

## Shortlist announced for Player of the Season



### Corbett Sports Welsh Premier League Annual Awards Shortlist

#### Corbett Sports WPL

##### – Player of the Season 2012/13

- a) Lee Owens (Airbus UK)
- b) Andy Parkinson (Prestatyn Town)
- c) Michael Wilde (The New Saints)

#### Corbett Sports WPL

##### – Young Player of Season 2012/13

- a) Kai Edwards (The New Saints)
- b) Ryan Fraughan (The New Saints)
- c) Steve Tomassen (Airbus UK)

#### Corbett Sports WPL

##### – Manager of the Season 2012/13

- a) Carl Darlington (The New Saints)
- b) Andy Preece (Airbus UK)

#### Welsh Premier Women's League

##### – Player of the Season 2012/13

- a) Emily Brown (Cardiff Met)
- b) Alys Hinchcliffe (Wrexham)
- c) Lauren Price (Cardiff City FC)

The Corbett Sports Welsh Premier League has announced their shortlist for the four main awards for 2012-13

The Player of the season and Young Player of the season result from polls taken of the twelve WPL club managers/coaches.

Each manager selects his top five players with the top choice getting five points and the fifth- place choice awarded one point.

Each player's points are totalled to decide the winner.

The full poll will be published next week following the Awards Dinner on the evening of June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Bellvue Euro favourite

Rhyl FC,s Belle Vue has been chosen as home venues by Bala Town and Prestatyn Town.

With Maes Tegid and Bastion Gardens respectively not cleared for Europa League matches both clubs have realised Rhyl's experience of hosting UEFA matches in the past. Both sides should also attract good local support for their home legs

The Lakesiders and Seaside will find out who they'll face on Monday 24th of June and the matches will be played on July 4th and 11th.



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Welsh Premier League



WELSH PREMIER LEAGUE

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Manager  
of the Month

The Corbett Sports Welsh Premier League  
Manager of the Month for April is  
**ALAN BICKERSTAFFE**  
of Bala Town

We all know by now that Bala Town have reached Europe for the first time in their history on the back of a 13 match consecutive winning streak.



During the month of April the Lakesiders won 5 matches – scoring 12 goals and only conceding 1 in the process. Their most impressive victory came at Stebonheath as they beat Llanelli 5-1. Afan Lido, Aberystwyth, Gap Connah's Quay and Newtown were also beaten during the month.

**Congratulations to Alan once more on his award**

*'Rydym oll yn ymwybodol erbyn hyn bod Y Bala wedi cyrraedd Ewrop am y tro cyntaf yn eu hanes yn dilyn rhediad anhygoel o ennill 13 o gemau yn olynol.*

*Yn ystod mis Ebrill enillodd clwb Maes Tegid 5 gêm gan sgorio 12 gôl ac ond ildio 1 yn y broses. Daeth eu buddugoliaeth mwyaf swmpus ar Barc Stebonheath pan enillon nhw o 5-1 – ond curwyd Lido Afan, Aberystwyth, Gap Cei Connah a'r Drenewydd hefyd.*

**Llongyfarchiadau i Alan ar enill y wobr**

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Player  
of the Month

The Corbett Sports Welsh Premier League  
Player of the Month for April is  
**STUART JONES** of Bala Town



The central defender contributed greatly to Bala's good run of form. As mentioned, only 1 goal was conceded during the whole month and Jones also netted in the 4-0 victory over Afan Lido.

The former Everton youth player has become a firm favourite at Maes Tegid and wins the monthly award for the first time.

**Our congratulations to Stuart on winning his award.**

*Bu cyfraniad Jones yn amddiffyn Y Bala'n enfawr wrth I'w rhediad da o fuddugoliaethau barhau drwy fis Ebrill. Dim ond 1 gôl ildwyd gan fechgyn Maes Tegid ac fe rwydodd Jones ei hun yn y gêm yn erbyn Lido Afan.*

*Mae cyn-chwaraewr ieuencid Everton yn ffefryn mawr yn Y Bala bellach a dyma'r tro cyntaf iddo gipio gwobr misol Uwch Gynghrair Cymru – Corbett Sports.*

**Llongyfarchiadau i Stuart ar enill y wobr.**

## Hughes at the helm at Aber

Aberystwyth Town Football Club has announced the appointment of Ian Hughes as First Team Manager.

