

Follow us on Twitter
@standardnews



News

Our apprentices earn their Spurs

Tottenham's new signings help boost jobs campaign



David Cohen

TOTTENHAM Hotspur have become the first Premier League club to sign up to the Standard's campaign to help jobless young Londoners into work.

London's top performing team, currently riding high above Chelsea and Arsenal in the league, have agreed to take two Ladder for London apprentices to be deployed in their retail outlet for one year, starting in three weeks' time. It takes the total apprenticeships pledged to 650, with 109 having already begun their placements.

Yesterday the former Tottenham captain Ledley King, an ambassador for Spurs since his retirement last year because of chronic knee problems, visited our campaign partner City Gateway in Limehouse.

"I am no different from you guys," he said to about 50 assembled pre-apprentice trainees. "I grew up in Bow around the corner from this youth centre and I left school at 16 with only a few GCSEs, so I could easily have been like you here, unemployed and looking for an apprenticeship, if football hadn't worked out for me."

Asked by a trainee (wearing West Ham shorts) to distil the secret of his success, he said it came down to three things, "hard work, hard work, hard work".

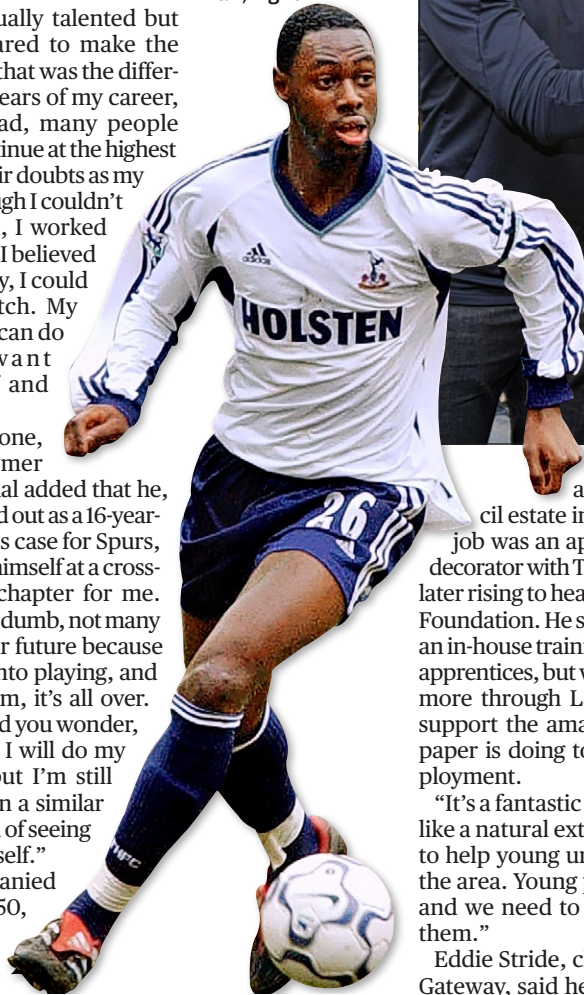
"I had friends equally talented but who weren't prepared to make the sacrifices I did, and that was the difference. The last five years of my career, my knee was so bad, many people doubted I could continue at the highest levels, but I used their doubts as my driving force. Although I couldn't train with the team, I worked hard in the gym and I believed that come match day, I could perform on the pitch. My message is that you can do anything you want through self-belief and hard work."

Striking a modest tone, the 32-year-old former England international added that he, like them, had started out as a 16-year-old apprentice, in his case for Spurs, but now also found himself at a crossroads. "It's a new chapter for me. Footballers are quite dumb, not many of us think about our future because we put everything into playing, and then suddenly, wham, it's all over. You're still young and you wonder, what's next for me? I will do my coaching badges, but I'm still finding out, so I'm in a similar position to you, kind of seeing what's out there myself."

King was accompanied by Grant Cornwell, 50, chief executive of the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, who



Fit for a King: Ledley with Blessing Amadi and Jordana Lomanga, above, and other hopeful apprentices. The Spurs legend, below, also shares a joke with an Arsenal fan, right



also grew up on a council estate in Bow and whose first job was an apprentice painter and decorator with Tower Hamlets council, later rising to head the £4 million Spurs Foundation. He said: "We already have an in-house training programme for 20 apprentices, but we decided to take two more through Ladder for London to support the amazing work the newspaper is doing to tackle youth unemployment."

