

# HIT THE BAR!

Christmas  
2020

£1



## MERRY CHRISTMAS

Dear Santa, Please can I have blah de blah de blah...oh, and can you fix it for Jon Mellish to not be transferred in the January Window



*"The longest running UK football fanzine in continuous print circulation"*



# FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

## DECEMBER

19 Forest Green	A
26 Bolton	H
29 Harrogate	A

## JANUARY

2 Walsall	A
9 Leyton Orient	H
16 Mansfield	A
23 Forest Green	H
26 Newport	A
30 Exeter	H

## FEBRUARY

6 Cheltenham	A
13 Crawley	H
20 Salford	A
23 Tranmere	H
27 Oldham	H

## MARCH

2 Colchester	A
6 Morecambe	A
9 Grimsby	H

13 Bradford H

20 Stevenage A

27 Cambridge H

## APRIL

2 Southend A

5 Scunthorpe H

10 Barrow A

17 Port Vale H

20 Bolton A

24 Harrogate H

## MAY

1 Leyton Orient A

8 Walsall H



# Contents

Join the London Branch	4
Editors Bleat	5
Chairman's Craic	7
CUSG 2020 Review	10
Keep the Faith	12
Festive Fixtures	14
In off the Post	15
Branch Funding Update	16
Brunton Park Diary	18
What did you expect?	35
The Kids Re-United	39
United 1-0 Mansfield In pictures	42
Branch Committee Contacts	43
Credits and Thanks	44



# THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

## JOIN THE LONDON BRANCH TODAY!

The London Branch welcomes all Carlisle United supporters living in exile. Membership brings your personal copy of HTB! along with Virtual Hit the Bar! the invaluable e-mail bulletin. You 'll get news of our special programme of virtual events, including matchday experiences, Q&A sessions with CUFC officials, players, former players and most of all, keeping you in touch with fellow branch members.

Visit: [www.carlislelondonbranch.org](http://www.carlislelondonbranch.org) for details

Join: online at [www.carlislelondonbranch.org/join/online/](http://www.carlislelondonbranch.org/join/online/)

Contact: Peter Smithson, Great Gable, Sheephouse Road, Maidenhead, SL6 8HB  
or call 07979 700 275



# EDITOR'S BLEAT



## HAPPY CHRIS(BEECH)MAS AND WELCOME TO HTB 314!

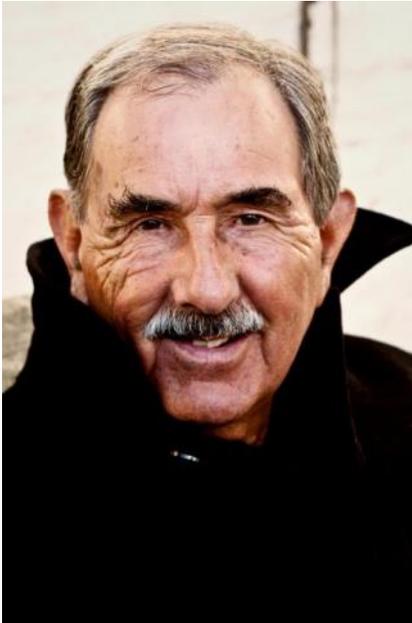
I tempted fate and held off writing my 'bleat' until after the Mansfield game. Thankfully, the team once again did us proud and put on a very professional performance, scoring a quality goal and chalking up another clean sheet. So let's thank Chris Beech, the playing squad and everyone at Brunton Park for giving us exciting, high energy football and great results over these recent months. Despite the nagging worry that the lesson of lockdown is that team performs better when we aren't there, I can't wait to see these players in the flesh—how great it would have been to be at Crawley and Bradford.

For both footballing and financial reasons it was disappointing to lose to Doncaster Rovers in the FA Cup, but it showed that our relatively inexperienced team can compete individually and collectively against a good League One side. Given the relentless fixture list and our current healthy league position, perhaps the distraction of a 'glamour tie' and more games to play was best avoided. We've seen a few too many times in seasons past, how injuries in January can derail what was shaping up to be a good season. The broken collar bone suffered by George Tanner in the closing minutes against Stevenage show how easy it is to lose key players.

The other lesson of lock down is how well the branch can keep members in touch



and engaged through the use of 'Zoom' events . In the pages that follow there's a report on the 'Kids are United' evening. This featured former United youth players, Matt Jansen, Paul Murray and Tony Caig along with Dave Wilkes and Robbie Earle from the current academy. Like the evening with Jon Colman, this was a great night, again hosted by Simon Clarkson, for whom a second career as a chat show host surely beckons.



**Chairman Dave Brown invited author, journalist, broadcaster and more importantly, branch vice-president, Hunter Davies to our virtual Xmas party and was delighted to receive the following reply:**

*Hi David, Cant make it - I am 85 and can't fiddle the knobs much or zoom into Zoom - but I'm endlessly mentioning CUFC in my 'Cumbria Life' column . I lie awake at night thinking yes, this will be the season they go up, yes, this will be their turn around year. Then I wonder fantasise, if in my life time will I see them back at the top of the tops, as they were on Aug 24th, 1974. Ah I remember it well. I still have that league table framed on my wall. Good luck to the team, the club and all its supporters.*

(Photo: United Agents)

You'll read in Dave Browns' article on page 16 about our support for the CUFC academy, so it's a good time to congratulate the Youth team for their recent run in the FA Youth Cup. It ended with a narrow 0-1 defeat at Brunton Park in a high quality game against Category 1 club Blackburn Rovers, in the third round proper of this season's competition. Thanks to the CUFC media team, we've been able to watch the matches on YouTube and see that the next generation of players share the playing style and high tempo of the first team.

**Have a safe and Happy Christmas. Let's hope we can meet at an away ground before too long to see this exciting United team finish the season in style.**

Up the Blues

John B



# Notes from the Chair

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, Carlisle v Salford, should become another date in the Carlisle United legends calendar – the day the crowd returned to Brunton Park, the day the Paddock displayed a positivity that has never been seen before, the day that Carlisle fans started to believe that promotion is a real possibility.**



We have to give a huge thanks and appreciation to Nigel Clibbens and his team at the club for the way they got the game set up and people in the ground safely. We also have to say that Nigel has generated a positivity around the club in the last 12 months that has been great to see – his desire to communicate with fans has been immense. When EWM went into administration he was honest and effective

in saying he didn't know what would happen but kept everyone up to date. Honesty and transparency are the first steps -once all the owners and directors display that we will be on the real up.

In regard to crowds in the ground, it seems that there are only 300 tickets for general sale at this time. As a member you are entitled to use one of the two branch season tickets. It will cost you £12 or nothing if you have never used them before. To book the tickets contact Howard Atkinson 10 days before you would like to go [seasontickets@cusclub.com](mailto:seasontickets@cusclub.com). Be aware you will not be allowed to attend if you live in a tier 3 area and you must wear a mask.

Online events have continued to go



from strength to strength – if you haven't been on one yet get onto Zoom. The nights with Jon Colman on his "Bolts from the Blues" book launch and Robbie Edgar and Dave Wilkes on the Academy set up were fantastic and greatly aided by having ex-players like Derek Asamoah and Matt Jansen there on the nights. Our next night is a London Branch Xmas party on the 16<sup>th</sup> December where you will see the musical talent within the branch, some embarrassing pics of the committee and a Xmas quiz. <https://zoom.us/j/7286019415>

The Hit The Virtual Bar – the branch's pub is open every match day – join us 1 hour before a game, HT and full time to celebrate, argue or commiserate. <https://zoom.us/j/7286019415>

I have been delighted with the financial support that we have been giving to the club and particularly to our youth and community team from your generosity. We have just approved a donation to the academy (7-16 year olds) for nearly £3,000 to buy equipment at Frenchfields – the training ground at Penrith. On top of all the other support that we have provided for the club ranging from cameras for training to refurbishing the Glass Bar we have been doing our club well to the tune of £10,000 per season from

the subs and donations that you provide.

It has been good as well to see CUOSC (Supporters Trust) getting to £12,500 in their Carlisle Reunited campaign which I know that many members have supported and they have now bought their first item for the club – a Nordbord that is needed for rehabilitation of hamstring injuries. Well done, CUOSC.

