

= Scott Laird =

Scott Benjamin Laird ( born 15 May 1988 ) is an English professional footballer who plays for Scunthorpe United as a defender .

Laird began his football career as a trainee at Plymouth Argyle , progressing through the club 's centre of excellence . He spent a total of eight years on the club 's books , but only managed to make one first ? team appearance for the club . In 2006 , he was loaned out to Tiverton Town , playing a total of 20 games for the club , scoring four times . He was later loaned to Torquay United in September 2007 , making two appearances for the side . Another loan spell followed , this time to Stevenage in late 2007 . Laird impressed under manager Peter Taylor and signed on a permanent basis at the start of February 2008 for an undisclosed fee .

He has been a first ? team regular since his move , and was the club 's Player of the Year for the 2009 ? 10 season , a season in which the Hertfordshire side won promotion to the Football League for the first time in their history . His success as a Stevenage player continued the following season , as he played an integral role in the club 's 2010 ? 11 campaign , helping Stevenage earn promotion to League One . He left Stevenage when his contract expired in 2012 , and joined Preston North End . Laird has also represented Scotland at youth level , captaining the Scotland U16 team . However , Laird was called up for the England C side in April 2009 , starting in a game against the Belgium U21 team .

= = Club career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Laird began his football career as a trainee at Plymouth Argyle 's centre of excellence . He made the hour journey to Plymouth from his Bridgwater home to train with the club every Tuesday and Thursday . Laird attracted interest from Scottish side Rangers in 2003 , with the SPL club enquiring about the player after his performances for Scotland in the Victory Shield . No move materialised , and he continued to progress through the youth system at Home Park , and was offered a professional contract at the age of 17 by manager Tony Pulis in February 2006 . During his time as an apprentice , Laird lived in a hotel " just for apprentices " with Luke Summerfield , Reuben Reid , and Chris Zebroski , and described the experience as a " great way to grow into football " .

The following season , Laird joined Tiverton Town of the Southern Football League on an initial one @-@ month loan in September 2006 . He made his debut for the club in Tiverton 's 2 ? 1 victory against Wealdstone , and played in the following game against Cheshunt . The loan was extended for a further five months , and Laird scored his first goal for the club in a 4 ? 1 defeat at Hemel Hempstead Town on 5 April 2007 . Two days later , he scored twice in Tiverton 's 3 ? 1 home win against Cirencester Town , netting both of his goals in the space of four minutes to give Tiverton a two @-@ goal lead . A week later , he scored again , netting the opening goal of the game as Tiverton lost 4 ? 1 to King 's Lynn . Laird played a total of 21 games for the club , 17 in the league , scoring four times from a central midfield role . Laird returned to Plymouth ahead of the 2007 ? 08 season , and was subsequently handed his Plymouth debut in a 2 ? 1 victory over Wycombe Wanderers in the League Cup , playing the whole match and assisting Plymouth 's second goal . However , he did not appear in the first ? team for Plymouth again and was loaned out to nearby Conference National side Torquay United a month later . Laird made his Torquay debut in a 5 ? 2 victory against Kidderminster Harriers at Aggborough , and also featured in a 3 ? 2 victory over Weymouth . Although his loan at Torquay was extended in November , he did not make any more first ? team appearances for the club , and so played just twice for Torquay United during his two @-@ month loan spell .

= = = Stevenage = = =

A month after returning to his parent club, Laird was loaned out to another Conference National team in the form of Stevenage on 31 December 2007. He made his Stevenage debut a day later in a 2-1 win over Rushden & Diamonds. Laird impressed under manager Peter Taylor and signed on a permanent basis at the start of February, for an undisclosed fee. He featured regularly at left-back during the second half of the 2007-08 season, and scored his first goal for Stevenage in a 4-1 victory away at Histon - a 35-yard strike into the top right hand corner of the net. The following season, under the new management of Graham Westley, Laird featured regularly again, playing 51 games in total for the Hertfordshire side, scoring three times in total. Laird scored his first goal of the 2008-09 season in Stevenage's first win of the season; a 3-1 victory away to Barrow in August 2008. His second goal of the campaign came in an FA Cup tie against Horsham, while his third goal of the season came in Stevenage's last regular Conference National fixture of the season in a 2-1 defeat away to Mansfield Town. Laird was also a key part in the side's successful FA Trophy campaign, featuring in six matches. However, he missed the final at Wembley Stadium as a result of being sent off in the defeat to Cambridge United in the Conference National play-off semi-final. In his absence, Stevenage beat York City 2-0 in the FA Trophy final.

