

Dayle Southwell: Wycombe Wanderers signing on fish factory job in Grimsby

By Phil Shepka **BBC Sport**



Dayle Southwell won his first cap for England C this summer

Non-league players making the step up to professional football always provides us with great stories of other jobs while trying to 'make it' - and Dayle Southwell is no exception.

The 22-year-old striker has joined League Two club Wycombe Wanderers after a prolific 54 goals in two seasons at National League North side Boston United.

But enough of the boring football facts. While playing part-time for Boston, he worked in a Grimsby fish factory in a job which included the dubious honours of packing fish food and fish tank lights.

"When you're making fish food using blenders and you get a little bit in your eyes, it's not the nicest," he told BBC Sport.

Southwell needed to find a job that would support his part-time football career after leaving Grimsby at the end of a two-year professional contract.

And it was the factory that he put his heart and sole, quite literally, into.

"You've got to do what you've got to do to earn money. I used to come home absolutely stinking of fish," he said.



Southwell (number nine) chose Wycombe after speaking to a number of other clubs

"A lot of the days I would get out of my house at 08:00 in the morning, then go straight from work at 17:00 to Boston for training and not get home until 22:30.

"Sometimes if I didn't have enough time to get a shower, my team-mates at Boston would smell a bit of the scent on me.

"I've learned the hard way and it's made me realise how lucky you are to be a professional footballer, so I'm really glad I did it."

Southwell's move up to the English Football League will obviously draw comparison with Jamie Vardy, who has gone from non-league to scoring for England at the European Championships in the space of four years.

Jamie Vardy joined Leicester from Fleetwood in 2012 and has gone on to win the Premier League title with the Foxes and score against Wales at Euro 2016

He said: "You've got to be ambitious and when people prove that non-league to the Premier League can be done, you've got to look at that and think why not me as well?

"If I can score goals, you never know where that will take you. I'll just carry on working hard and let that inspire me."

After finishing a job which included lifting "heavy, heavy, heavy" boxes for 10 hours on some days, he is sure he can net goals for the Chairboys.

"The step up is always going to be harder, we know that," he said. "But I still feel like I can score goals. I'll be playing with better players and get better service.

"I'll still get in the right positions and I'm capable of hitting the back of the net, I've proved that, so I'm confident I can still get goals here."