

FOOTBALL FEATURES

England's biggest success stories from Gareth Southgate's 2016 Toulon winners

By Harry Edwards



Published: 18:56, 2 September 2020

People like to accuse England fans of getting ahead of themselves, but the Three Lions have a pretty decent youth set up.

In fact, in 2016, 2017 and 2018, the Young Lions won the Toulon Tournament, a summer competition for national teams using players from under-17 to under-23 level. A large number of England's current crop of exciting youngsters will have played in the tournament at some point, which has only enhanced their progression.

Focussing on 2016 in particular, England's current senior team benefits stretch beyond just the players who took to the pitch that year. Leading them from the dugout was Gareth Southgate, who would go on to become England manager and took the Three Lions to fourth at the 2018 World Cup.

It was quite the achievement from Southgate, becoming the first England manager since Sir Bobby Robson in 1990 to reach a World Cup semi-final, but how did he fare at the Toulon tournament all those years ago?

What happened at the 2016 Toulon Tournament?

A 10-team tournament in 2016, England were placed in a group alongside Portugal, Paraguay, Japan and Guinea, with the top team advancing to the final.

The Young Lions had a tricky start, against biggest opponents Portugal, but came through with a 1-0 win thanks to Lewis Baker's second-half goal. The Chelsea midfielder would go on to finish as the tournament's top scorer, grabbing four goals in total, though he was pipped to the Player of the Tournament by a Blues teammate – but more on him a bit later.

The next game was more straightforward, as England thrashed Guinea 7-1 despite going a goal down inside the opening minute. A post-Ireland Jack Grealish equalised for Southgate's side just six minutes later and added a second later in the first half, but not before James Ward-Prowse and Nathan Redmond had put England in control. The second half saw Cauley Woodrow score twice and an own goal from Souleymane Makadji completed the scoring.

Another big win followed in the third group game, this time a 4-0 victory over Paraguay, with Baker and Redmond getting their second goals of the tournament, while eventual Golden Ball winner Ruben Loftus-Cheek bagged a brace, showing what had made him so impressive in the Chelsea academy. England closed the group, and secured top spot, with a 1-0 win over Japan thanks to Baker's third of the tournament.

The final put England up against a France side that had also been perfect in their group, conceding just two goals on the way. But by the end of the night, England had doubled that tally, thanks to goals from – you guessed it – Baker and Loftus-Cheek, securing their places as top scorer and best player.

So how many of that squad have made it to the senior squad, and who is still waiting for their chance?

Fully fledged

Starting off with the big boys, the players that have not only been handed their first team debuts since the Toulon Tournament but have kept their place – becoming regulars, or in the case of one, look set for the future.

Jack Grealish was making his England debut in the 2016 Toulon Tournament, having switched allegiances from the Republic of Ireland, for whom he had played at under-21 level. But despite promising performances and growth on the pitch at club level, becoming Aston Villa's most important player, Grealish has been consistently ignored by Southgate for England's senior squad. Even when he was finally called up last month, Grealish's place only came through withdrawals, having not been in the initial roster – a decision that was met with frustration by fans.



He's joined in the current squad by Toulon Tournament teammates **Jordan Pickford** and **James Ward-Prowse**, both of whom were handed their senior team debuts by Southgate – though the former has been more of a feature, becoming England's number one. But after going under-appreciated by the senior national team, Ward-Prowse is another who sits rightly in the squad, showing ability and leadership for Southampton.

There are two more players from the 2016 squad that will be considered as first-teamers, but aren't in the most recent squad, due to injury and lack of playing time because of injuries. Both are current Chelsea players, in new-signing **Ben Chilwell** and **Ruben Loftus-Cheek**. Chilwell is arguably England's brightest left-back option but he has been made to wait for his opportunities, making 11 appearances since 2018. Loftus-Cheek had looked to be becoming a driving force in England's midfield, but his progress has been hampered by a long-term injury layoff from which he has only recently returned. Expect these two to be in England squads for years to come, however.

Stuck in limbo

Moving on to a diverse group of players who are either yet to make a breakthrough into the senior squad or have been handed a cap but look rather unlikely to add to it – for one reason or another.

