

WEALDSTONE v WHITEHAWK  
10-MINUTE INTERVIEW

STONES

# Josh had a debut to remember ..if only he could remember it!



Tim Parks discovers centre-back  
**JOSH HILL's** long and winding  
route to finally sign for the Stones

**J**OSH HILL was an instant knockout when he made his Stones debut on loan from Dartford four years ago... literally.

'I'd just moved to London and was dual signed with the Darts - Gordon Bartlett needed a centre-back and in my first game against Cray Wanderers I was KO'd in mid air in a clash of heads after 15 minutes' recalls the 6ft 3in defender.

'I must have been out cold for five or ten seconds, but Gary the Physio brought me round and I reckoned I could carry on... but after an hour the exact same thing happened and there I was, a complete dead weight passed out on the pitch. It was a bit scary because I couldn't remember any-

thing about the game, or even the password for my phone.

'Jason (Scannell) went with me in the ambulance to hospital in Watford and I stayed overnight - when Gordon heard I was still in, at 11 that night, he drove up to make sure I was okay. That was so typical of the man. That was my only appearance for the Stones so one to remember - or not, in this case!

'I went back to Dartford as they were two leagues higher at the time, but I spoke to GB every summer for four years trying to sort out a move here as I have so much respect for him... but for one reason it another it didn't happen until this summer.

'Now, of course it all seems

rather strange as Gordon lasted just four games this season. I haven't been here long enough to comment about the managerial change, whether the timing was right or not, but I must say that the training is much more intense now and we are moving in the right direction.'

**U**nfortunately Josh wasn't moving in the right direction before the recent Bognor home game!

'Ahh, yes that was an awful morning for me... I was left out after arriving late for the 1.30pm meet. There was an accident on the North Circular and it took me four hours to drive the 17 miles from Walthamstow (where I live) to the ground. But people were

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Josh Hill

60 SECOND PROFILE

BORN: CARDIFF  
 01/08/91

WEIGHT: 13st12lbs  
 HEIGHT: 6ft3in

13 APPEARANCES FOR 'WOOD' (AS OF END OF 2013/14)

Playing History

ILKESTON FC  
 COALVILLE TOWN FC  
 WORKSOP TOWN FC  
 DARTFORD FC

RIGHT FOOTED CENTRE BACK

'WOOD' DEBUT: EBBSFLEET UNITED MARCH 2014

DAY JOB: MARKETING OFFICER

**Josh on Twitter: I should have learned after writing off Leicester just before they won the Prem**

In the last home programme we mentioned Josh's twitter reaction to Daily Mirror online's story on Wayne Rooney turning up for training with a stubbly chin.... and leaving a few hours later apparently clean shaven. 'When you're not having a great day, just imagine having to write this sort of thing for a living' he tweeted. Well, the Mirror boys sit just along from me and stuck to their view that Rooney spending his training time on a-hot-towel-and-razor-blade routine was interesting. Josh replied: 'Well, I probably should have learned my lesson a few years ago when Leicester were rumoured to be spending big and I tweeted something like 'As if Leicester could win the Premier League #deluded' and then of course it came back to bite me on the bum when they won the title... that post was retweeted about 1,000 times!'

*We're normally a bit scathing of other club's programmes, but fair play to Boreham Wood who carried this decent graphic on Josh two years ago*

badly injured in that crash so it puts it in perspective.'

Fortunately for Josh, rival centre back Ciaron Brown was missing for the Poole Town game two days later - playing in a trial match for Cardiff City - and our 6ft 3in summer signing from Chelmsford City moved seamlessly into the No4 shirt alongside Matt Day. A faultless performance that has seen him rival the youngster for the No.4 shirt in every game since.

'I'm delighted for Ciaron' said Josh. 'He's such a good prospect for a 20 year old and I'm a bit jealous that Cardiff are looking at him.... I was brought up in South Wales, between Swansea and Cardiff and the Bluebirds are my team. He's six years younger than me though so I'm more realistic about my chance of going in to full-time pro football.'

'You've got a good job though, Josh, sounds like the best of both worlds?' I asked him.

'Yeah, I work for a charity, Marie Curie, in digital and email marketing but of course I'd much rather be out on the training ground on a Monday morning than sitting in an office. Playing football is a bonus for me rather than a necessity.'

**H**is route into the semi-pro game was an unusual one: Josh studied at Loughborough University but 'had only just kicked around with my mates really' before starting his degree. His potential was quickly spotted and he was soon playing for

the University side in the Midland League before, in his final year at Loughborough, signing for Ilkeston Town in the Bostick Northern Premier League.

Josh takes up the story. 'I moved down to take a job in London at a small sports charity, and went on trial at Dartford - which was when I had that short loan spell at the Vale. Then Boreham Wood signed me, in the Conference South at the end of the 2013-14 season. I had a dozen games then, and then the whole of the next season when we won promotion to the Vanarama National League with people like Matty Whichelow and Sam Cox in the side. We also had two quality strikers in Junior Morais, who's now scoring goals for Peterborough, and Lee Angol who is doing well at Mansfield Town. He was the best striker outside the league at 19 and got something like 30 goals that season.'

'So who are the toughest strikers you've faced?' I asked him.

'Louis Theophanous (now at Billerica) was always a handful, and fortunately I played with him last year at Chelmsford, but funnily enough Dan Fitchett always seemed to score against me when he was at Sutton so I was pleased to walk into training in the summer and see Fitch in a Wealdstone shirt! He's horrible to mark and never gives you a moment's peace.'