentally strong, command my area, am a good communicator and will not hesitate to go into any challenge.

I would be grateful if I could be invited to your next trial day, I promise you I will not let you down.

Also, if you wish to send a scout to watch me, I have enclosed a fixture list of my next 10 games.

Yours sincerely

Ray Newland

IN MY SAMPLE LETTERS, I HAVE USED GOALKEEPING. YOU WILL OBVIOUSLY CHANGE THIS TO YOUR POSITION.

My Winning letter!

Please now see the letter that got me my **FIRST PROFESSIONAL CONTRACT!**

You will see the power of having enclosed a recommendation from someone with influence, as my letter was not that impressive.

The letter looked uninviting; it was not printed but hand written (I never had a personal computer so had to **personally** write each individual letter). When I look at this letter, I wonder how I managed to get invited for trials.

Nowadays it should be so easy, all you have to do is write a template on your computer and print it off when you want. You can also get your computer to print out your envelopes.

So where it would have taken me at least two hours to prepare **one** letter, you can have **every** letter and envelope printed off to every professional football club that you wish to contact within this time frame!

Technology is great isn't it!

So please read the letters that I personally sent to football clubs as a teenager, while I was a non-contract at Everton FC. This was the letter that Peter Shilton had read which resulted in me getting that winning trial that made me achieve my dream of becoming a professional footballer.

You will also see the recommendation letter attached by the legend Neville Southall.

RAY J NEWLAND.

K GREEN

EEN.

L.

DA.

8616.

Dear Sir,

At present I'm a goalkeeper at EVERTON FC. where I've been since last season. I'm on a Non-contract basis where I've played up to now several times for the A-team, several Reserves games and travelled with the First Team on a couple of occasion as ever, as a fifteenth man.

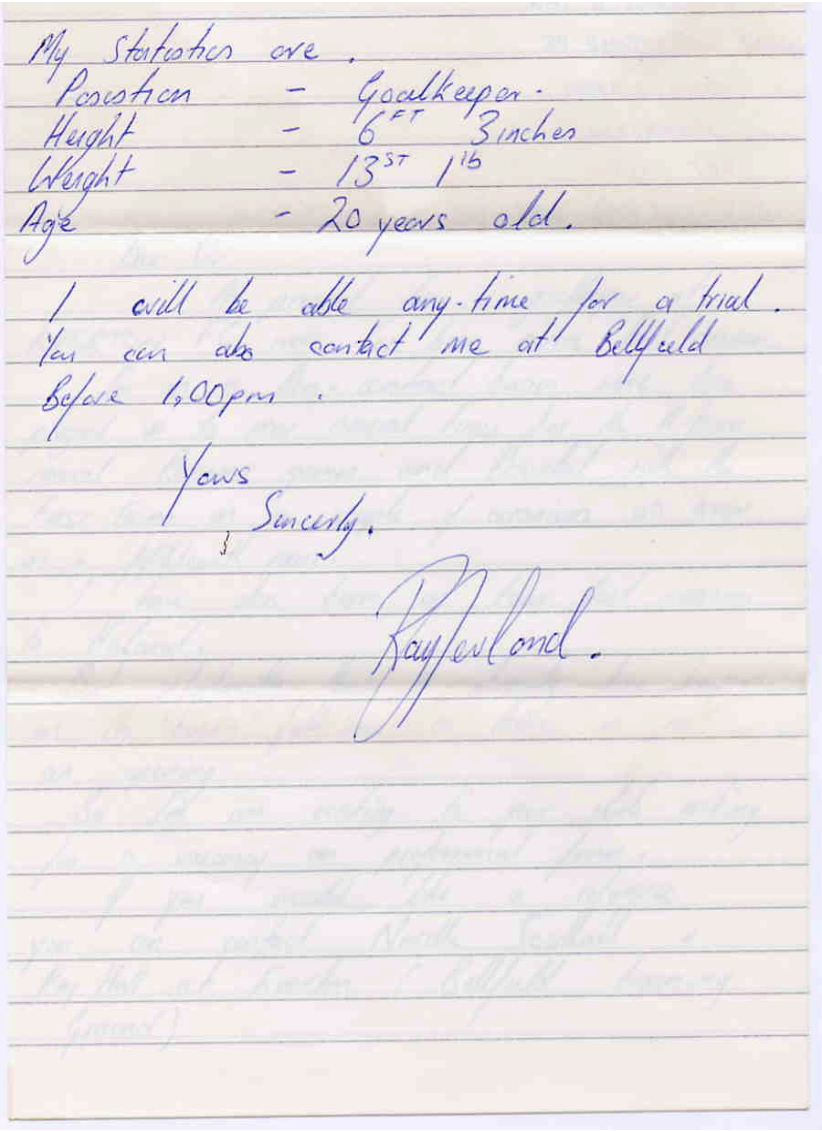
I have also been on tour last season to Holland.

