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Dennon Lewis



A familiar sight this season: Dennon celebrates a goal, this one against Bath City in the 7-0 demolition

Now I know what it's like to be blown away by Dennon Lewis.

No defender's been able to stay in touch with our livewire left winger all season, and it was a similar story when I called him for a chat in the middle of Storm Ciara last week.

He was out walking his dog close to his home at Abbots Langley - but it was so windy I couldn't hear a thing. Just the odd bark from his two year old Staffie, Bear!

'Sorry, sorry, I'll call back when I'm inside' said Dennon after 10 minutes of disjointed conversation that was like talking to Johnny Vegas in a wind tunnel.

But finally we could hear each other. And for me to get the lowdown on the 22-year-old who grew up in Harrow, moved to Watford and has arrived at Wealdstone after a short stint at Falkirk in the Scottish Championship.

"Yeah, I was born in Pinner, moved to

'Who's the quickest in the squad? It's got to be me of course! I think every one of them will agree with that'

Stanmore - my mum had a shop there - then was living in Watford and all the while playing for lots of youth teams in that area. Parkfield, Ruislip Rangers, Abbots Youth, and Evergreen in north Watford.

"But then Watford FC picked me up and I had three really enjoyable years at the academy. I earned my first pro contract as a right wing

back actually, as the first team manager Slavisa Jocanovic saw me play against Sampdoria for the under-23s and it mirrored the way his team played - I was only 16 or 17 then but they were great times. Under-23 football and training at London Colney was ledge... the best football I've been involved in before coming to Wealdstone!

So had you heard of Wealdstone, growing up in Harrow?

'Not really - the first I remember be-

ing aware of the Stones was when Luke O'Nien went out on loan to Wealdstone from Watford and said he really enjoyed it.

"My family are all very sporty but we didn't go and watch matches - apart from when we were living right next to the Watford FC stadium, in Oxford Street which runs parallel to Vicarage Road, and one of the stewards used to let us kids in for free. I was talking about this with my mum the other day now and it was well dodgy - I think he had a bit of a thing for the boys. Don't know if he's still around now."

In the final year of his Hornets contract Dennon went out on loan to Woking, and then Crawley Town - where he was first introduced to the talents of Billy Clifford - before agreeing to sign for Falkirk in the Scottish Championship.

"That was a mistake. They wanted to play as a solid No.9 and that's not me at all unless you are clever on the ball and can use my pace and ability. But they wanted to just play hoofball and that league is much more physical than down here.

"It's supposed to be the equivalent of League Two/National League but it didn't suit my game.

"I'm loving it here. We play tippy-tappy stuff and we've got the players to make it work - and a manager to believes in the system and in the players. We could play a more physical game but where's the enjoyment then?"

I asked him what his favourite position was (not in a Love Island way).

"Oh, left wing all day long. I can play other positions but that suits me best - I can go inside and outside. We've got players like Greenie and Billy who can find you wherever you are. We play lots of team shapes and play-throughs in training and it's really paying off in matches".

So who's the quickest in the squad?

"Me of course!" he laughed. "I think they'll all agree with that."

I asked him if he'd always had that really quick-feet running style - not long-striding

but still incredibly rapid.

"That's just the way I've always run - when I was at Watford the sports science coaches tried to get me to lift my knees up higher but that just slowed me down. You just have to stay natural."

And what about his favourite Wealdstone goal? "Mmmm... yes, the one in the FA Cup was good, at Farnborough when I hit it into the stanchion from outside the box. The video was rubbish though and didn't really capture it!"

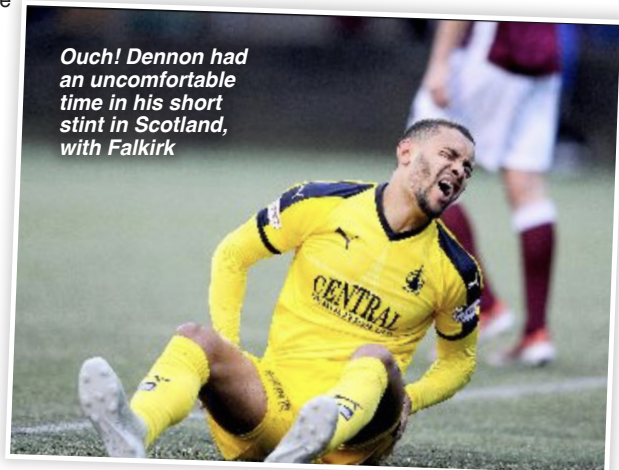
Not the fourth goal against Bath in the 7-0? The one where Moses laid it off and you cut through before banging it high into the net at the near post?

