

MEET THE TEAM



Josh Riley

Player, Men's Reserve Team & Coach, Under 15 Youth

In the latest instalment of *Meet The Team* we get to chat with Josh Riley about his last 13 years at Abbey Rangers.



What clubs have you played for? I've only ever played for Abbey Rangers – I'm incredibly loyal but it's also been said no other club would have me! I started with the U7 Youth and that team then became the Colts which I played for right the way through to U16. I then played for the U18 Development team and captained them in my third year, and this season I've managed to work my way into the squad for the Men's Reserves.

What positions have you played? I was always a bit of a utility player and filled in where I was needed but I started as a striker, then moved to midfield and now play as centre back or CDM.

Do you have a favourite goal? We were U11 and went to play the league leaders at their place – I collected the ball near the corner flag and with no teammates as options I beat three defenders and scored in the corner to help get us a well-deserved draw. It's also my favourite goal because of the look on the defenders' face when I celebrated!



Best memory at Abbey Rangers? So many!! Again it's probably getting a result against the odds – we were U16 and played the league leaders away, we only had 10 players available so we set up with a 3-4-2 formation and a game plan and the players delivered it perfectly – we worked so hard as a team and then scored the winner with 10 minutes to go. Scenes!!

Also when I played for the U18 Development team you get to play in the FA Youth Cup – those are always special games and make you really proud to play for Abbey Rangers F.C.

I've estimated you've played over 350 games for Abbey Rangers – any advice for the young players at the Club? For me it's a balance: you have to work really hard and try your best but you always need to have fun as well – get balance right and good things will follow. Football can be the most frustrating sport but can also be the most rewarding.



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Let's find out some more about you:

Favourite food: Abbey nuggets & chips!

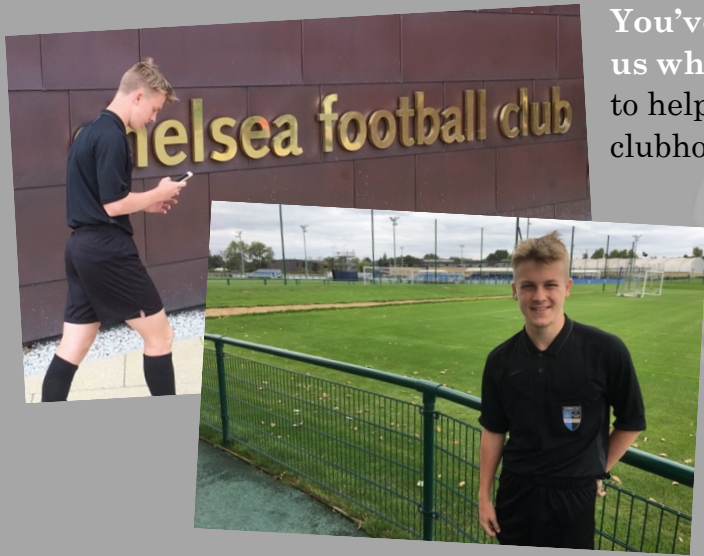
Favourite film: White House Down

Favourite players watched live: Jorginho & Super Frankie Lampard

Favourite music: Kanye West

Favourite team: Chelsea and Abbey Rangers – if I'm not watching Chels or playing for the Reserves I love watching the Abbey 1st Team play home and away

Favourite Abbey players: PK and Pitty



You've not just been a player at Abbey Rangers – tell us what else you've done? I've done a lot of volunteering to help look after the pitches and the 3G and I help in the clubhouse which is always a good laugh.

At 14 I became a qualified referee which I love doing – it's a great way to learn more about football, be involved in the game and earn good money.

I managed to progress and was selected to officiate an U11 Surrey FA Cup Final, and for three years I also officiated the boys' and girls' academy games at Chelsea FC's training centre in Cobham.

This season I've cut back on the refereeing as I've started coaching at Abbey Rangers where I help run the weekly training sessions and match days with our U15 Youth team. I really enjoy this and it's great to see there's now more young players starting to help coaching at Abbey.

What's next for Josh Riley then? It's a massive step from youth football to adult football but I've worked hard this season and I'm now part of the squad for the men's Reserves team – and after some appearances as sub I've started the last six games. That's just the beginning though, I need to keep working hard and enjoy the experience I'm getting – it's that balance thing again!



The development opportunities for young players at Abbey are good and it's been great to move through the U18 Development team into the Reserves team with players like Reilly, Oscar, Alex, Olly and Harvey.

My target is definitely to play for the 1st Team, I still have a lot to learn and the coaches in the Reserves Team and 1st Team are working with me on the parts of my game I need to develop. Some of the 1st Team players also help me with advice both on and off the pitch, the support here at Abbey is really good.

