

Football Futures Blog – Summer 2016



JOSH ROPER - Football Futures Award Winner



After playing football all my life and I knew it was something I wanted to pursue in the future. My Journey started when I was only 15. Whilst studying BTEC Sport at North Walsham High. I began volunteering with the local Under 8 football team at North Walsham; it was just picking up cones to begin with! This then progressed. My confidence grew, and I got more involved. After 6 months of thoroughly enjoying the volunteering I got asked to referee the girls under 13's, (bearing in mind I never refereed before!) as I had a good understanding of the game and the rules, I took the opportunity! This was the moment things developed for me... My break through!

After completing the FA Referees Course, I was asked by the chairman of North Walsham Youth FC if I wanted to create and coach a new girl's football team. After some thinking I soon realized I couldn't turn this down. The club put me through my Level 1 Coaching Award, Emergency First Aid and Safeguarding course. I was ready to go! On my Level 1 I was told about the Norfolk FA Football Futures programme. I put myself forward to be an ambassador, to my surprise and delight I was successful. This gave me the chance to run events for Norfolk FA such as Soccer on the Sands, girls' football festivals and young leader's workshops – of which we won a national award!



In 2013 I decided I wanted to step out of my comfort zone and try something new to continue my development. I chose to coach in America for the summer after finishing college, I flew out with a company called Challenger Sports to Chicago for 3 months. It was an amazing experience and I met some great people, along with seeing some really special places!

Continuing my journey on the Football Futures programme and racking up 100's of hours volunteering I was chosen to represent Norfolk FA at the National Football Futures Camp in 2014 held at St George's Park. The Camp consisted of coaching, refereeing, disability football, and media. I learnt so much from the 4 days and made over 90 new friends and contacts within football. Shortly after, I was nominated for a national coaching award. Amazingly I was invited back to St George's Park to be presented an award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Football.'



My biggest advice would be to take ANY opportunity that comes your way; you never know how it could impact you, even if it's just voluntary. You never know just how far picking up cones can take you - for me it was Chicago!

[Click here to find more information about our FA Football Futures Programme!](#)