



MIKEY RUNS TO VICTORY
see Page 9

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Since our inception, First Touch has enjoyed the tremendously loyal support of parents both at and away from training sessions. The role of parent is an incredibly challenging one as we all try to do what we think is best for our children whether it be at home, at school or through clubs and associations such as ours. A particular challenge that faces parents (and coaches) in relation to extra curricular activities is to find the balance between encouraging your child to do their best and enjoy their sport, with the concept of being competitive and winning. Your child's involvement with First Touch is a great example of this.

Article by Coach
Des McCole

The Parents Role

As parents we have an extremely influential role to play in our child's football experience, but this can be positive and constructive or negative and destructive. The interest and support of parents is vital to a young players continued participation in football. It is also widely known (and often through direct feedback from the child) that much of the pressure and anxiety that young players feel in sport can come from their parents.

Why Play Football ?

The best starting point for becoming a good football parent is to give careful consideration to the purpose of your child playing football. Questions which are useful to ask your child, and more importantly to ask yourself first are - Why is my child playing football ?, or Why do I want them to play football?, What does success for my child, in football look like ?, How is success of my child's involvement in football defined and measured by myself and my child.

Continued on Page 2.



NOLZA DOWN UNDER WHO HAS MY NUMBER 12 NOW?

IT IS A LONG WAY FROM GREENOCK TO THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL CITY CANBERRA, BUT CONOR NOLAN IS ONE FORMER FT PLAYER WHO MADE THE MOVE. CONOR WAS SIX WHEN HE JOINED FT AND HAD ENJOYED COMING THROUGH THE RANKS BEFORE HIS FAMILY MOVED TO THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY (ACT), IN APRIL 2005 AND HE HUNG UP HIS NOLAN 12 JERSEY. THIS SEASON HE IS PLAYING UP A YEAR WITH BELWEST FOXES U 12'S. HE RECENTLY WENT THROUGH HIS GRADING PROCESS, A SERIES OF TRIALS FOR THIS TEAM AND NOT SURPRISINGLY, GIVEN THE EXCELLENT COACHING HE RECEIVED AT FT, WAS RATED IN THE TOP GROUP. HE HAS ALSO BEEN CHOSEN TO REPRESENT ACT AT U 11'S See Conor's Interview on Page 6

Inside:

Page 3

Save Hands

Page 5

Kickers
News

Page 6/8

Match
Reports

Page 9

Off the Pitch

Page 10

Parents
Night.

Glenafton.

Page 11

Sponsor
News

Page 12

DJ's

Anagrams

FOOD FOR THOUGHT continued.

Your relationship with your child

At First Touch we must all understand it is vitally important that your child plays football for fun. Nobody should put too much responsibility on the child. The child should be able to win, lose, play well or not, without fearing his parents' reaction.

At this stage of your child's participation in football we should ALL give out the message that winning is not the main goal. Whilst it is a natural instinct to involve yourself in your child's football play, it would be better for the child if you could avoid being too hands on and simply allow them to play for themselves.

We believe that the child should be constantly recognised even when he makes the slightest progress since this might be extremely important to him. It is of fundamental importance not to put him in a position to compete with his team mates, thus avoiding comparing his performance with those of more skilful players. In every group at First Touch we have boys of varying ability but do not forget that each and every one of them was selected because we truly believe that they have potential worth developing. It is evident that, just like any other sport, boys will develop at a different pace and level to one another. But they all make progress and that should be recognised.

It is evident that parents feel proud when their child is amongst the best but this must not become an obsession. If he loses a match or has not played well, parents should avoid showing disappointment. Otherwise, the child will suffer not only because he has lost the competition, but also because he has disappointed his parents.

This article is not intended to be aimed at any parent or group of parents for a particular reason. Most of our coaches are parents and, being former players, fully appreciate the difficulties in managing frustration when the boys don't do well at training or in match play situations. This article is simply aimed at being a quiet reminder to us all that we should think always positively and encourage our boys to enjoy their experience at First Touch. Thank you all for your continued support.

SOME OF OUR SUCCESS STORIES

FIRST TOUCH PLAYERS SIGNED TO SENIOR CLUBS

2003 / 2004

Liam Bryce, Brendan Grana, Darren Orr, Ben Croucher, Andrew Ellis, Craig Brown- all Kilmarnock
Mark Buchan, Graham McClements, Luke Murray- all Morton, Nicky Low - Aberdeen

2004 /2005

Jamie Carson-Kilmarnock Darren Patton-Kilmarnock Robbie Crawford-Rangers
Aiden Fulton-Celtic Stephen Hepburn-Motherwell Glenn Thomson-St Mirren

CURRENTLY TRAINING WITH SENIOR CLUBS

94's Lee McCaulay, Ross Knight, Robbie Davis, Mikey McKitrick, Joel McGilp, Simon McBryde
- all Kilmarnock

95's Cameron Black, Alan Frizzell, Sam Ball, Callum Roberts, Craig Ellis, Matthew McLelland
- all Kilmarnock

96's Lewis Morgan, Jamie Mills, Ryan Sinnamon - all Rangers



DARREN ORR KILMARNOCK

Q. Did First Touch help your progress? Yes, as I would never have had the opportunity at being at a Pro Youth Team. Q. Were your individual ball skills better than the other boys signed by the club? Yes, as we did skill sessions regularly. Q. Would you recommend First Touch as the best place to start? Yes, definitely. Q. What do you still have to work hard at training? I still have to work on my upper body strength. Q. Who have you been playing against? Celtic and the other SPL Teams... Q. What was your favourite training task at First Touch? Shooting was one of my favourites especially when Bidge TRIED to kid on he was a goalkeeper Q. What was your worst training task at First Touch? None, I enjoyed every moment. Q. Lastly, when you're a major SPL player would you still visit First Touch? Yes, of course.

