

MATT ADORE

06/07 (CAC)

Benni sings praises of strike partner Derbyshire

Luton 0
Blackburn 4



By NEIL McLEMAN

BENNI MCCARTHY believes his "telepathic" understanding with fellow forward Matt Derbyshire has the power to guide Blackburn all the way to Wembley.

The 20-year-old local lad was working as a YTS community coach at Ewood Park only four years ago and playing non-league football.

But by taking his goal tally to five in the last six games with his double against Luton, Derbyshire has shown he can put theory into practice.

And with Blackburn scoring eight goals in two away FA Cup ties in this campaign, his South African mentor already has a vision of the pair running out together in the final in May.

"Oh man, he's fantastic!" said McCarthy. "He's young, very optimistic, always willing to learn and he wants to get better. He makes it so easy, he's got the fresh legs to run a lot and make me look good!"

Motivates

"I have good telepathy with him. He wants to get better and I have a little bit more experience so he always tends to listen to me.

"He wants to do well and so do I so hopefully we can form a fantastic partnership. We believe we can get to the Cup Final."

But after only his third start, it is Derbyshire's past which really motivates him now.

"I started off at Blackburn Rovers as a community coach working with young children," said the Rovers fan, who also scored at Everton in the last round. "Every Friday morning we

would go down to the training ground and get balls signed by the first team. I remember David Dunn and all the other big names being there. Now getting the chance to play for them is unbelievable."

But Derbyshire, who has been loaned out to Plymouth and Wrexham, has learned about the game the hard way.

"I was playing for Great Harwood Town in North West Counties Division Two before Blackburn picked me up so I know what it is all about," he added. "The changing rooms and the pitches – all a bit different. Muddy pitches, six-foot defenders smashing you in the back

every single game. It was a great way to learn."

At equally unglamorous Kenilworth Road, Derbyshire netted the crucial first goal after only 10 minutes to kill

the contest for the paltry crowd and the live TV audience. McCarthy benefited from a Derbyshire knock-down for his 15th goal of the season after 37 minutes before the young striker headed home his second.

Morten Gamst Pedersen then smashed home the goal of the game with 16 minutes left to reflect the gulf between the 20th team in the Championship and a growing Premiership

force. "To be honest I was half-expecting this result today with the squad we've got," said Luton boss Mike Newell, who tried to sign Derbyshire on loan at the start of the season.

It is not an easy time for the former Blackburn striker who is fighting a lengthening injury list at the cash-strapped club and facing an FA hearing on Wednesday to explain his anti-woman rant last November.

With the 42-year-old on the short-list for the Coventry job, he reckons he is well-prepared for another challenge. "I haven't heard from them but I can't help people linking me with other jobs," he said.

"Eventually I will go to a football club where I can go out and identify players I want and put them in the team. I won't have to worry about anything else."



IT'S ALL ROVER:
Two-goal hero
Derbyshire after
heading in his
second (above)

AWAY THE LADS

GOALS come naturally for Blackburn on their travels - 19 in their last seven games away from Ewood

16 Dec Reading 1 Blackburn 2
23 Dec Arsenal 6 Blackburn 2
1 Jan Wigan 0 Blackburn 3
7 Jan Everton 1 Blackburn 4
20 Jan Man City 0 Blackburn 3
23 Jan Watford 2 Blackburn 1
27 Jan Luton 0 Blackburn 4



44%	POSSESSION	56%
3	SHOTS ON TARGET	7
1	SHOTS OFF TARGET	3
3	OFFSIDES	7
4	CORNERS	4
14	FOULS	17
0	YELLOW CARDS	1
0	RED CARDS	0

ATTENDANCE: 5,887

MAN OF THE MATCH: Derbyshire

TEAMS AND RATINGS

LUTON: Beresford 6, Foley 6, Coyne 4 (Keane 21, 6), Perrett 6, Davis 5, Boyd 7, Langley 7, Robson 6, Emanuel 6, Bell 6 (Morgan 58, 4), Talbot 7 (O'Leary 80, 4).

BLACKBURN: Friedel 7, Khizanishvili 7 (Gallagher 76, 4), Nelsen 8 (Samba 70, 5), Henchoz 7, Warnock 8, Emerton 6, Mokoena 7 Bentley 7, Pedersen 8, Derbyshire 9, McCarthy 8 (Jeffers 67, 4).

Referee: STEVE BENNETT