The pandemic has meant that Andy Hall and Dave Wilkes have been filming the youth team (U18s) for fans to



watch on the Carlisle United Youtube Channel. Mike Kilner has long raved about our centre forward, 16 year old Sam Fishburn, who he sees as a real star in the making. Last weekend he got 4! Unfortunately Tuesday this week wasn't to be the fairytale we hoped after beating Bradford in the last round. We played Blackburn Rovers, a Category 1 youth set up (we are a category 3) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the FA



youth Cup at Brunton Park and lost 1-0. In the first half they showed their class and scored a great goal; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> we were all over them – had two chances cleared off the line, hit the cross bar and Sam missed two chances he would normally have buried. Blackburn felt lucky to get through. Try watching the youth team on youtube – you will be delighted at what you may be watching in a couple of years.

Any organisation is only as good as its members and we feel that our members are the best. We have to recognise that a lot of our members are over 50 and we desperately need to attract under 50s as well as over 50s. I have chatted to members who say that they know Carlisle United fans nearby. In one case there were two other fans in the same small village in Gloucestershire, in another he worked with 3 Carlisle fans in a building project in Dubai. If you meet a Carlisle fan get them to contact us [chairman@cusclub.com](mailto:chairman@cusclub.com). One fan joined us 3 weeks ago, and he was given a ticket for the next game. Can't promise often but we do a lot, give a lot of information, provide a lot to the club we love and deliver a lot of value – all for £10 for the first year - £20 ongoing (U25s £5). Pass on the name and phone number to a Carlisle fan near you.

I wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe Christmas and a wonderful New Year

***Dave Brown***

**EFL Clubs across the country united last week to raise awareness of Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign.**

The focus of this year's campaign is ensuring a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all whether we're together, apart, online or on the pitch, as we collectively work to Make Sport Everyone's Game. Taken before the recent thrashing of Stevenage, branch **CUSG reps Terry McCarthy and vice chairman Simon Clarkson** show their support for inclusivity. (pic courtesy of Barbara Abbott)



# CUSG 2020 Review



**At the risk of stating the obvious, in common with most of football the activities of CUSG during 2020 were severely limited because of Covid 19.**

There were two meetings prior to games being postponed in March. Before the lockdown the group hosted a Fans Forum where directors, Nigel Clibbens and David Holdsworth answered fans questions. It had been planned to host another Fans Forum with manager Chris Beech. This will now hopefully be held early in the new year and may be a Zoom event which would allow branch members to take part.

In the week in which the first Lock-down was announced I took delivery

of 750 94/95 Commemorative Pin Badges. It was planned to sell these badges at the Leyton Orient 'Good Vibrations' game in March, and at a commemorative dinner for the 94/95 squad. Neither of these events took place. The group is now promoting the sale of these badges at home games and through The Blues Store. \*

Once the the start of the new season was announced CUSG started meeting again. Three Zoom meetings have been held since August. Because of the restrictions imposed by the second lockdown and Cumbria's Tier 2 status CUSG's focus has been on engagement rather than action. The group were able to help and support the club in producing the Code of Conduct for fans returning to Brunton Park. By common consent, the club's communication with fans since the first lockdown has been excellent, and wherever possible the constituent CUSG supporters groups have sought to reinforce and explain these communications to their members.

Because Brunton Park has been closed to the public for much of this year, the planned refurbishment and renaming



of a number of the bars in the ground did not take place. At the beginning of December a new plan was agreed to deliver on these projects, and it is hoped that work will start on refurbishing The Sporting Inn (which will be renamed Murphy's Bar) in January. The London Branch have ring fenced funds to be used in refurbishing The Sunset Suite and renaming it The Glass Bar. Additional funding will be sought from supporters groups for this project to ensure that the project delivers a meaningful refurbishment. One thing that has continued throughout the year is supporters donating CUFC memorabilia to the group, this should ensure some interesting wall coverings and displays in the refurbished bars.



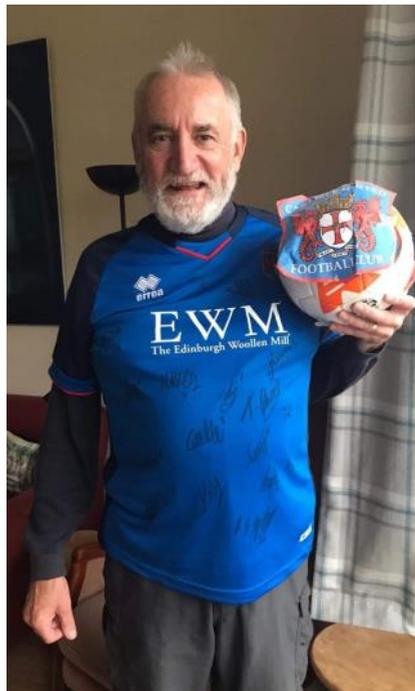
Other than the sale of the 94/95 pin badges there was little opportunity for fund raising in 2020. However, the group did provide funding to the club's academy which allowed them to purchase equipment for the filming and streaming of academy and youth team activities.

## Get your pin badge

Contact Terry McCarthy (mccarthy178@btinternet.com ) and provide your home address. The badges cost £4 (£3 + £1 pp) and the cost will be charged to your TDS account.

## AND THE WINNER IS....

**Robert Calvert models his home signed shirt, donated by Carlisle United that he won in the raffle at the branch AGM in October.**



# Keep the Faith



**At the time of writing we are handily placed in fourth with over a third of the season played.** With a fair wind, which means the COVID-19 situation improving and not too many injuries, it will be disappointing not to make the play-offs at least, and you have to believe that an automatic promotion spot is within reach. Mind you, we've been here before and not that long ago. I do think, however, we look more resilient, with greater strength in depth, than the last couple of times we had similar thoughts. We can, hopefully, avoid the injury crisis and dip in form we suffered at the begin-

ning of 2017 under Keith Curle, or the slump from mid-February 2019 under Steven Pressley. This time around we have decent back up players in all positions, although an extension to Rhys Bennett's contract would help a lot.

In the meantime the pandemic goes on. **It is fantastic that 2,000 fans can currently go to matches to urge the team on and see us playing well and winning.** It has been an uplifting experience for us Blues fans unable to attend to be able to watch the Blues performing so well on i-follow, and has been something to really look forward to in these grim times.

Today there was a lot of hope for a better 2001 with the first vaccines administered. **At the moment I'm optimistic that we, by which I mean exiled supporters, can get back to supporting the team live on a regular basis before the end of the season.**

Until such a time though, it looks like I'll be continuing with i-follow and hitting the virtual bar for my Saturday football fix. For those branch members who are able to get to Carlisle,



but don't have a season ticket, then there is the option of one of the two branch season tickets providing you apply 10 days before the match, so it will need some advance planning.

**The threat of the EFL lower league clubs' imminent financial collapse has receded with the announcement of the deal with the Premier League to provide £50m of financial support to Leagues 1 and 2.**

This makes £30m immediately available. The £30m grant is based on lost gate receipts, with League One clubs receiving a minimum payment of £375,000 and League Two clubs £250,000. Half of that £30m will then be distributed based on a "lost gate revenue share calculation". The remaining £20m will allow clubs to apply based on "need".

**This doesn't mean necessarily that clubs are out of the woods financially; savings will still have to be made and**

the support of supporters, either through the gate or via i-follow, is a big help to the club. The spectre of the unknowns regarding EWM and administration still loom over the club as well.

Since the last issue of Hit the Bar was published in early November, there has been another excellent online event organised by the London Branch. The 'Kids are United' event on Zoom went really well and was another great example of how branch members, as well as supporters generally, can come together during these times of social distancing. All the special guests spoke really well so it was an illuminating and enjoyable session for all involved. I'm now looking forward to the Branch Xmas party on Zoom next week.

**Finally, I'd like to wish branch members, all United fans, players and staff a happy and successful festive season despite the current difficulties.**

**Up the Blues and keep the faith,**

**Ken Hullock**





# In off the Post!

editor@cusclb.com



Dear Sir, I attach a photo of the branch 5 a side football time for either the 1985 or 1986 APFSCIL annual 5 a side tournament held at Harrow Leisure Centre each summer on a Sunday. I was non-playing captain, organiser, kitman & general dogsbody. Mike Cheshire who was a member for many years has been dredging through old files and came across this photo which presumably I took.

We have managed to identify all but one player. Several of whom are still members I think. **They are from bottom right Micky Driver, Alistair Blackett, Ray Cuneen & John Heslop. Top row from left is Andy Jaworski, unidentified & Mike Cheshire.** It is possible top middle is a ringer we roped in from a team with more players than needed. But if anyone out there can identify him please feel free to get in touch.