But unfortunatly there is already five keepers on the books full-time, so there is not an opening.

So I'm am writing to your club asking for a vacancy on professional forms.

If you would like a reference you can contact Neville Southall & Ray Hall at Everton (Bellfield training Ground).

Please note: this is the same letter, when it was scanned page 1 came out a slightly different colour for some reason?

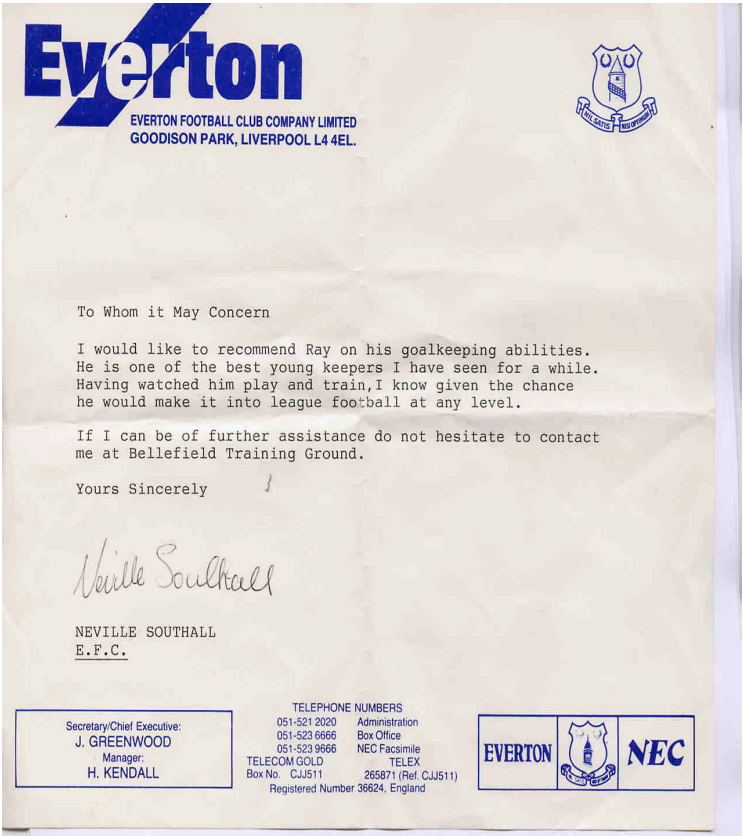


My Statistics are.
Position - Goalkeeper.
Height - 6FT 3inches
Weight - 13ST 1lb
Age - 20 years old.

I will be able any-time for a trial.
You can also contact me at Bellfield before 1.00pm.

Yours Sincerly.

Rayfield.



Everton

EVERTON FOOTBALL CLUB COMPANY LIMITED
GOODISON PARK, LIVERPOOL L4 4EL.

To Whom it May Concern

I would like to recommend Ray on his goalkeeping abilities. He is one of the best young keepers I have seen for a while. Having watched him play and train, I know given the chance he would make it into league football at any level.

If I can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact me at Bellefield Training Ground.

Yours Sincerely

Neville Southall

NEVILLE SOUTHALL
E.F.C.

Secretary/Chief Executive:
J. GREENWOOD
Manager:
H. KENDALL

TELEPHONE NUMBERS
051-521 2020 Administration
051-523 6666 Box Office
051-523 9666 NEC Facsimile
TELECOM GOLD Box No. CJJ511
TELEX 265871 (Ref. CJJ511)
Registered Number 36624, England

EVERTON NEC

The above letter from Legend Neville Southall was photocopied and enclosed with every letter I sent to professional football clubs.

Sending a fax.

People do not realise the power of a fax. Did you know you could programme several hundred phone numbers into the address book of a fax machine, press the button **once** and EVERY phone number will be instantly contacted in seconds?

Can you imagine the time and money this will save you!

The fax you send can be the letter you send to coaches via mail like we have already discussed, but make sure you put right across the top of the letter/fax…

FAO: Chief Coach John Nelson.

Like the letters you send out, you need to have a contact name of the person you want the fax to be read by.

If you just send a fax to every football club with no name attached for whom the fax is for, I will guarantee most of your faxes will end up in the bin.

I know it might be a little time consuming finding out the contact details of each individual coach, in each individual football club, but this will be **well** worth the effort and will **drastically** improve your hit rate of getting a trial at a professional football club!

So make sure the fax is addressed to someone!

This way, when the fax comes out of the machine the receptionist will not read the letter, she will immediately pop it on the desk of the intended coach, thus you achieve your goal of contacting the correct person!