"It's a fantastic campaign and it feels like a natural extension of what we do to help young unemployed people in the area. Young people are the future and we need to do our bit to inspire them."

Eddie Stride, chief executive of City Gateway, said he was especially keen

to attract fitness companies and gyms to Ladder for London.

"We have about 50 people doing pre-apprenticeship training to be sports coaches and personal fitness trainers, but unless companies take them on, they have nowhere to go."

After touring the facilities, signing shirts and taking time for a game of ping-pong, King met the two Ladder for London apprentices who live in Tottenham and who beat 28 other candidates who also interviewed for the Spurs job. Blessing Amadi, 23, and Jordana Lomanga, 17, said they thought they had been picked because of their enthusiasm. "I have been unemployed for seven months and this will be my first paid job," said Ms Amadi. "I went through a bad patch in my life and this

is a golden opportunity to get my foot on the career ladder."

After quizzing King about life after football, Ms Lomanga added: "I feel inspired by what Ledley told me about having to look around for what to do next. He is a man who had a dream, but now he has to find his way like all of us. Like many people, I don't have a dream, but what I do have is a strong desire to be successful."

She smiled. "Two weeks ago I was despairing, thinking that I could be unemployed for a very long time, but here I am, talking to Ledley about working for Spurs. I can't wait to start. People ask me, 'but are you a Spurs fan?' I tell them, 'I am now'."

How can you get an apprentice?

Website: standard.co.uk/ladderforlondon

Email: ladderforlondon@standard.co.uk

Comment

Like us on Facebook
facebook.com/eveningstandard 



Why we still fight for women's rights

TODAY is International Women's Day: it comes as this paper campaigns against the horror of female genital mutilation. For despite the huge advances in women's position since German socialist Clara Zetkin first founded International Women's Day in 1910, women remain discriminated against around the world.

So it is that we have to fight for women and girls' basic rights, such as education, as US Secretary of State John Kerry reminds us on these pages – the cause for which 15-year-old Afghan campaigner Malala Yousafzai almost died. And so it is that even in Britain, up to 30,000 girls are estimated to be at risk of female genital mutilation. The girls, from African and Arab communities, are usually sent abroad for the barbaric procedure – yet that requires the complicity of families and communities.

International Development Secretary Justine Greening today makes a powerful call for Londoners not to look the other way and confront the problem of female genital mutilation. We need greater awareness among the girls themselves, their families, and their teachers and doctors.

Meanwhile, other British women face violence elsewhere in their daily lives – or else are degraded in ways such as those highlighted today by Home Secretary Theresa May, who announces a drive to stop girls being pressured into sending males explicit photos of themselves. Those in Britain and elsewhere who have fought for women's rights have much to be proud of: but the work of International Women's Day remains as urgent as ever. American feminist pioneer Mary Wollstonecraft said: "I do not wish [women] to have power over men, but over themselves." Her words remain relevant today.

Lib-Dems at bay

THE Liberal Democrats meet today for what looks set to be a gloomy spring conference. The party has things to celebrate: a by-election victory in Eastleigh last week and, despite predictions to the contrary, three years of generally well-functioning coalition government. Yet the Lib-Dems have taken a pounding over the conviction of former Cabinet minister Chris Huhne and his ex-wife Vicky Pryce, and over the Lord Rennard sexual harassment allegations. More seriously, the party's poll ratings have for more than two years bumped along around the 10 per cent mark. A huge new poll today funded by Conservative Lord Ashcroft will make particularly worrying reading for Lib-Dem leader Nick Clegg: it suggests that more than seven out of 10 people who voted Lib-Dem in 2010 are ready to defect.

Yet paradoxically, the Lib-Dems remain strong. The Tories' grim showing in Eastleigh, beaten into third place by Ukip, reveals their own weakness: the Conservatives' ambition to win a majority in 2015 looks more distant than ever, and that is gradually sapping the Prime Minister's authority. However much many Tories may chafe at the compromises of coalition, they still need the Lib-Dems. The Lib-Dems are still succeeding in imposing some of their policies, such as raising the income tax threshold. The recriminations of this weekend aside, it is still much too soon to write the party off.

