



JAMES GANNON

Stockport County Manager & Community Foundation Coach 2019

I combined my part time role within the club as first team manager with my daytime employment in coaching roles with both our Youth Academy and SCFC Community foundation schools coaching programme. Even though the demands on myself as a Football manager have increased, I never say no to the SCFC Community Foundation. I love attending the schools career days, open days, presentation events and school holiday soccer schools. Every game I make the effort whilst the players warm-up to visit the family lounge and see the hundreds of young fans brought to the club for a match day experience and to see local live football. But it's not just the young ones I like to meet. Whilst playing in the walking football with the senior adults and also observing the great work of the Disability Programme you get to see the fun and spirit which such activities bring.

I am a massive supporter of the Clubs involvement in the Community. When I was a player during the decade of 1990-2000 I was heavily involved in the Clubs schools programme delivering education of sport, health and lifestyle choices. This project was fantastic for schools having their children hearing first hand from their role models, but it was also invaluable in promoting the Club and helped increase both the size and age profile of our crowd to one of the best in the lower Football leagues. That positive experience has stayed with me and as someone who still lives in Stockport and has three young children I understand the value of people, Clubs and projects that help the Community. I feel the combination of the fantastic season on the pitch and the widespread message of the SCFC Community Foundation is surely have a similar positive effect in helping increase the level of our support especially amongst the younger generation. For example, more and more of the children at my own children's school are talking about 'County' and wearing County shirts on sports days.

I have always advocated for my players at all levels to be fully involved in the Community and to go out and coach and meet the people of our community. I am delighted that some of my best players are enjoying building this relationship. Great examples include Sam Minihan and more recently club captain Paul Turnbull who are our greatest 'flagbearers' and very active regular coaches in The SCFC Community schools coaching and associate projects.

The involvement of our players from all levels in Community football and Schools coaching as increased and constantly promoted by myself and the staff. I have encouraged young professionals such as Adam Etches and Szymon Czubik to join the Community Foundation. And more recently our Academy player Josh Robinson who studied BTEC and HND Sports coaching as part of his course, are finding regular coaching and potential career pathways through opportunities in the SCFC Community Foundation. We keenly aware we can't make all our students professional footballers but the strong interconnection with our Community Foundation has helped encourage their skills, an enjoyment of coaching and an involvement with the Community that I trust will stay with them for life.

As football manager I feel very much a part of the SCFC Community Foundation team. I feel my players are part of their team, and equally I feel that Dave, Matty and Ade are part of my team. Our work together is bringing success.

James Gannon

