

= Michael Chopra =

Rocky Michael Chopra (born 23 December 1983) , known as Michael Chopra , is an English professional footballer who plays as a striker .

A product of the Newcastle United youth system , he spent six years at the club without managing to secure a regular first team place , instead spending time on loan at Watford , Nottingham Forest , and Barnsley . He was sold to Cardiff City for £ 500 @, @ 000 in June 2006 , and won a place on the PFA Team of the Year for his performances in the 2006 ? 07 season . He then made a £ 5 million move to Premier League side Sunderland in July 2007 , before returning to Cardiff on a loan deal that was made permanent in July 2009 for £ 3 million . He again was included in the PFA Team of the Year for the 2009 ? 10 campaign , before being sold on to Ipswich Town for £ 1 million in June 2011 . He joined Blackpool on a free transfer in July 2013 , before moving to the Indian Super League with Kerala Blasters for the inaugural 2014 season . Chopra signed for Scottish Championship club Alloa Athletic in March 2015 , playing for the side for a year before being released in March 2016

He has represented England at the under @-@ 16 , under @-@ 17 , under @-@ 19 and under @-@ 20 levels . In 2006 , he scored what was then the fastest goal by a substitute in Premier League history , scoring after being on the pitch for 15 seconds . With an Indian father , he was also the first player of Indian parentage to play and score in the Premier League . A gambling addict made him fall in severe debt and he had to seek professional help to overcome his addiction .

= = Club career = =

= = = Newcastle United = = =

Born in Newcastle upon Tyne , Tyne and Wear , Chopra attended Gosforth High School in Newcastle , and owing to his goal @-@ scoring exploits there , and later with the Montagu Boys ' Club , was recruited to the Newcastle United academy in July 1993 . Being an unused substitute for Newcastle in a Premier League match against Charlton Athletic in October 2002 , Chopra signed a three @-@ year contract with the club on 30 October .

Chopra made his professional debut on 6 November , at St James ' Park against Everton in the League Cup . Coming as a substitute for Lomana LuaLua , he missed a penalty kick in the shootout , sending Everton to the round of 16 . He made his UEFA Champions League debut in December 2002 against Barcelona . Coming as a substitute for Lualua , in the final minutes of the match , Newcastle was handed a 3 ? 1 defeat .

Further playing once for the club against Bayer Leverkusen , Chopra was loaned to second @-@ tier club Watford for five matches on 25 March 2003 . During his short loan spell , he scored five goals in as many matches , which included four goals against Burnley . Being behind Alan Shearer , Craig Bellamy , Shola Ameobi and Lualua in the pecking order , Watford manager Ray Lewington expressed his desire to re @-@ sign him on loan for the next season . He said that Chopra " had an experience he wouldn 't have believed a month ago having played in an FA Cup semi @-@ final . " In September of the same year , the BBC reported that Indian club Mohun Bagan was interested in signing him .

Failing to find a goal in the 2003 ? 04 season , Newcastle loaned Chopra to Nottingham Forest for a month in February 2004 . Even there he failed to find the net , as he ended the season playing eleven times without scoring . At the start of the 2004 ? 05 season , he was loaned for a month to League One club Barnsley in August . Making his debut against Hull City , he would score his first goal for Barnsley against Hartlepool . Chopra " fired Barnsley ahead " to give them a lead , only to be equalized by Adam Boyd in the final minutes of the match . Scoring a total of five goals , his loan was extended in November till the end of the season . In the rest of the season , Chopra scored twelve times ? including two hat @-@ tricks , one against Peterborough and another against Huddersfield .

In August 2004 he went on loan to League One club Barnsley for the entirety of the 2004 ? 05 season . He scored 17 goals in 42 appearances for Paul Hart 's " Tykes " , including hat @-@ tricks against Peterborough United and Huddersfield Town . New Barnsley boss Andy Ritchie intended to sign Chopra in the summer to play alongside Paul Hayes , but was unsuccessful .

Chopra began the 2005 ? 06 season back in Newcastle 's first team , scoring his first senior goal for Newcastle in the 3 ? 1 away win to Slovakian side Dubnica on 17 July in UEFA Intertoto Cup . Making his second ever start for Newcastle , he opened the scoring in the fourth minute of the match . In the second leg of the match , he suffered concussion with Sky Sports reporting that he was " set to miss out " the next match against Spanish club Deportivo de La Coruna . Nevertheless , he played in that match where he " slid home Charles N 'Zogbia 's cross at the far post " . In a Premier League match against Sunderland in April 2006 , Chopra would score the fastest goal by a substitute ? find the net after coming for fifteen seconds . Later in that season Chopra injured his knee ligaments , which he claimed to be the " worst injury " he ever had .