Following Tomi Morgan's resignation last week, the club moved quickly and promoted Hughes from within the Management Team, where he has been Assistant Manager since January 2010, when he joined then manager Alan Morgan.

Anglesey-born Ian, 29, is one of the youngest coaches in Wales to have achieved the UEFA A licence standard, at just 24 years of age. He was formerly Academy Director and Assistant Manager of Llangefni Town, and helped them to lift the Cymru Alliance in 2010, although they



were unable to be promoted to the Welsh Premier after failing to achieve the club licencing criteria. Ian has experience coaching at Wrexham's Academy, and has been based with the Welsh Football Trust for the last four years as a Coach and Player Development Officer.

With a significant portion of last season's playing squad on contract through till the end of 2013/4, the need for continuity was apparent, and Ian will be joined on the Management Team by Wyn Thomas, who becomes Assistant Manager, and Antonio Corbisiero, who becomes First Team Coach. Both Wyn and Antonio are currently studying for the necessary A Licences.

Ian said: "It's a privilege to be asked to take the club forward and build upon the strong foundations that have been set. The club prides itself on its strong community links and with such a strong, loyal fan base it gives us a great opportunity to move forward together.

"Sustainability is key and it's great that Wyn Thomas has accepted my offer of becoming the Club's Assistant Manager. Antonio Corbisiero will become First Team Coach as well as being an important player on the pitch.

"Finally I would like to thank both Alan and Tomi Morgan. Tomi has been supportive of my appointment which I appreciate, and I look forward to starting in my new role"

Club Chairman Tony Bates added: "The Board of Directors and I are looking forward to a new and exciting phase for the Club, with a youthful and highly motivated Management Team. We have high hopes for the future under Ian, Wyn and Antonio, and we encourage all our supporters to get right behind them as they endeavour to bring success to Aberystwyth Town Football Club."

## Duo leave Nomads

Gap Connah's Quay have confirmed that Jamie Petrie and Rob Jones will be departing Deeside Stadium this summer.

It is understood that the pair have been in discussions with Bangor City regarding a possible move but nothing has been confirmed as yet.

Player/Manager Mark McGregor said: "Unfortunately, after a very good first full season back in the Corbett Sports Welsh Premier League, we have scored a lot of goals and created a lot of chances, so the bigger players were always going to make a move on our attacking players, but after offering the pair new contracts, they have decided it is time to move on.

"I have personally thanked both of the players for their services to the Club, as they were a large part of how far we have come on over the past three successful years."





## Delaney final inductee to Hall of Fame – for now!

To celebrate 20 years of the WPL – Mark Delaney became the 20th person to be inducted into the WPL Hall of Fame. The Pembrokeshire boy who caught the eye playing for Carmarthen Town (1996-98) was signed by Cardiff City before moving on to Aston Villa for £250,000 in 1999. During his time at Villa Park he played in the 2000 FA Cup Final loss to Chelsea and went on to claim 36 full international Wales caps.

Delaney was an integral part of the Wales team that famously beat Italy 2-1 at the Millennium Stadium in 2002. He retired from football in 2007 due to a knee injury and now works as a Youth Coach at Aston Villa.

Delaney without doubt raised the profile of the WPL and showed that our National League does produce some great talent.



### Delaney yw'r olaf am y tro yn yr oriel

Er mwyn dathlu 20 mlynedd o UGC – dewiswyd 20 person i gymryd eu lle yn Oriel Anfarwoliion UGC – a Mark Delaney yw'r 20fed person i gael ei gynnwys.

Tra'n chwarae i Gaerfyrddin (1996-98) yr hawliodd y bachgen o Sir Benfro sylw clwb Caerdydd ac ym 1999 symudodd o Barc Ninian i Barc Villa am £250,000.

Yn ystod ei gyfnod gyda Villa yn Uwch Gynghrair Lloegr chwaraeodd yn Rownd Derfynol Cwpan Lloegr yn y flwyddyn 2000 pan gollon nhw yn erbyn Chelsea. Aeth ymlaen hefyd i hawlio 36 o gapiau dros Gymru – gan gynnwys y fuddugoliaeth fythgofiadwy yn erbyn Yr Eidal yn 2002.

