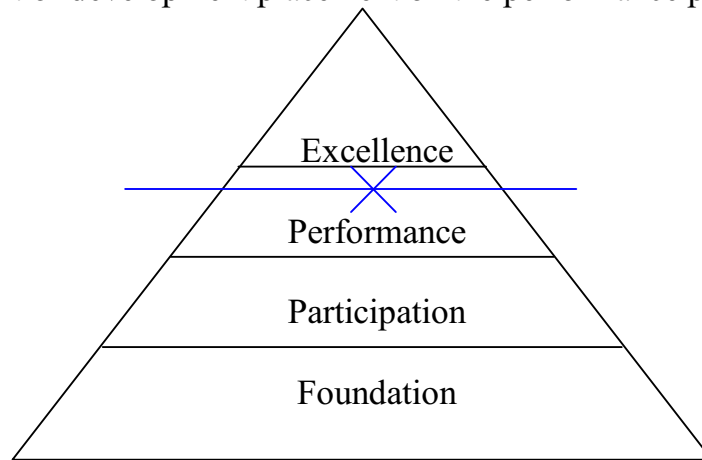


Section A3 (V) Ben Davies

Assessment of development placement on the performance pyramid.



I am currently playing at performance level. I currently play for Thorns Athletic; we are in the Kidderminster League Division 1. It is a men's league and it is a good standard so I am playing against men a lot stronger and older than myself, but I enjoy the challenge and feel it will help me progress. It is performance level because the league is organised by the governing body the F.A. We have official referees every week, which are provided by the F.A. If a player receives a yellow card there is a £12 fine, which is paid by the club to the F.A. if a player receives a red card a £36 fine is paid. All teams are allocated a pitch and we play with a full size ball and for 45 minutes each half. Teams can officially complain about referees and write a direct letter to the F.A., referees can officially complain about teams and teams can officially complain about other teams. If a team receives sufficient complaints they could be thrown out of the league.

I started playing football at a very early age, my dad used to kick a ball with me at the age of three. This is when I was at foundation level and when I learned co-ordination skills and how to kick a ball. I continued to play at foundation level, until the age of four. This was a purely leisure activity.

At the age of four I was taken to Gigmill School to train with Richard Stevens who works for the F.A. to develop young footballers. At this

training I was taught basic skills such as dribbling and passing. I was also taught basic rules such as throw-ins, corners and fouls. Small-sided games were played using smaller balls and cones for goal posts. This training was participation level. All through primary school I would normally go to this training at Gigmill school in the summer. It was a good set up and very organised and professionally done. This was physical recreation.

I started playing at performance level at the age of six. I joined Forest Falcons, this was a well set up club and well organised. I played in the Stourbridge League Division 1, run by the F.A. and official rules and referees were used. Games were played on smaller pitches with a size 4 ball and only 30 minutes a half. It was a huge step for me to jump from participation level to performance. I did not enjoy Forest Falcons I think it was too young to start playing competitive football, I did not like the managers only wanting to win and being shouted at when I made a mistake. This was at a sporting level.

I left Forest Falcons after about a season and joined Hagley, I think Hagley was a drop from performance to participation level because we only played friendlies and trained, there was no league and the manager of either side would referee. I enjoyed Hagley but left as my Dad thought I was ready to play competitive football, and I wanted to leave as a lot of my friends were leaving.

I joined Oldswinford U'9s. This was a step up to performance level. It was the Stourbridge league Division 2, with official referees and rules. I played for Oldswinford up until last season, in 7 years there were some changes, at under 14s we changed to a full size ball and a full size pitch and 40 minutes a half. Only last season did we change to 45 minutes a game.

I have also played football through school, at primary school I only played in year 6 where we came second in the league and got to their semi finals of the cup. I also played competitive football at Hagley, I was sent to District trials in year 7 and year 8, I got to the final stage in both trials but didn't make the final squad. The standard was excellent at the district

trials, and I was privileged to be sent. In yr 10 and 11 I captained the Hagley school side.

In a few seasons I would like to go to trials for maybe Lye town or Cradley town, as I feel I have the ability and will be stronger after two or three seasons of playing against men. Both Lye Town and Cradley Town are semi – professional teams and so it would be a good achievement to play for either of them and would probably move me higher up in the performance section of the pyramid. Also all through my football career I have played for intrinsic values only, but playing for a semi-professional side would mean I would get paid and so there would be some extrinsic rewards.

I think a factor preventing me from reaching excellence was that I started playing football too young as when I was at the age of 13 I had a lot of injuries as I was growing and playing too much sport. However it was through my own choice to play this sport, there were no external factors pushing me to play. Although I don't know if I had the natural ability to reach excellence but I think I would have progressed further up the pyramid, if it weren't for injury.