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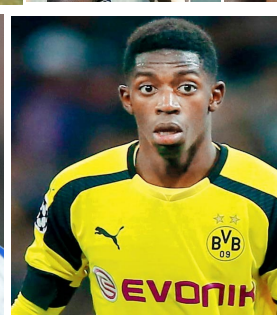
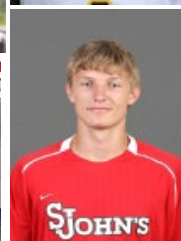
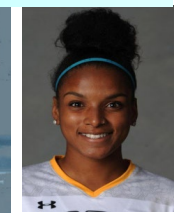


2022



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READING COMPREHENSION



Silver Spring's Joe Gyau rising up European soccer ranks

WASHINGTON POST by STEVEN GOFF January 10, 2013

When Philip Gyau watches his son play soccer, he sees his own father.

"Joe plays like him," Philip says with a warm smile. "He is built like him — strong and big, thick legs and calves. It's his grandfather out there."

Joseph-Claude Gyau, 20, has followed in the Silver Spring family business: playing pro soccer, though not in the United States. After 18 months in Germany's proving grounds, Bundesliga club Hoffenheim rewarded him last spring with a three-year contract.



He is on loan this season to second-division St. Pauli, continuing an adventure that began in the parks of Montgomery County and, through Philip's global travels as a player and coach for the U.S. beach soccer team, exposed him to a tapestry of cultures and styles.

"I try to carry the torch," Joe Gyau (pronounced "jow") said while home during a brief winter break. "I never doubt that I am going to do it."

He is well on his way to surpassing his elders.

A father's guidance

Joe blends speed, strength, and technical skills. Philip, on the other hand, was a swift and direct forward who breezed past defenders with confidence and grace. In 1990, playing for the Columbia-based Maryland Bays, he was voted the MVP of the American Professional Soccer League.

Growing up, Joe would obsessively watch a VHS tape of his father's exploits. "It wasn't just another highlight tape; it was my father," he said. Together, father and son also studied tapes of the world's greatest attackers.

Philip's influence continues. When Joe was home for the holidays, Philip took him to Walter Johnson High School for track work and to Wootton High to run hills. Yes, a German-based professional earning a handsome salary was accepting instruction from his dad while on vacation.

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"He has done everything for me," Joe said of his father, who coached at St. John's High School and Bullis for several years and, since 1997, has operated the Next Level Development instructional program for ages 6 to 14.

Philip also instructed Joe's elite youth team, the Bethesda Roadrunners. And between ages 7 and 12, Joe accompanied him to Rio de Janeiro and watched the beach tournaments. Mesmerized by the technique, Philip enrolled Joe in a camp run by Zico, a Brazilian icon. On a trip to Monaco, Joe met French legend Eric Cantona.

"Because of Philip's experiences, it allowed Joseph to see a side and a perspective of the game that very few [American players] get to see," said Joe's mother, Amina, a middle school teacher.

Philip incorporated those lessons into his own teachings back home. What he couldn't replicate was the soccer culture.

"They live it," he said. "They get up and play every day. They see their heroes. It's like basketball here. Most Americans can shoot because they are exposed to basketball. In Brazil, everyone can kick a ball or get the ball up in the air and do things with it, even if they aren't professionals. That's what is missing here."

'Training, school, sleep'

Philip wanted his son to swim in such an environment. So as Joe's skills evolved, his career direction took shape.

After his freshman year at Bullis, Joe was accepted into the U.S. under-17 residency program in Bradenton, Fla. — the elite destination for dozens of players each year.

Many end up playing in college and signing early with MLS, which, despite its steady strides, still lack a stable system to develop young players.

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Like many of his peers, Joe Gyau turned pro as a teenager. But he set out on an inconspicuous course overseas that emphasizes development. With few exceptions, teenagers with European clubs are not promoted – and offered hefty contracts – until they've passed through a gantlet of academies, junior squads and reserve teams.

At 16, Gyau signed a low-scale contract with Hoffenheim. FIFA guidelines prevent players from joining foreign clubs until they are 18, so he moved to Vancouver for nine months of training with a German instructor.

In August 2010, a month before his 18th birthday, he arrived in Hoffenheim, a village of 3,500 near Heidelberg in southwest Germany. He didn't speak German. The host of his guesthouse didn't speak English. Internet service was sketchy.