Yours sincerely, *Howard Atkinson*



# BRANCH FUNDING UPDATE



October's committee meeting had one of the easiest funding requests ever, **agreeing nearly £3,000 to purchase of equipment to be used by the Carlisle United academy** at their training centre at the Frenchfield Sports Centre in Penrith. The academy covers elite players from the age of 7 to age 16, when they join the youth set up. **Robbie Edgar, Lead Foundation Phase Coach** and **Dave Wilkes, Head of Academy** explained at our recent online event how important that equipment will be. Matt Jansen, Tony Caig, and Paul Murray emphasised how important the academy was to Carlisle's future as well as saying how

important the academy and Dave Wilkes was to their career. Robbie said that some of our year groups are better than any in the North West including the biggest teams. Until now they have had to hunt down the equipment needed, which has taken valuable time from the coaches and there was no indication that we represented the club. No more; when their programme re starts they will have brand spanking new nets, respect banners, a 'v' board, corner poles and flags, all proudly emblazoned with CUFC and CUSCLB logos.

It was good to hear this week from



Terry McCarthy, after the CUSG meeting, that he and Simon Clarkson will soon be meeting Nigel Clibbens in the soon to be named **Glass Bar to discuss how our reserved funds from the sales of Jimmy Glass tee shirts and ale will be used in the refurbishment.**

It was also good to know that soon, paid for by reserved funds from the London Branch, plans will be drawn up by an architect for **new facilities for disabled in Brunton Park.** This hits two of our ticks – disabled support and seed support, as once these are done the disabled group will be able to apply for various grants.

**Against Salford we finally got crowds back into the crowd. Remember that we are funding two season tickets for the paddock that can be used by any member.** Email Howard Atkinson, [seasontickets@cusclb.com](mailto:seasontickets@cusclb.com) at least 5 days in advance to ask to reserve these tickets. Some rules apply; you will not be allowed in to the ground if you are from a tier 3 area, so check with Howard first, the first ever time that you use them will be free – after that it will cost you £12 compared to £18 on the day.

It was good to see so many members and non-members at the Jon Colman virtual book night (which was a cracker). All those that registered were invited to buy a copy of Jon's book "Bolts from the

Blues" (its great) and for those that did, the publisher donated 20% of the price to the NHS Cumbria COVID-19 Appeal. Not sure of the numbers yet but will try to find out for the next issue.

We have been pushing support for Carlisle ReUnited set up by the Carlisle United Official Supporters Club formerly known as the Carlisle United Supporters Trust which many of our members are also members of. The campaign has reached £12,500 which I know has been supported by a lot of London Branch members. I am delighted this week that the first purchase for c£3,000 has been made – a Nordboard for sorting out hamstring injuries which has been a problem for a few of our players. <https://www.carlisleunited.co.uk/news/2020/december/cuosc-carlisle-reunited-funding-helps-club/>

**Please do get in touch with me, Dave Brown - Chairman [chair@cusclb.com](mailto:chair@cusclb.com) or Vice Chairman, Simon Clarkson if you have any comments or suggestions as to how we should use the money that you provide.**

*Dave Brown*



# Brunton Park Diary 2020/21



## GOD ONLY KNOWS HOW GOOD THE BEECH BOYS WILL BE....

### **Oct 15th (Thu)**

23 year-old Academy strength and conditioning coach **Greg Short** is promoted to the senior team position vacated last month by David Waldie. His older brother Tom fulfils the same role at Burnley.

### **Oct 16th (Fri)**

Beech attempts to plug the latest attacking player injury curse breach by bringing in 19 year-old **Micah Obiero** from Huddersfield on loan until January. Wide attacker Obiero started his career at Leyton Orient before linking up with the Terriers three seasons ago and made his first team debut on the last day of last season, coming on at half time.

Even if a ram's natural habitat is on the fells of Cumbria, one we apparently couldn't lure before the close of deadline day is Derby County's prolific under-23 forward, Jahmal Hector-Ingram.

Having been also linked with Barrow in recent days, it's Michael Flynn's Newport County AFC that finally bring in Jamie Devitt on a loan until January. The Welshmen pick up Jamie Proctor from Rotherham as part of the 'get one ex-Blue, get one free' EFL sale.

**'Herman' Webster** describes some people behind the scenes at Carlisle as "snakes" in an interview with Non-League Daily. Something doesn't add up, sounds like someone's been drinking one too many Cobras.

### **Oct 17th (Sat)**

#### **CUFC YOUTH 2 MORECAMBE YOUTH 1**

Swift revenge for the previous week's defeat in the cup, **Fishburn and Swailes** scoring in a dominant first half for the toddlers. The referee's best attempts to level things up after the break, first through a penalty and then a straight red for United's Josh Barnett, left a nervy end to the game. The Blues though held on for the three points and missed a penalty of their own.



## **CUFC (2) 3 COLCHESTER UTD (1) 2**

A strong start and a barnstorming finish left the Blues gracing the top five of the division at 5 o'clock. **Alessandra's** whipped-in cross gave the Blues an early lead as a typical Mellish run into the box distracted the CUFC imitation act from laying either a boot or a glove on the ball as it made its inevitable journey into the net. 1-0. The favour was soon returned, Alessandra skipping past a challenge to feed **Mellish** who gleefully steers the ball past the stunned keeper. 2-0. Faux CUFC briefly show glimpses of the side that stuffed United three nowt in both fixtures last season and benefiting from another soft handball, claw their way back to 2-2. Ten minutes left and the siege-like passage of play on their goal ends with **Hayden clinically steering the ball in for all three points from close range. 3-2. Job done.**

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.20, Tanner 7.30, Hayden 8.40, McDonald 6.60, Anderton 7.80, Riley 7.60, Guy 7.50, Mellish 6.75, Kayode 7.20, Alessandra 8.38, Toure 7.10 Sub: Reilly 7.00

## **Oct 20th (Tue)**

### **OLDHAM ATH (0) 1 CUFC (0) 1**

United were left to count the cost of missing a slew of good chances, allowing two points to slip through their fingers in an otherwise impressive attempt to

avenge the lamentable display in the Carabao Cup. Hot and cold Toure managed to hit both the bar and post in a dominant first half, the latter a straightforward 1 v 1 with the keeper after taking advantage of a defensive slip. **Hayden's towering 54th minute header wasn't quite enough in the end with the Latics equalising with ten minutes to go.**

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.50, Tanner 7.50, Hayden 8.25, McDonald 6.00, Anderton 7.75, Riley 7.00, Guy 8.20, Mellish 8.50, Kayode 6.50, Alessandra 7.75, Toure 6.00 Sub: Reilly 7.00

## **Oct 21st (Wed)**

Now close to adding the words "Journeyman" to his Facebook profile, 30 year-old **Jordan Cook** signs with National League North side Gateshead until the end of the season.

## **Oct 24th (Sat)**

### **CUFC YOUTH 2 SALFORD YOUTH 3**

Dominated by the Reds for the first hour of the match after missing a couple of early chances, United with two goals in four minutes through Kilsby and Fishburn, took the game right down to the wire after a stirring comeback.

## **GRIMSBY TOWN (1) 1 CUFC (0) 1**

Beech said in his post-match interview



that he thought it was probably our poorest performance of the 8 games we'd played this season and while might be edging on self-critical in a game we created the better of the few chances made, there won't be many asking for the DVD for Christmas. That said, it did feature their keeper McKeogh 'having a moment' straight after the restart worthy of any football bloopers compilation, slicing an innocuously directed and paced back-pass from near the side touchline into his own net to bring the Blues all level. In blustery, swirling conditions that made good football difficult, both sides failed to seriously trouble either keeper from there on, limited to half-opportunities mostly from the occasional defensive wobble.

CUFC Player Ratings (MK): Farman 6.0, Tanner 7.5, Hayden 7.0, McDonald 7.0, Anderton 6.5, Riley 6.0, Guy 7.0, Mellish 6.5, Kayode 6.5, Alessandra 6.0, Toure 7.5 Sub: Reilly 6.0

### **Oct 26th (Mon)**

18 year-old first year pro **Jamie Armstrong** becomes the fourth player to be parachuted into United's finishing school at Kendal. The attacking midfielder joins messrs **Birch, Barnes and Lightfoot on loan at the Northern Premier League Division One North West - and breathe - club.**

**Grant Holt was right to say on TV that he was going to be copping a pile of flak in the wake of sending United on a 600-mile round trip to Hillingdon to face Southern League Premier Division South side Hayes & Yeading** in the fan-less first round of this season's Emirates FA Cup. Former players for both clubs include Joe Anyinsah and .....well, that looks about it, while current keeper Magnus Norman played twice as an 18 year-old in 2015 on loan from Fulham before getting injured and returning.

The game will be shown live 1245 on Sunday 8 November via the BBC Digital red button platform, earning both clubs a minimum of £18,000 for the fixture.

