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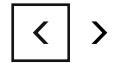

Chelsea

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SAT
15:00
25 OCT



16:30 BST

'Stamford Bridge is instantly a livelier place when Estevao is on the pitch'

FAN'S VOICE



Our Chelsea fan contributor Nina Hristova reflects on Estevao Willian's performance in the Blues' impressive 5-1 win over Ajax and what boss Enzo Maresca might do next with the teenage forward.



Find more from Nina Hristova at [Nina's Chelsea Corner](#)

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14:50 BST

Chelsea's kids are alright

Tom McCoy
BBC Sport journalist



Alan Hansen infamously said "you can't win anything with kids", but that was 30 years ago and Enzo Maresca clearly doesn't share that sentiment.

The Chelsea side picked by Maresca on Wednesday night had an average age of only 22, the second youngest fielder by an English side in Champions League history.

His bold selection was vindicated in a 5-1 win against Ajax, with Marc Guiu, Estevao and Tyrique George all on target – the first time in the competition's history three teenagers have scored for one team in a single game.

Youngest starting line-ups in the Champions League

By Premier League sides

Team	Year	Opponents	Result	Average age
Arsenal	2009	Olympiakos	L 1-0	21 years, 215 days
Chelsea	2025	Ajax	W 5-1	22 years, 163 days
Arsenal	2008	Fenerbahce	D 0-0	23 years, 67 days
Leeds	2000	Besiktas	D 0-0	23 years, 155 days
Arsenal	2007	Steaua Bucharest	W 2-1	23 years, 195 days

Source: Opta

BBC

It's only fair to point out that while substitute George is a Chelsea academy graduate, none of the starting line-up came through the ranks at Cobham.

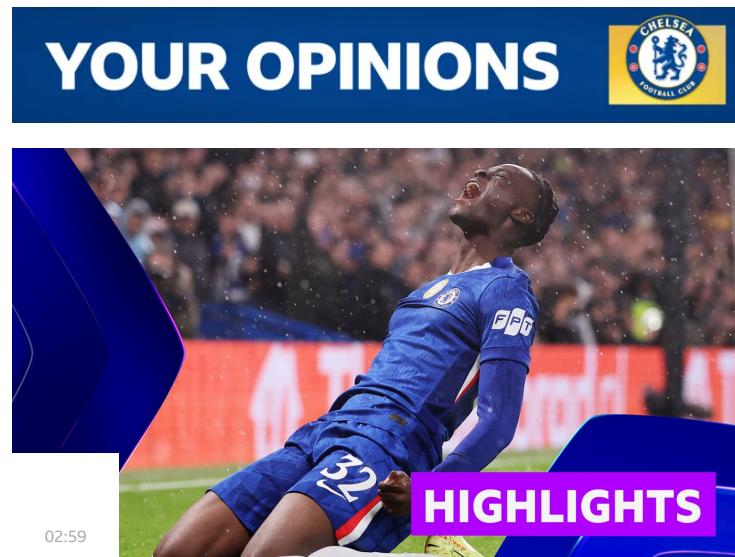
Most of their top young talents have been recruited from elsewhere, often at significant cost and with the promise of a pathway to first-team

Nonetheless, it is a model which appears to be working for the Blues, who finished fourth in the Premier League in May despite the average age of their starting line-up being just 24 years and 36 days – the youngest across an entire season in the competition's history.

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12:12 BST

'Estevao's ceiling is limitless' - fans on Ajax victory



We asked for your views on Chelsea's 5-1 win over Ajax in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Here are some of your comments:

Colin: Great display albeit against a poor side. Jamie Gittens a vast improvement on Alejandro Garnacho, but Filip Jorgensen is still a major worry. We need a better goalkeeper and a bit more experience defensively, but offensively we look like challengers.

Freddie: Great to see so many younger players out there, and great to get the goal difference, but I think the scoreline flattered Chelsea. We made a lot of changes and it showed, and defensively still not good enough. Wesley Fofana looks like a shell of his former self and Jorgensen has to do better with the one challenging moment he had in the game. Overall though, never going to be unhappy with a 5-1 win. COYB!

