
Simpemba's family treble

YOUTH team star Ian Simpemba has been picked to play for the Republic of Ireland Under-17 side, completing a unique family hat-trick.

The midfielder joins his young cousins Michael Foley, who is on Liverpool's books and Glen Cronin, who is at Exeter City, in the Irish international picture.

Simpemba, 17, said: "It's a dream come true. I was brought up in Dublin and lived there until I was 11, it's fantastic to get the chance to represent them."

Simpemba first impressed Irish youth team boss Brian Kerr with an excellent performance for the Blues in the fourth round of the FA Youth Cup at Newcastle United last year.

He then confirmed his international potential in front of the Irish selectors in another FA Youth Cup match at Brighton earlier this year.

He is one of four new caps called into the squad for the Republic's double header against France in Montpellier later this month.

The matches, on January 24 and 26, have been arranged as part of the Republic's preparations for the U19 European Championship next year.

Now having broken onto the international scene Simpemba wants to fulfil a second ambition this season – his first team debut at Adams Park.

Even though he is still a youth team player he was awarded the number 23 first team shirt at the start of the season because youth team boss Gary Goodchild picked him out as a prospect who could break into the first team by the end of the year.

Simpemba said: "I'm hoping for a game at the end of the season, that would be something really special."