GRAHAM McCLEMENTS MORTON

Q. Did First Touch Help your progress? First Touch helped my progress because it taught me to control the ball better and to take time on the ball. Q. How many nights do you now train? I train two nights and play on a Sunday. Q. Would you recommend First Touch as the best place to start? Yes, I would definitely recommend that you start at First Touch because you don't have a league and the intention isn't for you to score or win, it's for you to concentrate on your passing and first touch.. Q. At First Touch the boys are now starting as young as 6, do you have any advice for them? Always concentrate, give as much as you can and always listen to your coaches. Q. What was your worst training task at First Touch? They were all great. Q. Lastly, when you're a major SPL player would you still visit First Touch? Even if I don't become a major SPL player I would still come to visit first touch and help out if I could.



OUR BOYS REACH SOCCER 6'S AND 7'S NATIONAL FINALS.

During the month of February a number of our players successfully participated in the Bank of Scotland West of Scotland Soccer 6's and 7's Finals at Ferguslie Park, Paisley. The teams featured many of our players.

Soccer 6's (no older than primary 6 pupils): Ardgowan (Alan Frizzell, Callum Roberts and Craig Ellis)
St Patrick's (Cammy Black, Sam Ball, Jack McArthur, Gerard Smith and Scott Lafferty)
Inverkip (Craig Knight)



ROBERTS

All three schools were represented with Ardgowan winning their group to go through to the National Finals to be played at Hamilton

Academicals ground at the end of April. Despite not losing a game and dominating their group, St Patrick's failed to capitalise on their numerous goal scoring opportunities and went home as runners-up by a single point. Inverkip also gave a good account of themselves but did not progress to the National Finals.

Soccer 7's (no older than primary 7 pupils)

Ardgowan (Joel McGilp and Alan Frizzell)
St Patrick's (Lee McAuley, Darren Boyle, Cammy Black, Sam Ball and Gerard Smith)

This time round, it was St Patrick's who were to progress to the National Finals to be played same day as the Soccer 6's Finals. Ardgowan played well, but it was not enough to win their group. Well done to all the boys who took part and good luck to those who will play in the National Finals.



BOYLE



SMITH

COACH PROFILE NEIL McCOLE

Q - Neil, how long have you been coaching at First Touch?

I've been coaching for First Touch for around 3 years and I'm currently working with the oldest group of boys.

Q - How did you get into coaching?

I got into coaching and working with kids through mainly my dad but through Davie Provan who offered me the chance of working for Inverclyde Leisure.

Q - Do you have any coaching qualifications?

I have gained Early Touches Certificate, and the Level 2 Coaching Certificate, coaching young footballers. I have also done a Mini Kickers course and have a Pre-school Assistant Gymnastics coach qualification. I am also studying Sport and Exercise Science.

Q - Why does a young coach like you get out of your bed early on a Sunday morning to coach these lads?

The main reason I get out my bed every week to go to coaching is because I enjoy it and when I see how the boys have been playing in recent games it is certainly worth it, plus it helps cure the hangover (boys - Neil can explain what that is?).

Q - Do you still play football?

I still play football myself; I play for the Pele Athletic 21s and also play 5s for the famous Kenya Lions.

Q - What do you think are the key strengths of the First Touch coaching programme?

First Touch's main strengths are that the focus is all about fun and learning and that there is no pressure to win. I believe that if more clubs within Scotland adopted the same attitude as us then football in Scotland would be in a much better state.

Q - What's the best advice you were given as a player?

The best advice that I've been given is probably not to be scared of losing because if we get upset at losing then our performance in the next game or match can be affected.

Q - How has the coaching programme developed during the time you have been a coach?

First Touch has grown from strength to strength and this has shown in the increase in numbers from when it started. I think the experience the coaches have gained since the beginning has helped the kids to develop as well. I think that every kid that leaves First Touch will have a knowledge and discipline of the game which would otherwise not be achieved until maybe 15 or 16, this is what I feel the biggest success of First Touch has been. Myself and a few of my friends only wish that there was something like this available to us when we were growing up.

Q - who do you find is the most difficult to play against at First Touch?

The hardest player to play against in our group is a tough one to pick. Scholesy and big Ross Knight enjoy kicking me and Lee McCauley and Joel Souness can trick you easily, but the hardest must be Simon McBryde. He tied me up in knots last week and I had to watch the game from the side. The easiest player is big John McClurg without a shadow of a doubt!!!!

Check out Neil's regular article on Page



Goalkeepers Save The Day

Over the past few months our search for players with potential goalkeeping skills has resulted in three new boys joining First Touch. They are Michael Burrows, Dylan McNally and Conor McArthur. These boys are put through their paces on Thursdays and Sundays by our goalkeeping coach, Craig Millar, whose efforts are proving particularly rewarding in competitive games against other clubs. Many of our coaches have also remarked on how well the boys are performing when they return to join their own groups at the end of each session.



It is not an easy task identifying and attracting potential goalkeeping talent and we hope to recruit more players during our open trials in May. If you know of any potential Boruc, Klos or McGurn please let your coach know.

SKILLS, HOW DO WE TEACH THEM ?