Scott: Very good performance from a ridiculously young Chelsea team. However...that is one of the poorest sides I've ever seen in the Champions League. The Ajax fans must be distraught.

Nick: Top performance from a much-changed Chelsea team - who would probably have won at a canter even if Ajax had kept 11 players on the pitch. Estevao was simply a joy to watch.

Alfie: Estevao's only 18-years-old and already showing his quality. He's the most exciting young attacker to come through Chelsea's doors since Hazard - his ceiling is limitless.

James: Must admit I was a bit unsure when I saw 10 changes but this is the kind of Chelsea performance that was always threatening to happen! Estevao, what a player he is. He's this good at such a young age I am excited for the future of this team.

Orina: The lads were exciting to watch and I believe with a bit of time and cohesion, Chelsea will become the benchmark for football success.

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11:50 BST

'What a lovely moment for George'



GETTY IMAGES

Former Chelsea winger Pat Nevin says Tyrique George "stood out" among the youngsters who featured in Wednesday's 5-1 Champions League win over Ajax.

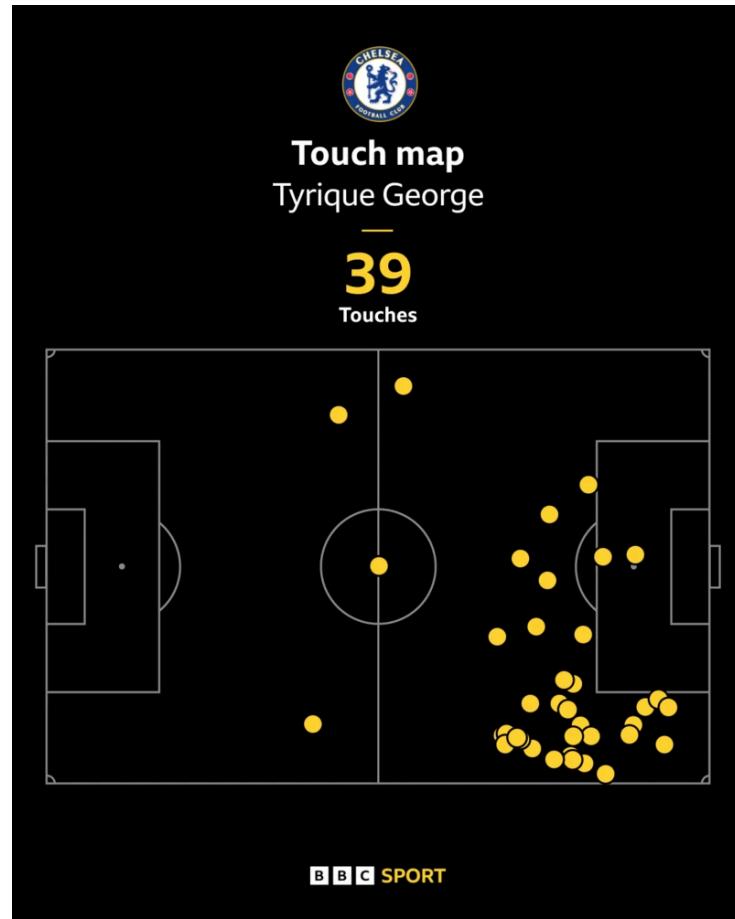
George was **close to a move away from Stamford Bridge** over the summer after breaking through last season, but started the Blues' last European match against Benfica and made the most of his opportunity on Wednesday by scoring just minutes after being introduced at half-time.

"What a joy it is to come on against a team that are a big name but not very good," Nevin told BBC Radio 5 Live's Football Daily podcast.

"It's amazing how much easier the game is when you're ahead and cruising like that and it was lovely to see the youngsters. The nice thing is everyone of them looks so comfortable on the ball.

"It's just like this production line. They turn up and have this 360 vision, they're picking out passes, they have great understanding with each other."

George's deflected strike made it five for Chelsea but the 19-year-old continued to impact the game, operating mainly from the right and consistently being fed the ball to run at his full-back.



"There is maybe one who stood out above the rest, and obviously I could go on about Estevao," added Nevin.