Laird continued to impress at full-back for Stevenage in the first half of the 2009-10 season. He scored his first goal of the season in a 2-0 victory over Histon at Bridge Road in August 2009; the ground he coincidentally scored his first ever Stevenage goal in 2008. In September 2009, Laird scored a highly significant goal when his 85th-minute strike ensured Stevenage beat local rivals Luton Town 1-0 at Kenilworth Road in the first ever league meeting between the two clubs. He scored a similar looking goal in a 4-0 win over Barrow, before also scoring the winning goal in a victory over Oxford United; stroking home a second half penalty to score the only goal of the game. Laird's fifth goal of the season followed shortly after, when he converted another penalty in a 2-0 win against Forest Green Rovers. He scored another goal from the penalty spot ten days later in a 1-0 win over Gateshead. Laird made 53 appearances during Stevenage's promotion-winning campaign, more than any other player for the club during the season, scoring a total of six goals. He was also voted as Stevenage's Player of the Year at the end of the season, as voted for by Supporters Association members and season ticket holders at the club. Laird signed a new two-year contract with the Hertfordshire club in May 2010. He was voted as the 2009-10 Young Player of the Year at the National Game Awards. At the Football Conference's Annual Presentation Dinner, Laird was also named in the Team of the Year, alongside fellow Stevenage defenders Ronnie Henry and Mark Roberts.

Ahead of the 2010-11 season, Laird scored in Stevenage's pre-season friendly victory over Histon. He started in the club's first ever Football League fixture, a 2-2 home draw with Macclesfield Town. In September 2010, in games against Cheltenham Town and Torquay United respectively, Laird was used as a left midfielder, as opposed to playing in his usual left-back position. He reverted to the left-back spot in Stevenage's 1-0 win over Lincoln City at Sincil Bank. He scored his first goal of the 2010-11 season from the penalty spot, in a 2-1 win over Burton Albion in October 2010. A week later, he missed the chance to double his goal tally for the season, missing a second half penalty in a 0-0 draw against Morecambe. Coincidentally, Laird's second goal of the season came in the reverse fixture against Morecambe in January 2011; he scored from close range following John Mousinho's cross to give Stevenage the lead. Just three days later, Laird scored his third goal of the season, netting with a curling effort from 25 yards out to give Stevenage their third goal of a 3-0 win against Rotherham United. Laird was initially credited with scoring an 87th-minute winner in Stevenage's 1-0 away win at Crewe Alexandra on 19 February 2011, but the goal was eventually given to team-mate Byron Harrison. At the age of 22, Laird captained Stevenage for the first time in their 1-0 loss to Hereford United on 8 March 2011. In the club's following match, against Wycombe Wanderers at Adams Park, Laird was sent off for two bookable offences, although Stevenage held on to win the match 1-0. Laird's fourth goal of the campaign came in Stevenage's 3-3 draw against Bury on 7 May 2011, as he opened the scoring with a strike from 25 yards out. He played a total of 54 games during the 2010-11 season, scoring four goals. This included three appearances in the

2010 ? 11 League Two play @-@ offs following Stevenage 's sixth @-@ placed finish . Following a 3 ? 0 aggregate victory over Accrington Stanley , Stevenage earned promotion to League One after a 1 ? 0 win against Torquay United at Old Trafford on 28 May 2011 , with Laird playing the whole game .