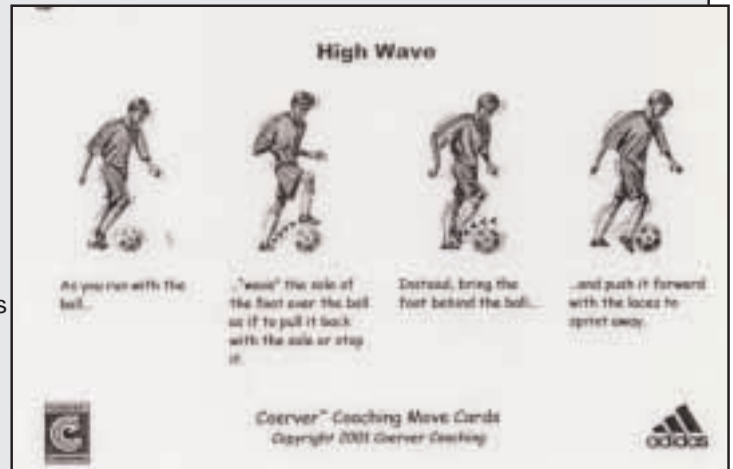
At First Touch our coaching sessions are well planned in advance and include the renowned training methods of Wiel Coerver a great Dutch coach and a soccer visionary. His ideas and methods have had a profound influence on football coaching around the world. Back in the 1970's it was Coerver who pioneered the innovative skill-development coaching programmes for young players by preparing dozens of new methods of skill training.

He focused on teaching ball mastery and 1 on 1 skills by encouraging youngsters to emulate the moves on the world's great players. Over the last 20 years this has been expanded into a comprehensive coaching programme for young players teaching both individual skills and team play.

The central theme of all Coerver Coaching concentrates on the improvement of both individual skills and small team group play, especially in the 6 - 14 age group. Coerver® Coaching believes that the game is made up of a series of movements and plays involving a small number of players (1v1, 2v2, 3v3 etc.) in different parts of the field. It is when they are linked together, or broken up defensively, that these small group plays make up a game of football.

We conclude that ultimately any system of team play is only as good as the players involved. First Touch therefore focuses on individual development both alone and in the context of small group team play.

In future issues of Keepy Update we will include an exercise for the boys to practice.



A Sample Coerver Coaching Card Used By Our Coaches



THE PRO'S TIP

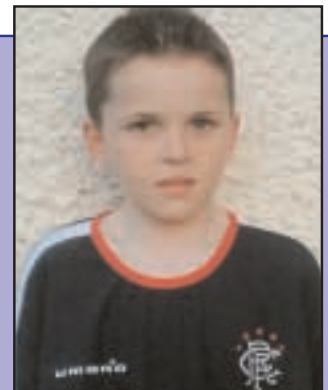
" You need to practice from an early age and practice in every spare moment you have...the more familiar you are with the ball the more you can concentrate on the other moving things in the game, i.e. your team mates and, as important, your opposition. It is also critical that you enjoy your football. If you don't enjoy it you will never be able to play to your best "
Jay Jay Okocha.

"JUST AS LONG AS I AM BACK IN TIME FOR DES"

Lewis Morgan one of our Group 2 boys who is currently at Murray Park last month travelled with the Rangers under 10's to play against Everton's under 10's at the Everton Youth Academy in Liverpool.

After a Friday night journey and overnight stay in a Travel Lodge the Rangers boys arrived at the Academy for a 9.30 kick off. Unlike the SFA rules the English clubs still operate to the school start date rather than January 1st date .The result was that Lewis lined up against a team of boys almost a year older and all built like Wayne Rooney who is a prodigy of the Academy as was Franny Jeffers but not many talk about that.

The game was a closely contested match with Rangers taking the lead before going behind only to fight back for a 3-3 draw although a late strike by Morgan could have sealed a victory if the post hadn't got in the way. Everton's hospitality organised by Dave Moyes, included Lewis and his team mates attending the Everton v Aston Villa match where the boys enjoyed James McFadden scoring a cracker to help Everton seal a needed victory. The boys travelled back right after the match and Lewis had an early night to be fresh for Des's session on Sunday morning 24 hours after lining up against Everton.



STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS - JOHN McCLURG IS A GRANDAD

Congratulations to John & Janice McClurg on becoming grandparents for the first time on 21st April 2006,when their daughter Lynsey gave birth to a healthy baby girl, Elizabeth (Beth) Anne Williamson.
Best wishes to John, Janice, Lynsey and Lynsey's partner Stuart.

Update on the Kickers

A view from Kilmacolm

In our 2nd edition of Keepy Update we introduced everyone to the First Kickers who train on a Wednesday evening at Kilmacolm. There are currently 14 boys training in this group.

Recently we spoke to two of our First Kickers, Liam Donnachie and Craig Morrison. Both boys were scouted from the Saturday morning coaching at the Battery Park run by Inverclyde Leisure. Both Liam and Craig told us they have benefited from the Kilmacolm experience where they enjoy the amount of time working with the ball, learning tricks and turns, ball handling and dribbling and passing. They have also made some very good new friends.

These boys and all the other players have worked very hard this season and recognise that by working hard they will improve. As Liam stated when asked what he had to work harder on, "everything with my left foot!".

The parents also recognise the value of Kilmacolm where the player to coach ratio allows close coaching. Even although it is a bit of a journey, especially on winter nights travelling up that road to Kilmacolm, parents see their kids gaining in confidence as they learn new skills. By using age appropriate drills they also see their boys getting used to the discipline that will be required to carry them through their sporting life whether it is football or not, and best of all they see the first kickers having fun.



CRAIG McPHERSON OVERSEES THE KICKERS ON A TRIP TO THE MAIN ACADEMY



WATCH IT CRAIG THAT WEE CHAP IS ABOUT TO REVERSE NUTMEG YOU.

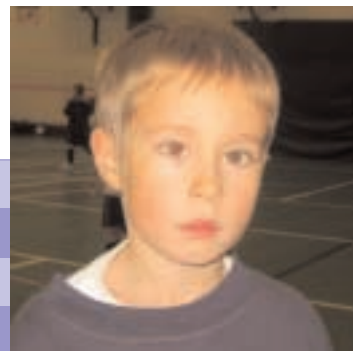


DAN GAULT STUDIES THE CLOSE CONTROL OF OUR FUTURE STARS

PLAYER PROFILE

John McDonald No 61

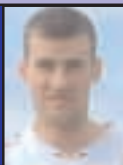
Johny is the all round sportsman in the kickers also playing Basketball and Hockey. A few of the coaches know young John's granda Brian McDonald and they reckon the wee man got his skills from his granny's side of the family.