The great thing about a fax is that it costs literally pennies to send hundreds at once, so you can send your fax on the 1st day of each month EVERY month, so you will be getting continuity with your target mailings, thus strengthening your chance of success.

Another advantage is that the coach does not have to open an envelope.

Put yourselves in the shoes of a very busy coach, and you only have just enough time left to read just one more correspondence before you head off to train.

Would you spend your time opening an envelope or grab a piece of paper (fax) on your desk you can quickly read?

I think the answer is obvious.

Send an e-mail.

Again the great things about e-mails are that they are time and money friendly. You can put literally hundreds of e-mails on one address folder and at the click of a mouse, send every one of your contacts an e-mail, and they will receive them within seconds.

Again like the fax method, you can send once a month, as it will not cost you one penny, so you have NOTHING to lose!

Again, like the fax and letter, please ensure you make the e-mail out to someone.

For example in the subject line state:

FAO: Joey Jones

This way, the coach knows it is not junk mail. Also, this lessens the risk of your e-mail going into this coach's junk mail folder and getting lost forever!

The only downside to this type of contacting is, the coach may not be computer literate or lazy with his emails!

However, if you are sending letters, faxes and e-mails, it does not take a rocket scientist to realise that it will only be a question of time before you start getting calls inviting you for trials.

It is a numbers game, and all you have to do is make sure YOUR NUMBER is always in the hat!

As they say in the lottery adverts,

'You have to be in it… to win it!'

You cannot get a trial if you do not contact the clubs.

However, you may have difficulty obtaining the coach's e-mail address. Ringing up the secretary of every club, and asking her to spell out the his e-mail address, including full stops, underscores, dashes, dots, etc, will take forever, so what I suggest is for you to go onto the football club's website and see if you can find the coach's e-mail details here.

You can simply copy and paste this coach's e-mail details, saving you a lot of time and effort getting them.

But once you have these guy's e-mails, you can contact them anytime for FREE!

This is so, so powerful.

Websites

EVERY professional football club now has a website and even the lowest of division football teams have some type of football website.

And this can provide you with a whole lot of information at your fingertips!

You can gather information on the club, **and find out which coaches you need to contact!**

Also, you can get the ADDRESSES of football clubs, e-mails and fax numbers so that you have everything needed to contact the necessary people who will have the authority to invite you for a trial.

IMPORTANT TIP: If you can find the name of the coach that you are contacting, you can research what type of player he was, as normally this club's website will have some blurb on the career of their coaching staff.

(More explained on this shortly)

Internet

Even if there is no blurb on this coach on the club's website, once you know their name you can do a web search for them through the likes of google, yahoo, etc.

You type in for example:

'Mike Smith professional footballer'

You then should get a list of different pages of information on the coach you are researching. Now if you are clever, you can use this information in your correspondence, to make your letter, fax or e-mail to this coach, **personal to him (and you!).**

For example:

Say Mike Smith was a defender, who was a no-nonsense hard tackler, who took no prisoners.

In your correspondence to this coach, you can give him your details and then say something like,

'I am a tough tackler, who prides himself in never pulling out of a challenge. I also like to try and mentally beat my opponent throughout any match I play.'

Can you see that you have made your letter **personal to this coach?**

Every coach likes to think he can develop a player that is a 'mirror image' of themselves as a player. I suppose in a way, it reminds them of their playing days.

Over the years as a professional footballer myself, I saw this happen on a near daily basis!

The coach always seemed to prefer the players that were similar to them when they played.

What happens if a coach was in a different position to you? How can you make this personal?

Remember, it not their position or ability you are trying to match but mostly the mental state, character or personality of this coach (when they played).

Say you are a goalkeeper, and the coach you are trying to persuade was a centre forward.

Two different positions and known enemies on the pitch!

So how can you make yourself personal to a coach in a different position to yourself?

Easy, like this.

Say after your research on this ex-centre forward coach, you find that this coach was an honest player.

In your correspondence to him you can say,

'As a goalkeeper, I feel that I am honest within my game and if I make a mistake, I will be the first to hold my hand up, then make sure I do not make the same mistake again.'

Or, if this centre forward coach was a bit of a bully on the pitch, you can write,

'As a goalkeeper, I use my physique to intimidate opponents, and if I get a chance I will let the opponents know they are in a game and will not hesitate to put another player off by hitting them hard in a tackle.'

As you can see, I am trying to find something in this coach's character that I can use to make my correspondence **PERSONAL.**

So this coach might see a little bit of himself… in me.

Look at this from the point of view of a coach. Would you rather invite a stranger for a trial, who writes an impersonal letter, fax or e-mail to you, or would you invite a player who has written a personal letter to you and reminds you of what you were like during your playing days... and also seems to have similar characteristics to you?

I think the answer is obvious.