### **Bafana Bafana and Blues midfielder**

**Dean Furman** is named in a 25-man squad to play Sao Tome in back-to-back Cameroon 2022 AFCON qualifiers. The first match will be played in Durban's Moses Mabhida Stadium on 13 November 2020 while the away match will take place three days later.

### **Oct 27th (Tue)**

#### **CUFC (2) 3 MORECAMBE (0) 1**

In typical Carlisle style, we were 2-0 up within 3 minutes, should have been 4-0 up and out of sight a couple of minutes later, gradually let the Shrimpers back into it, the gap narrowed to just 2-1 for



8 nervy minutes and then finally settled the contest on 87 thanks to **Tanner's** first competitive goal in a man-of-the-match performance.

There were only 23 seconds on the clock when we broke up the field with space for **Kayode** to cross into the area and the ball spin off Songo'o into his own net with just 23 seconds gone. That man **Mellish** then bagged his sixth with an audacious chip over the keeper, the ball striking the opposite upright and coming back off the gloveman. Kayode and Alessandra then missed gilt-edged chances straight afterwards as thoughts of a cricket score crossed a few minds.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.25, Tanner 8.00, Hayden 7.13, McDonald 6.38, Anderton 6.63, Riley 7.75, Guy 8.00, Mellish 7.38, Kayode 7.50, Alessandra 6.63, Toure 6.13

### **Oct 30th (Fri)**

Contract-rejecting midfielder **Jack Bridge** ends up dropping down a couple of levels in order to get some football as he goes from one 'beach' to another and winds up at **Canvey Island side Concord Rangers** in the Conference South.

### **Oct 31st (Sat)**

#### **FLEETWOOD YOUTH 2 CUFC YOUTH 1**

A much-improved performance with Watt scoring from Bell's cross in the first

half for United, only to give away a soft equaliser from a defensive blunder and then the gut-punch of losing the game in the 94th minute after poor marking from a free-kick.

#### **EXETER CITY (0) 1 CUFC (0) 0**

In a game that had the faint whiff of being a promotion six-pointer even this early into the season, it was a long and disappointing journey back after being the better team for much of the game. **The friendly, Trust-owned, Devonian country bumpkins of the Tisdale era seem to have been body-snatched and replaced by their barber shop-striped cousins from Lincoln City**, such were the Cowley-like dark arts being performed by the Grecians. Whether it was the stream of niggly fouls, stealing 5-10 yards on every throw-in and free-kick including the one that led to the goal or constantly getting in the ear of the ref, every trick in the playbook was employed.

For all its shortcomings and knockers, the benefit of a quick glance at a VAR monitor might have meted out early punishment on Bowman for his clear push on the back of Hayden that sent him headlong into Farman's knee and inevitably out of the game. If not then, it would have surely led to equal punishment on Jake Taylor for a moment when he confused Toure's legs for a vat-full of



scrumping apples needing an old fashioned pressing at the end of the picking season. Instead, **Toure's daft reaction resulted in a red and gave the home side an easier last 30 minutes than they would have otherwise been entitled to.**

Old boy Parkes was inevitably first to everything in the air at the back while amongst the positives, Guy was absolute class again in the midfield and Max Hunt wasn't in the shadow of Hayden when he came on in for him, delivering a performance that augurs well for the future.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.00, Tanner 7.67, Hayden 7.00, McDonald 6.67, Anderton 6.83, Riley 6.00, Guy 8.17, Mellish 5.67, Kayode 5.33, Alessandra 5.50, Toure 4.00. Subs: Reilly 5.50, Hunt 7.17, Patrick 6.00

### **Nov 2nd (Mon)**

Having set his dreams on playing in 50,000-plus all-seater stadiums, it all finally comes true for **Canice 'Chopper' Carroll** with news that the Spiders of **Queen's Park** have signed him to tread the hallowed turf of Hampden Park. He joins Peter Grant as part of their growing ex-Blues contingent.

### **Nov 3rd (Tue)**

#### **CUFC (1) 3 NEWPORT COUNTY (0) 2**

Taking three home points off Newport

two days before heading back into lockdown, United decided to make the game a proper nail biter by conceding two late goals the Welsh Morris Dancing troupe barely deserved. Kayode was sent tumbling in the box to allow **Alessandra** to squeeze his resulting spot kick early on. Reilly, enjoying a start in place of the suspended Toure, was unlucky to hit the base of the post from just inside the area whilst also dragging one just wide with only the keeper to beat.

**Mellish** smashed one into the net in front of the Warwick after a terrific run from Patrick and then finished tidily ten minutes from time after a quick break and being teed up in the box by Alessandra. **Despite Devitt, who got the first goal back and Proctor both coming on** and livening up Newport towards the end just to make it interesting, United went home with the deserved three points.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.00, Tanner 7.75, Hayden 7.75, McDonald 6.88, Anderton 7.25, Riley 6.75, Guy 9.25, Mellish 8.25, Kayode 7.88, Alessandra 7.13, Reilly 6.50. Sub: Patrick 8.00

### **Nov 4th (Wed)**

#### **CUFC YOUTH 3 CHESTER CITY YOUTH 2 – FA YOUTH CUP 1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND**

Given a four day head start over the old farts on the big training pitch, the nip-



pers did Kinder and Carlisle proud with an entertaining, hard-fought win over Chester City to set up a home tie with Bradford City. Big **Sam Fishburn** looked useful at the top of the tree, not too dissimilar to Sam Cosgrove in his play. As expected, **Lewis Bell** looked at a slightly different level to the rest with his touch and pace.

As for the game, which was streamed over Dialbook, Swailes played a DeBruyne-like defence-splitting diagonal to **Watt**. He still had some work to do but finished well past the advancing keeper for 1-0 on 7 minutes. A dozen minutes it was two-nowt as **Walton** drilled the ball into the bottom corner after being put through by Swailes. Although Chester got one back, Swailes was on the end of another excellent through ball to make it 3-1 just before the break. The Seals kept chipping away and narrowed it to 3-2 with about 25 left on the clock although we always looked like we had another gear in reserve if needed.

United: Robinson, Ellis, Kilsby, Leslie, Steele, Day, Watt (Garvey 82), Walton, Fishburn (Taylor 78), Swailes, L Bell.

#### **Nov 6th (Fri)**

**Kayode will be competing against a number of instantly recognisable Gaelic names for one of the Eire forward spots**

in their forthcoming UEFA Under-21 European Championship Qualifiers against Iceland and Luxembourg in just over a week's time including Jonathan Afolabi, Zack Elbouzedi and Michael Obafemi. No, really. It means he'll miss the league game against Cheltenham and Aston Villa U21 in the EF(fing)-L Trophy.

Cash lifeline **Jarrad Branthwaite is selected for the England U19s** for the first time having recently recovered from an ankle injury. Joining him in the training camp is young Liam Delap.

#### **Nov 7th (Sat)**

##### **CUFC YOUTH 2 BOLTON YOUTH 0**

Kinder's kids continued their recent good form with a comfortable win over WeBuyAnyPlayer.com's youth team thanks to a goal in each half from **Fishburn**.

#### **Nov 8th (Sun)**

##### **HAYES & YEADING (0) 2 CUFC (0) 2 – AET, CUFC won 4-3 on penalties – FA CUP 1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND**

The Blues almost became David-fodder when with less than three minutes remaining, they were trailing 2-0 to a spirited H&Y side doing the 7<sup>th</sup> tier proud. The away team coach engine was just starting up when magic man **Mellish** volleyed in from the edge of the box and



then in the dying seconds, find a yard to turn the ball in from closer range after one of Kayode's trademark throw-in bombs had caused chaos in the defence. Although there were rare starts for Dewhurst, Armer, Hunt, Furman and Patrick, it was still a strong team, perhaps partly-jaded after the exertions in south Devon followed immediately by another tough game against the league leaders. Kayode and Alessandra both missed from 12 yards in the shoot-out, which summed up how our forward line performed all afternoon. The Blues hit the woodwork twice with Riley shaking the underside of the bar and Reilly the post while scuffing almost everything when inside the box. **Although some debt goes to the home team's profligacy in the shoot-out, Dewhurst became an instant hero with a stupendous save to his left to suck the wind out of the H&Y sails.**

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Dewhurst 6.50, Tanner 6.00, Hayden 5.00, Hunt 5.50, Armer 4.50, Riley 5.00, Furman 5.50, Mellish 7.00, Kayode 4.50, Reilly 4.50, Patrick 4.50. Sub: Anderton 4.50, Guy 4.50, Alessandra 4.50, Obiero 4.50.