Dioddefodd Delaney anaf i'w ben-glin orfododd iddo ymdeol yn 2007 – ond mae'n parhau i weithio i Aston Villa fel hyfforddwr ieuentid.

Heb os cododd Delaney broffil ein Cynghrair Cenedlaethol a phrofodd bod UGC n cynhyrchu gwir dalent. Delaney Oriel

## Academy stars graduate to Nomads first team

The Nomads are pleased to announce that two academy graduates have signed first-team contracts, underlining our commitment to developing young talent.

Jamie Wynne and Ryan Edwards have signed for one and two years respectively.

Edwards, who celebrates his 19th birthday tomorrow, has been rewarded for his breakthrough season in the Welsh Premier League that saw him start 16 games in midfield, whilst coming off the bench in an additional seven games. The highlight of Ryan's 2012/13 season was surely his Goal of the Month winning strike against Bala Town in February.

19-year-old Jamie Wynne also had a successful season in the Welsh Premier League, featuring in 14 games. Jamie scored against Llanelli in the 4-2 Welsh Cup victory, and was also on the score sheet in the 4-1 New Years Day victory over Airbus UK in the WPL.

Both players were part of the successful u19 team who recently secured the U19 Welsh Premier League trophy.



## Jones looking forward to Europe



New signing Steve Jones with chief operating officer Stewart Roberts.

from [www.airbusfc.com](http://www.airbusfc.com)

The Wingmakers' new signing Steve Jones put pen to paper at the Hollingsworth Group Stadium on Wednesday night and says the lure of more European football was a major factor in agreeing to a deal. "I've played in European football before for Sligo Rovers, so I thought I might as come to Wales, sample the league and have a go at Europe," said the 36-year-old striker, who arrives from AFC Telford United.

"We played Club Brugge in the Europa League and lost on aggregate, but it was a good experience and it's one I would like to repeat, it will be good."

Jones has already plied his trade for 16 clubs in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic, so a move to Wales completes a nap hand of the home countries.

"I don't know anything about the league," Jones admitted. "The only team I have heard of is TNS, we (Telford) played them pre-season, I scored twice in a 3-0 win, so I know what they are about, they're a good passing team but they are not unbeatable."

In a varied career, Jones regards his time at Gresty Road, where he scored 39 goals from 158 appearances for Crewe, as the most enjoyable.

"I have seven good years in the Championship with Crewe, played a lot of important games and got moved to Burnley in the Championship as well - most of my career has been spent in the Championship.

"Obviously, playing for Northern Ireland as well has helped develop me as a player, but I'd say my best years were spent with Crewe. Dario Gradi is the best manager I have played under, he is fantastic, he works with you 24/7 and he helps you improve your game. If you come from the non-league scene, which I did as a youngster, he helps you develop into a good player."

Steve won a total of 29 caps for his country, first called-up for a friendly match against Finland in February 2003 to replace the injured Kevin Horlock.

He was an unused substitute in that game but, after impressing in a 'B' international match against Scotland, Jones was called-up to the senior squad again for a friendly against Italy and the Euro 2004 qualifying match against Spain, and recalls those games as the most memorable.

"The highlight of my international career was making my debut in Italy against players like Paolo Maldini, who marked me on that day, Damiano Tommasi and some other great players.

"And in the next game I made my home debut against Spain and Carles Puyol marked me for 90-odd minutes so they are great occasions.

"Those two stick in my memory as well as my first international goal in the Caribbean against St Kitts and Nevis."

Photo: Steve Jones skips past some tight Spanish marking from Puyol in the Euro 2004 qualifier in Belfast.





## **Aber new boss Hughes releases two**

Aberystwyth Town have parted company with Central Defender Gavin Cadwallader and central midfielder Mike Walsh.

This brings to an end Gavin's second spell at the club, and over the past seven years he has played 55+6 times in the Welsh Premier League, scoring five times.

Gavin said: "I've really enjoyed my time at Aber and I'd like to thank everyone for the support I have had. I am disappointed to be leaving but it gives me a chance to to have a think about next season and to concentrate on my coaching."

Ian Hughes said: "I hope to see Gavin playing in the Welsh Premier League again next season, his performances on the pitch were of a good standard and he was always dependable! I wish Gavin all the best."