Nickname	"Johny Mc"
Age	7
School	St Patricks
Favourite Team	Celtic
Favourite Player	Roy Keane
Favourite TV prog.	The Simpsons
Favourite Food	Chicken Nuggets
Favourite Joke	Q.Why do squirrels swim on their backs? A.So they don't get their nuts wet.
Ambitions	To play for Celtic or Barcelona!!!!

WHY WE DO A WARM UP

By Neil McCole



There is no doubt that time spent on warming up will improve an athlete's level of performance. As a result the coach must encourage the athlete to regard the warm up as an essential part of both the training session and competition itself. All professional players perform some type of warm up before training and matches. A proper warm up can increase the blood

flow to the working muscles which results in decreased muscle stiffness, less risk of injury and improved performance. Additional benefits to warming up includes physiological and psychological preparation.

Benefits of a proper warm up

Increased muscle temperature – the temperature increases within the muscles which are being worked during a warm up. A warmed muscle both contracts more forcefully and relaxes more quickly. This means the probability of overstretching a muscle and causing yourself an injury is far less.

Increased Body Temperature - This improves muscle elasticity, also reducing the risk of strains and pulls.

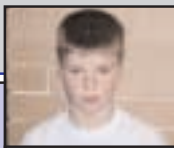
Improved Range of Motion - The range of motion around a joint is increased.

Mental Preparation - The warm-up is also a good time to mentally prepare for an event by clearing the mind, increasing focus, reviewing skills and strategy. Positive imagery can also relax the athlete and build concentration. Warming up also reduces the strain on the heart, as it lowers the blood pressure.

MATCH REPORTS



FIRST TOUCH (GROUP 3) VS ARDGOWAN (REPORT BY BILLY CLARK)



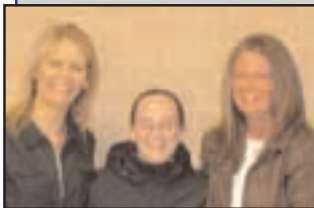
SHARPE

The boys played three twenty minute games against Ardgowan. In the first twenty minutes First Touch dominated play with some fine passing, and movement off the ball. Showing they really do listen in training, there was excellent mid-field work from Michael Grant, Lee Campbell and Graham Brown supported by good finishing touches from Shaun Campbell and Scott Lindsey to make the score a comfortable 6-0 victory. In the second session, Ardgowan re-arranged their play and put up a determined fight and their scoring chances were only denied by fine defending from Craig Knight, Brendan Sharpe and Chris McAuley. Some good passing movement from Dylan Campbell resulted in a 2-0 victory for First Touch. In the final game, Ardgowan took advantage of some shifting of positions of the First Touch team to take an early lead with two quick goals. However, FT settled down and took control again to win 3-2. These games were played in a very sporting manner.

FIRST TOUCH (GROUP 2) 0 VS ADREN 2 (REPORT BY FRIZZ & SINNY)

A team from Des's group sailed the ocean's seas to Dunoon on 1st April 2006 to take part in a series of games against 5 other clubs. Unfortunately, Mr Black's pleading for voluntary journalists was all in vain – all adults apparently suffering from an epidemic of writers cramp! It was left to two of our super subs to fill the gap and here is our touchline report from Ryan Sinnamon and Alan Frizzell (aged 9 and 10). Unfortunately, whilst the boys won 4 of their 5 matches, this report was for the game they lost! First Touch made a great start when Cammy hit the bar. Great first touch football and into a header which was missed. But a gap in the defence led to a goal to the opponents then another goal was scored by a cross. First touch looking nervous on set pieces, 2 mins later First Touch had a great ball in from Craig on the left but good defence from Adren kept us out. A good game and quite even but sadly we lost 2-0

FIRST TOUCH (GROUP 2) 11 VS KILWINNING RANGERS 0 (REPORT BY THE LADY REPORTERS) JANET , KAREN , AND JULIE.



Saturday morning brought another cold and early morning start for the boys from Group 2 and their parents who were heading to frosty Kilwinning.

The first half started off well with Alan Frizzell's attempt being cleared off the line, only to fall at the feet of Lewis Morgan whose fine shot narrowly missed the goal. First Touch's corner reached the head of Cammie who was unlucky not to score. It took another few minutes before

the back of the net was reached with the opening goal coming from Lewis from just outside the box (0-1). The vast majority of the possession within this half was with First Touch, who displayed plenty of skill with a fine one-two between Sinny and Sam, almost leading to another goal.

Goal number two came from Sam who put away a forward pass from Lewis (0-2). Sinny showed great footwork and was unlucky not to score himself, but shortly after, managed to score on the rebound of Sam's shot (0-3). There was not much for the defence to do but Guti and Ian Beattie made sure they did their job when required. By the end of the first half, confidence was boosted and the football was excellent.

The second half proved to be an unbelievable display of the boys' talents, although Kilwinning had a little more possession of the ball. Goal number four came from Cammie and Matthew's solo effort made it number five (0-5). Dylan, our goal keeper, did not have much to do but did a fine job when needed, even venturing up the field for a shot of the ball!