Please Note: If you do decide to send a fax or e-mail, this can be in the exact same format as the sample letters.

Just turn up!

Even though I do not recommend this, just turning up on the day and asking for a trial can actually work.

I have actually seen this work a couple of times when I was a professional.

This is where a player (generally aged over eighteen) had just turned up and asked could he train for the week.

Now in this day and age, I cannot see a manager allowing a stranger to train with his team, especially the amount that players are now worth!

And another thing that you would need is skin as thick as a rhino!

Because to do this, takes an awful lot of courage.

Even though I have seen this work in the past, and I think it would be difficult to do now, it still maybe worth a last ditch effort if your letters, faxes, etc are failing.

However this is more likely to work for a parent taking their child to an academy or satellite centre.

If you have the bottle and you have a child aged between seven and fourteen, you could walk into your local professional football club academy or

satellite centre with your child all kitted out and approach one of the coaches.

There are many things that you can say. For example,

'Hi, my son was playing this Sunday at Edge Park for his team, and one of your scouts asked me to bring him here tonight.'

or,

'Hi, I got a phone call on Tuesday by one of your scouts asking me to bring my child here tonight.'

or,

'Hi, my son's manager was asked on Sunday at Edge Park to invite my son to your training session for tonight.'

If you can hold your nerve, you will most probably get away with this!

Let me explain why.

In children's football, professional football clubs have **THAT MANY** scouts, so-called scouts, hanger's on, school teachers who think they can coach, football managers, referees, etc, who all think they are that 'Super Scout'.

So if you approached a coach at a professional football club's academy or satellite centre, they would have **NO WAY** of knowing if you were telling a teensie-weensie white lie!

The strong chances are, they will say that your child can train, 'just for tonight'...

but if your child impresses, you never know?

I know one parent who did this, and his child went to this club for nearly a whole year!

Also, if the coach refuses to allow your son to train, you can give it the…

'I do not believe this! I took time off work to bring my son here on the back of one of your coaches or scouts inviting us here!'

'My son is going to be gutted, I am going to the local papers over this!'

The chances are the coach you speak to will panic if you say this because they know there are ssooooooooooo many coaches and scouts involved in an academy, they will be thinking at the back of their heads,

'*What if it was such and such coach/scout who invited this guy? I will be slaughtered if I let this kid leave tonight.'*

or,

‘Crumbs, this guy is cheesed off, I’d better just humour him and give him tonight’s training as I do not want him going to the press and giving the club a bad name.’

Actually if you said, *‘**What’s your name**, I am going to the press over this! We were invited and you have just disregarded my child like he was an unwanted animal!’*

This coach would REALLY panic over this, as he would not want his name attached to kicking a kid into the street so distastefully!

As I mentioned above, you would probably only get one training session, just to shut you up. But if your child impresses one of the coaches who has a say at this club, he could get an invite back.

You would have to ne very thick skinned to do this but it can work.

Send in a DVD

Another thing you can do is send in a DVD of yourself (or your child).

The only downside to this is that it will cost money and you do not know if the coach will watch the whole thing. You are best making this DVD no more than ten minutes long.

Do MORE than the 'Average'

I do not know if you have caught on to what I have been trying to teach you within this book, but this is to try and contact the coach **who has a say in whether he can invite you to his club.**

But more importantly…

Do more than the average person!

The average person would just write one letter a year, and if they did not get a response think, *'Oh well, they must have thought I was no good!'*

Please DO NOT think like this, otherwise you will have NO CHANCE of getting that invite!

This is like a centre forward shooting for goal, and the goalkeeper saving it.

Now most forwards will not think, *'Wow, this keeper is great. I have no chance of scoring, so I will not shoot again, I will pass to a team mate instead.'*

Would any centre forward do this?

Of course they would not!

If they thought this goalkeeper was amazing, they would simply try harder to beat him.

They would try:

- Curling the ball around him
- Hitting it high
- Hitting it low
- Volleying it
- Faking shots
- They would try everything in their power to score that goal, and they would do this with different options and choices that they would make!

Alan Shearer became a legend because he became a natural at seeing a goalkeeper's weakness (creating opportunities for him) and them exploiting these opportunities whenever he got that chance.

Players like Alan do not become living legends by accident.

And in a way, you must be like this centre forward trying to find ways to put yourself in the shop window to become a professional footballer.

When Alan Shearer was starting out, do you think there were other centre forwards his age, with his playing ability?

Probably?

However, do you think that they had his HUNGER to work hard, keep persisting, not giving up when he

got rejected as a youngster, and trying to improve his game to be the best in his position?

Probably not!

So you have to be like these centre forwards and not give up just because one or two of your shots gets saved – or one or two of your letters get ignored.

By writing this book for you, I have hopefully given you enough options and choices for you to at least do **more than the average when contacting professional football clubs.**

It's now up to you (or your parent if they are doing this on your behalf).