"But, what a lovely moment for Tyrique George. He thought he was getting real decent chances at Chelsea and suddenly they went and bought two strikers. He thinks that's him finished, and will be sent out [on loan]."

"But, he comes on, gets another chance, scores a goal and looked really good in that position. Among the others, he looked really good and I am delighted for him."

[Listen to the full episode on BBC Sounds](#)

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09:51 BST

Who is Blues record-breaker Walsh?

Nizaar Kinsella
Chelsea reporter



GETTY IMAGES

Reggie Walsh made his fourth senior appearance for Chelsea on Wednesday and manager Enzo Maresca thinks the midfielder is already special.

Having had an accomplished career in the position himself, the Italian has plucked this youngster out of Chelsea's academy - and his GCSE year at school - to allow him to become the club's third youngest ever player.

Walsh turned 17 on Monday and came on for Romeo Lavia in the 65th minute against Ajax on Wednesday, becoming the second youngest Englishman, behind only former [Arsenal](#) midfielder Jack Wilshere, to play in the Champions League.

Walsh has already broken a host of records:

- He was already Chelsea's youngest player to play in Europe when appearing at Djurgardens last season in the Conference League, aged 16 years and 193 days.
- He also became the club's third youngest player, behind only midfielder Ian Hamilton and goalkeeper Kingsley Whiffen - who made their debuts in 1967.
- One week later, he became the youngest player to start a European match for Chelsea when facing Djurgardens in the second leg.
- And he is also Chelsea's youngest player to play in the League Cup, having played against Lincoln in the third round last month aged 16 years and 338 days.

Such was the surprise that Walsh was called up into Chelsea's first team at the end of last season, his family had not anticipated him making his debut in Sweden.

Fortunately, they got to see him start one week later.

Walsh, a technical, deep-lying playmaker with a good engine and great vision, only signed his first professional contract on Monday.

He counts pundit and former [Spurs](#) and [Liverpool](#) midfielder Jamie Redknapp as a family friend and is also an England Under-18 international.

Still, it was surprising when Maresca plucked him from the under-18s - given he had made just two appearances for the under-21s when making his debut last season.

Maresca previously said "he makes everything [look so] easy", adding that he was "perfect" for "his system", and he showed just that against 10-man Ajax.

Walsh completed 18 of his 19 passes on Wednesday, with 16 of them being in Ajax's final third. He also won possession twice through two interceptions.

In short, Walsh is the chosen one by Maresca and could be next off the production line at Cobham.

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07:40 BST

Hato compares Estevao with Barca star Yamal

Nizaar Kinsella
Chelsea reporter



Chelsea defender Jorrel Hato says only Barcelona superstar Lamine Yamal can compare with his team-mate Estevao Willian.

Estevao, 18, became the Blues' youngest goalscorer in the Champions League when scoring a penalty in the 5–1 win at home to Ajax on Wednesday.

When asked how good Estevao is, Hato said: "Have I seen a teenager like this? Yes, maybe Lamine Yamal - but I cannot name anyone else."

"He was really good - he is very young, even younger than me."

It was an emotional night for Hato, who captained Ajax having come through the youth system.

The 19-year-old was seen applauding the away fans after the match.

He added: "It was a little bit strange because I know everyone. I was nervous in the beginning but it was nice after. It was a big win to win 5–1 in the Champions League."

Hato was making his fourth start since joining Chelsea. He had struggled in previous appearances against physical teams like **Brentford** and **Lincoln City**, though improved against **Brighton** before coming off with cramp.

Hato admitted: "It hasn't been easy to move from the Dutch league to the Premier League. It is a big step and I knew that. I was maybe struggling a little bit physically and with the tempo of the game in the beginning, [but] I am getting better and better."

"I am ready when the coach needs me."

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01:13 BST

UK gambling ads with Lewis Hamilton and Chelsea logo banned over influence on children

Business · 141



00:47 BST 23 October

Walsh makes Chelsea history on night of records for youthful Blues

Chelsea · 180



23:11 BST 22 October

Chelsea 5-1 Ajax: What Maresca said



Chelsea boss Enzo Maresca, speaking to TNT Sports: "The red card changed the game. We know how difficult it is when we get a red card.