Cammie's run up the wing and cross into the box was sadly unfinished as no-one managed to get into the area on time. His efforts were rewarded later when he passed to Craig who finished with a nice goal (0-6). Next to take a shot on goal was our defender Ian Beattie who received the ball on the move and managed to score, for goal seven (0-7). Craig's earlier goal must have given him the taste of success as he stole the ball from a Kilwinning player and, while displaying some excellent skills, put the ball in the back of the net for his second (0-8). An unfortunate goalkeeping blunder was used to Cammie's advantage and increased First Touches lead to nine (0-9). The amount of possession shown by Kilwinning was slightly increasing, until Sam got the ball and scored with a fine left footed lob over the keeper (0-10). The final goal of the day was by Guti whose great strike put the icing on the cake for the First Touch boys winning 11-0.

Despite playing against a weaker side, this was a wonderful performance from all the boys in which their communication, effort and great skill was displayed much to the enjoyment of Des, Bidge and the parents who, by now, had just about defrosted. There is also one other person to mention - Gregor Black who was team mascot for the day and ball boy, keeping the game going.

After the game the goalkeepers were put to the test with a penalty shoot out. First Touch scored only three (Sinny, Ian and Matthew) compared to Kilwinning's six. It could have been more if not for Dylan's four saves. Note for Des - maybe we should practice more in scoring penalties rather than hitting the bar??



DES'S GROUP 2 BOYS

**DUNOON 1VS FIRST TOUCH (GROUP 1)12
(REPORT BY ALEX MCGILP SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2006)**

There is an air of renewal about Dunoon. Formerly a major Clydeside resort that failed to keep pace with the changing economic environment of the late 1900s Dunoon has begun to rebuild on it's enduring asset of a seaside location with an attractive mountainous hinterland. As a result it has succeeded in bringing in both jobs and a new breed of tourism.

Attention, likewise, has been paid to sport with a football development programme being introduced to cultivate flourishing local talent.

Talented as they might be, today, however, they were no match for our boys.

Eyebrows were raised on the touch-line when the starting line-up omitted the irrepressible Lee Macauley together with Ross Knight and Simon McBryde. Others like Johnny Rennie simply seized the opportunity to impress. Despite losing an early goal to a slightly more physically superior team, Rennie showed remarkable composure to round the goalkeeper and equalise a couple of minutes later. There followed a performance of unmatched goal scoring prowess, (interspaced by a fine goal by David Slack), apparently reminiscent of his father in his prime, that had both of his parents whooping with delight. The second period failed to live up to the excitement of the first with only a Robbie Davis penalty and an inevitable Macauley solo effort to add to the tally. Period three merely underlined the superiority of the First Touch boys with further goals from Simon McBryde (2), David Slack, Lee Macauley and Aiden McIntyre completing the scoring in an emphatic, if ultimately one-sided against a demoralised opposition, victory.



Fans Favourite Slack



Penalty Scorer Davis

Star performers were David McNeill, the very polite Don Galli and Joel McGilp. However the Man of the Match award must go to Johnny Rennie, who, incidentally, has fine acting abilities as well, for his first period goal scoring heroics. Praise goes also to Ryan Murdoch for some robust, if occasionally ill-timed, tackling and an outstanding goalkeeping performance in the third period, Robbie Davis (ever played rugby,son?), the referee for trying to persuade the boys that he was only forty five and Don Galli (Snr) for his celery and cucumber sandwiches!

**FALKIRK PRO 1VS FIRST TOUCH (GROUP 1) 0
(REPORT BY STEVEN MAXFIELD)**

On a bright spring evening we made our way to Stirling University for thrilling encounter with Falkirk Pro Youth. The coaches showed their dedication to health and vitality by stopping at McDonalds on the way to the ground and were still wiping the tomato sauce from each others mouths as they entered the changing room.

From the kick off it was apparent we were going to be in for an exciting match and within 5 minutes Lee McCaulay had volleyed off the bar. After continued pressure First Touch won a corner and Simo placed the ball on Joel McGilp's head who unfortunately, had a great looping effort saved by the keeper.

From the kick out Falkirk broke clear up the park and were only prevented by scoring by a first class save by Don Galli. The next 10 minutes produced some end-to-end exciting football and Darren Boyle and Scholesy deserve to be singled out for some great defending in our hour of need.

The second period started with 4 subs by First Touch and almost immediately Falkirk scored as the new players were settling into their roles. It would be unfair to blame Scholesy who had just taken over in goal and was still lacing up his platform shoes to make him look bigger to the opposition. In fact during the section of the game the wee man was very impressive in goal.

As the game progressed the silky passing of the first phase had deteriorated slightly and suddenly a Falkirk midfielder sank to the ground writhing in agony. As Lee protested his innocence – "I never touched him Gov" the Falkirk player was replaced and sent to the local ballet school to try and build up some muscles.

Meanwhile, it was reported by a passer by that Jack Maxfield had tackled one of the opposing players. This raised the biggest gasp from the crowd as no one had ever seen this before and bets were immediately placed on whether it would happen again before the end of the season. Worth a flutter at 50-1.

By the third period it was becoming very difficult to write while wearing a balaclava, ski mitts and doing the hokey cokey to try and keep warm. I seem to remember a weaving run by Simo through the centre of the park followed by a fine shot saved by the Falkirk keeper. Mikey & Bush also held their own in defence but unfortunately we could not get the break to allow Slacky to sprint up the field and equalise when we needed it most.



First Tackle Maxi

The supporters of both teams were thoroughly entertained by some excellent passing and support play by every member of the squad. Well done to all concerned.

GRYFFE 1 FIRST TOUCH 4

(REPORT BY NO.1 ACE REPORTER BILL MCKITRICK) "ONE FOR YOUR SCRAP BOOK LADS "

A TRIUMPH FOR TOTAL FOOTBALL

On a cold night at Linwood First Touch U 12`s lined up against Gryffe U13`s. It was good to meet up with John Cunningham, a great friend of First Touch over the last few seasons whose son, Jamie, stars for Gryffe.