Spurs' new stars

WITH its pledge to take on two apprentices, Tottenham Hotspur is just the latest employer to support this paper's Ladder for London campaign. Working for Spurs, now riding high in the Premiership, might not be like other jobs. But for the young people concerned, these positions will most of all be a vital route into the world of work – just like all the 650 apprenticeships pledged in the campaign.

Brave stand: Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by the Taliban after campaigning for education for girls, recovering in Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital



Malala's vital lesson for US foreign policy

In his first article for a British newspaper, the new US Secretary of State says he will continue Hillary Clinton's fight for women

ONE of my first meetings as Secretary of State was with a group of courageous women from Burma. Two were former political prisoners, and although they had all endured incredible hardship in their lives, each of them was committed to moving forward – providing education and training for girls, finding jobs for the unemployed and advocating greater women's participation in civil society. I have no doubt that they will continue to be powerful agents of change, bringing progress to their communities and their country in the years to come.

Opportunities to engage with such remarkable and inspirational individuals reinforce why it is so vital that the United States continues to work with governments, organisations and individuals around the world to protect and advance the rights of women and girls. After all, just like in our own countries, the most pressing economic, social and political problems cannot be solved without the full participation of women.

According to the World Economic Forum, countries where men and women are closer to enjoying equal rights are far more economically competitive than those where the gender gap has left women and girls with limited or no access to medical care, education, elected office, and the marketplace.

Similarly, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that if women farmers had the same access to seeds, fertilizer, and technology as men, it would reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 100 million.

Yet in too many societies and too many homes, women and girls are still undervalued, denied opportunities and forced to marry as children. Too many lives have been lost or altered for ever

John Kerry



by gender-based violence. As the father of two daughters, I cannot imagine the pain suffered by the parents of the young woman known as "Nirbhaya", the 23-year-old medical student murdered on a New Delhi bus simply for being a woman, or the anguish felt by the parents of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani girl shot by extremists as she too rode on a bus, simply for wanting to go to school.

The outstanding treatment and care Malala has received at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham is a powerful symbol that people across the world stand united against those who want to silence women and girls through intimidation and violence.

I am inspired by Malala's undaunted commitment to her cause, by Nirbhaya's determination, while dying, to bring her assailants to justice, and by their fathers' courage in speaking out on behalf of their daughters and women everywhere.

No country can get ahead if it leaves half of its people behind. So it is in the interests of boys and men to do everything in their power to unleash the potential of girls and women and to champion their rights, because without their contribution we are all the poorer. This is why the United States believes gender equality is critical to our shared

It is in the interests of boys and men to do everything in their power to unleash the potential of girls and women

goals of prosperity, stability, and peace, and why investing in women and girls worldwide is critical to advancing US foreign policy.

We are investing in the training and mentoring of women entrepreneurs so they cannot only lift up their own families, but also help their countries' economies grow. We are investing in girls' education so they can escape forced early marriage, break the cycle of poverty and develop into community leaders and engaged citizens. Increasing girls' and women's education and their access to resources also improves the health and education of the next generation.

We are working with partners around the world to boost maternal health, strengthen female farmers, and prevent and address gender-based violence because all societies benefit when women are healthy, safe, and can contribute their labour, leadership and creativity to the global economy. US diplomats are working to integrate women fully into peace negotiations and security efforts because bringing women's experiences and insights to the table can help prevent future conflict.

My predecessor, Hillary Clinton, elevated the empowerment of women and girls as a foreign policy issue, and I'm determined to keep it a cornerstone of US foreign policy during my time in office. The truth is that when women thrive, we all thrive, and our global commitment to that cause will not diminish.

Today, International Women's Day, is a day of celebration. It is also a day when each of us must recommit to ending the inequality that prevents progress in every corner of the globe. We can and we must commit to this so that each of our daughters can ride a bus without fear, all of our sisters can fulfill their tremendous potential, and we can tap the talents of every single woman and girl.



Read more at:
[standard.co.uk/
comment](http://standard.co.uk/comment)