Perhaps the biggest name among those is **Nathan Redmond**. Scoring twice in the 2016 Toulon Tournament, Redmond was another to make his senior debut under Southgate, coming on as a second-half substitute in a friendly against Germany in 2017. But the Southampton man has not added to his sole cap since, forever being on the periphery. A decent 2018/19 campaign saw Redmond included in the provisional squad for the 2019 Nations League finals but he was not in the final 23. And now, at 26, Redmond may have missed his best opportunity to become a long-term fixture for the Three Lions.



Nathaniel Chalobah is another like Redmond who has made a senior appearance, for six minutes in 2018 this time, but may not count himself part of the Three Lions for the future. The midfielder came on in stoppage time of England's 3-2 Nations League win over Spain, but injuries saw his career stagnate and, now with Watford in the Championship, Chalobah has slipped under the radar. Then there's **Calum Chambers** who actually made three first-team appearances before the 2016 Toulon tournament, but hasn't since.

Angus Gunn, **Kortney Hause**, **Jack Stephens** and **Rob Holding** are all still awaiting their first senior caps with only Gunn being called up so far, but shouldn't be completely discounted in the future. Unlike, unfortunately, the next group.

Out of reckoning

Although it is never smart to completely rule a player out of contention, unless they do so themselves, there are a handful of the 2016 Toulon Tournament winners that look to have missed the boat.

With regards to the tournament, the biggest is top scorer **Lewis Baker** who failed to build on his performances, while also falling foul of Chelsea's loan system. The midfielder, now 25, has had seven different loan spells away from Stamford Bridge but has struggled for playing time in recent seasons, particularly for Fortuna Dusseldorf last season.



Baker's former Chelsea teammates **John Swift** and **Kasey Palmer** are also unlikely to be getting a call up anytime soon, finding comfort in the Championship with Reading and Bristol City respectively – a league that is often overlooked when it comes to England's senior squad.

Another member of the 2016 squad plying their trade in the Championship is Sheffield Wednesday defender **Dominic Iorfa** who was named the club's Player of the Year for 2019/20. But with so many stars in front of him, Iorfa is unlikely to get an England call up, though he is eligible for Nigeria.

Aston Villa's **Matt Targett** also appears to be out of the reckoning despite England's lack of options at left-back, while **Matt Grimes'** Three Lions career has not pressed on since Toulon.

And finally two forward options, **Cauley Woodrow** has been doing well for Barnsley in the Championship but this will have gone largely unnoticed by those in the Three Lions' set-up, thanks to England's impressive Premier League options. And **Duncan Watmore** is now without a club.