First Touch started confidently using the large pitch to take maximum advantage of their trademark swift passing game. The first 25 minutes saw a composed First Touch dominate possession with slick interplay between Jonny Rennie and Lee McCauley terrorising the Gryffe defence. Joel McGilp bossed the midfield with tenacious tackling and drove the team forward. Jack Bushfield and Robbie Davis controlled the flanks with determination and a maturity beyond their years. Ross Knight added to his growing reputation as a top quality centre back with his solid tackling, accurate reading of the game and his self confidence radiated throughout the team. Simon McBryde began in goals and later played outfield to devastating effect. The first period ended with First Touch firmly in control but unable to convert their dominance into goals.

The second period began with an onslaught from Gryffe who now realised they were in a proper game. First Touch matched them and gradually reasserted their own brand of total football with fast paced one twos and unselfish movement. Aidan McIntyre was prominent in his midfield role and was at the heart of the link ups between defence and attack.

Jonny Rennie`s powerful running earned its just reward when Joel won the ball in midfield, released a quick ball to Simon who quickly found Jonny sprinting clear and he finished clinically with a low angle drive. 1 : 0 to First Touch.

Almost immediately Lee McCauley had the away crowd gasping in admiration as a brilliant solo run ended with a shot shaving the right post.

By now Neil and John (Rinus Michels) McClurg had shuffled their talented squad. David Slack moved upfront to replace Lee. Mikey McKitrick moved into midfield to provide some probing passes to exploit David`s lightning pace. Ryan Murdoch and Darren Boyle had locked the back door and were pushing the whole team forward.

Gryffe were finding it difficult to break down a solid back four and were at risk from the penetrating raids of Jack Maxfield and Dave Carlos McNeil marauding down the flanks. David Slack had the rather square Gryffe defence at his mercy when Jonny slotted a telepathic pass into David`s run. His blistering pace carried him clear and a cool finish gave the exposed keeper no chance. 2 : 0.

As the second period drew to a close Gryffe pushed forward, raised their game and only a brilliant Jack Bushfield interception prevented a strike. First Touch were under intense pressure and were pinned back on the edge of their 18 yard box. Gryffe were playing strong, determined football and deserved their goal with an accurate low drive. First Touch roared back and Simon blazed narrowly over. This was the crucial point of the match. Gryffe showed considerable skill and grit, First Touch had to defend resolutely to end this period 2 : 1 ahead.

Into the final third and once again a reshuffled First Touch took the field. Darren Boyle and Ryan Murdoch shackled a busy Gryffe attack, Lee replaced Jonny, Joel took over as keeper and Simon`s, strong running began to dominate the midfield. Gryffe were being stretched by excellent wing play from Jack Maxfield and the athletic overlapping of Anthony Doherty and by the need to chase an equaliser. This space was cleverly exploited by the best move of the game; Simon beat two players with close control, played a long pass wide right and David Slack sprinted through, beat the offside trap, drew the keeper and calmly stroked an inch perfect diagonal goal. 3 : 1.

To their credit Gryffe continued to play clever disciplined football and launched waves of determined attacks only to be repelled by the best defensive display this reporter has witnessed.

Late in the game, Aidan McIntyre`s tireless endeavour was rewarded when he stroked an angled 20 yard drive into the Gryffe net to round off a total night of total football played with the highest levels of sportsmanship.

It was reassuring to see Don Galli amongst the supporters as he wins his battle against illness and we eagerly await his return to the squad.



NOLZA DOWN UNDER CONTINUED

Conor's dad Gerry stood in as Chick Young to pose. Conor some questions starting right away with how football in Australia compared to

Scotland."A. It's more physical in Scotland and more skillful with better coaching. The Aussie boys are all really big, strong and fast."**Q.What do you miss most about FT?** A. I miss the training routines. In ACT they are not as well organised."**Q.Who has been the biggest influence in your football career?**A. That is easy. Des. I first went to him when I was four, before I started at school and he used to say practice all the time. When I started at FT John, Bidge and the rest of the coaches were brilliant and I learned lots."**Q.What did you think of the coaches?**A. They made training fun and made me a better player. The coaches are the best I have seen."**Q.What was the highlights of your time at FT?**A. Playing against Rangers at Murray Park and playing the tourneys at Glenafton."**Q.Who was the most skillful player you played with?**A. Overall Robbie Crawford but in my group it was Lee Mc Cauley. **Q.Who was your most difficult opponent?**A. Everyone was difficult because they were good. Robbie Davis was hard to play against."**Q. Do you have a message for all at FT?**A. Yes. Enjoy it and work hard. Listen to the coaches.Good luck to everyone for the future and I will visit when I come home for a holiday.



A YOUNG CONOR WITH SKILLFUL MCCAULEY

Conor would be delighted if any of his old FT mates e-mailed him to bring him up to date on what their up to at FT,what's new in Greenock and who has number 12 now. Contact Conor on nolza7@hotmail.com

OFF THE PITCH

Cross Country By Mick Harrington

There is, it seems, a life beyond football for a number of our players. Over the past few months, many of our boys have participated - some, very successfully - in various cross country and road race events.

Cross country running is a hard, energy-sapping sport that requires stamina, commitment and a degree of agility. Runners have to be prepared for all sorts of challenges from running in ankle deep mud, to frozen rutted ground, and from flat racing to steep hill running. It's not just about turning up on the day and taking part. Like football, training is essential.

Cross-country races are normally run in the winter so a good warm-up is vital. Slow jogging should be followed by a series of stretching exercises for the hamstring and calf muscles. Increasing the pace and distance raises your heart rate and increases your breathing. If you don't do this before a race you will be out of breath very quickly during it.

