


POMPEY

**Pompey physio
Steve Allen
treats Blues
midfielder
Michael Brown**
Pictures: Joe Pepler/
Portsmouth FC



Physio Allen proves he's fit for purpose after Cotterill reunion

by Chris Powers
Sports Mail

SOME PUNDITS would say he has the hardest job in football – keeping an already depleted squad fully fit – but new Pompey physio Steve Allen has no regrets.

The 44-year-old had a number of potential suitors when he left Charlton Athletic in the summer, including Southampton and Saudi Arabian champions Al-Hilal.

Yet he opted for Fratton Park and the challenge of aiding Pompey's resurrection in the Championship.

Leaving school at 16 with no qualifications, Allen's ambition was to become a professional footballer.

Colchester offered him that opportunity but his dream was cruelly cut short through injury after just three first-team games.

That instigated a difficult change in career paths and by the age of 19 he became the youngest person to gain the FA Treatment of Injury Diploma.

Several months after that Allen became the youngest head physio in the first division, joining Wimbledon in 1987.

A degree in sports science followed, along with a first-class honours degree in physiotherapy, as Allen made his way in the game.

Now Pompey is his latest stop-off – a job that filled him with excitement when the opportunity arose.

'Clubs come and go in spirals and it's about catching a club at a good time,' he said.

'The opportunity to come and

Blues are in safe hands as Fratton new boy has no regrets making switch to south coast



Ibrahima Sonko gets help from physio Steve Allen

work for Steve (Cotterill) at a club like Portsmouth was exciting, as I believe the club has a chance to rebuild and come back up.

'In the summer I had several potential options.

'The first was to rejoin Alan Pardew at Southampton – after I worked with him at Charlton and West Ham.

'The second was to work in Saudi Arabia with the champions Al-Hilal and the third was to work with Steve at Portsmouth.

'He is one of the best managers I've worked with and I've worked

with an awful lot.'

Allen first met Cotterill while working for the Dons in 1989, when the Pompey boss was signed as a player.

His time at Wimbledon also saw him work with the famous Crazy Gang.

He feels his time at Plough Lane prepared him well for the challenges he currently faces at Portsmouth – although working with such a small squad is new to the experienced physio.

'If you can deal with the Crazy Gang, you can deal with most things

that are thrown at you,' said Allen.

'Without a doubt, this is the smallest squad I have ever dealt with.

'It makes it easier because you have less to deal with.

'But it also makes it harder because there's more pressure on you to get the players fit.

'It's a real double-edged sword.'

Despite his key role at Fratton Park, Allen remains sincere about his impact on the team's on-field performances.

'We're not as vital as the players on the pitch,' he said. 'They're the ones who make or break what we do.

'You could be the best physio in the world but on a match day it's all down to the 11 on the pitch.

'We been very lucky with injuries. In the first half of the season, we probably had the most respectable injury record of any club in all four divisions.

'With a small squad, sometimes you need that luck.'

Having enjoyed FA Cup success with Wimbledon and promotion with Crystal Palace, Allen believes the good times can once again return to Fratton Park.

'Given the right tools and armoury, he (Cotterill) could take the club far,' added Allen.

'He built a team at Burnley that went on to gain promotion to the Premier League and he will do that again here.

the week at the PARK

by JAKE RAFFERTY

MONDAY

Steve Cotterill admits he's cautiously optimistic he will be given the backing to rebuild Pompey after encouraging discussions with owner Balram Chainrai.

David Nugent vows to stay at Pompey until at least the end of the season.

The striker also reveals he's in talks to extend his Fratton Park stay, with his contract up at the end of the season.

Cotterill believes Pompey target midfielder David Norris is keen to join Pompey from Ipswich.

TUESDAY

Pompey are defeated 2-1 by Burnley at Fratton Park, with John Utaka's goal sandwiched between strikes from Jay Rodriguez and Dean Marney.

Jonathan Hogg makes his debut in the defeat against the Clarets after he completes his loan move from Aston Villa.

Blues boss Steve Cotterill reveals Nadir Ciftci will quit Pompey at the end of the season, with the youngster refusing to pen a new Fratton Park contract.

David Nugent calls on the Blues defence to cut out their costly mistakes.

Joel Ward pens a new two-and-a-half-year contract at Fratton Park.

WEDNESDAY

Pompey fly out for a training camp in Gran Canaria as Steve Cotterill searches for a way to refresh his troops.

New loan signing Ritchie de Laet becomes the latest player to slam the Blues' defensive frailties.

Steve Cotterill claims the performance against Burnley at Fratton Park was their worst of their season.

THURSDAY

Steve Cotterill challenges John Utaka to prove he can cut it as a striker by bringing in the goals.

Utaka's favoured position is as a striker but, with a record of just 13 goals in 114 games, the Blues boss believes he will have to score more goals to prove his worth as an all-out striker.

It is revealed that Hermann Hreidarsson is a target for two clubs, one of which is thought to be Glasgow Rangers.

Goalkeeper Darryl Flahavan signs on for another month at Pompey.

FRIDAY

Ritchie de Laet calls on Pompey to get their heads focused for the rest of the season.

De Laet believes Pompey must get in the right frame of mind while at their training camp.

Steve Cotterill is still debating about who are his best centre-back pairing.

Cotterill warns of the crisis that looms over the summer, with 19 players out of contract at the end of the season.