



Scouting for Moyes: The inside story of a football scout

Les Padfield

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All football clubs have them -- scouts. Men (for they are almost always men) who watch teams to check how they play, who watch players to see how good they are. Even in these high tech days of video analysis and Prozone (a system which tells how far each player has run in a game, how many passes and how successful they were etc.) football clubs could not operate without the human element of scouting. Les Padfield, though, is not your typical scout. Not many are published poets! A Londoner, he was a schoolboy footballer of great promise -- as he writes, Harry Redknapp, the Spurs manager, used to provide the crosses for him to score when they were schoolboys. He chose though to become a teacher of Physical Education, English and other subjects. He became a scout when, having been persuaded to attend a match at Millwall he meets an old friend, John Sainty, the chief scout at Preston North End. Sainty tells Les that the club's manager, David Moyes, is looking for a London-based scout. And even though Les moved on to Bolton Wanderers in the Premier League, the title 'Scouting for Moyes' was too good to resist. Les tells of the frustrations of the job, the perks -- a trip to Nigeria to watch a teenage prodigy who revealed he preferred to study medicine -- and the precarious nature of football life. Gary Megson, Bolton's manager who had also employed Les when he was in charge at West Bromwich Albion and Nottingham Forest, is sacked at the end of 2009. Les also offers the insight of a professional into the world of football. Surprisingly his views are very often those of an outright fan. His royalties from the book will be donated to Cancer Research.

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