"Yeah, I laced that one! I think sometimes, if you go near post it can surprise keepers at this level. Some coaches say you should always shoot across the keeper, for rebounds if he saves it, but it's a shorter distance to the near post and if you hit it well it can often fly in. I've got ten or 11 goals this season in 30 games and that's not a bad return. And ten assists - don't forget the assists!"

Did the 7-0 win over Bath surprise you after that tense 0-0 down in Wiltshire?

"Not really. That game at Bath was very technical, like a boxing match where you're trying to win on points and they managed to stop us playing our usual game. But we knew we had better play-

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Ouch! Dennon had an uncomfortable time in his short stint in Scotland, with Falkirk

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THE STONES INTERVIEW

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ers and that showed in the return game”.

Have any of our opposition impressed you this season?

“Well, Havant turned us over at home but that was down to one mistake (sorry Ox) and I thought we were in control until then. Bath away, yes they did a job on us and Slough did something similar on Boxing Day. But we were on plastic that day and they made it very difficult. “

So how did you come to join the mighty mighty Stones, Dennon? “Well it was a funny one. I’d spoken to Connor Smith after I cancelled my contract at Falkirk - I’ve known him since my Watford days and we played Power League together - and he had just signed. He said ‘come and play for us’ so I messaged Stuart Maynard on Instagram and he invited me over for training - and they offered me a contract straight away.

“Just now I’m working for Brentford FC too, doing some academy training and in schools, and I’ve also been into some of the local Ruislip schools on behalf of Wealdstone to encourage the kids to come along to matches. I loved doing that and you can see it’s paying off by the number of them now coming to the Vale.”

Finally, a couple of lifestyle questions...

How do you like to relax? Clubs or chilling at home? “Ah, I’m more of a cinema person now. Just been to see 1917, and Will Smith in Bad Boys for Life. Great films. I’ve been with my girlfriend Louisa since July and that’s what we like to do”.

Favourite restaurant? “my favourite place at the moment is Vapiona, up in town by Oxford Circus tube. It’s Italian, it’s brilliant and it’s cheap too”.

Sounds like a team night out later in the season!

FULHAM FAN SAYS: THAT CROSS BY DENNON LEWIS FOR STONES’ 1ST GOAL WAS EXQUISITE!



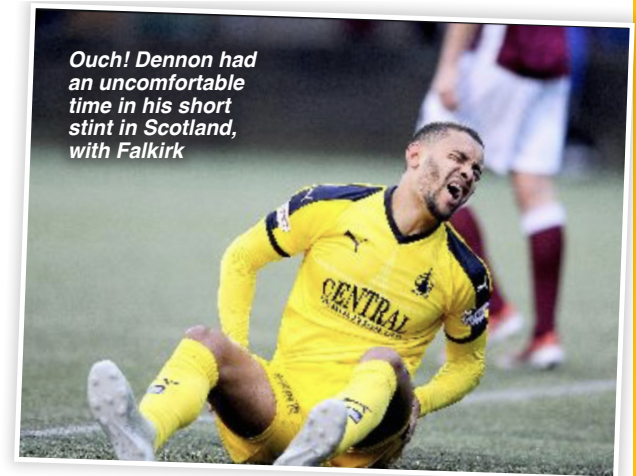
A little example of the impact Dennon & Co are having at the Stones: Keen Fulham fan David O’Farrell is the headteacher at St Bernadette’s School Primary school in Kenton - which has been visited by Stones players and officials in recent months as part of the club’s ongoing community project. He came along to the Billericay game as he couldn’t make the long trip to Blackburn to watch Fulham.

“It was a last-minute decision but I’d wanted to catch a game at Grosvenor Vale as I’d been so impressed by the work Wealdstone are doing in the

schools” he said.

“I thought I’d be a bit of a Billy No Mates, but when I got to the ground there were four or five of the guys I see at Fulham! They’d all caught the Stones bug, and I could see why... the standard of football was way higher than I was expecting, not far off Fulham to be honest, and the cross by Dennon Lewis for the first goal was exquisite.

“I was standing right in line and he bent the ball around two defenders to land it on Emmanuel’s head (PICTURED ABOVE). Brilliant stuff and I’ll be back for the next game!”



Ouch! Dennon had an uncomfortable time in his short stint in Scotland, with Falkirk



DENNON LEWIS

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