The only thing I cannot do for you, is make you **ACT** on the information given within this training book.

Some of you will act on this information and will use it to create trials for yourself and hopefully put yourself in the shop window to achieve your dream of becoming a professional footballer.

Others will not act on this information provided and not put themselves in this shop window.

This is now up to you!

What shop window do you want to be in?

The techniques in this training book worked for me, and can work for you. I now wish with **all my heart** that you achieve your dream of becoming a professional goalkeeper.

Even though my career was only short and I never reached my full potential because of my premature injury, it was the best experience of my life.

So I urge you to chase YOUR dream!

Your friend

Ray Newland

Breakdown of how to get to a professional football club:

1: Remember, if you are under 15 it's not the end of the world if you are not at a professional football club's academy or centre of excellence.

However, you **must** get professional coaching to keep level with your peers who are getting coached, even if it is at an independent soccer school, run by a **doer -** an ex-professional.

Also you have to realise that you GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR in this world. Gone are the days where you pay £2 per session in a coaching school. Actually these classes are still out there, but the coach will be mediocre and the results you will get for your (child's) development will also be mediocre!

If you are a parent who will not pay the £5-£10 per session that is now the going rate for specialist coaching and development for your child, there is nothing that I can say to help you!

We are becoming more and more like the USA, where people pay for the **best** coaching and development for their child. Remember, cheap coaching and free coaching is normally **not an advantage.**

That is why they are cheap or free!

2: Ideally when you are 15 years old, start contacting football clubs by any of the methods that are within this book.

3: Make sure that you have **two irons in the fire.** Always have a second career in mind and NEVER neglect your education.

4: Try and get as many reputable people as possible to recommend your playing abilities, as this will give you an advantage.

5: Remember, no's are part and parcel of trying to make the grade, so you have to be ready for them and not let them effect your confidence.

In football, no does not mean no… it means 'not yet'

6: Know when to quit!

Do not be like my friend's friend, who was still trying to chase his dreams at age twenty-nine. Only you will know when it's time to quit, but if you have two irons in the fire, this will make this process easier.

But I believe you have a window between the ages of 17yrs to 22yrs to get into a pro club.

7: Give something back! If you do make the grade and become a professional, when you come to the end of your career, please promise me this… that **you give something back to the children in your area!!!**

Frustratingly, there are not enough ex-professionals who come out of the game and offer their experience to help young hopefuls.

Please do not be one of these selfish people and please make sure (even in a small way) that you give something back!

Many foreigners in our leagues, when their careers finish will go back to their home country, leaving a MASSIVE void of ex-professionals going into coaching in the UK.

So the children in other countries are getting the advantage of their player's experience from playing in our leagues.

Sad, frustratingly annoying but true!

So please give something back!

I wish you all the luck in the world!

Ray Newland

Glove sponsorship!

If you are a goalkeeper, I would like to sponsor you no matter how old!

Just4keepers has its own range of gloves on the market. (See below just a few).

Please check out www.freegoalkeepergloves.com









Other things that Ray Newland is involved with to help goalkeepers achieve their dream.

www.totalgoalkeeping.com

www.goalkeeperagent.com

www.goalkeeperscholarship.com

www.goalkeeperglovesforsale.com

www.j4k.tv

www.just4keepers.net

As it's a pain getting contact details of professional clubs, I have done this for you **saving you MONTHS of work!**

AFC Bournemouth FC The Fitness First Stadium at Dean Court Bournemouth Dorset BH7 7AF	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01202 726300 01202 726301 admin@afcb.co.uk www.afcb.co.uk
Brighton & Hove Albion FC Ground Address: Withdean Stadium Tongdean Lane Brighton BN1 5JD		
Admin Address North West Suite 8th Floor, Tower Point 44 North Road Brighton East Sussex BN1 1YR	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01273 695400 01273 648179 - www.seagulls.co.uk
Bristol Rovers FC The Memorial Stadium Filton Avenue Horfield Bristol	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0117 909 6648 0117 907 4312 admin@bristolrovers.co.uk www.bristolrovers.co.uk

Carlisle United FC Brunton Park Warwick Road, Carlisle CA1 1LL	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01228 526237 01228 554141 enquiries@carlisleunited.co.uk www.carlisleunited.co.uk
Cheltenham Town FC Whaddon Road Cheltenham Gloucester GL52 5NA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01242 573558 01242 224675 info@ctfc.com www.ctfc.com
Crewe Alexandra FC Alexandra Stadium Gresty Road Crewe CW2 6EB	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01270 213014 01270 216320 info@crewealex.net www.crewealex.net
Doncaster Rovers FC Keepmoat Stadium Stadium Way Lakeside Doncaster DN4 5JW	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01302 539441 01302 539679 info@doncasterroversfc.co.uk www.doncasterroversfc.co.uk
Gillingham FC Priestfield Stadium Redfern Avenue Gillingham Kent ME7 4DD	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01634 300000 01634 850986 info@gillinghamfootballclub.com www.gillinghamfootballclub.com