"We started well. With 10 changes... it's a very demanding season so we need to rotate because it's complicated for the ones who play all the games.

"We know when you concede a red card with 10 minutes to go it's OK but when it's more than an hour to play it's difficult for everyone.

"We trust a lot the younger players. The strategy of the club. Not only the ones we buy but the ones from the academy."

On Estevao: "Exciting to see him. The odd thing about Estevao is with young players you're worried they have one good game and think they're top. Estevao is polite, he's humble, he wants to learn. His family make a big job there. We're happy not only way with way he performs but he's a nice boy, a good boy."

"I think in the Premier League he needs a little more time. It's very similar to Cole Palmer. I had him same age with Manchester City's under-23s. Cole played wide and now he's inside. Now Estevao plays wide but in the future I think he's more of an inside player."

"We could have scored more goals - but we tried to manage the game. On Saturday we have Sunderland here. They're physically strong. We're happy. Every game is different."

Did you know?

- In Marc Guiu, Estevao Willian and Tyrique George, Chelsea became the first side in European Cup/Champions League history to see three different teenagers score for them in a single match.
- Estevao is the youngest player to score for Chelsea in the Champions League (18 years, 181 days). The Brazil international is also the third youngest penalty scorer in Champions League history, behind Bojan (18y 90d for Barcelona v Sporting in 2008) and Lamine Yamal (18y 100d for Barcelona v Olympiakos on Tuesday).

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22:51 BST 22 October

Analysis: Vision of Chelsea's future and Ajax's demise

Nizaar Kinsella
Chelsea reporter



Ten players aged 21 or younger featured for Chelsea in this non-contest in west London.

Forwards Estevao Willian, Marc Guiu and Tyrique George will all remember scoring their first Champions League goal while Reggie Walsh's record as the youngest player to play in the competition, having just turned 17 on Monday, could stand for some time after taking it from now-Tottenham striker Dominic Solanke.

Enzo Maresca's use of his players, with Josh Acheampong, Jorrel Hato, Romeo Lavia, Jamie Gittens and Facundo Buonanotte also being either 21 or younger, will have delighted the hierarchy at Stamford Bridge.

The only surprise was not seeing 16-year-old winger Ryan Kavuma-McQueen make his debut having made a senior matchday squad for the first time.

Chelsea have not used a player over 30 since the beginning of last season.

And this team selection and outing will have delighted the sporting directors and owners, who entered the dressing room again after the match, just as they do after every game regardless of the result.

They have purposely built the youngest team in the Premier League, which is also among the youngest in Europe's top five leagues, with a view to seeing them grow together and someday challenge for major honours.

It is a model akin to the one that Ajax, one of the great talent factories in European football, have been famed for.

However, the Amsterdam club look in disarray and are a shell of Erik ten Hag's team that drew 4-4 at Stamford Bridge with nine men in 2019, with their best academy product, Hato, having been poached by the Blues in the summer.

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22:01 BST 22 October

Chelsea teenagers humiliate 10-man Ajax

Chelsea · 271

22:00 BST 22 October

Chelsea 5-1 Ajax - send us your thoughts**HAVE YOUR SAY**

Whether you were at the game or following from elsewhere, we want to know what you learned.

What did you make of Chelsea's display?

Come back to this page on Thursday to find a selection of your replies

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19:02 BST 22 October

Chelsea v Ajax: Team news

Chelsea make 10 changes for Ajax's visit to Stamford Bridge, including the recall of Enzo Fernandez and Wesley Fofana as they return from injury.

The only Blues player to retain his place from the 3-0 win at Nottingham Forest is Romeo Lavia, who played just 45 minutes at the City Ground.

Meanwhile, a struggling Ajax team includes Liverpool loanee James McConnell.

Chelsea XI: Jorgensen, Caicedo, Fofana, Adarabioyo, Hato, Lavia, Fernandez, Estevao, Buonanotte, Gittens, Guiu.

Ajax XI: Pasveer, Lucas Rosa, Ikatura, Moro, Taylor, Gloukh, Godts, Baas, McConnell, Weghorst, Sutalo.



