



Ant Carney... Living the Dream

Sunday 8th May 2011 dawns bright and clear down in London where Ant Carney is psyching himself up along with the other team members of Coalville Town Football Club to play in the final of the FA Vase beneath the iconic arch of Wembley Stadium.

It is an incredible achievement for any local footballer. But for Positive Futures staff in North West Leicestershire, this is a particularly proud moment as Ant has realised his schoolboy dream with help from the District's Positive Futures programme which started work on his estate when he was just 12 years old.

Ant Carney's natural talent always shone through and he quickly gained a reputation on the estate as the boy to get on your team. His reading of the game and delightful touch gave him the opportunity to run rings around staff and young people alike, securing his place in the Agar Nook Amateurs.

As he continued through the Positive Futures programme, his footballing prowess took him in the direction of volunteering and mentoring, eventually leading him to become employed as a member of the PF staff where he runs football sessions with a wide range of young people and the boys' club. He also helps at a variety of other PF initiatives with hard-to-engage and targeted young people.

But how did he get to be at Wembley? When Positive Futures' co-ordinator for North West Leicestershire District Council, Tony Smith, started the job in 2008 he remembers hearing about Ant. *"Young people and staff would say to me, have you seen Ant play, Ant's amazing, and when I saw him at a session I thought there's definitely something special here."* Tony persuaded Ant to go for trials at the town team where Ant bagged a place on the reserve squad.

After just two training sessions, he was plucked from the reserves and put into the first team squad where, over the last two seasons, his stature, fitness and technique have blossomed.

So, back to 8th May 2011, and in front of nearly 9,000 fans and TV cameras, Ant showed the nation that skill as he delivered quality crosses and tormented the Whitley Bay defence on the hallowed turf.

Although Coalville Town lost the game 3 – 2, the club and its fans showcased their passion and emotion for the beautiful game to the entire country and despite leaving Wembley empty handed, they have won promotion – with Ant contributing 15 goals during the campaign.

So well done to Ant Carney, and much success to you in your footballing future.

