

Programme Notes v Crewe

Good afternoon and a warm welcome to our visitors from Cheshire for the final game of the season against Crewe. With nothing to play for apart from pride for either team, and with a number of youngsters likely to be included in all or part of the game, it will hopefully be an open and entertaining.

Our visitors of course are renowned for developing players from their academy and it is great to see we are doing the same with the announcement this week that a further three players (Jock Curran, Brandon Buckley and Roman Burrell) have been offered professional contracts. This is on top of Ollie Battersby and Matty Pollock announced earlier in season and with Harry Clifton, Max Wright and Akeem Rose already part of the squad that makes eight of next seasons squad will have come through the academy in the last two years. Also it must have been a very close call for the likes of Ollie Saunders, Tom Jamieson and Kyle Richardson which goes to show the strength of the current crop from the academy and we hope they have been successful today in their final game of the season against Lincoln which, depending on Doncaster's result, could see the U18's confirmed as league champions. In what has generally proved to be a frustrating season the emergence of the youngsters has been a massive positive and augers well for the future. With other young players already in the squad such as Jake Hessenthaler, Harry Cardwell and Charles Vernam the average age of the squad will be one of the youngest for a very long time and supplemented by a few quality summer signings we can look forward with optimism. If you would like to see for yourself how some of the younger kids in the academy are developing, then come along to Blundell Park tomorrow to watch the academy take on Notts Forest at all age groups up to U16. Entry is free (main stand entrance) and starts at 10am through to around 4pm, there is a BBQ and the bar is open!

Today we are pleased to host 16 of our Junior Members for the match day experience which includes playing on the pitch at half time as well as meeting the players. They are winners of a free prize draw and this is just one of the activities we do for juniors throughout the year. Membership for juniors is just £5 per year and is we are currently working with the club to enhance even further some of the benefits for our junior members. Details of how to join can be found on our website www.marinerstrust.co.uk or contact us by e-mailing enquiries@marinerstrust.co.uk.

It was disappointing to hear this week that the club was one of only a handful of clubs not to receive a gold standard from the EFL for Family Excellence. We have obtained a copy of the report and the biggest single mark down was to do with signage and website information for first time visitors and frustratingly some of this criticism has subsequently proved to be unfounded. The scores are based on two spot visits, the Oldham and Newport games, and although procedures were identical for both the scores for some of the criteria from the adjudicators were markedly different. What the report has done is identified a number of very quick wins which we are going to work on with the club and make sure they are in place for the start next season. Whilst on the subject of family supporters, today sees the final game for Jill Dobbs who is retiring after 26 years of being the coordinator in the family lounge. Jill has done a fantastic job over the years and will be sorely missed by all the regulars in the lounge. Good Luck Jill and happy retirement.

Finally, a reminder of a couple of dates for your diary. Firstly, on June 1st we have our first of what we hope will be an annual Real Ale and Cider festival. It is being held in the Trust bar and starts at 11am through to around 9pm. As well as the beers we have fantastic Indian food from Masala

Masters, live music and GTFC footage on screens. Entrance is free and weather permitting we will have seating and activities outside as well as in the bar. Just before the season starts, we are collaborating with the club to put on the annual fun day which this year will be on Sunday July 28th. More details will be issued nearer the time, but we are planning for it will be bigger and better than ever.

Enjoy the match and enjoy the summer. See you next season. UTM