



Moses Emmanuel



Moses teases the Bath defence out of position before sending Dennon Lewis clear for our fourth goal a fortnight ago

'It was an easy decision to sign... the pace, tempo and quality in this team is ridiculous!'

Moses Emmanuel believes that everything happens for a reason. "Me signing for Wealdstone was just meant to be" said the 30 year old striker - and cult goalscoring hero at many of his previous clubs - when I caught up with him for a chat last week.

"I was at Welling but there were budget cuts and a new manager (Bradley Quinton) and when the Gaffer came in for me it wasn't a hard decision!" he laughed.

"I knew a lot of the players (Ross, Michee, Connor and Billy) from when I played under Dean at Billericay last season, and there is real quality here. What I didn't realise is the pace and tempo in this team - it's ridiculous!"

"And they're so young! I've been used to playing in successful, experienced teams but it wasn't until I looked through the team against Bath that I realised only the Skipper

is older than me - and only by a bit. That gives us great energy and you could see how quick we were all over the park".

My first question was a doozie.

"So, Moses, was that performance, the win over Bath City, better than when you scored a hat trick for Bromley in their shock 7-2 win at Torquay three years ago?"

"Ha, they were good times, those days" he said. "You've looked into this, haven't you?"

I had to confess that when news came through that we'd signed Moses from Welling my non-League antennae went up.

Moses Emmanuel? Wasn't he the Bromley striker who earned rave reviews in Dave Roberts' book 'Home and Away', the story of Bromley's first season in the National League - told through the incredulous eyes of a 60-year-old fan who'd been around

when they were the self styled 'worst team in amateur football'?

Moses had shot the Ravens to the National League South title in 2014-15 and his glorious hat trick at Torquay is the subject of a very entertaining chapter in Roberts' book.

"I'll never forget that game, scoring three in the first half but my first three games for Wealdstone have been memorable too!" he said.

I told him that I'd been trawling through Wikipedia for his goalscoring stats and they had him down for three goals in three games - two at Havant and then the (Frankie Artus) own goal against Bath.

"Ha! I'll take that - although I'm not sure I got much of a touch on it.

"The Havant goals were definitely mine, although I missed that sitter with just the keeper to beat... I just got it all wrong. But the team allowed me to get on the end of a couple more chances and they went in - the last one I just hit hard to make sure!"

So was the 7-0 against Bath the biggest win you've been involved in?

"No actually - when I was at Billericay we beat Whitehawk 9-1 and I got a hat trick that day too - but the biggest thing about the Bath game was that we kept it up right through the 90 minutes, the pressing, making chances, the movement and the energy. Makes us excited to be playing - the next game can't come soon enough".

There's no doubt that Moses' pace, strength and trickery have given a new dimension to our forward play. But how did he learn to turn defenders? Is it a sixth sense to know exactly where they are?

"I don't think it's down to training really - that comes from the experience of playing 12 years and getting a bit of knowledge in every game. You pick it up as you go along".

He is a South London boy, brought up in the Croydon/ Crystal Palace area but now living in

Leatherhead, Surrey. He credits his mum, Sought After, with his football career and changed his surname to hers - he was previously Moses Adimola - a few years ago. He played youth football in Eltham for Cray Wanderers but got noticed when he was 17 years old, playing in the Ryman South for Croydon Athletic.

Brentford took a chance on the teenager - with the £2,500 transfer fee paid for by the Bees fanzine 'Thorne in the Side', possibly a first for a Football League player. He played a part in Brentford's promotion from League Two that season with eight appearances.

"My first taste of pro football was an EFL Cup game at Swansea at the Liberty Stadium - Swansea were in the Championship and beat us 2-0 but I came on as sub and hit the crossbar almost straight away".

A lot of posts on the Bees' Fans Forum around that time attested to young Moses' potential. And the fans had effectively paid for him so they were keen for him to do well!

But he went out on loan to Woking, a move that was made permanent in 2012 and his goals helped the Cards to promotion from the Conference South.

Then it was on to Eastleigh, and then Dover (another promotion from the Conference South), and then on to Bromley where 35 goals in 82 games

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Moses (2nd right) claims Frankie Artus's own goal against Bath!

...and here are a few snippets from Torquay 2 Bromley 7, feat Moses!

Predictably, Bromley went behind early on, and it was all too easy. A free kick into the box, the right-back James Hurst leapt high above the defence, beating Palace's third-/fourth-choice keeper with a firm header, and that old, familiar feeling came over me.

This was Torquay United away. What was I expecting? A 5-0 win or something?