Hartlepool United FC Victoria Ground Clarence Road Hartlepool Cleveland TS24 8BZ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01429 272584 01429 863007 info@hartlepoolunited.co.uk www.hartlepoolunited.co.uk
Huddersfield Town FC The Galpharm Stadium Huddersfield HD1 6PX	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01484 484100 01484 484101 diane@htafc@btinternet.com www.htafc.com
Leeds United FC Elland Road Leeds LS11 0ES	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0113 367 6000 0113 367 6050 football@leedsunited.com www.leedsunited.com
Leyton Orient FC Matchroom Stadium Brisbane Road Leyton London E10 5NE	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0208 926 1111 0208 926 1110 info@leytonorient.net www.leytonorient.com
Luton Town FC Kenilworth Stadium 1 Maple Road Luton Bedfordshire LU4 8AW	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01582 411622 01582 405070 mailto:lutontown.co.uk www.lutontown.co.uk

Millwall FC The Den Zampa Road London, SE16 3LN	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	020 7232 1222 020 7231 3663 info@millwallplc.com www.millwall.co.uk
Northampton Town FC Sixfields Stadium Upton Way Northampton NN5 5QA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01604 757773 01604 751613 secretary@ntfc.tv www.ntfc,co.uk
Nottingham Forest FC City Ground Pavilion Road West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 5FJ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0115 982 4444 0115 982 4455 enquiries@nottinghamforest.co.uk www.nottinghamforest.co.uk

Oldham Athletic FC Boundary Park Oldham OL1 2PA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	08712 262235 0161 627 5915 - www.oldhamathlectic.co.uk
Port Vale FC Vale Park Burslem Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST6 1AW	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01782 655800 01782 834981 - www.port-vale.co.uk
Southend United FC Roots Hall Victoria Avenue Southend-on-Sea Essex SS2 6NQ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 174 2000 01702 304124 info@southendunited.co.uk www.southendunited.co.uk
Swansea City FC Liberty Stadium Swansea SA1 2FA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01792 616600 01792 616606 - www.swanseacity.net
Swindon Town FC County Ground County Road Swindon Wiltshire SN1 2ED	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 443 1969 01793 333703 - www.swindontownfc.co.uk

Tranmere Rovers Tel: 0151 609 3333 Football Admin

FC Prenton Park Prenton Road West Birkenhead, Wirral CH42 9PY	Fax: Email: Web:	0151 608 4724 - www.tranmererovers.co.uk
Walsall FC Bescot Stadium Bescot Crescent Walsall West Midlands WS1 4SA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01922 622791 01922 613202 info@wallsallfc.co.uk www.saddlers.co.uk
Yeovil Town FC Huish Park Luton Way Yeovil Somerset BA22 8YF	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 777 1922 0870 774 1993 cotton@yeoviltownfc.demon.co.uk www.ytfc.net

Accrington Stanley FC The Interlink Express Stadium Livingstone Road Accrington Lancashire BB5 5BX	Telephone Facsimile Email Website	01254 356950 01254 356951 info@accringtonstanley.co.uk www.accringtonstanley.co.uk
Barnet FC Underhill Stadium Barnet Lane Barnet Herts. EN5 2BE	Telephone Facsimile Email Website	0208 441 6932 0208 447 0655 info@barnetfc.com www.barnetfc.com
Bradford City FC Bradford and Bingley Stadium Valley Parade Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 7DY	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 822 000 01274 773356 bradfordcityfc@compuserve.com www.bradfordcityfc.co.uk
Brentford FC Griffin Park Braemar Road Brentford Middlesex TW8 0NT	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 900 9229 0208 568 9940 - www.brentfordfc.co.uk
Bury FC Gigg Lane Bury BL9 9HR	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0161 764 4881 0161 764 5521 admin@buryfc.co.uk www.buryfc.co.uk

Chester City FC The Saunders Honda Stadium Bumpers Lance Chester CH1 4LT	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01244 371376 01244 390265 infor@chestercityfc.net WWW.chestercityfc.net
Chesterfield FC Recreation Ground Saltergate Chesterfield Derbyshire S40 4SX	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01246 209765 01246 556799 reception@chesterfield-fc.co.uk www.chesterfield-fc.co.uk
Dagenham and Redbridge FC Glyn Hopkin Stadium Victoria Road Dagenham Essex RM10 7XL	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0208 592 7194/1549 0208 593 7227 info@daggers.co.uk www.daggers.co.uk
Darlington FC The New Stadium Hurworth Moor Neasham Road Darlington DL2 1GR	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01325 387000 01325 387050 - www.darlington-fc.net
Grimsby Town FC Blundell Park Cleethorpes North East Lincolnshire N35 7PY	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01472 605050 01472 693665 enquiries@gtfc.co.uk www.gtfc.co.uk