Manager: John Heitinga Formation: 4 - 3 - 3


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18:37 BST 22 October

Follow Wednesday's Champions League games live

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There are nine games in the Champions League, three of them involving Premier League teams, on Wednesday and BBC Sport will bring you every moment.

- Athletic Club v Qarabag (17:45)
- Galatasaray v Bodo/Glimt (17:45)
- Atalanta v Slavia Prague
- Bayern Munich v Club Brugge
- Chelsea v Ajax - [listen on BBC Radio 5 Live](#)
- Eintracht Frankfurt v Liverpool
- Monaco v Tottenham
- Real Madrid v Juventus

- Sporting v Marseille

Kick-off times 20:00 BST unless stated

Follow all of the action and reaction here

You can also listen to 5 Live commentaries on most smart speakers. Just say "ask BBC Sounds to play Chelsea v Ajax".

Find out more about how to listen to football on BBC Sounds

Watch highlights of every Champions League game from 22:00 on Wednesday on BBC iPlayer and the BBC Sport website and app.

There will also be a Champions League Match of the Day on BBC One on Wednesday, from 22:40 to 00:00.

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16:05 BST 22 October

Ajax look to end barren run against English teams

Paul Birch
BBC Sport journalist



GETTY IMAGES

When Ajax face Chelsea in the Champions League on Wednesday, they will be aiming to address their shocking form against English sides. The Dutch giants have failed to win any of their past 11 European encounters (drawn two, lost nine).

This poor run was kick-started by their dramatic 3-2 loss to **Tottenham** in the second leg of the 2019 Champions League semi-finals. It also includes two matches against Chelsea in the 2019-20 Champions League group stage that ended 1-0 to the Blues in Amsterdam, before a 4-4 draw at Stamford Bridge.

They have failed to score a goal in any of their past five fixtures versus English clubs, since Mohammed Kudus netted against **Liverpool** in September 2022 - a game they lost 2-1.

John Heitinga's side go into this game on a five-game losing streak in Europe, having lost three Europa League games last season and against Inter Milan and Marseille in the opening two games of this campaign's Champions League - both without scoring a goal.

They last lost six in a row in Europe between April 1988 and September 1989.

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14:53 BST 22 October

Has Chalobah done enough to secure his Chelsea future?

Nizaar Kinsella
Chelsea reporter



Trevoh Chalobah's place at Chelsea has been the subject of several questions sent in via our '[Ask about Chelsea](#)' form this week, given the club's reported willingness to sell him over the past two summers and the emergence of Josh Acheampong.

Chalobah is highly respected internally at Chelsea despite previous attempts to sell him.

There was much less of a push to offload him this summer, albeit with a clear message that he must not expect to be an automatic starter this season.

However, Chalobah continues to play a prominent role and has backed himself to keep convincing the hierarchy at Stamford Bridge that he is capable of making the grade.

In my view, and from what I have heard over the past few months, Chalobah still sits on the cusp of make or break and is continually fighting to avoid being a PSR asset who is sold.

It must be said, the wider context is that Chelsea could well sell any player at any given moment for the right price - aside from a few untouchables like Cole Palmer or Moises Caicedo - given the aggression at which the club pursues both the buying and selling of young players.

Acheampong is highly rated and Strasbourg loanee Mamadou Sarr is on the Golden Boy list, highlighting the precariousness of poor form for Chelsea's current centre-backs - the Blues have players ready to take their place.

Ask Me Anything is a service dedicated to answering your questions.

We want to reward your time by telling you things you do not know and reminding you of things you do.

[Find out more here](#)

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13:02 BST 22 October

Chelsea add 33 youth players to Champions League squad

Nizaar Kinsella
Chelsea reporter



Chelsea have registered 33 academy players - including legendary defender Thiago Silva's son Isago - for the upcoming match at home to Ajax.

The host of players aged between 16 and 19 have been added to an unlimited B list, which is fully within Uefa's rules.

Sources at Stamford Bridge say the abnormal move has been made for administrative reasons.

It will allow Chelsea to call upon youngsters for the Champions League league phase as and when they choose instead of needing to make the changes before each match.