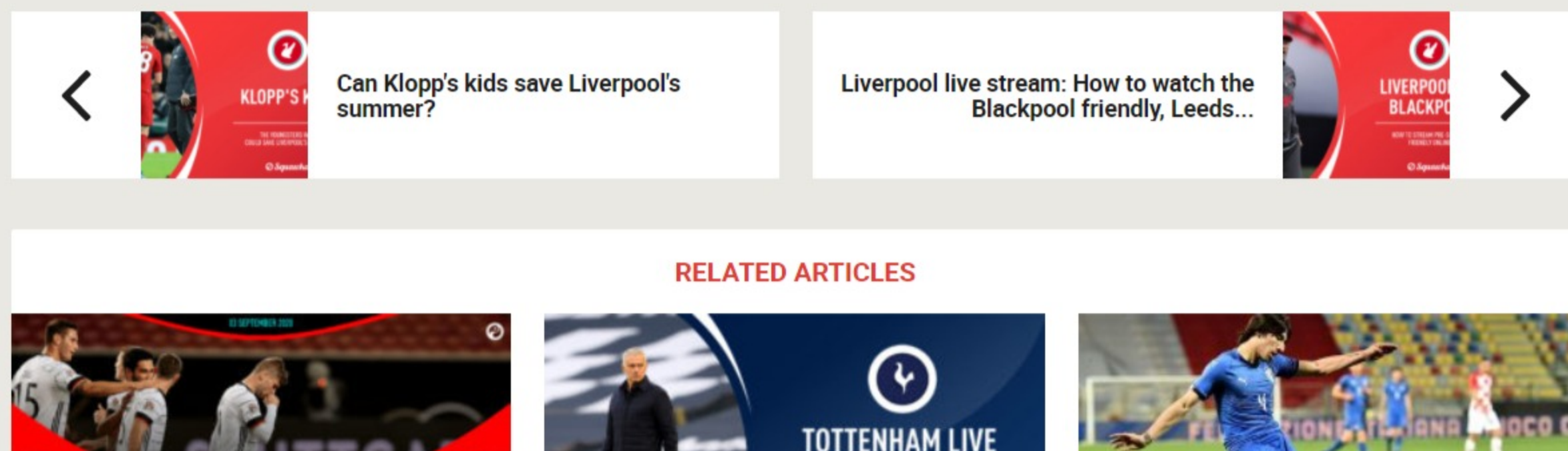
The full 2016 Toulon Tournament squad

Goalkeepers: Angus Gunn, Jordan Pickford.

Defenders: Calum Chambers, Ben Chilwell, Brendan Galloway, Kortney Hause, Dominic Iorfa, Jack Stephens, Matt Targett.

Midfielders: Lewis Baker, Matt Grimes, Nathaniel Chalobah, Ruben Loftus-Cheek, John Swift, James Ward-Prowse.

Forwards: Jack Grealish, Kasey Palmer, Nathan Redmond, Duncan Watmore, Cauley Woodrow.

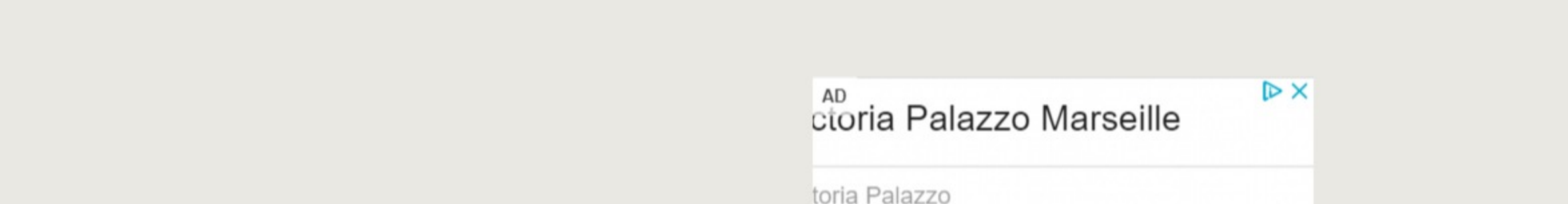
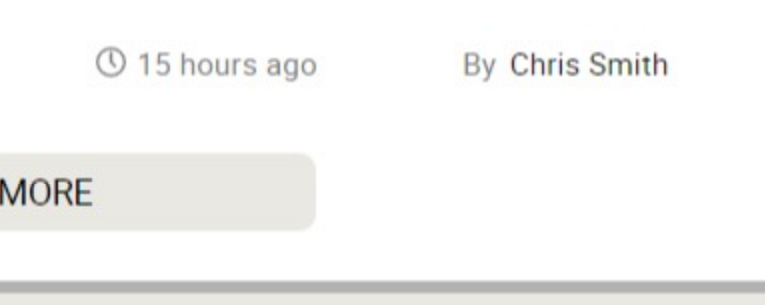


FEATURES
De Gea lays down Henderson gauntlet: Full player ratings as Spain earn late draw in Germany
By Harry Edwards 12 hours ago

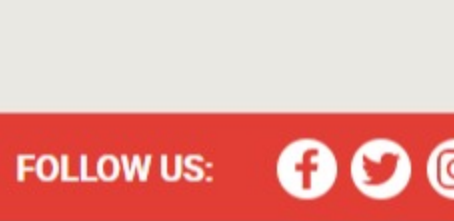
NEWS
Tottenham live stream: How to watch the Watford friendly, Everton Premier League...
By Harry Edwards 15 hours ago

NEWS
Sandro Tonali rejected Man Utd and Barca in favour of AC Milan, says Brescia president
By Chris Smith 16 hours ago

SHOW MORE



Help & FAQs | Privacy | Terms | About



Copyright © 2020 Catena Operations Limited. All rights reserved.

Data Licensed From



*Registered name: Catena Operations Limited | Registered address: Quantum Place, Triq ix-Xatt 'ix' Xbieh, Gzira, GZR 1052, Malta
Registration number: C 62481 | Place of Registration: Malta
VAT registration number: MT 2151 8128 | info@catenamedia.com