**Nathan Thomas watches his new teammates at Hamilton Accies** get murdered 8-0 by Rangers from the safety of the subs bench. See you again soon Nathan.

### **Nov 9th (Mon)**

United will renew acquaintances with **Doncaster Rovers** after being drawn at home to the League One side in FAC R2. Donny include ex-Blues Reece James and Tom Anderson in their ranks and Beech will be hoping that 63 year-old James Coppinger, in his final season for club, wakes up with a stiff back.

### **Nov 10th (Tue)**

The dreaded curse of the monthly award hovers reaper-like over the Blues as the Gaffer and Mellish are in the running for their respective Manager and Player of the Month gongs.

### **Nov 12th (Thu)**

The centre-half department is further bolstered by the addition of 6'3" 29 year-old **Rhys Bennett** on a short-term deal until January. Previous clubs in his career of over 300 games include Falkirk, a spell being coached by Beech at Rochdale, Mansfield Town and Peterborough, where he played 63 games in two seasons before his release over the summer. A rumoured summer move to Wycombe fell-through over pay-as-you-play terms and their loss will hopefully be our gain.

Cumbrian **Dean Henderson** finally makes his long-awaited England debut in a comfortable 3-0 win at Wembley



against Eire.

### Nov 13th (Fri)

With the wolves howling at the door in the shape of November's approaching pay run, Division 3 and 4 clubs collectively agree to accept the Premier League's offer of a £50m bailout, which is a mix of grants and grubby IOUs. Meanwhile, Championship teams will have to go Oliver-like bowl in hand to apply for hardship funds on a case by case basis.

Having expertly steered Chesterfield FC into the National League relegation zone and then Wigan Athletic to the bottom of the League One table, Special Agent **John Sheridan's** next task is to do the same to Swinedung Town as he takes on their reins until the end of the season.

### Nov 14th (Sat)

#### CUFC YOUTH 1 BRADFORD CITY YTH 0 YOUTH ALLIANCE CUP

A goal on the half hour from **Dylan Garvey** settled this dead rubber of a tie, which at least proved a useful warm-up against the same opponents in the big cup game five days later.

#### CUFC (1) 1 CHELTENHAM TOWN (2) 2

United's performance was ultimately as stop-start as iFollow's initial coverage of the game. With Kayode on duty with

Eire U21's, the Blues received a taste of their own medicine with **Ben Tozer's colossal throw creating the first and causing chaos at the back all afternoon.**

The same man took advantage of a clumsy challenge from an off-balance Mellish to earn the pen for the second, which could have easily been given the other way if the referee had spotted the initial barge into him. Magic man **Mellish** made amends just before the break, steering in calmly from close range after good work from Patrick and Tanner. Both sides traded half-chances in a quiet second half with the well-drilled away team wasting time at every opportunity until the unfortunate Reilly



missed a gilt-edged chance to equalise, receiving Anderton's mishit through ball and somehow shooting straight at the keeper from little more than 7 yards out.



CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 5.50, Tanner 4.50, Hayden 5.50, McDonald 5.00, Anderton 4.50, Riley 3.50, Guy 6.00, Mellish 6.50, Alessandra 3.50, Reilly 2.00, Patrick 2.00

Nov 17th (Tue)

### CUFC 3 ASTON VILLA ACADEMY 1

#### PAPA'S LONG JOHNS EFFING-L TROPHY THING

Youngsters **Sam Fishburn, Josh Barnett and Max Kilsby** were given senior squad non-playing debuts whilst there was some welcome pitch time for **Josh Dixon** after his long-awaited recovery from consecutive cruciate knee ligament injuries. **Toure** scored and hit the bar in his return from the Exeter-game ban in an otherwise quiet game while both **Obiero and Reilly** improved and also found a spot on the scoresheet after looking out of sorts in recent weeks. Villa's academy were 3-0 down and as stuffed as one of the sponsor's baked dough discs before finally earning a late consolation.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Dewhurst 6, Devine 6, Armer 6, Bennett 6, Hunt 6, Malley n/a, Charters 6, Obiero 5, Patrick 4, Reilly 6, Toure 3, Subs: Norman 6, Bell 5, Dixon 5

Nov 18th (Wed)

**JJ scores and stars for Eire** on his international debut as they win 2-1 in Luxem-

bourg although his fine header isn't enough to secure qualification to the U21 Finals next year. With the first team going 10 hours without finding the back of the onion bag, it may just be a matter of time before he gets a call up to the senior squad.

Nov 19th (Thu)

### CUFC YOUTH 3 BRADFORD CITY YTH 1 FA YOUTH CUP ROUND 2

A glamour home tie against last season's semi-finalists Blackburn on 8 December was a just reward for a game Kinder's Kids deserved to win through in the end after goals from the exciting talent of big Sam Fishburn, Walton and a Bell penalty after Garvey was tripped in the box on the turn. Bell had time to smash a fine free-kick against the bar in a dominant spell after the half-time break.

United: Robinson, Steele, Kilsby, Leslie, Barnett, Day, Ellis, Walton, Fishburn, Bell, Watt (Garvey 46).

Fresh from walking under a ladder and running over a black cat, **Brennan Dickenson** returns to training following a Covid-19 two-week self-isolation period.

Nov 21st (Sat)

### ROCHDALE YOUTH 2 CUFC YOUTH 2

United paid the price for taking their foot off the gas, possibly after the exer-



tions against Bradford less than 48 hours earlier, after storming into an early two-goal lead through **Leslie** from the edge of the box and **Bell** on the break. In the end, they could easily have lost the game.

### **CRAWLEY (0) 0 CUFC (1) 3**

Broadfield has always been one of United's favourite stomping grounds but even so, few would have predicted the almost complete dominance over the home side from start to finish. It **would be hard to pick out one star performer with Tanner absolutely outstanding at right back, Alessandra, Guy and Riley everywhere, Rhys Bennett running the show on his league debut for the mighty Blues alongside Hayden** and the

forward line of Alessandra, Kayode and Toure-the-Tormenter leaving Crawley's back line chasing shadows almost every time they got the ball.

It was **Bennett** who opened the scoring, quick to react when Toure's shot was parried into his flight path. The second was a thing of beauty that all but killed the game, Tanner leaving defenders in his wake as he weaved into the box and sending a pin-point cross to **Kayode** to steer home with a fine near-post volley. The cherry was put on the cake a few minutes later as Alessandra's drilled shot came out to **Hayden** to bury both the ball and Crawley from close range.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.67, Tanner 8.67, Hayden 8.25, Bennett 9.18,



Anderton 7.67, Riley 7.00, Guy 8.17, Mellish 7.33, Alessandra 7.83, Kayode 8.67, Toure 7.83

### **Nov 24th (Tue)**

#### **TRANMERE ROVERS (0) 1 CUFC (0) 0**

Not much between the two teams in a game of few chances against a side that could rightly claim a back line every bit as strong as United's. The difference in the end was a spell just after the break when the lively Corey Blackett-Taylor began to get increasing joy with a number of direct left-wing runs. It was one of these that managed to wrong foot Tanner just enough to allow him to cut inside and shoot past Farman. Vaughan and Spearing showed Tranmere's promotion aspirations, signings that Beech could only dream of and after completing a Michael Palin-like road journey just a few days earlier, this substantial test was perhaps too tough an obstacle to overcome.

CUFC Player Ratings (MK): Farman 5, Tanner 5, Hayden 5, Bennett 6, Anderton 5, Riley 5, Guy 6, Mellish 6, Alessandra 6, Kayode 5, Toure 5.

### **Nov 25th (Wed)**

#### **FLEETWOOD RESERVE XI (1) 1 CUFC RESERVE XI (1) 2 – BOUNCE GAME / FRIENDLY**

Young **Dixon** impressed on his return

from injury, decisively converting MoM Danny Devine's cross early doors after the break. They had taken the lead from a headed own-goal having already marked their intentions with Charters volleying against the post and then curling another shot off the bar with the keeper watching. First-year professional, defender Tom Wilson, was also back in the thick of things after his ankle injury.

United XI: Norman, Armstrong, Hunt, Wilson (Barnes 65), Armer, Devine, Furman, Dixon (Lightfoot 86), Charters, Bell (Birch 75), Obiero (Fishburn 46).

### **Nov 26th (Thu)**

We knew that today would all end in tiers and it did. **Cumbria's placement into Tier 2** for the Covid-19 restrictions will mean that starting with the Salford home game next Wednesday, the club should in theory be allowed to admit up to 2,000 fans into the Home of the Gods to watch the game. The mouth-watering prospect of double our largest crowd of the season plus giving ginger dwarf **Paul Scholes** endless stick from the Paddock could create a frenzy for the few tickets available once the season ticket holders have received theirs.

