

# Q&A

## DANIEL HAYDEN

Speaking to *FGIF* is Blackpool based **Daniel Hayden** joint editor (with his brother Jay) of the excellent Squires Gate FC programme. Having received rave reviews this season, Dan talks about his involvement with the NWCFL club, what it's like editing the *Talk of the Gate* and his hopes for the future.

***FGIF:*** First of all, can you tell us a little bit about yourselves?

***Dan:*** Well, we both work full time at a cinema. Jay is also in his fourth year at University studying Mechanics, and in our spare time we put together the Squires Gate programme. I think we are the youngest programme editors in the league - Dan (23) and Jay (21).

***FGIF:*** How did you first get into football and which teams do you support?

***Dan:*** When we were growing up, we were always out in the garden playing football from morning to evening and although neither of us actually playing for a club, we always made our own games and ran off celebrating as if we had just scored a winner in the last minute of a cup final. We would draw pieces of paper out of a hat and play all the games which sometimes would take hours. We collected the full range of stickers and cards (Shoot Out, Match Attax, Panini, etc). Football played a massive part in our childhood, and we would spend every Saturday glued to Soccer Saturday with Jeff Stelling. In terms of supporting teams, we grew up in Watford and although our dad supports Spurs, I stuck with the local team which of course was Watford. Jay grew up supporting Newcastle, but I think he secretly has now been converted to Watford as he travels to most away games with me - our latest one being Norwich.

***FGIF:*** How long have you been following Squires Gate FC?

***Dan:*** I started volunteering down at the club in 2013, when I wanted to get a Saturday job. I had emailed the club website and they got back saying they were always looking for volunteers, so I went down to their game vs 1874 Northwich and met the then chairman Stuart Hopwood who looked after me, and the whole feel of the club was welcoming. A few months later, I asked Jay if he wanted to come down and watch some football and do some voluntary work, he agreed and we have not left since. We have multiple jobs at the club, and our work does not stop after we complete the programme - Jay does the turnstile, as well as the hospitality at half time, and also helps clear the tables after the game. I help behind the bar for majority of the game, preparing the food and selling (and sometimes drinking) the alcohol. It's fair to say we enjoy helping the club, but it's the feeling of our help being appreciated by everyone at the club.

**FGIF: When did you first get involved editing the SGFC programme?**

*Dan: At the end of the 2013/14 season I think it was, Albert\* approached us and asked if we would be interested in putting together a programme every week. We weren't too sure on how or what to include in the programme but we gave it a go. We printed the programme from home the first few years so we had to be very careful of colour and pictures added. However, we gained some credit from visiting fans on how it had improved over the years. Looking back now, me and Jay both agree that the past programmes we have done have been a poor standard and in years to come we will probably look back on this season's edition and think the same.*

*\*Note - Albert Cooper is the current club photographer.*

**FGIF: How long does it take to produce your programme?**

*Dan: In short, a long time. Personally, I applaud every single programme editor in non-league football and there are some great editions in our league alone but I have also seen some very average ones, but some clubs don't have the facilities or people who have the time to put together a programme. It is a strain sometimes, and it depends on the type of info available to us and on how quickly we can include it. But, at Squires Gate we try to ensure our programmes provide quality not quantity.*

**FGIF: What are the main stages involved in producing your programme?**

*Dan: The first thing we would do is email people from the opposition clubs - fans, players, committee and hope that they get back to us with some answers to the questions which isn't always the case but we do not expect them and appreciate that some might reject our approach. We copy the design over from the previous programmes - anything that just needs the info changing - eg. the stats page, or the squad page and then go from there. We are always looking for some interesting blogs, articles from non-league too! Our most recent one was a Q&A with a groundhopper in Russia!*

**FGIF: What do you think makes a good football programme?**

*Dan: I think for me, it's something unique. Something different to the usual history, honours, etc that you find in every club which is copied from every year. Something that fans from both teams can read, like we have a section for the away team, and we get them as involved as we can! Just interesting articles for me, stats that people may not have known, etc.*

**FGIF: What would you say are the difficulties editing a programme?**

*Dan: I'd say trying to make it as interesting as possible, and sticking to a time frame. Trying to get fans, and players from the opposing team can also be quite hard too, but I leave that to Jay.*

**FGIF: What are the best things about being the SGFC programme editor?**

*Dan: It has to be hearing that people enjoyed reading our efforts, the feedback we have got this year has been promising and being told that we have one of the best, if not the best in the NWCFL, is great. Although, we do not sell many paper copies down at the Gate, our online issues have been read over 200-300 times each game, and for me that is progress. We also have many programme collectors who have asked us to send them issues every week, so the fact that people love reading a programme that we have spent time putting together, makes the time worth it.*

**FGIF: What ambitions do you have for the *Talk of the Gate*?**

*Dan: Well, ideally, we want to win the NWCFL Programme of the Year, or at least to be in contention for it. I think if we fail to even be mentioned this year, it will have a massive knock on effect to motivation next season but we will not be giving up until we get that award. When we took over in 2014, we said we would win it one day, and this season I think we have as good a chance as anyone. In terms of editing, we want to be able to produce a programme that is talked about throughout the league, and beyond.*

**FGIF: Finally, if we weren't involved in football, what would you be doing?**

*Dan: I have no idea. Football plays a massive part in our lives and anyone that doesn't like football just confuse us. I do enjoy watching cricket though, I can tolerate rugby but anything else just bores me. I'm sorry if any of your readers love golf, or snooker (does snooker even count as a sport?) but it's not for me. Maybe I would be involved in something like that. Jay likes F1, and with him training to be a mechanic I am sure that is what he would be doing.*

**FGIF: Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?**

*Dan: I hope that is okay for you, please feel free to edit any parts. We do hope to see you down at Squires Gate at some point in the future. We have passed on your feedback in our committee meetings, and we will continue to tag you in our tweets with the programme to try and encourage people to read your blog!*

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