Laird played in Stevenage 's first ever League One fixture on 6 August 2011 , playing the whole match in a 0 ? 0 home draw against Exeter City . He was a crucial player in the club 's first win of the season , assisting Chris Beardsley in the 91st minute as Stevenage beat Bournemouth 3 ? 1 at Dean Court . Laird 's first goal of the campaign came four days later , on 20 August , scoring with a header from Robin Shroot 's corner to ensure Stevenage came from two goals down to draw against Hartlepool United . He also scored against Huddersfield Town on 8 October , scoring with a first time finish to briefly restore parity in an eventual 2 ? 1 loss . Laird 's impressive start to the 2011 ? 12 season resulted in a " number of Championship clubs " tracking the player . Laird scored the winning goal in a 2 ? 1 victory against Sheffield United on 5 November , converting from the penalty spot with eight minutes remaining . A week later , on 12 November , he scored the only goal of the game as Stevenage defeated Hartlepool United 1 ? 0 in the FA Cup . Laird 's fifth goal of the campaign came on 26 December , scoring Stevenage 's fourth goal in a 6 ? 1 away victory at Colchester United , calmly scoring from close range following a well @-@ worked free @-@ kick . He was on the scoresheet once again in Stevenage 's 4 ? 2 home win against Milton Keynes Dons in January 2012 , heading in Luke Freeman 's cross to ensure Stevenage overcame an early deficit to take the lead . The left @-@ back scored his seventh goal of the campaign in manager Gary Smith 's first league game in @-@ charge , a 1 ? 0 away victory at Sheffield Wednesday . He scored further goals in draws against Chesterfield and Sheffield United respectively , taking his goal tally to nine for the season . Laird finished as the club 's second highest goalscorer for the campaign , as Stevenage missed out on a third successive promotion following a play @-@ off semi @-@ final defeat . At the end of the season , it was announced that Laird had rejected an improved contract offer and would be leaving the club on a free transfer when his contract expired . Laird made 230 appearances during his four years with the club , scoring 23 goals .

= = = Preston North End = = =

In May 2012 , Laird signed for League One side Preston North End on a free transfer . The move reunited him with manager Graham Westley , who had previously managed Laird at Stevenage . He made his Preston debut in the club 's first game of the 2012 ? 13 season , playing the whole match in 2 ? 0 home win over Huddersfield Town in the League Cup . Laird scored his first goals for the club in a 5 ? 0 win against Hartlepool United at Deepdale in September 2012 , netting twice within the space of three second @-@ half minutes . His third goal of the season came in a 3 ? 1 away victory at Doncaster Rovers on 2 October 2012 , heading in Joel Byrom 's cross to restore Preston 's lead in the match . He added to his goal tally a month later , " acrobatically volleying in Chris Robertson 's knockdown " in a 1 ? 1 home draw with Brentford . In the club 's next match , a home game against Notts County on 20 November 2012 , Laird suffered a broken leg following a challenge from Jamal Campbell @-@ Ryce . It was later revealed that Laird had broken his left tibia and would miss the remainder of the season . During his recovery , Laird stated that Campbell @-@ Ryce rang him on a weekly basis ? " I knew him previously and he 's rung me every week to make sure I 'm alright . I 'm not one to hold grudges anyway and he 's been fine . I accept his apology " . Laird scored four times in 24 games during his first season with the club .

On 17 December 2013 , Laird extended his contract with Preston for a further twelve months , thus keeping him at the club until the summer of 2015 .

= = International career = =

Despite being born in England , Laird represented Scotland at youth level , captaining the Scotland U16 team all the way up to U20 's level . He played in all three of Scotland 's games in the Victory Shield in 2003 , scoring twice , with Scotland finishing as joint winners of the tournament alongside

England .

Laird was called up by Paul Fairclough for the England C side in April 2009 , and subsequently started in England 's 1 ? 0 defeat to Belgium U21 the following month .

= = Personal life = =

Laird was born in Taunton , Somerset , and grew up in Bridgwater . He supported Rangers as a boy , and states that Brian Laudrup was a player he always aspired to play like . Laird also supports Ipswich Town . He says that Guti is the best player he has ever played against . Laird 's grandmother gives him a one pound coin every time he scores a goal , something that she has done ever since he started playing football .

Laird 's father , Craig , was appointed as manager of Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare in May 2010 , having previously managed Southern League Division One South and West outfit Bridgwater Town .

Laird has three brothers , Craig , Jamie and Callum . Craig Laird is currently playing soccer at the University of Tampa in the United States and has also represented England at schoolboy level . [ 1 ] Jamie Laird was last at Hereford .

= = Honours = =

Stevenage

FA Trophy ( 1 ) : 2008 ? 09

Conference National ( 1 ) : 2009 ? 10

League Two play @-@ offs ( 1 ) : 2010 ? 11

Preston

League One play @-@ offs ( 1 ) : 2014 ? 15

Individual

Stevenage Player of the Year ( 1 ) : 2009 ? 10

Conference National Team of the Year ( 1 ) : 2009 ? 10

= = Career statistics = =

As of 20 November 2012 .