**Tony Caig** is promoted to Acting Assistant Manager at Scottish Premiership strugglers Livingston after Gary Holt



hands in his resignation, a move which sees Livi reel off victories in their next three games.

### **Nov 28th (Sat)**

#### **CUFC YOUTH 6 OLDHAM YOUTH (0) 1**

The visitors were gunned down with a six-shooter featuring a different bullet in every chamber as **Garvey, Fishburn, Barnett, Steele, Bell and Watt** got on the score sheet.

The **Bank of Henderson** hopefully ticks off another contingent payment for the Blues after subbing for DeGea in Man Utd's 3-2 comeback win at the Saints.

### **Nov 29th (Sun)**

#### **CUFC 1 DONCASTER ROVERS 2** **FA CUP 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND**

United pushed their League One visitors all the way but just came up short in the finishing department, lacking the clinical edge on display from their skipper, Ben Whiteman. Mellish grabbed his customary goal towards the end but it was the one that got away while still 0-0 that left a few with heads on their hands, the ex-Gateshead man blazing a volley over from less than 12 yards out. One of the other differences was the sharp incisiveness of their Saints winger Josh Sims, the type of loan player we used to enjoy seeing at that level like Adam Clayton, Ben Marshall and others.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 6.25, Tanner 6.25, Hayden 6.00, Bennett 6.75, Anderton 3.75, Riley 5.00, Guy 6.38, Mellish 6.00, Patrick 5.50, Kayode 5.00, Toure 5.38.

### **Nov 30th (Mon)**

Ten years after leaving the Blues, 35 year-old veteran **David Raven** will be trying to pinch himself out of a dream after the draw for the FA Cup 3<sup>rd</sup> Round paired giant-killers **Marine** with the Premier League leaders Spurs.

### **Dec 1st (Tue)**

The **Islington Assassin** finally decides to call it a day at the age of 37 after battling a number of injuries in the last 12 months.

### **Dec 2nd (Wed)**

#### **CUFC (1) 2 SALFORD SPICE BOYS (0) 1**

A fitting, welcome return to that hairs-on-the-back-of-your-neck feeling with fans celebrating goals inside Brunton Park once again. The early kick-off put United in spotlight and **Alessandra** didn't disappoint in an excellent performance capped by a stunning curled shot into the top corner. Devine ran him close and certainly didn't look like a previous bit-part squad player making his debut for the Blues and while the Pad-dock no doubt enjoyed the goals, they



were never happier than being back in their element whether booing Andrade's every touch or comedy referee Salisbury's foul count. I said count. The second came when Guy's deep free-kick was headed in by the diving **Bennett (pictured below)** on the hour and despite the customary wobble near the end, it was a well-deserved win.



of around £15m based on a lost gate revenue share calculation plus a sizeable needs-based 'monitored grant'.

The local Shields Gazette reports that 21-year-old **non-league hotshot Cedwyn Scott** will be looking to impress Beech and the staff over the next few weeks while training with the first team and

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 6.90, Tanner 8.40, Hayden 7.70, Bennett 7.70, Anderton 6.00, Devine 6.80, Guy 7.80, Mellish 6.70, Patrick 7.40, Kayode 7.30, Alessandra 7.90.

### Dec 3rd (Thu)

**Santa's bailout red sack will be filled with a minimum payment of £250,000 for the Blues.** There will also be a share

hopefully turning out in a friendly or two. A local Hexham lad, he comes recommended from the Barcodes having recently had a trial with their U23s following a blistering start to the season that saw him fire in 20 goals in just 9 games at local Northern League side Hebburn FC. Scott had started his career as a junior at Huddersfield before a spell in Scotland with Dundee including loan moves to Berwick and Forfar. A brief



turn at Dunston UTS followed before joining Hebburn in January, who former Carlisle youngster Carl Taylor also turns out for.

**Dec 5th (Sat)**

**TRANMERE YOUTH 2 CUFC YOUTH 4**

**Or Tranmere 2 Sam Fishburn 4 if you prefer as the prolific number 9 adds four more goals to his growing reputation.** A well-hit shot on the spin got the ball rolling, a ricocheted clearance off him and into the net made it two while the last was slotted under the keeper.

**BRADFORD CITY (0) 0 CUFC (0) 1**

**United's desperate recent record at the Valley Parade was given a deserved day off, ending a sequence that had seen**

**the last win way back in 1975 in the League Cup and incredibly 1951 in a league match.** Quite probably bored by the Bantams minimal efforts to mount any kind of threat to Farman's goal in the Blues' own version of lockdown, **Bennett** went up the other end and scored from the recalled Furman's low diagonal cross into the mixer. The Stuart McCall up-and-down the steps sideshow was probably their best footwork all game and apart from the occasionally useful set-piece delivery, **Elliot Watt** disappointed for Bradford and must be wondering why he chose money over the clean, crisp skies of Cumbria during the summer.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.00, Tan-



ner 7.17, Hayden 6.83, Bennett 8.17, Anderton 6.83, Devine 7.17, Furman 6.00, Mellish 5.33, Patrick 6.83, Kayode 6.67, Alessandra 7.67.

### ANOTHER CLEAN SHEET FOR FARMAN



Bermuda international **Reggie Lambe** debuts and scores for Eastern Counties League Premier Division side **Stowmarket Town** as they beat Eynesbury Rovers in the FA Vase in front of 176 fans. Described as the biggest signing in their history, the former midfielder's new team play down in the Thurlow Nunn League Premier Division and the ninth tier of the English football pyramid, five below his last team Cambridge United.

### Dec 8th (Tue)

#### CUFC YOUTH (0) 0 BLACKBURN YOUTH (1) 1 - FA YOUTH CUP ROUND 3

Category 1 club Blackburn survived an excellent but ultimately futile second half onslaught, defending the Warwick Road goal from wave after wave of attack from United. It took a fine finish from the lively Gent for Rovers in one of the few spells they were arguably on top. Efforts were cleared off the line on at least two occasions while away keeper Goddard covered himself in glory with some fine saves to deny the equaliser.

United: Robinson, Steele (Taylor 73), Barnett, Day, Kilsby, Ellis (Watt 62), Walton, Leslie, Bell, Garvey (Rooks 30), Fishburn

### Dec 9th (Wed)

Director of Football **David Holdsworth's** little official-aimed rant at the end of the Donny FA Cup tie costs him 750 big ones following a verdict handed down from the naughty step committee.

### Dec 11th (Fri)

#### CUFC YOUTH 1 SHREWSBURY YTH 1

Kinder's Kids recovered to get a point after the double blow late in the first half of conceding a scruffy goal and then having **Elliott Day** sent off for two dubious yellows. Despite Bell's missed penal-





Hayden appeals in vain—but the sending off was cancelled on appeal



ty early into the second period, United kept plugging away and eventually drew level in the fifth minute of stoppage time through **Fishburn**.

**Dec 12th (Sat)**

**CUFC (3) 4 STEVENAGE (0) 0**

Anderton, Tanner, Guy and Kayode all made the EFL Team of the Week in a comfortable win for the Blues after sweeping into a decisive 3-0 lead just after the half-hour mark. Skipper **Nick Anderton** had unquestionably his best and most influential game of the season even if his free-kick to open the account owed a debt to keeper Cumming, fumbling away like two 14 year-olds on their first date at the back of the Lonsdale Cinema. Guy's set pieces have gradually improved in recent weeks and **Kayode** powered in a fine header from one such corner. **Alessandra** was the next to get



in the act, running through unchallenged and firing across and past the luckless Cumming. Third gear cruise control was then the order of the day, a spell briefly broken by sub **Riley** almost breaking the back of the net as he volleyed a superb fourth from a typically threatening Kayode long throw.

The only grey cloud to the proceedings was a last-minute shoulder injury sustained by Tanner after a nasty shove onto the pitch surround.

CUFC Player Ratings\*: Farman 7.33, Tanner 8.00, Anderton 7.67, Hayden 7.33, Bennett 8.17, Guy 8.33, Devine 6.67, Mellish 6.50, Patrick 7.33, Alessandra 7.67, Kayode 7.67. Subs: Riley 6.50, Toure 7.25

\* Player Ratings calculated from the average of all marks given on TheCumbrians.net forum

Mike Kilner



# WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

## Expected Goals

This article introduces the reader to the concept of expected goals, what it is, how it can be used and then what it tells us in relation to Carlisle United's current League Two season.