The B list players from the academy are as follows:

Goalkeepers: Ted Curd, Max Merrick, Jack Austin, Hudson Sands, Toby Bell.

Defenders: Genesis Antwi, Richard Olise, Harrison Murray-Campbell, Kobe Barbour, Harry McGlinchey, Kaiden Wilson, Olutayo Subuloye, Joseph Wheeler-Henry, Calvin Diakite, Isago Silva, Lewi Richards, Dante Waite.

Midfielders: Samuel Rak-Sakyi, Jimi Tauriainen, Reggie Walsh, Harrison McMahon, Leo Cardoso, Landon Emenalo, Sol Gordon, Ollie Harrison, Yahua Idrissi, Frankie Runham, Shaun Wade, Charles Holland, Ibrahim Rabbaj.

Forwards: Ato Ampah, Shim Mheuka, Chizaram Ezenwata, Ryan Kavuma-McQueen, Joel Vidal Philbert.

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13:02 BST 22 October

Hato's lack of starts 'says a lot about this Chelsea' - Heitinga



Ajax manager John Heitinga says Jorrel Hato "hardly plays" for the Blues and this "says a lot about the strength of this Chelsea".

Hato became Ajax's youngest captain when he led the team out against AEK Athens in the Europa League aged 17 in December 2023 and made the move to Stamford Bridge for £37m this summer.

However, the now 19-year-old has only started twice in the Premier League so far and is yet to feature in their opening two Champions League matches. He will hope that changes when his former side visit west London on Wednesday.

"They have a lot of quality in every position," Heitinga said.

"To name one example, Jorrel Hato was one of our best players at Ajax. He is bought by Chelsea. He is sitting here on the bench. He hardly plays.

"That says a lot about this Chelsea, about the quality, because Jorrel is a difference maker for us.

"Of course, he needs the time. Just like with us. The guys we have attracted - you have to give them the time. But if a player is bought for so much money and hardly plays here, that says a lot about the strength of this Chelsea."

Asked about legendary Ajax figure Johan Cruyff's famous quote that he has "never seen a bag of money score", Heitinga said: "I've never seen a bag of money score but I think Chelsea have spent a lot of money in recent years.

"We play against teams that are stronger than us but it's about how we get on the pitch [on Wednesday]. And that doesn't matter, it can go either way.

"We've seen [those] results in the last two rounds in the Champions League. It's one game."

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12:11 BST 22 October

Meet Chelsea record-breaker Mahdi Nicoll-Jazuli

Nizaar Kinsella
Chelsea reporter



GETTY IMAGES

Eyebrows were raised when Mahdi Nicoll-Jazuli became the youngest player to start a Uefa Youth League match for Chelsea last month.

The midfielder is yet to finish secondary school and does not turn 16 until January, yet he is playing in Europe's elite youth competition, lining up for Chelsea's under-21s and has faced men the same age as his father in the EFL Trophy.

This is down to both Nicoll-Jazuli's talent and the academy's strategy of giving chances to younger players, with Chelsea's first team currently the joint youngest in the Premier League.

But who is Nicoll-Jazuli? He was born in Sydney to an Australian mother, while his father hails from a region around the Chad-Sudan border.

He is playing up an age group with England Under-17s but could also be eligible to play for France, highlighting a potential future international tussle.

Nicoll-Jazuli's football journey began at Afewee Training Centre, located in Brixton Recreation Centre in south London. He was quickly spotted by Chelsea, Arsenal and Crystal Palace, but opted to join the Blues as a six-year-old, with his younger brother also now at the club.

Previously a reluctant centre-back, Nicoll-Jazuli moved into midfield in the under-13s and has since proved capable of playing as a number six, number eight or number 10 in midfield.

Personality-wise, Nicoll-Jazuli is said to be friendly, confident, energetic and chatty, while part of his success has been down to doing extra running in the Blackheath area.

His involvement in first-team training before the match against Ajax in the Champions League highlights how highly rated he is.

It also raises the question of whether he could make his debut this season - and if Nicoll-Jazuli makes his senior debut before May, he could become Chelsea's youngest ever player.

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16:42 BST 21 October

'He has to start and keep starting' - is Acheampong the 'next Van Dijk'?

