

Five minutes of your time, please – with Paul Waites



Paul (Front right) in a Wealdstone past IX

Five Minutes Of Your Time is a series of interviews with people from different areas and eras within the game. This one features Paul Waites who until recently was Manager at FC PASA in Finland...

Hi Paul, I know you from your days at Wealdstone, but how would you introduce yourself and what are you doing now?

I'm son of George Waites, a winger and inside forward who played in all the 4 divisions of the Football League with Orient, Norwich, Brighton and Millwall... In my playing days, I was a small

reasonably skillful old fashioned "ball player" (not quite suited to the "English" way), and I've just returned from Finland where I took over a small Football Club (FC PASA) in an effort to make them a big club.

We did reasonably well winning our League 3 times in the first 3 years, but unfortunately we became victims of our own success as we went too far too quickly and the fourth season became a chore. Eventually, I left and I came back to the UK towards the

end of last year.

Now I'm back, I'm working with my brother and sister in the family Property business.

You had a decent career in the game, was it always in your mind to get into coaching and management when you retired from playing?

Yes. Football is our family 'thing'. Dad came from the East End of London – his mum left home when he was very young so football was all he had. It was his whole life really before the family

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came along. It must be in the genes as I was only really interested in "doing" football.

In fact when I was about seven, my dad became Player-Manager of Willesden and that lasted on and off for about 6 or 7 years though from time to time the Chairman wanted to pick the team! We played Wealdstone in a Middlesex Cup tie during this time (January 11th 1977).

The first game at Willesden was a 1-1 draw with a young Francis Joseph scoring for Wealdstone right at the start of his career – it was his only game for the club! I was Dad's shadow going to training and EVERY match and we would be talking all things football; the team, tactics etc. I was almost like an Assistant Manger to him from that early age!

You had a successful business too - then a few years ago decided on the move to Finland. How did that and the job at FC Pasa come about? Any regrets?

Yeah, we first started the family business when I was at Wealdstone. I was 18 at time and Dad bought a fruit shop in



FC PASA 2010

Bushey for me and my sister to work in - with our little brother due to leave School a year or two later. That's what got us started. Now, I'm glad to say, we've progressed a little from that Bushey shop!

I'd played football out in Finland during my career; Dave 'Harry' Bassett needed someone to go out there (he had big connections to Wealdstone via Alan Batsford) and he asked me if i fancied it and off I went. With the style of football out there not being great technically, the players are very keen and fair. You don't come up against too much ugly football out there and I thought I could make a difference and improve their game a little.

Regrets? Not really. Maybe i should have chosen a Club that had the resources to jump up the divisions at the pace we achieved...

When you joined FC Pasa they were at a low level in Finland; how does the standard compare with the UK?

It's very hard to compare. I look at the Premier League over there and think that it's not great but their teams have played against English and Scottish Premier teams in European competitions and not been embarrassed. As for the lower levels out there, I have to say there is a big difference. They only have ONE league system for the whole of the country and the numbers alone dictate that the standard

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of competition is so much stronger, but I have to say that it was a pleasure operating in a country where if you had ability and performed you got your rewards plus there was no one trying kick you off the park!

Was that the biggest difference - the way you could coach and manage in the UK compared with Finland?

Yes. But being a foreign and Professional Coach / Manager also guaranteed a level of respect to start with. It helped get things started, but you still have to prove yourself of course!

What's the structure of a club like PASA - how much authority and responsibility can a foreign coach have on player signings and such like?

Haha..i had ALL the responsibility (and the blame).

What is the day job now? Is football still a part time occupation? What's on the horizon?

The Property business now that I'm back here in the UK, working with my brother and sister. Football wise, There is a documentary of last season at FC PASA that has recently come out in Finland - it was made as an independent film by the Finnish version of the BBC's top Cinematographer - so I guess there will be some interest out there once that gets broadcast. Who knows what might happen!

Since you hung up your boots



as a player, what are the biggest changes you've seen in the game? Are they for the good or detriment of the game as a whole?

Well I'd have to say it's nice to see some quality players playing in our Premier League unfortunately they are almost all foreign! I'd like to think we see this quality week in and week out and try to produce it in "our" youngsters, but having come through the Pro game myself I don't hold out too much hope.

Who was missing from the England Squad at the Euro's; Who would you have had in the side and why?

I'd say about 3/4's of a decent team is missing. These English boys that i keep hearing are GREAT players - do me a favour. (But I'm not sure there are too

many "proper" English players out there).

Finally, you have one chance to make a change to the game at any level; What would you do?

Have you got all day...!

It would be in the most IMPORTANT aspect of the English game - The KIDS.

They have got to be allowed to dribble, to try stuff with the ball without some would-be Premier League Manager Dad shouting "Get rid of it". Scandalous !!

I'd cut out competitive games and Leagues etc and give them a ball each. Get them practising - practising - practising keeping and controlling the ball. Kids don't need to do all the running - you can get kids fit at ANY age but you cannot teach them skills at any age. It has to be introduced when they are as young as possible!

To be any good you have to MASTER the ball, love it, cherish it, look after it...

Unfortunately, none of that is the 'English' way.

Rant over !!!!

Five Minutes of Your Time is one of a number of articles produced for the blog at www.2ndyellow.com where there is a regular column on Wealdstone.