

The Society of Sports Therapists

Press Release

Top Marks for Jonah

David Jones, Sports Therapist for 'The Chairboys' was presented with his BSc Honours Degree in Sports Therapy at an awards ceremony at the Barbican Theatre, London last week.

Joined by his mother Monica, wife Bridget and two sons Mathew and Daniel, the ceremony was the culmination of several years of study, carefully balanced alongside his day job at Adams Park and an active family life.

It's proving to be quite a year for 'Jonah', as he is known in the treatment room, as he has also been granted a testimonial by the Wanderers for his outstanding loyalty and service to the club.

Joining the club in 1986, Jones has worked with no less than seven managers including Martin O'Neil, and John Gregory, and going back as far as Alan Gane in the days of the Isthmian Premier league through to current Wanderers manager Lawrie Sanchez.

Assistant Manager Terry Gibson, who has worked with the very best in the game, including Manchester Utd and Tottenham, recognises that nowadays, there are new pressures on therapists. He commented:
'There's so much more required these days with changes in treatment and rehab, particularly with all the new developments in surgery techniques.'

Jones' educational career path was guided by former Glasgow Rangers physiotherapist Professor Graham Smith, now Chairman of The Society of Sports Therapists. 42 year old Jones said:

'I held the FA course before joining Wycombe Wanderers and it gave me the appetite for studying further, but I had nowhere to progress after that. I was then introduced to an organisation called The Society of Sports Therapists by Jimmy Graham who was the Sports Therapist at Runcorn FC and it just opened all sorts of new doors for me.'

After studying for several years with The Society, Jones passed The Society's Advanced Diploma examination. Success here earned him his place by right at the University of North London (now London Metropolitan). He continued:

'I received so much encouragement from The Society and Professor Graham Smith in particular. The emergence of The Sports Therapy degree, which is run in

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association with the Society of Sports Therapists, meant that I didn't have to pack up my job to study, but could do the course on a part-time basis'.

While the sight of Jones in a mortar- board and gown may have been cause for some serious ribbing from the players, their respect for him is enormous.

Keith Ryan and Jermaine McSporrان have both suffered from career threatening anterior Cruciate ligament injuries not once but twice and have been forced to spend much time in the treatment room.

Ryan who is Wycombe's longest serving player commented: 'Jonah was fantastic. He sorted me out with a top surgeon who had a proven track record. He was really positive with me and really motivated me to get back to fitness. In doing the degree course he has shown that he is not willing to stand still, he's always looking to increase his knowledge. He's also done brilliantly to balance his job and home life as well'.

McSporrان, who is getting back on the path to full fitness agreed with these sentiments. He added, 'He's always prepared to work and push himself to know more. The treatment has changed and progressed since I did my first cruciate. Jonah's got physio's from other clubs phoning and wanting advice now'.

His knowledge on cruciate knee injuries has been inspired not only by his studies but also by a trip to the States to visit knee surgeon Donald Shelbourne. Once again through dedication and hard work Jones, won a scholarship from The Society in 1997 and was able to spend a week with one of the world's most respected knee surgeons. He said:

'It was a tremendous experience and gave me such an insight into new and highly successful treatment methods which were so different from what was being done in England at the time'.

Jones' dedication is without question, both for his players and his studies. When the Wanderers reached the FA Cup Final against Liverpool in 2001, the manager, Lawrie Sanchez, took the players off for a short golfing break to Spain. With a ten thousand word assignment to complete, Jones laptop went in the luggage; the golf clubs stayed at home.

Another player who has undergone lengthy rehab following career saving surgery, Sean Devine, fully appreciates the support he has received. Devine, came back this time last year after being out of the game for eighteen months with a serious knee injury. He said

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'Jonah stuck by me and got me through. He genuinely cares about the players and really knows his stuff.'

At a time when there is huge pressure on managers as well to have key players on the pitch and not in the treatment room, an understanding between the management team is vital.

Terry Gibson said:

'The manager trusts Jonah's judgement, he always listens to what he has to say and won't play players if they're not fit.' He continued, 'He has great respect at the club having worked with several different managers. It's important for the club to have some one of his quality, it's to our benefit as well and the club appreciate his loyalty'.

Often when players arrive from another club, it takes a while for them to get used to the methods of their new therapist but for goal-keeper Martin Taylor, who arrived at the club from Derby County and played in all 63 games last season, there were no such problems. He said: 'I trust Jonah, he knows what to do and keeps me on the pitch'.

And it would seem that even when players leave the club, respect for 'Jonah' remains high. Former 'Chairboy' Steve Guppy, now with Celtic FC said: 'Although I left the club quite a few years ago, he's always been there for me and just been really helpful.'

In a sport where loyalty is often hard to find, it really is respect and hats off (and mortar boards too), to David 'Jonah' Jones.

END

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Notes for the Editor

The Society of Sports Therapists is the leading professional body for Sports Therapy in the UK.

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The BSc (Hons) Sports Therapy Degree course at London Metropolitan University is run in collaboration with The Society of Sports Therapists.

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