



Thursday, February 9th 2012

## **Blackpool physios score with football coach**

A BLACKPOOL football coach is praising hospital physios for helping him get back on the pitch.

Nick Cunliffe, 37, Coach and Kickz Coordinator at Blackpool Football Club Community Trust underwent intensive physiotherapy at Clifton Hospital after injuring his foot during a football coaching course.

Whilst undertaking a course to develop his coaching skills, Nick was left with a tear to his Achilles tendon that if he didn't have specialised physiotherapy on, would have required surgery.

He said: "I was warming up during the first hour of training, when all of a sudden I felt a snap and a sharp pain. I had to sit the rest of the training day out and of course became the stick of all jokes for becoming injured on the first day."

Nick visited his GP in agony the next morning. It was confirmed he had severely torn his Achilles muscle and was referred to the Physiotherapy Department at Clifton Hospital.

Nick said: "Both my career and my social life centre around my feet and my skills as a football coach. I coordinate the Blackpool Football Club's Kickz scheme, which sees a team of football coaches going into deprived areas of the Blackpool community and providing free football training sessions for kids from 12 to 18 years old.

"I thoroughly enjoy my role within the Blackpool football community and I also coach St Annes FC, a girl's football team that my stepdaughter also plays for.

"I have always been a keen footballer myself. After playing semi professional when I was younger and then spending 10 years in America training as a coach, football has become a huge part of my life and an injury like mine could have been a huge knock to my career and my enjoyment of the sport."

Nick went on to receive five weeks of physiotherapy on his injury which included a multidisciplinary approach with a variety of rehabilitation techniques.

He said: "My Physiotherapist, Joanne Bunce was a great support and left me feeling really cared for. She was very friendly and positive and gave me the determination to get back on the pitch as soon as possible.

Each session of physio included a variety of specialist techniques to Nick's injured ankle and involved him using specialist equipment to exercise. He was also sent home with a number of exercises to continue the development programme and was soon making great progress.

Nick added: "Without having access to this great service, my injury would have got extremely worse and would have needed surgery which may have left me sat on the football bench for a very long time.

"My treatment at Clifton Hospital was first class and expertly handled by the NHS. My tendon is now fully healed and I can begin to participate in sports once again.

"A huge thank you to the physiotherapy team and everyone at the hospital - You were great!"

Joanne Bunce, Senior Physiotherapist at Clifton Hospital said: "We are delighted to hear how much Nick has benefited from the physiotherapy he received at Clifton Hospital. Well done to Nick for his determination and for putting in the time with his exercises. We wish him all the best for his future in football coaching."





**Caption: Nick Cunliffe**

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