**Expected goals (abbreviated to xG) is a metric for evaluating the quality of a shot in a game of football.**

**Each shot that happens in a match is given a value from zero to one which indicates how likely that shot is to result in a goal.**

This comes from processing huge databases of shot data and can use things like shot position, defender/goalkeeper position, if the shot is a header, if it was assisted with a pass, how fast the pass was played etc.

**By using this data we can predict how likely a shot in a certain scenario is to result in a goal.**

For example a penalty is worth roughly 0.75 xG (which means it is scored 75% of the time) a shot from outside the box where the goalkeeper and defence are in position may be only 0.03 xG (it is scored 3% of the time). Using this method we can track teams and players over

time, how many goals they have scored and how many expected goals they have scored

## Using Expected Goals

**Expected goals can be used to evaluate a team's performance in a game or over several games / a season.** We can see how a team's expected goals total relates to the expected goals total of the team they are playing against.

For example a team may have taken shots which total 3 xG in a game whereas their opponents only took shots worth 1 xG. This would show one team created much better chances than the other.

**We can use this to determine which team performed better.** You often see one team dominate and take lots of shots but the goalkeeper is playing exceptionally well or some very easy chances are missed and then the other team score from the one shot they have. Using expected goals tries to take that "luck" element out of evaluating performances.



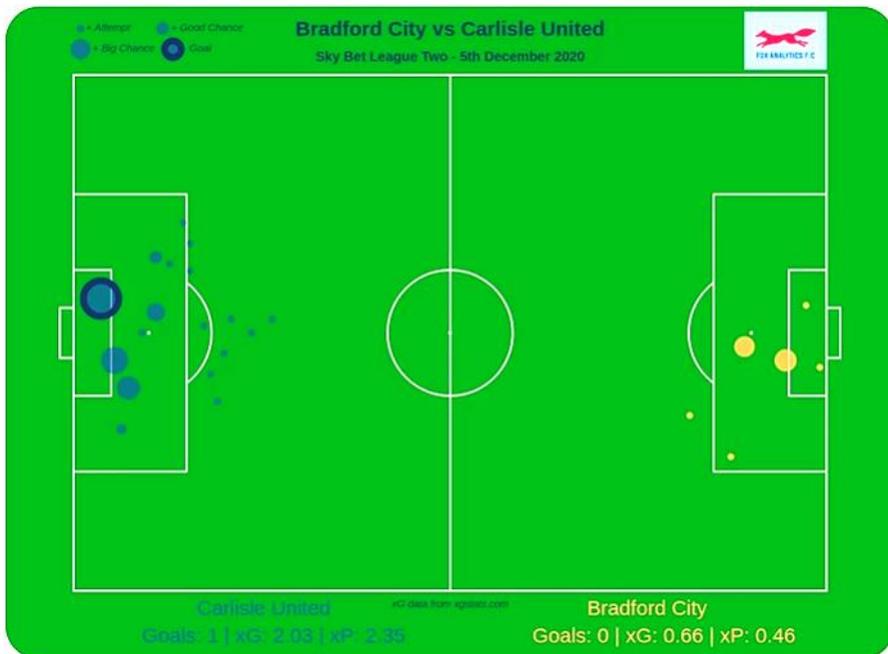
Sometimes people will use shots and shots on target stats for this **but expected goals tries to go a step further and use shot quality over shot quantity.**

For example one team may have had 10 shots on target in a match but they might have all been shots from distance

## Carlisle United's XG stats

Let's look at Carlisle's impressive win over Bradford this season.

The circles show the shots each team had and the bigger the circle, the higher its xG value. You can see that Carlisle clearly had the better chances. The

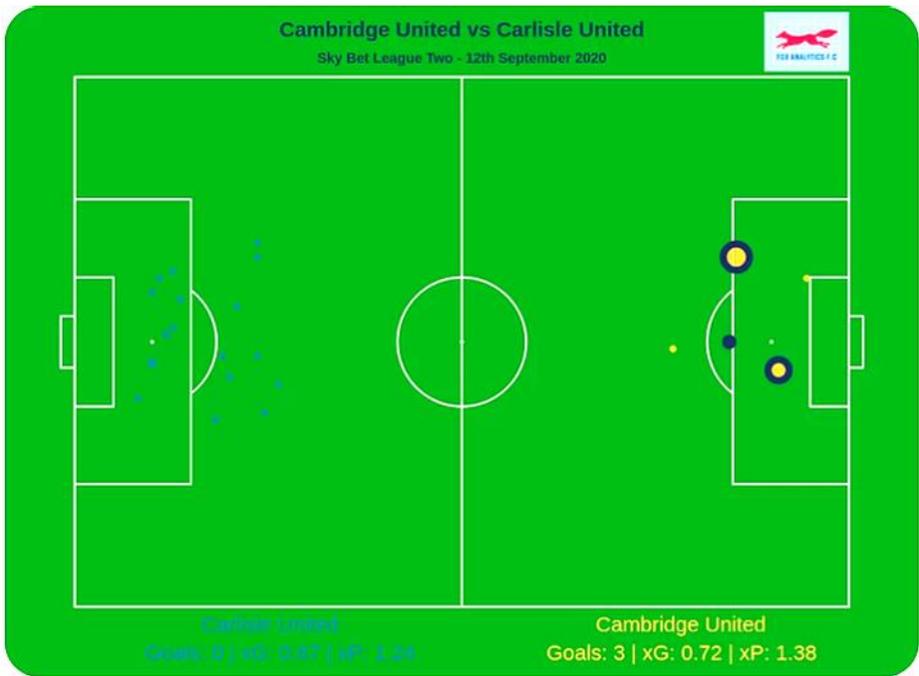


that were very unlikely to result in a goal.

Using expected goals would show the quality of those chances and give us a better idea of how much that team created in the game. This then gives us a tool to see how good a team's performances have been regardless of results.

chances totalled up to 2.03 xG so you can argue that the finishing could have been better and that they maybe deserved to score 2 goals.





Interestingly, if we then look at the first game of the season (the 3-0 defeat to Cambridge), it wasn't as bad as the scoreline suggested.

Carlisle had a lot more chances even though they didn't have any very good chances. Cambridge's finishing was superb and Carlisle really can count themselves unlucky to concede 3 goals.

Carlisle ended with 0.67 xG to Cambridge's 0.72 xG so although this was an alarming result, the performance wasn't too bad against a good Cambridge team.

## Individual players

Jon Mellish has been in outstanding goalscoring form this season and has scored 4.27 xG resulting in 7 goals after 14 games (he has essentially scored 3 more goals than you would expect him to based on the chances he has had).

This is exceptional and you can argue that the cross/shot against Morecambe is skewing the figures but he's consistently getting into good positions in the opposition box and scoring goals.





After game sixteen of this season, here's what the data tells us:

**xG FOR: 24.09**

**Goals scored: 22**

**xG AGAINST: 12.21**

**Goals conceded: 16**

You can see that Carlisle are creating roughly double the number of xG chances than their opponents. This season's run of form is no fluke and they are deserving the victories they are getting. Long may it continue!

If you'd like to read more content like this, I post about Carlisle United analytics on my blog: <https://www.foxanalyticsfc.co.uk/>

And on Twitter: @f\_analytics

You can also look at players who aren't scoring as many goals as you'd expect and look at their expected goals data, they may not be taking shots from good areas or they may not be finishing good chances.

These sort of things tend to even out over time so it can be good to look at a whole season's data and see how things stand.



# THE KIDS RE-UNITED

The latest virtual branch event, ably hosted by Simon Clarkson, took place on 26th November, with “The Kids are United” giving us an insight into youth development at Carlisle United. The branch puts a priority on supporting youth development at the club, and this gave members the chance to hear from and talk to **David Wilkes** (Head of Academy Coaching) and **Robbie Edgar** (Foundation Phase Coach) and then from three former United ‘youths’; **Tony Caig** (goalkeeping coach & co-interim manager at Livingston), **Matt Jansen** (Head of recruitment and player liaison at Stockport County) and **Paul Murray** (Youth academy manager at Oldham Athletic).

EPPP has three phases: Foundation (Under-9 to Under-11), Youth Development (U12 to U16) and Professional Development (U17 to U23) with the academies dealing with the Foundation and Youth Development phases. Academies are placed into one of four categories with category one being the highest status. This results from an independent audit based on 10 factors including productivity rates, training facilities, coaching, education and welfare provisions. **Category one academies are mainly Premier League, category 2 the Championship, with the majority of League One and Two clubs (Carlisle included), in category 3.** A handful of academies are in category



four and deal only with 16-18 year olds. The EPPP then oversee English Youth Development, allocating the money invested by the FA and Premier League with a tapering amount invested across the four

Dave and Robbie opened the session by describing the CUFC academy, part of the structure introduced in 2011 as part of the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) in which ‘Academies’ replaced the ‘Centre of Excellence’ structure.

academy categories.