Gavin holds a B Licence Coaching Certificate and hopes to join the A Licence course in the near future. He leaves Park Avenue with the best wishes of all concerned.

The club also confirmed that the Club and central midfielder Michael Walsh have mutually agreed not to renew his contract at Park Avenue for next season.

The travelling time from Walsh's home in Prestatyn was the major factor in this decision, which was agreed with new Manager Ian Hughes this week.

Michael said: "Unfortunately, with a young family, the travelling has become a much bigger issue than it was when quite a few of the squad came from North Wales, which is why I agreed with Hughsie to part company with the Club. I've had a great time at Park Avenue and I'm glad to be leaving on good terms."

Ian Hughes said: "Michael has given two seasons of service to the club and we thank him for his efforts on the pitch, his attitude towards training and his will to win is second to none and I'm sure there will be quite a few clubs after his signature, I wish him all the very best."

Since joining the Club from Bangor City in January 2012, Michael has been a model professional and has made 22+2 appearances in the Welsh Premier League.

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## **AFC Llanelli apply for Welsh League membership**

BOB Jeffrey has taken steps towards entering a new club named AFC Llanelli in division three of the MacWhirter Welsh League.

Llanelli AFC were wound up at the High Court last month over an unpaid tax bill. That followed a season of financial struggle in which players regularly went without wages, while other creditors were also owed money.

Now Jeffrey, along with a group of businessmen and supporters, is hoping to resurrect the side under a new name. The highest that club could enter the pyramid would be in the fourth tier.

They were relegated from the Welsh Premier League after failing to gain a domestic licence for next season, a situation stemming from on-going cash problems.

And the only way the Reds could have remained in division one would have been if chairman Nitin Parekh appealed against the decision to liquidate the club. That would have involved settling a bill of around £120,000 made up of unpaid players' wages and money owed to other parties. But with the deadline to do that now passed, Jeffrey is looking towards a new chapter in the club's history.

"I've spoken to the Football Association of Wales. Nothing's been set in stone but negotiations have been quite positive about getting a team in division three," he said. "That's the best-case scenario."

But the path forward is complicated. Llanelli also have to be granted a lease by the Town Council to play at Stebonheath Park next season. And they can only afford to commit to that if the rent is dramatically reduced.

Jeffrey submitted a letter expressing his intent to take over the lease last week and is waiting for a response. Until he gets one, any plans for next season will have to be put on hold. The former Reds academy boss cannot start building a team without confirmation of what league they will be in or whether they will have a ground to play at. He fears this situation may drag on for weeks, meaning it could be mid-June before he gets around to recruiting players — if things get that far at all. And by then other teams are likely to have snapped up potential targets.

"It's very frustrating," said Jeffrey, "it's a ridiculous situation. We need things sorted but this could drag on for a few weeks yet."

# German Academy model the ideal guide for the WPL

This article by Thomas Dahlhaus, BBC World Service, Frankfurt clearly sets out the way to go for our academy system. This of course is well under way but the piece emphasises not only how it can benefit both club and country but also generate local interest to a very high level.

Other pointers in the article such as club ownership also gives food for thought.

The first all-German Champions League final on Saturday was testament to the Bundesliga's emphasis on youth and home-grown talent.

Almost the entire German national team will be on display when Bayern Munich take on Borussia Dortmund at Wembley, most of them having come through the two clubs' academies.

It's a scenario that most Premier League sides could only dream of. To understand how this has come about, we need to go back to 2000. That was the year Germany were humiliated at the European Championship, finishing bottom of their group without winning a game.

An ageing side was found badly wanting and Dutch newspapers, somewhat gleefully, wrote of Germany as a "dying football nation". Germany's Under-21 and Under-19 sides were also struggling at the time, because of a talent shortage and the fact their players lacked competitive match experience with their clubs.

In short, the future of German football looked bleak, forcing the national association, clubs and fans into some profound soul-searching.

What followed was a fundamental change of emphasis, with youth development now at the fore. And the new measures that were implemented soon began to pay off, with the number of under 23-year-olds regularly featuring in first teams in the Bundesliga jumping from 6% in 2000 to 15% in 2010.