= = = Cardiff City = = =

Becoming frustrated owing to his failure to make an impact in Newcastle , Chopra signed for Cardiff City in June 2006 for £ 500 @, @ 000 . On his decision of leaving Newcastle Chopra commented that he had shown his loyalty to the club [Newcastle] and expressed his desire to get the same loyalty from the club . He also added that he would love to return to Newcastle in the future . During the season , Chopra scored 22 goals in forty 44 matches . He helped the club to stay in the " top of the table " during the month of September , and earning the Championship Player of the month for September . He was also featured in the PFA Team of the season (an annual award given to a set of 44 footballers in the top four tiers of English football) .

= = = Sunderland = = =

In July 2007 , newly promoted Premier League side Sunderland agreed a deal worth up to £ 5 million , activating a release clause , to sign Chopra on a four @-@ year contract . His Geordie roots and high price @-@ tag caused unrest among some Sunderland fans . He scored on his debut for the " Black Cats " on the opening day of the 2007 ? 08 season at the Stadium of Light , when Chopra came on as a substitute late in the second half and scored the winning goal against Tottenham Hotspur in injury time . He scored in the next game at Birmingham City , but then went 15 games without scoring before he converted a penalty at Reading on 23 December . He went on to score the only goal of a 1 ? 0 win over Aston Villa at Villa Park , before he scored his sixth and final goal of the season in Sunderland 's 3 ? 2 win over Tees ? Wear derby rivals Middlesbrough , finishing as the second highest scorer at the club , being just one goal behind Kenwyne Jones . After missing the initial matches for " personal problems " , he scored two goals in his second game of the 2008 ? 09 season as Sunderland beat Middlesbrough 2 ? 0 on 20 September .

With the arrivals of Djibril Cisse and El @-@ Hadji Diouf , Chopra found his playing time to be limited . So he rejoined Cardiff City in November on a two @-@ month loan . Chopra made his debut against Queens Park Rangers playing the entire ninety minutes of the 1 ? 0 defeat . In the next match against Crystal Palace , he found his first goal . Chopra converted a 31st @-@ minute penalty the saw Cardiff winning the match 2 ? 1 . Scoring five goals his the spell , he was recalled from loan by the new Sunderland manager Ricky Sbragia to the squad , with The Guardian writing that he was " excited " to return to the squad . Chopra rejoined Cardiff on loan in February 2009 for the rest of the season , with the transfer becoming permanent at the end of the season . Cardiff chairman Peter Ridsdale said that Chopra was " over the moon " about the transfer . During his second loan spell at the club , he found the net four times .

= = = Return to Cardiff = = =

Chopra completed a permanent move on 1 July following the opening of the transfer window for a

fee of £ 3 million . The transfer smashed the club 's transfer record which was previously held by the £ 1 @. @ 75 million signing of Peter Thorne from Stoke City in 2001 . He scored in his debut , " claiming the first and third goals " in a 4 ? 0 victory over Rotherham United . Chopra then would score consecutively in matches against Blackpool , Plymouth Argyle , Bristol City and Bristol Rovers . In the post @-@ match ceremony , manager Dave Jones commented , " Chopra is on fire , he 's scored seven goals already and he 's shown he will get the goals if he gets the supply " . Chopra scored a total of 21 goals which included a four @-@ goal haul against Derby County . For a second time , he was included in the PFA Team of the Year .

After the season , Goal.com reported that Ipswich Town lodged a £ 3 million bid to secure Chopra 's services . Though it was increased , he continued the next season with Cardiff City . In the 2010 ? 11 season , he suffered a hamstring injury during a match against Barnsley on 23 April 2011 ruling him out of action for 10 to 12 weeks . A statement released by the club hailed it as a " disappointing news " as they would prepare for the rest of their matches without one of their " potent attacking options " . His played his next match against Queens Park Rangers on 23 April which ended in a 2 ? 2 draw . He also featured in both the legs of the Championship play @-@ offs against Reading . In the second leg , he was near to scoring , only for his shot to be deflected by Reading captain Matt Mills .

