



# ACADEMY



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

### International Call-Ups

Covid restrictions have disrupted Academy International Call-Ups in recent months.

However, in March the Academy had an International Call-Up with U23 midfielder Ryan Stirk being called up by Wales U21s for their friendly against the Republic of Ireland.

Ryan played the full 90 minutes in the 2-1 defeat at Colliers Park in Wrexham.



Focus for all of the European U21 sides will now turn to the 2023 European Championships with qualifiers starting in June. Wales have been drawn in the same qualifying group as Bulgaria, Gibraltar, Moldova, the Netherlands and Switzerland, with only the top side in the group qualifying for the tournament automatically.



### March 2021

### Schoolboys Returning

March saw the return of the Schoolboy Games Programme with U9-U15 fixtures against West Brom. The performance of the weekend fell to the U10 age group, securing the most positive result of all, with a 14-8 win across all games.

Games will be coming thick and fast for the Schoolboys, with games taking place all the way through to the final week in June there is plenty of football to be played between now and the end of the season.

### U23 PDL Form

The U23 fixture v Cardiff saw the age group return to St. Andrew's Trillion Trophy Stadium for the first time this season. It was a winning return with a 2-1 victory with Rliey McGree and an own goal securing the three points for the home side.

The age group will return to St. Andrew's once more before the end of the season with their fixture against Charlton in May, with the side hoping for a similar positive result.

Another good month for the U23s saw them rise one place in the league to 3<sup>rd</sup> having been in 10<sup>th</sup> at one point in December.

Blues have 2 games in hand over 2<sup>nd</sup> placed Nottingham Forest with the gap between the two teams standing at 8 points with 6 games remaining.

### U18 PDL North & Youth Cup Update

March was a more challenging month for the U18s having experienced a good run of form recently which saw the side hold first place in the PDL North heading into March.

A positive result started the month with a 3-1 win over Nottingham Forest. However, with teams around them in the table playing their games in hand as well as a 4-1 away defeat to new table toppers Wigan, Blues have dropped to second in the table. With 7 games of the regular season remaining, making the semi-final play offs is still a real possibility.



March also saw the postponed third round FA Youth Cup Fixture v Man City take place at the Academy Stadium in Manchester.

Playing the winners of last year's competition, a team who have only lost once in the league this season, full of youth internationals and players who have made their first team debuts this season it was always going to be a tough fixture.

While the result did not go in favour of the Blues, there were positives from the evening such as the final goal of the evening being scored by Josh Williams.