



TOUCHING IN LONDON DOWN

by SUTTON RETTIG

THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, athletics has served as a remarkable outlet for Giles Phillips. Barrington High School alumnus and former Carthage College soccer defenseman serves as the premier example of someone who knows precisely what he wants out of life. For Phillips, what he wants is an opportunity to showcase his talents as the newest roster addition to the Queens Park Rangers Football Club Under 23 roster located in White City, London. Phillips, who has spent a countless amount of hours consistently modifying his skill set and evolving as an athlete by enduring rigorous training regimes, learning comprehensive knowledge of offensive and defensive schemes and building chemistry amongst teammates, has held himself to the highest of standards in his pursuit of greatness.

The young, rising talent still finds himself blown away by the reality that he has finally reached this point of fulfilling his dream of showcasing his skills on a professional level.

"I've been a 'Pro' now for a over a month and the most exciting part is just being able to play the sport that I love," Phillips said, "There's no better feeling than waking up realizing that I get to go play football and that's my actual job."

Prior to signing with Queens Park this past summer, Phillips spent two seasons as a critical piece of the Carthage College Men's Soccer team. Teammates and coaching staff voted to award him Most Valuable Player honors in 2015, accounting for career totals of nine assists, eight goals (including two game

winners), and 23 shots on goal. Phillips was named the 2016 "Newcomer of the Year" for the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin, which in turn granted him a selection to First Team All Conference honors. Well on his way to achieving stardom following heavy recruitment and eventual signing from Queens Park, Phillips remains as driven and ambitious as ever to strengthening his skill set and becoming a vital piece to a successful Rangers organization for many years to come.

While the young footballer is embracing the idea of personal achievement, his individual concentration has been locked on helping the Rangers succeed, humbled by the time it took simply to sign his contract this past summer with the organization's development squad.

"The most strenuous obstacle was the waiting. So after I went on trial twice at the club's facility in January and February, they didn't sign me until June so I had a good few months of just waiting around in the States. It was hard sitting around waiting I just wanted to be there and playing as soon as possible."

In the ensuing months since his contract signing, the 20-year-old footballer has come to realize the important role of observation as he continues to get his legs under him, serving as a protege for the more experienced players, while embracing relations with all members the Queens Park family.

"The best piece of advice I could give is make sure you're getting a lot of exposure in front of coaching staff and scouts if you really are serious about playing at the pro level," Phillips said, "You could be a really

great player, but if you're not playing in front of the people, then you won't really make that next step."

As Phillips adjusts to his role with the Rangers, he remains focused on the task at hand contributing to the betterment of the team. He has been humbled by the experience thus far as he continues to bask in the comradery and majesty of playing professional soccer. Through it all, though, Phillips maintains a high ambition to climb his way up the ladder from the U-23 team to eventually bringing his talents to the first team Rangers. As of late, his concentration surrounds improving both his offensive and defensive arsenal, assimilating new schemes and growing as an athlete in all facets.

"Obviously you train to always keep improving yourself as a player," Phillips outlined, "So I always feel that my game with be growing and hopefully continue to develop as a player."