Anyone who has played or coached football will know that if you ask players to do any running, whether it be sprinting or distance, it is regarded as a slog. However, ask them to do the same with a ball at their feet and they will do it without thinking. During a full 11 a-side football match some players can run up to 10 kilometres (just over 6 miles), so the amount of running our boys do during coaching and in their small sided games more than prepares them for the school or club races which are run over a distance of between 1 and 2 miles.



Mikey McKitrick
"Champion"



It is no surprise that the First Touch boys who take part in these running events generally do well. Here are some recent successes:

Inverclyde Schools Cross Country Championships This is a series of three races run near the grounds of local secondary schools. A number of our boys recorded some fine individual and team victories over the three events, most notably Mikey McKitrick who won the primary 7 championship with Jack Bushfield finishing not far behind in the overall table.

In the primary 5/6 event, Alan Frizzell, Cameron Black and Jack Harrington turned in some fine performances to finish well up the field but just outside the medal positions.

Inverclyde AC 1 Mile Road Race This event was an open invitation with a large turnout of runners from various clubs in the West of Scotland. Alan finished first local boy in second place, with Cameron in a commendable 5th place.

Willie Jukes Memorial 1 Mile Road Race This race was run in Dunoon, again attracting runners from various clubs. In a nail biting junior race, boys from First Touch - all representing Glenpark Harriers - recorded a 1-2-3 victory in the mile race. In a sprint finish, Cameron Black held off Jack Harrington (2nd) and Gerard Smith (3rd) to win the race.



BLACK AND FRIZZELL BATTLE IT OUT

If anyone is interested in finding out more about running, contact Mick Harrington.

BLACKBURN OFF



It is with regret that we have been informed by Blackburn Rovers that the tournament that was planned for April 2006, and to which we were invited to participate, has been cancelled. We do, however, wish to continue to develop relationships with Blackburn and other senior clubs and are confident that similar opportunities will arise in the future.

GLENAFTON ON



This year, we shall be taking part in the annual competition held at Glenafton, where we have enjoyed considerable success in the past. Our 1993 kids won the tournament in 2004 and the 1994 boys were runners-up in 2003. We are intending to field



Last year at Glenafton... nice hair doos boys

two teams from each of group on the following dates:

Sunday 11/06/06 - group 4 Saturday 17/06/06 - group 3 and Sunday 18/06/06 - group 2 Please let your son's coach know as soon as possible if he is not going to be available. Please note this is an all day event.

One to One Meetings - Parents and Coaches

Towards the end of June, we intend holding one to one meetings with the purpose of providing you with an end of year progress report on your boy, and for you to raise any issues that you wish to discuss with his coach. Meetings are likely to be no longer than 10 minutes per child.

To assist us in the planning of those meetings, the boys will be issued with a form to request an appointment. You will have the choice of a Thursday or a Sunday meeting held during the normal coaching hours. Please return your form to your son's coach as soon as possible. The date and time of your meeting will be communicated to you in due course.

Group 1 End of Season Presentation

By way of recognising our Group 1 boys leaving First Touch at the end of June, we intend to hold a Presentation Ceremony for our leavers which will also include a buffet for the boys and their parents. This year, we wish to give this event the importance it deserves and will be arranging a suitable day time venue during the month of June, to accommodate us. If any parent of a boy in Group 4 has any thoughts or ideas on the location, time and format please contact John McClurg. It is for your boys, so it would be nice if you helped organise the occasion.

SPECTATING

We would respectfully ask all spectators at the Battery Park to stand behind the spectator rails provided. The jobs of coaching and refereeing become unnecessarily more difficult to control when spectators stand on the wrong side of the rail and get too close to the play.

KIT-BE PREPARED

At the beginning of the season, we asked all parents to ensure that boys are prepared for all types of weather when attending for games. Unfortunately, this is not always happening and we had a recent situation where Group 4's game was abandoned due to torrential rain but only two or three boys had brought towels with them. The boys were soaked through. Please also ensure your child has a change of clothing with him.

GAMES WANTED

Our Group 3 (under 10's) and Group 4 (under 8/9's) boys are desperate for some opposition. If you know of a team that the boys could play please contact Craig/Dan (Group 4) and Bidge (Group 3). Both teams are prepared to travel within a reasonable distance to show off their skills.

FEEDBACK

We have included a questionnaire with this issue as we are looking for some feedback from both boys and parents on our Keepy Update. Do you think it keeps you informed? What articles have you found interesting? Is there something you would like to see featured in future issues? The editorial team look forward to your comments - hopefully you won't let us down, just fill it in and pass to any coach or Jim Black. Even a verbal comment would help.

THANK YOU Our Sponsors & Friends

In this issue we are delighted to show off another of our new strips, this one being sponsored by **Gianni's Chip Shop**. Our other strips have been sponsored by the **Yorkshire Building Society**, and **Baronial Properties**.



New sponsor Giovanni Demelas of Gianni's Chip Shop pictured with members of First Touch displaying the new dark blue strip. Giovanni is a life long supporter of AC Milan and appreciates the continental flair player and is looking forward to similar displays from our boys in these new strips. Giovanni's nephew Marco Sau has recently signed for Italian Serie A team Cagliari. We wonder who Gianni will support when they meet AC Milan.

We have been absolutely delighted at the recent response for funding/sponsorship and wish to thank everyone for their generous donations. The expense involved in running First Touch with over 80 boys could not be possible without the sponsors and friends who have donated funds. For the start of the 2006/07 season all boys will be issued with new kit to complement what they currently use. On top of buying new kit we need to replace the balls, pay fees for Glenafton, for our training pitches and the costs related to competitive matches. First Touch seek the parents continued support in our commitment to generate more funds to help with these running costs. Before we break up for the summer holidays, we intend to organise a sponsored walk for our boys and any adults wishing to participate, from Battery Park to Lunderston Bay. Weather permitting, we will be having a barbeque and kick-about. Details to follow, but in the meantime, if anyone would like to help organise the event, please contact Jim Black.

