

Meet Jamie

Helping others to reach their goals.

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Jamie Wilson left Mary Hare School in 1996 after attending for seven years. He studied Biology, Business Studies and Computer Studies in 6th Form, he then went on to study Sports Studies at Nottingham Trent University and then Sport Science at Coventry University for the final two years of his BSc (Hons) degree. Jamie also gained a masters degree (MSc) in Sports Science (Exercise Physiology) at the University of Ulster. He lives in Dublin and works for the Football Association Ireland. Jamie talks to us about his journey so far and how his passion for football and coaching has shaped his career path.

Football is obviously your passion. When did this spark ignite?

During the World Cup 1986 I watched Northern Ireland and the great Maradona play and that's what got me hooked! I started to play and realised I had a bit of a talent for the game. Mary Hare further developed that passion and it just grew.

What influence did your time at Mary Hare have on your career path?

I was able to play sports daily at Mary Hare and as I went through GCSEs and A Levels my dream to become a lawyer dwindled and sport became my focus for my future. My teachers, Chris Gwynn and David Galbraith, were massive influences and it was what I really wanted to do.

What was your first job?

I started out as an instructor/manager running a few fitness centres. I enjoyed it as it complemented me during my

playing career. I was lucky enough to break into the Irish professional football scene but very soon after I suffered near career ending injuries and couldn't reach the heights again. I then started to do a lot of football fitness coaching and completed my coaching qualifications, which then developed into becoming a professional football coach.

Did you have to overcome any obstacles to get where you are today?

Being deaf was the major obstacle; it is even still to this day. People can't see how I achieved what I have, simply because I am deaf. This is actually my motivation and enables me to push beyond those perceptions and prove those doubters wrong. Unfortunately, a lot of those people are the ones that don't like to see others succeed in an industry which is difficult to break through.





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What is the best part about your job?

It's football every day. I get to work with and develop the best players in the leagues, academies and country. I also get to work with and developing coaches on gaining their coaching qualifications. I am actually enjoying being a coach education tutor at the moment. No day is the same, and my office is my car and the pitch. It simply doesn't get any better than that!

Tell us about one of your proudest moments in your career?

Football being what it is, you have highs and lows on a regular basis. I have been fortunate to win trophies and coached average teams to become title winning teams. However, the other side is losing finals and missing out on winning titles. That can be heart breaking. But it develops your character!

Gaining my UEFA A Coaching Licence was a very proud moment, as I was only a young coach at the time so to achieve it then was a milestone for me.

My proudest moment today is seeing a number of players that I have coached in my teams making it in the game in Ireland or England. Seeing them representing Ireland at international or senior level is something I enjoy.

What sets you apart from other coaches?

I have worked with many top level coaches in my job and I have often been told that my powers of observation stand me out. I always put it down to being deaf. I have to rely more on my observation skills and that has set me up really well in my job.

I see players play and see how good they can be. I can also see how their attitude is

on and off the pitch and can then decide if they would be a good asset to the team. I watch closely how players and coaches conduct themselves and part of my job is to help them on these things.

Did you have any deaf role models when you were growing up?

Yes, my former PE teacher at Mary Hare, Chris Gwynn, was a huge role model. His knowledge of the game astounded me and our conversations on football would be worth paying to listen to! Chris was an unbelievable coach, his sessions, team talks and mentoring were of the highest standard and he expected nothing less. In fact, his theories and methods I actually use in my own coaching style and they have never let me down.

Would you like to sum up your industry and your career?

Sport is a very competitive industry to break into and every year there is another qualification or another accreditation that you must have to get whatever role you would like.

Perseverance is the key in sport. You have got to think outside the box, get out of the comfort zone and put yourself out there.

If you want to break into football you need to be able to take the rejections and not let them bring you down. Believe me, I have been rejected from jobs and roles over the years but I keep coming back and I keep getting more qualifications and experience. The right job will come along. For some it will come quickly and for some it will take a while.

My advice is, if anyone says you can't do it, then prove them wrong.



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