Hereford United FC	Telephone	01432 276666
Edgar Street	Facsimile	01432 341359
Hereford	Email	hufc1939@hotmail.com
HR4 9JU	Website	www.herefordunited.co.uk
Lincoln City FC	Tel:	0870 899 2005
Sincil Bank	Fax:	01522 880020
Lincoln	Email:	-
LN5 8LD	Web:	www.redimps.com
Macclesfield Town FC	Tel:	01625 264686
Moss Rose Ground	Fax:	01625 264692
London Road	Email:	admin@mtfc.co.uk
Macclesfield	Web:	www.mtfc.co.uk
Cheshire		
SK11 7SP		
Mansfield Town FC	Tel:	0870 756 3160
Field Mill Ground	Fax:	01623 482495
Quarry Lane	Email:	mtfc@stags.plus.com
Mansfield	Web:	www.mansfieldtown.net
Nottinghamshire		
NG18 5DA		
Milton Keynes Dons FC	Tel:	01908 622880
Stadium Mk	Fax:	01908 622943
Stadium Way West	Email:	info@mkdons.com
Milton Keynes	Web:	www.mkdons.com
Bucks		
MK1 1ST		

Morecambe FC	Tel:	01524 411797
Christie Park	Fax:	01524 832230
Lancaster Road	Email:	office@morecambefc.com
Morecambe	Web:	www.morecambefc.com
LA4 5TJ		
Notts County FC	Tel:	0115 952 9000
Meadow Lane	Fax:	0115 955 3994
Nottingham	Email:	info@nottscountyfc.co.uk
NG2 3HJ	Web:	www.nottscountyfc.co.uk
Peterborough United FC	Tel:	01733 563947
London Road Stadium	Fax:	01733 344140
London Road	Email:	-
Peterborough	Web:	www.theposh.com
PE2 8AL		

Barnsley FC Oakwell Stadium Barnsley South Yorkshire S71 1ET	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01226 211211 01226 211444 thereds@barnsleyfc.co.uk www.barnsley.co.uk
Blackpool FC Bloomfield Road Blackpool Lancashire FY1 6JJ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 443 1953 01253 405011 info@blackpoolfc.co.uk www.blackpoolfc.co.uk
Bristol City FC Ashton Gate Stadium Bristol BS3 2EJ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0117 963 630 0117 963 641 commercial@bcfc.co.uk www.bcfc.co.uk
Burnley FC Turf Moor Harry Potts Way Burnley Lancashire BB10 4BX	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 443 1882 01282 700014 - www.burnleyfootballclub.com
Cardiff City FC Ninian Park Sloper Road Cardiff CF11 8SX	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	029 20 22 1001 029 20 34 1148 club@cardiffcity.co.uk www.cardiffcity.co.uk
Charlton Athletic FC The Valley Floyd Road Charlton London SE7 8BL	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0208 333 4000 0208 333 4001 info@cafc.co.uk www.cafc.co.uk

Colchester United FC Layer Road Colchester Essex CO2 7JJ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0871 226 2161 01206 715327 editor@colchesterunited.net www.cu-fc.com
Coventry City FC Highfield Road Stadium King Richard Street Coventry CV6 6GE	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 421 1987 0870 421 1988 info@ccfc.co.uk www.ccfc.co.uk
Crystal Palace FC Selhurst Park London SE25 6PU	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0208 768 6000 0208 771 5311 info@cpfc.co.uk www.cpfc.co.uk
Hull City FC Kingston Communications Stadium The Circle Walton Street Anlaby Road Hull HU36 6HU	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 837 0003 01482 304882 - www.hullcityafc.net
All Football related correspondence for Phil Hough to be sent to:- Hull City AFC Training Ground Mill House Woods Lane Cottingham East Yorkshire HU16 4HB		

Ipswich Town FC Portman Road Ipswich IP1 2DA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01473 400500 01473 400040 enquiries@itfc.co.uk www.itfc.co.uk	
Leicester City FC Ground address: The Walkers Stadium Filbert Street Leicester LE2 7FL	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 040 6000 0116 291 5278 - www.lcfc.com	Main switchboard
Training Ground and Football Admin Offices Middlesex Road Aylestone Leicester LE2 8PB	Tel: Fax:	0116 291 5279 0116 291 5278	Football Admin
Norwich City FC Carrow Road Norwich NR1 1JE	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01603 760760 01603 613886 reception@ncfc-canaries.co.uk www.canaries.co.uk	
Plymouth Argyle FC Home Park Plymouth PL2 3DQ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01752 562561 01752 609121 argyle@pafc.co.uk www.pafc.co.uk	
Preston North End FC Sir Tom Finney Way Deepdale Preston Lancashire PR1 6RU	Tel: Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	08704 421964 01772 693305 01772 693367 - www.pne.com	Main Switchboard Football Admin Football Admin