"Training, [language] school, sleep. Training, school, sleep," he said. "There were days I didn't say anything because I couldn't talk to anyone."

He made strides in the language lab alongside Turkish and Bosnian immigrants. On the training grounds, he rose from the under-19 team to the reserve squad, which plays in the German fourth division.

At practice, "the emphasis is on basics," he said. "We do so much passing, it has to be crisp and it's under pressure. You learn it in America, but [at the youth level], you practice a few times a week and play on the weekend. Kids in Europe are doing it every day."

Gyau began working with Hoffenheim's first team last season and was named to the 18-man roster three times. Although he didn't get into a match, he had proven himself: Hoffenheim inked him to a long-term pact (a base salary for a Bundesliga prospect typically starts at \$500,000).

“Playing Professional Soccer”

Name the player in this article _____

Where is he from? _____

Where is he playing professional soccer? _____

What team is he playing for and how long is his contract?

What is his father's name? _____

List Joseph's three top qualities

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Which Brazilian legend's camp did he attend? _____

After his freshman year in high school, where does Joseph go, and for what reason?

Who is the top teenage prospect?

The world is awash with teenage prodigies. FIFA.com wants to know which of them you consider the sport's best prospect.

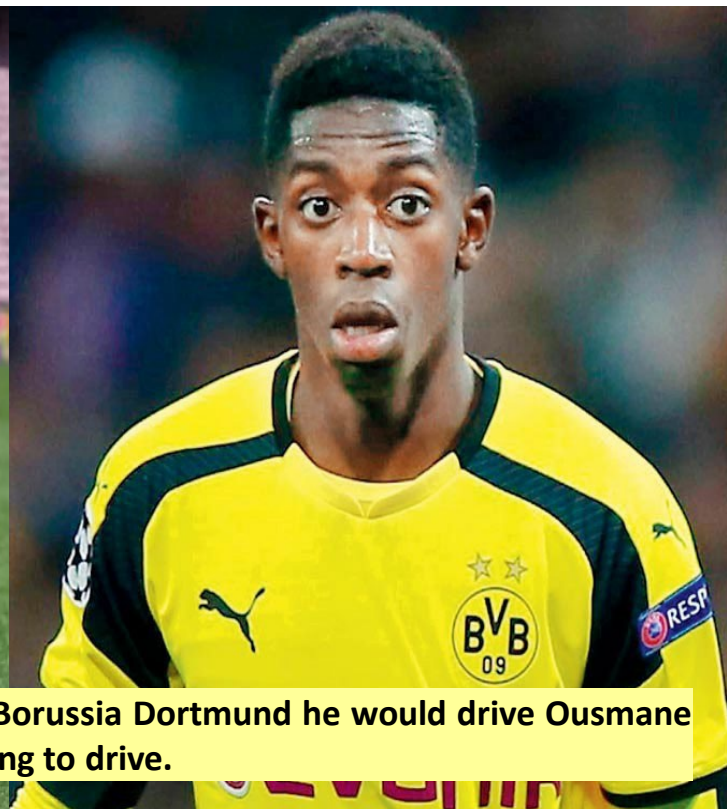
Joseph Gyau

Silver Spring, MD

FIFA'S Top Prospects

In 2010, FIFA.com published a list of the top teenage soccer prospects in the world, and Joseph's name was included. This was quite an accomplishment for Joseph to be featured in a group that included the likes of Mario Balotelli, Jack Rodwell, Eden Hazard, Jonathon dos Santos and Neymar

Mario Balotelli, Nassim Ben Khalifa, Sergio Canales, Jonathan dos Santos, Douglas Costa, Wilson Cuero, Alan Dzagoev, Stephan El Shaarawy, Sani Emmanuel, Kermit Erasmus, Fabio, Joseph Gyau, Lukman Haruna, Eden Hazard, Gael Kakuta, Ben Kantarovski, Batuhan Karadeniz, Rene Krhin, Romelu Lukaku, Iker Muniain, Neymar, Sotiris Ninis, Philippe Coutinho, Miralem Pjanic, Rafael, James Rodriguez, Jack Rodwell, Eduardo Salvio, Yaya Sanogo, David Santon, Daniel Villalba, Georginio Wijnaldum, Jack Wilshere, Chris Wood and Franco Zuculini.



Joseph said that when he was playing with Borussia Dortmund he would drive Ousmane Dembele to practice because he was too young to drive.