The list below highlights how we have been spending our sponsors donations and the costs of items we hope to raise fund for **GLENAFTON TOURNEY**.

6 Teams of kids born 95 /96 /97	£300.00
90 new Mitre Size 4 Balls and Adidas Ball Bags	£530.00
Total	£830.00
NEW KIT	
Stanno Shorts, Socks and T-shirt (printed and numbered)	£16.75 per boy
Stanno tracksuit (printed)	£28.50 per boy
Based on 80 sets of kids x £45.25 per kid	Total £3,620.00
NOTE - this does not include Rain jackets	

2006 OPEN TRIALS TO TAKE PLACE DURING MAY

As we continue to develop and seek out players with talent and potential, we are holding Open Trials during the month of May for players born in the years 1997, 1998 and 1999. If you know of any friends or family members who may be interested, please ask them to call Des on 07840 605193 or e-mail firsttouch@btinternet.com for more details.



Congratulations to the following boys who celebrate their birthday in March and April

Don Galli
Jonathan Rennie

12

Alan Frizzell
Dylan McNally
John Duffy

11

Fabiano Fallone

9

Matthew McAuley
Ryan Ball

10

Michael Grant
Jamie Mills

8

John McDonald

7

Apologies to Chris McAuley for missing his birthday last issue, hope you had a good one.

ISSUE 3 LUCKY WINNERS Our two winners from the last issue were Sam Ball who guessed correctly the four ugly mug in the Who's That Pic. !. Reese 2. Anthony Doherty .3. Calum Roberts .4. Jonny Rennie. DJ's Anagram Corner was scooped by that clever chap Jack Harrington with the correct names of Darren Boyle Lewis Morgan Cameron Black Craig Ellis Gerrard Smith Michael Speirs Ian Beattie Michael Grant Calum Roberts and Adam Frizzell.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A WEBSITE PROGRAMMER/DESIGNER WHO FOR A VERY SMALL FEE WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP US PRODUCE A FIRST TOUCH WEB SITE. WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT IN IT AND THE GRAPHIC DESIGN IS NOT A PROBLEM BUT NEED HELP WITH THE FUNCTIONALITY. CAN YOU HELP OR DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO CAN ?

IF SO TELL JOHN MCCLURG OR JIM BLACK

Anagram Corner

by Coach Dave Jameison



RIGHT BOYS, SOMEONE TOLD ME LAST ISSUE'S ANAGRAMS WERE A BIT TOO EASY, SO I HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LOOK OUTSIDE FIRST TOUCH FOR MORE. SO SMARTY PANTS, WHOSE NAMES ARE HIDDEN IN MY ANAGRAMS THIS TIME ?

- UP HART ALLEY (SPL)
- REV DR STRANGE (PREMIERSHIP)
- POOR DADS (SPL)
- KERR ANDROIDE (SPL)
- TREBOR SPIERS (PREMIERSHIP)
- ENA YORKE (SPL)
- LR SLIM CHAIR (SCOTTISH 2ND DIV)
- YO NO NEW YEAR (PREMIERSHIP)
- STUN THIS ORC (PREMIERSHIP)
- BLACK RIDGE (FIRST TOUCH)

REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR OWN NAME ON YOUR ENTRY CLOSING DATE 7TH MAY.

Caption Competition

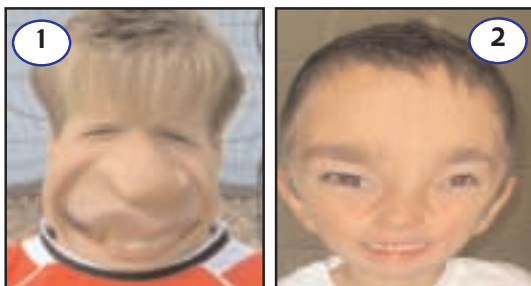
We are looking for a witty caption for this photo showing Des giving one of his important team talks to his group 2 boys



pass your captions to your coach and remember to include your name. Closing date for all entries to be with your coach is Sunday 7th May.

Jogo Bonito - First Touch

Boys we are looking for a photo of you as very young player for next issues Who's the Ronaldinho Photo Competition. All photos will be returned, if you have one pass it to Jim Black in an envelope with your name included.



SPOT THE PLAYERS AND WIN

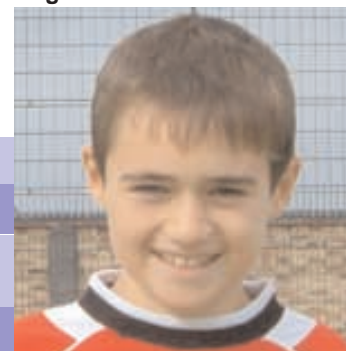
These good looking guys will have to try harder at training ,can you guess who's who - answers on a sheet to your coach to win. Beware ! Any boy not trying harder at training will feature here in the next issue. Closing date for all entries to be with your coach is Sunday 7th May.



PLAYER PROFILE

Jack Bushfield

SQUAD No.3 Jack is the second BUSH to go through the ranks at First Touch. His older brother Andrew was the original BUSH but as Jack will add he's always been the better player. When he's not doing athletics, hockey or badminton he plays a mean guitar, rockstar / football star ?



Nickname	"BUSH"
Age	11
School	Gourock Primary
Favourite Team	Morton
Favourite Player	Peter Weatherson
Favourite TV prog.	Scoccer AM
Favourite Food	Soup
Favourite Joke	Mom, there's a man at the door collecting for the Old Folks HomeShall I give him Gran???
Ambitions	To play for Leeds United

SMITHS OF GREENOCK ARE DELIGHTED TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH FIRST TOUCH.



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