Team Manager Arsenal FC Emirates Stadium 75 Drayton Park Highbury London N5 1BU	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0207 704 4000 0207 704 4001 info@arsenal.co.uk www.arsenal.com
Aston Villa FC Villa Park Birmingham B6 6HE	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0121 327 2299 0121 322 2107 postmaster@astonvilla-fc.co.uk www.avfc.co.uk
Birmingham City FC St Andrew's Stadium Birmingham B9 4NH	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	08445 571875 08445 571975 reception@bcfc.co.uk www.bcfc.com
Blackburn Rovers FC Ewood Park Blackburn Lancashire BB2 4JF	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	08701 113232 01254 671042 enquiries@rovers.co.uk www.rovers.co.uk
Bolton Wanderers FC The Reebok Stadium Burnden Way Bolton BL6 6JW	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01204 673673 01204 673773 reception@bwfc.co.uk www.bwfc.co.uk

Chelsea FC Stamford Bridge Fulham Road London SW6 1HS	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0207 385 5545 0207 381 4831 - www.chelseafc.com
***	S/board	0870 300 1212

***

Correspondence address
Training Ground
60 Stoke Road
Cobham
Surrey
KT11 3PT

Derby County FC Pride Park Stadium Pride Park Derby DE24 8XL	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 444 1884 01332 667519 derby.county@dcfc.co.uk www.dcfc.co.uk
Everton FC Goodison Park Goodison Road Liverpool L4 4EL	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 442 1878 0151 286 9112 everton@evertonfc.com www.evertonfc.com
Fulham FC * Ground address: Craven Cottage	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0870 442 1222 (main switchboard) 0870 442 0236 enquiries@fulhamfc.com www.fulhamfc.com

Stevenage
Road
Fulham
London
SW6 6HH ***

***
Correspondence
Address:
The Training
Ground
Motspur Park
New Malden
Surrey
KT3 6PT

Liverpool FC	Tel:	0151 263 2361
Anfield Road	Fax:	0151 260 8813
Liverpool	Email:	www.liverpoolfc.tv
L4 0TH	Web:	www.liverpoolfc.tv

Manchester City	Tel:	0870 062 1894 Main Switchboard
FC	Fax:	0161 438 7999
City of	Email:	mcfc@mcfc.co.uk
Manchester	Web:	www.mcfc.co.uk
Stadium		
Sportcity		
Manchester		
M11 3FF		

Manchester	Tel:	0161 868 8000 Main Switchboard
United FC	Fax:	0161 868 8804
Sir Matt Busby	Email:	enquiries@manutd.co.uk
Way	Web:	www.manutd.com
Old Trafford		
Manchester		
M16 0RA		

Newcastle	Tel:	0191 201 8400

United FC St James' Park Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 4ST	Fax: Email: Web:	0191 201 8600 admin@nufc.co.uk www.nufc.co.uk	
Portsmouth FC Fratton Park Frogmore Road Portsmouth PO4 8RA	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	023 9273 1204 023 9273 4129 info@pompeyfc.co.uk www.pompeyfc.co.uk	
Reading FC Madejski Stadium Junction 11 M4 Reading RG2 0FL ***	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0118 968 1100 0118 968 1101 comments@reading.co.uk www.readingfc.co.uk	
*** Correspondence address The Training Ground Hogwood Park Park Lane Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 4PT	Tel: Fax:	01189 762988 (Switchboard) 07789 761973	
Sunderland FC Stadium of Light Sunderland SR5 1SU	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0191 551 5000 0191 551 5123 enquiries@safc.com www.safc.com	
Tottenham Hotspur FC	Tel: Fax:	0870 420 5000 Switchboard	Main

Bill Nicholson Way 748 High Road Tottenham London N17 OAP	Email: Web:	0208 506 9048 Main Fax email@tottenhamhotspur.com www.tottenhamhotspur.com
West Ham United FC Boleyn Ground Green Street Upton Park London E13 9AZ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	0208 548 2748 0208 548 2758 yourcomments@westhamunited.co.uk www.whufc.co.uk
Wigan Athletic FC The JJB Stadium Robin Park Complex Newtown Wigan WN5 0UZ	Tel: Fax: Email: Web:	01942 774000 01942 770477 feedback@jjbstadium.co.uk www.wiganathlectic.tv