

What's Community ? – February 2019



I love Liverpool. Many of you might do, too, but there are also lots of you out there that hate those famous Reds. For other reasons to my Liverpool affection, I'm also a Coventry City fan. Most of you won't get to the extremes of 'love' or 'hate' for the Sky Blues, and that's part of why I love them – they are my family's team, and they are not likely to be yours.

My other family team is Roma, from the Italian side into which I married. And then there's Greenock Morton in the Scottish second-tier because a mate got us a kick on their 125-year old ground, and their away strip is a BEAUTIFUL Wallace tartan. And then there's Nurnberg in the German Bundesliga because I saw them with my boys, and no-one can ever take that shared experience away from us.

We follow the teams we follow because they provide us connection. My connections are not likely to be yours, but no matter, because when we wear the same colours and sing the same songs, then we are a part of a community.

And so it is at our community club – the Northern Falcons. Maybe you are the star player, or the team manager, committee member, line-marker, first-time player, canteen king or queen... we all share the green and black. We all have that rather fierce-looking falcon on our chests, and we all want the best for our kids and fellow members.

And you know what? After being privileged to see national teams up close and behind the scenes, witness English Premier League training and games, observe how this economy of global football ticks over, and explore how some of the top players go about becoming top players, the essence of it all is simple: a ball and a smile.

Sounds corny, but it's true.

Even with cameras in their faces and the pressure for places in the team, the best of the best still smile. They play and train to their maximum when they enjoy it. It's not work football, it's play football.

The Northern Falcons are an ambitious, competitive community club. We want to offer anyone the chance to play and to be involved with our community, whether they are that star, or whether they are the first-timer. Or whether they are not a player at all!

To be a successful, engaged community club, it takes small input from the many rather than massive input from a few. So wear your smiles along with your green shirts. Strive to improve, look for ways to be a bigger part of your community, and share a laugh. That's the heart of playing football. And that's the spirit of the Falcons.

Neil Montagnana-Wallace
U/11 coach, committee member