Robbie highlighted the significance to Carlisle of the change to the way the compensation (transfer fee) is paid when an academy player moves to another club. Under the old system, the level of compensation was decided



either by mutual agreement or an independent tribunal with the decision based on the potential of the player. The fee was usually an upfront payment then future payments based on first team or international appearances, there was sometimes also a sell-on percentage.

Under the EPPP rules, compensation fees are worked out using a fixed rate based on the category level of the academy where they have been trained. This means that Carlisle receive £3k per year between 9 and 11 and £12.5k between 12 and 16 for each year the player has spent at their academy. The sweetener is that that further payments come if the player makes first team appearances; 20 appearances in the Premier League are worth £300k - but only £50k in the Championship, £20k in League One and £10k in League Two. Thus the more recent players to move from the academy will have generated less immediate income for the club than would have been the case prior to 2011.

**The academy operates from Eden District Council's Frenchfield Sports Centre** in Penrith, next door to Penrith FC's ground. This has 7 full size football pitches, 2 mini football pitches and suitable changing facilities. **Robbie explained that they are based there because there are no comparable multi-pitch facilities available in Carlisle.** In the light of the problems Chris Beech has reported in recent weeks in finding un-sodden training pitches for the first team, this suggests a need for collabo-

orative action between the club and relevant parties in Carlisle.

**Dave and Robbie thanked the branch for the £3k donation** which will pay for new nets, Respect banners, a V board, corner poles and flags all branded CUFC and CUSC LB, creating a much more professional look to academy activity, particularly when hosting matches.

Both coaches commented that the standard of player and team performance in the academy is improving year on year, evidenced by good results against teams from clubs in higher leagues.

**We were then joined by Tony, Paul and Matt** who recounted their own paths through the Centre of Excellence, with each expressing a personal thanks to David Wilkes for his work with them. Your editor took a few notes, some of which turned out to be readable and give a flavour of the session which was ably chaired by Simon Clarkson.

With the current attention on Dean Henderson, the discussion turned to the steady stream of top goalkeepers from West Cumbria, Cleator Moor being identified by Robbie as a hot spot for young keepers. Tony Caig suggested that the Rugby League tradition in communities and schools out west breeds fearless athletes with good hand-eye coordination. Paul Murray agreed that his robust attributes may have been down to his time with the oval ball.

Matt Jansen's career is well documented, not least in the biography written with Jon Colman, but he recounted his



early years in the Centre of Excellence, his eye-catching debut and his final days at Carlisle as Michael Knighton touted Matt and Rory Delap for sale to the highest bidder.

**Asked about the transition from YTS at the Centre of Excellence to the first team,** Matt emphasised the importance of self-confidence as part of the development of young players and how he found that each step from youth team to first team built that self-confidence. He commented “I have to give a lot of credit to David Wilkes” in guiding Matt as Mervyn Day gave him his first team chance. This turned out to be a chance get kicked in the rough world of the lower leagues of the early 1990’s. Matt joked that he’d been toughened up for this by ‘Hack Football’ played on the concrete tennis courts at Austin Friars School.

**Tony recalled the importance of the standards and examples set by the senior members of the first team** to himself as young player coming into the squad. Paul Murray reflected on his own experience and the later lessons he’d learned from his brief spell as Carlisle manager and observed that each young player needs different support from coaches to help them make the move into the first team.

A branch member noted that the Youth team seem to have the same playing style as the first team and asked if a consistent club style should be seen at all levels. While agreeing that the Youth team do match the first

team and this has helped youth team players making the step up to the first team, **Dave Wilkes commented that consistent playing style isn’t the be all and end all and that the academy needs to give younger players experience of different playing patterns and styles.**

**Finally, Dave Wilkes was asked what our three former ‘babes’ were like to deal with as young boys:**

“Mussa was a cheeky little bugger, but tenacious – I had to send him in to see Mick (Wadsworth) as few times when he was getting a bit cheeky, but you don’t mind that. Caigy was always high on opinion, but good to work with, worked hard, really conscientious. Matty – all that ability obviously, and like he said I’d put an arm round him to build his confidence.”

In the last 12 months, with the sales of **Jarrad Branthwaite, Liam McCarron and Josh Galloway,** who are all products of the youth system at the club, it’s clear that the academy is playing its part in repaying all of the hard work that is put in by the staff at Carlisle United.

**Thanks to all involved for a great evening– particularly to Matt, Paul and Tony for their valuable time and to all members who ‘zoomed in’ on the night.**

*John B*



# UNITED 1 MANSFIELD 0



Mark Fuller's excellent pictures from the recent game—with thanks to the CUFC media team.



# Branch Committee 2020/21

Dave Brown	Chair	<a href="mailto:chairman@cusclb.com">chairman@cusclb.com</a>
Simon Clarkson	Vice Chair	<a href="mailto:sclarkson320@sky.com">sclarkson320@sky.com</a>
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Paul Irving	Social Secretary	<a href="mailto:social@cusclb.com">social@cusclb.com</a>
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John Bowman	Hit The Bar Editor	<a href="mailto:editor@cusclb.com">editor@cusclb.com</a>

## Branch Meetings

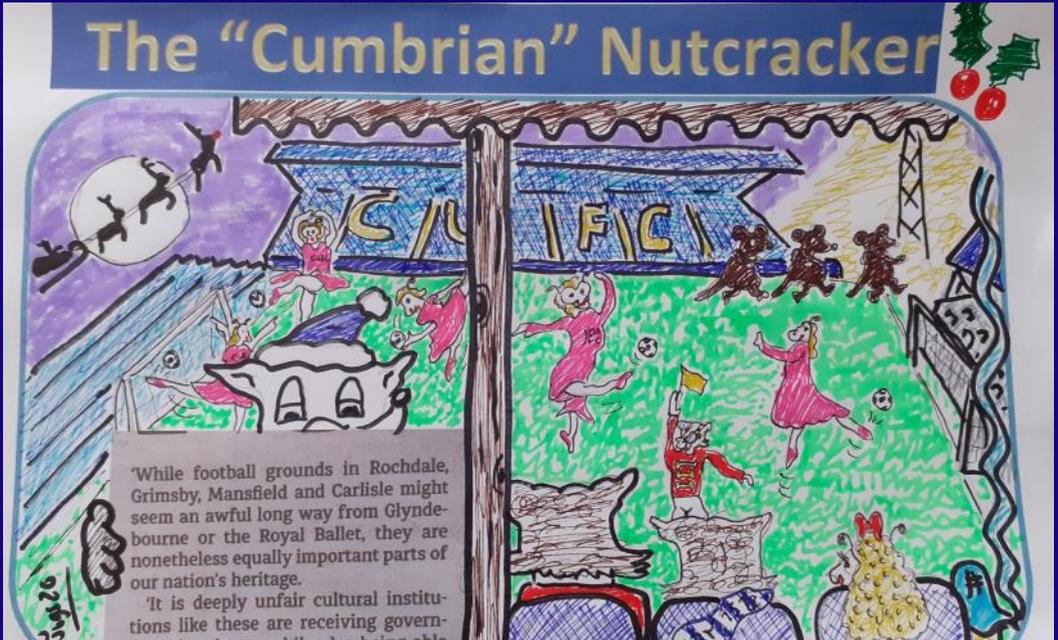
**Our Branch meetings in central London will resume when travel and social distancing measures permit. Virtual Hit the Bar! will carry news of any meetings or events we are able to hold.**



# SEE YOU IN THE VIRTUAL PUB!

All are welcomed in the virtual pub on matchdays.  
Look out for details of forthcoming virtual events.

## The "Cumbrian" Nutcracker



While football grounds in Rochdale, Grimsby, Mansfield and Carlisle might seem an awful long way from Glyndebourne or the Royal Ballet, they are nonetheless equally important parts of our nation's heritage.

It is deeply unfair cultural institutions like these are receiving govern-

The copy deadline for HTB! 315 will be notified in Virtual HtB over the coming weeks. Send any items, photos or articles to [editor@cusclb.com](mailto:editor@cusclb.com).

Thank you to all contributors to this edition of Hit the Bar! Picture credits to Shutterstock for all the BP Diary pictures, other than those of the Stevenage and Mansfield matches, which are by Mark Fuller.

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