

Dan Turner is a member of the University Air Squadron, MOD St Athan. Here he talks about his first season with Icarus FC.



It all began late last summer at an inter UAS 5-aside football competition where a victorious team performance and a memorable personal performance was viewed by Icarus scouts, Shutie and Coleman who approached me after the tournament and asked if I would be interested in playing for the RAF Officers football team, Icarus FC. Without hesitation I committed to attend a weekend training/trial session at the club.

Rising to the challenge

A bright morning back in August 2006 I arrived at RAF Uxbridge with one intention; to make a positive impression on and off the pitch. All of the staff and players were incredibly welcoming, creating a friendly dressing room atmosphere throughout which made it easy for me to settle in quickly and have confidence when training and performing on the pitch. The professional coaching provided was of an excellent standard and far better than any that I had ever experienced. Team bonding that weekend confirmed my impressions of the club and made me realise that given the opportunity, I wanted to be part of it all. My efforts during the friendly match that weekend paid off and it was there that the Development Team Manager Pete Beer asked me to play in the first fixture of the season. It was an honourable moment for me and one that I will never forget.

Match play – The Début

Anxious, curious, nervous, but at the same time exited and energetic. These were just some of my feelings prior my début match at Bentley Priory on 6 September 2006. I couldn't have asked for a better script. Having started up front my confidence grew throughout the match which led to me scoring my first goal for the club.

I was awarded man of the match and soon after approached by the first team manager to make an appearance for the first 11. From then on I have developed my game, integrated into the squad and become a regular first team player.

My season

The start of the journey seems so far in the past now. Since my début I have made 15 appearances for the club with only three where I haven't started in the first 11. It has at times been challenging for me to attend matches as a lot of travelling has been required especially from a parent station like MOD St Athan. However in reward for the efforts of the club we have had opportunity and privilege to play a good standard of football against a plethora of teams on some of the best military pitches across the country. As a first team player I have moulded into the squad and developed as an attacking right midfielder a decision made by the manager.

He feels that I have more to offer out wide with my energy, pace and penetration. I now have to agree. I enjoy playing in this position now as I have players of huge quality all around me with the likes of Jim Schofield and Ben Fisher (ex man of the tour) on the inside, Tosh behind to guide me and Hodgie and the gaffer in front of me who I try to assist the best I can. To me it doesn't matter what position the manager asks me to play in as it is a privilege to be picked at all but I will always give 110% as I feel I am now valued as an important player at the club. Everyone here plays for each other as a unit of players and as friends. The encouraging and charismatic vibe and the desire for success at the club is a pleasure to be a part of. We travelled to Germany for the end of season tour where three fixtures were lined up. Having not started in the first game I was eager to make an impression if called from the bench.

I came on at half time and scored to bring us back level and then after Jim and Ben came on I scored another to take us into the lead and eventually to victory. The Manager started me in the following two games, the last one I enjoyed the most as I scored again, this time probably the best goal I have ever scored with my left boot. In terms of football and social bonding the tour was definitely the highlight of my limited career in the RAF so far.

The future

By the start of the 07-08 season I hope to have been accepted into the Air Force. My plans have always been to play as much football as possible in the RAF and eventually make it into the RAF squad. Most importantly to me I would like to grasp the opportunity to be a part of Icarus Football Club's future plans. I want to strive to help Icarus become the premier football club in the RAF. To conclude I would like to thank the manager and all of the staff and players for welcoming me into the club and for the opportunities that I have had this season and finally thanks to the University of Wales Air Squadron for all its encouragement and support.