But you can't get too pessimistic when you've got Moses Emmanuel out on the pitch, and minutes after going behind, we were level. Moses got the ball on the right and, with the defender backing off, struck the ball sweetly past Lavercombe to make it 1-1.

And he hadn't finished. From a corner five minutes later, Torquay failed to clear and Moses was perfectly positioned to poke the ball home from a yard out.

Torquay 1 Bromley 2.

His third goal, on the half-hour mark, was the culmination of a brilliant move involving Anthony Cook, Louis Dennis and Ali Fuseini. Fuseini's shot was half cleared to Moses, who struck the ball cleanly into the roof of the net, giving him a first-half hat trick.

Torquay 1 Moses Emmanuel 3.

The Bromley fans were in football heaven. Apart from Pete, a fellow Leeds resident who told me before the game that we'd win, no one had seen this coming. The singing was louder than ever and the celebrations more exuberant.

But beneath the joy was a tinge of sadness. Moses was now the League's top scorer and bigger clubs would soon be chasing him. The January transfer window was going to be a very nervy time for Bromley fans.

Another nervy time was injury time, which always carried a great deal of stress for the seasoned Bromley follower. Our defence always seems to switch off, and today was no different. Deep into first-half injury time, Tyrone Marsh walked through and scored from close range.

Torquay 2 Bromley 3.

As the teams ran out for the second half, groans could be heard from several Bromley fans. Ben May, one of our two fit strikers, had been taken off injured and replaced up front by centre-back Jack Holland.

But as play got under way, it was soon apparent that the game had entered a parallel universe. Bromley suddenly clicked, and started playing out of their skins. It was all triangles and one-touch football. The movement was so fast at times that Torquay – that's Torquay United, who were in the Football League until recently – couldn't keep up.

This was as good as it got. Here I was, on a beautiful day on the English Riviera, watching the English Barcelona.

An inch-perfect Cook cross from the right was met by striker/centre-back/occasional midfielder Holland, who calmly side-footed home before uncalmly heading towards the delirious Bromley fans. They responded the only way they knew how, with a B-R-O, B-R-O, B-R-O-M-L-E-Y, which had somehow gone from being an ironic piss-take to a heartfelt goal celebration.

again helped the Ravens to the National League South title, and that memorable first season in the top division.

Do we sense a theme here?

"Well, my ambition, my objective now is just to win another promotion. The team is certainly good enough, the club is good enough and the fans are amazing... yes we can win promotion if we keep doing what we're doing.

"One game as it comes, and as I said we just can't wait for the next one!"

Torquay 2 Bromley 4.

From then on, Emmanuel, Cook and Dennis were at the centre of everything. Finding space, toying with the opposition defenders, and playing some lovely passing football. It was dizzying to watch.

After an hour there was yet another crude tackle on Cook outside the area, and another free kick. The keeper organized his defence, but Louis Dennis ran up and Mess'd the ball over the wall and into the top corner. It was now, unbelievably...

Torquay 2 Bromley 5.

Minutes later, before the 'Bromley Geezers' song had had a chance to die down, Jack Holland, who was having a great time playing up front, fed Cook who was chopped down in the box. The winger picked himself up and smashed the penalty powerfully past Lavercombe.

Torquay 2 Bromley 6.

The overwhelming feeling was one of pride. You can spend a lifetime following a team, sitting through hundreds if not thousands of Saturdays, and not see anything like this. And to think I nearly hadn't come. I felt the tension drain as I had the novel experience of knowing that Bromley were going to win, despite having twenty minutes left on the clock.

Then, after another fluid move, came the best goal of the lot. Holland once again got involved, setting up Fuseini who curled the ball from outside the box past the flailing keeper.

Torquay 2 Bromley 7.

I was feeling a bit emotional. This was a Bromley I'd dreamed about as a young boy. I took a picture of the scoreboard. It shows the Torquay United security guard staring at it, bemused. The keeper looks shellshocked. He was probably wondering if there were any vacancies at Poole Audi.

I was irrationally upset when Torquay got a consolation just before the end to make it 3-7.

The confidence among the players seemed to be stratospheric. Rob Swaine tweeted that 'If Moses Emmanuel doesn't get Player of the Month, I will cartwheel through Bromley High Street in a g-string.' I suspected that he wouldn't mind too much if Moses

missed out, as he didn't seem the shy retiring type. Another tweet reflecting the mood of the camp came from Anthony Cook. 'When Moses gets the ball anywhere near the box, don't think I'm making runs to receive the ball,' he wrote, 'I'm running to celebrate his goal.'