YOUR OPINIONS





We asked for your views on whether Josh Acheampong's can establish himself as first choice at Chelsea after our fan writer Will Faulks described the 19-year-old as "the perfect modern defender".

Here are some of your comments:

Alex: I remember having question marks over Josh in the first game against Palace as Mateta's physicality in the first half of that game isolated him a few times, but honestly can't remember seeing too many mistakes since - something I can't say for the rest of our centre-backs this season.

Freddie: I think he has to start and keep starting. His composure on the ball is great and he can drive the ball forward just as Colwill did. Plus, it's another sign that we give academy products a route to the first team which will be invaluable for the future. Him and Colwill (once he's back) will be a defensive partnership to be feared!

Stuart: Acheampong has all the attributes to develop into a top-class centre back. The concern is that we seem to regard academy players as expendable due to their "pure profit" status for PSR - hence selling Gallagher last year and attempting to sell Chalobah and George this summer. Hopefully I'm proven wrong, it'd be great to see Colwill and Acheampong anchor our defence for years to come.

William: Yes he is the next Virgil van Dijk. Give him a decent run and he will be an England regular.

Nick: Josh Acheampong's class and ability were obvious from the first time he played at Chelsea and I firmly believe he will be an England regular within a couple of years. He'll need to gain more experience this season, so the World Cup will come too soon, but he is the ideal successor to John Stones as England's right-sided centre-back - alongside Marc Guehi and with Reece James next to him at right back. The sky is the limit for Josh.

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16:03 BST 21 October

Chelsea deny indiscipline issue

Nizaar Kinsella

Chelsea reporter at Stamford Bridge



There is no doubt the underlying interest was around indiscipline and the response at Chelsea's news conference against Ajax was clear.

Both Enzo Maresca and Chelsea's oldest player, Tosin Adarabioyo, batted away concerns about the accumulation of four red cards in four consecutive matches.

The Blues already had a poor record of red and yellow cards but it has got worse lately.

Yet the two figures talking before the Champions League league phase match denied any concerns.

Maresca says he prefers not to discipline players for being sent off, but Tosin acknowledged there is a player-led fine system in place.

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With a smile, the defender also declined to comment on how much fine money is in the kitty for the upcoming Christmas party after the recent spate of red cards.

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13:47 BST 21 October

Acheampong's qualities are 'unmatched' - Tosin



Tosin Adarabioyo says he is trying to support 19-year-old team-mate Josh Acheampong in the same way Vincent Kompany did for him as a youngster at [Manchester City](#).

After coming through the youth system at City and graduating to the first team in the latter years of legendary captain Kompany's career at the club, Tosin spent four years at [Fulham](#) and, at 28, is an elder statesman within the youthful Chelsea squad.

In fact, he is the only player aged 28 or over to be used by Enzo Maresca while head coach of the club.

"Whenever I know he's going to be on the pitch I try to give him every support possible," Tosin said of Acheampong.

"Every single day I'm on to him to try to make sure he's doing the right things.

"When I was his age I had people like Vincent Kompany doing the same for me. It's very important to have somebody older than you and performing at a higher level than you to support you in any way possible.

"We can all see Josh's qualities. His qualities on the ball, especially when he's driving with the ball, are unmatched. He's the best at it and he just needs to continue working in the same way, keeping that confidence. In time, he's going to be a great player for us."

Despite only featuring as a late substitute at the City Ground on Saturday, Tosin was a vocal presence on the sideline as Acheampong scored his first senior goal against **Nottingham Forest**.

"Even when I'm on the side of the pitch I'm always trying to help," he added. The most important thing is getting the three points so any details I can give to the boys off the pitch is very important.

"It's part of my leadership role within the team. I do the same when I'm on the pitch and will continue to do the same off it.

"I feel my age, I feel 28. I think 28 is a great age to start kicking on and doing great things.

"As long as you play at a high level and perform well, I don't think your age matters. If you are a young player - like Josh, aged 19 - performing at the weekend you can come and play for this club."

Can Acheampong establish himself as first choice at Stamford Bridge?

[Tell us here](#)

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