Youth team to first team

A youthful German side finished third at the 2006 World Cup and matched that result in 2010, easily beating England along the way. At each of these World Cups, Fifa's young player of the tournament was a German - Lukas Podolski in 2006 and Thomas Mueller in 2010.

German under-age sides also regained their competitiveness, with the Under-21, Under-19 and Under-17 teams all winning European titles. What's more, the players were now very different to those of old, displaying technical ability, skill and nimbleness, rather than mere physical strength and athleticism.

To get a better idea of what has been done, I spent an afternoon at the youth academy of Eintracht Frankfurt earlier this week.

After slipping into the second division, Frankfurt regained their place in the top flight last year and have now qualified for next season's Europa League. An emphasis on home-grown talent has been at the heart of the resurgence.



Their latest hope is attacking midfielder Marc Stendera, (pictured left) who made the jump from the club's academy to the first team this season at the age of 17.

Germany international Marko Marin, now at Chelsea, is the best-known graduate of Frankfurt's academy and encapsulates the type of player they are now trying to produce. Armin Kraaz, who has headed up the academy for the last 10 years, describes Marin as "small and technically gifted and a perfect example of what has changed in German football".

The academy was completed in 2010 at a cost of 15m euros (£12.8m) and offers much-improved facilities and high-quality coaching to youngsters. (see photo next page)

"Training has changed tremendously," says Kraaz. "When I was a player at Frankfurt in the 1980s, training often involved lots of running and building up stamina. Now the emphasis is on skill and technique and almost all the exercises revolve around the ball.

"Our scouts go out to look for the most naturally gifted nine and 10-year-olds, regardless of their physical attributes. When they arrive at the academy, work in the gym to build up strength doesn't usually begin until they're at least 16."





The Bundesliga clubs now invest around 100m euros (£85m) per year in their academies, and there is close scrutiny from the German Football Association (DFB).

Every three years, the DFB's inspectors arrive at each Bundesliga club to put their academies to the test. There are about 800 questions to be answered, covering everything from training to how the youngsters are supported at school.

The clubs have to prove they can run their academies well before being able to obtain a licence from the DFB and Deutsche Fussball League (DFL). They must also have sound finances and the liquidity to cover their spending plans.

Heribert Bruchhagen - who has been chairman of Eintracht Frankfurt for the past decade and was previously chief executive of the DFL - explains: "Before every season, each club has to produce a detailed breakdown of expected revenue, from sponsorship deals to TV and ticketing, as well as the projected spending."

There is a brief window for amendments to be made, but if a club fails to meet the requirements laid out, their licence will not be renewed.

The other key element of self-regulation is the "50+1 rule". This requires that the majority of each club must be owned by its members, the supporters.

"To sell to an investor would be against the spirit of the club and neither the management nor the fans would stand for it," says Bruchhagen. "We'd rather suffer painful results, relegation even, than sell out."

Every time there has been a vote about whether to relax the rule, there has always been a clear consensus among the 36 clubs making up the top two tiers to keep things exactly as they are.

And what about the fans? Wouldn't they like to see more money coming in, especially now that Frankfurt are to compete in Europe as well as the Bundesliga?

Johannes Rapp is from the Frankfurt fans' group Nordwestkurve and has been a season ticket holder for 10 years.

"As a member I pay a slightly reduced rate of 104 euros (£89) which gives me access to all 17 home games of the season," he says.

This also includes preferential access to non-Bundesliga games and free public transport to and from the venue.



Even the standard season ticket price of 120 euros (£102) is extremely modest in comparison to the rest of Europe. Frankfurt offer 10,000 of those tickets, plus another 20,000 season tickets in seating areas, which cost just under 300 euros (£257).

In 2012-13, the Bundesliga confirmed its position as the best-attended league in the world, with an average crowd of more than 42,000. Frankfurt themselves had an average home attendance of 40,000 even when they were in the second division last season.

German football fans are very well

organised when it comes to making their voices heard about ticket prices. In the season just ended, there were several examples of fans joining forces to defend their interests.

Frankfurt seem to encapsulate the way German football has changed since 2000. There has been an emphasis on youth, and on technical ability over brute force. The supporters are at the heart of the club, and it is being run with financial frugality.

The best representation of all will come on Saturday, though, when two sides largely drawn from the academies of Bayern and Dortmund battle it out at Wembley.



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