= = = Ipswich Town = = =

On 10 June 2011 , Chopra penned a three @-@ year deal with Ipswich Town signing for an undisclosed fee , which was reported by East Anglian Daily Times to be £ 1 @. @ 5 million . Manager Paul Jewell revealed that he was the type of player the club was searching for . After signing , Chopra said that he was hungry for goals . He started his Ipswich years with a bang scoring twice in his debut against Bristol City . He also scored a goal in each of the two match = es against his former club Cardiff City . He ended the season as the club 's top scorer with 14 goals . However , Chopra had a lackluster second season with the club , where he scored five times in thirty six matches . Unhappy with his performance , manager Mick McCarthy said that he was not in his plans for going forward and they were free to look for another club . Nevertheless , he found the winner goal in the dying minutes of a match against Watford . Though he missed a couple of chance earlier in the match , he was successful in converting Carlos Edwards low cross in the last minute of the encounter .

= = = Blackpool = = =

Though he was close to signing with Barnsley , Chopra signed for Blackpool in July 2013 . Wales Online wrote that he joined the club to regain his " goal touch " . He said that the Blackpool move was a fresh start for him . He also expressed his confidence of scoring goals playing alongside the two wingers ? Thomas Ince and Matt Phillips . In January of the following year , he was fined for a tweet in which he criticised the club 's training schedules . During his time with the side , he made 20 appearances but failed to score in any of them . Chopra later called his stay at the club " hard times " .

= = = Kerala Blasters = = =

In August 2014 , Chopra confirmed his participation in the inaugural season of the Indian Super League . He said that he felt honoured to " involved in this new era " . He was drafted by Kerala Blasters which was managed by David James . In an interview , he said that he felt honoured to " play for a team that is owned by Sachin Tendulkar " . He made his debut in the first match against NorthEast United FC , coming as a substitute in a 1 ? 0 defeat , with The Times of India commenting that he " looked sharp " . His time in India was cut short by an injury which he suffered in a training for a match against Atlético de Kolkata . Goal.com criticized him for his poor " fitness level " and wrote that he never " impressed in the competition and failed to find the back of the net " .

Nevertheless , he played the 120 minutes of the semifinal against Chennaiyin FC , and also started the final against the Kolkata side where he managed two shots on goal . He ended the season playing nine times without scoring .

= = = Alloa Athletic = = =

On 17 March 2015 , Chopra signed for Scottish Championship club Alloa Athletic for the rest of the season . On that very day , he made his debut against Rangers . On 2 May 2015 , he scored his first goal for Alloa when he scored from six yards out in a league match against Cowdenbeath . Four days later , he scored his second goal for the club , as he opened the scoring in a 2 ? 0 victory against Brechin City in the relegation play @-@ offs . Chopra was released by Alloa due to injury in March 2016 , exactly one year after he signed for the club .

= = International career = =

Chopra has represented England at under @-@ 16 , under @-@ 17 , under @-@ 19 and under @-@ 20 levels . He played in the 2000 UEFA European Under @-@ 16 Championship and the 2002 UEFA European Under @-@ 19 Championship .

Born and raised in England , Chopra is eligible to play for India through his father . In November 2010 , Chopra entered into talks over acquiring an Indian passport in order to represent India in the 2011 AFC Asian Cup . However , without an Indian passport , and the Indian government 's refusal to change its stance on dual citizenship , Chopra cannot play for India without first renouncing his British citizenship . In August 2014 , Chopra stated that he wanted to play for India at international level , and was willing to renounce his British citizenship to do so .

= = Personal life = =

Chopra appeared in OK ! magazine in October 2007 to announce he had become engaged to Heather Swan , and that they were expecting their first baby . On 15 February 2008 , they welcomed a 6 lb 10 oz baby boy , Sebastian Rocco Thomas Chopra . In July , it was reported that the couple had split only weeks after their £ 250 @,@ 000 wedding , but they later reconciled as she vowed to " stand by him " as he entered rehab for his gambling addiction , which included a spell at the Sporting Chance clinic . He was re @-@ admitted to the same clinic for three weeks in October 2011 . In December 2011 , Ipswich Town gave Chopra £ 250 @,@ 000 to help pay off his gambling debts .

On 4 October 2012 , Chopra was one of three footballers among a group charged by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) over an investigation into " suspicious betting activity " . The allegations focus on horses being laid to lose on betting exchanges . On 25 January 2013 he was found guilty of this offence and given a 10 @-@ year ban from racing by the BHA .

= = Club statistics = =

As of 20 May 2015