

= Russell Howarth =

Russell Michael Howarth (born 27 March 1982) is an English former professional footballer who played as a goalkeeper .

Howarth started his career in the youth system of hometown club York City in 1996 while a schoolboy , before becoming a trainee in 1998 . He made his first team debut at the age of 17 , playing in the first six games of the 1999 ? 2000 season . During this run in the team he signed a professional contract with the club . However , he was unable to play regularly for York because of the form of Bobby Mimms and Alan Fettis . After having trials with Premier League and First Division clubs , Howarth left York in November 2002 to sign for Tranmere Rovers for a five @-@ figure fee . Here , he again played sporadically , only having runs in the team when first @-@ choice goalkeeper John Achterberg was unavailable . After being released by Tranmere in 2005 , Howarth signed for Bradford City . However , he was unable to dislodge Donovan Ricketts in goal and was released in 2007 . He immediately retired from football and started working as a paramedic .

While at York , Howarth played for England at a number of youth levels . He was capped twice at under @-@ 16 level in 1999 , while still a trainee at York . He tussled with Chelsea 's Rhys Evans for a starting place in the under @-@ 18 side , playing for them in 2001 UEFA European Under @-@ 19 Football Championship qualifying . After making four under @-@ 18 appearances from 2000 to 2001 , he progressed to the under @-@ 20 side , competing with Evans , Stephen Bywater and Boaz Myhill for a place in the side . He was capped four times for the side from 2001 to 2002 before being given a late call @-@ up to the under @-@ 21 squad for the 2002 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Football Championship . Following his move to Tranmere he was still included in under @-@ 21 squads , but failed to be capped at that level .

= = Early life = =

Howarth was born in York , North Yorkshire to Michael and Lyn Howarth (née Hammond) . He was baptised in Riccall , North Yorkshire . He attended Barlby High School . As a youth he played as a goalkeeper for Olympia Station FC , before representing York and District Schools at the age of 12 . In one season however he played as a left @-@ sided midfielder and scored 29 goals . He soon returned to playing in goal and impressed Huntington School teacher Alan Whitehead , a former York City player , who was running the York and District team .

= = Club career = =

= = = York City = = =

Howarth started his career with hometown club York City in their youth system , joining in 1996 on schoolboy terms . In the summer of 1998 he signed a three @-@ year academy scholarship at York and became a first @-@ year trainee . During May 1999 he played for York in the Candia @-@ 66 International Under @-@ 20s Tournament , a youth tournament hosted in Europe . York won the tournament after defeating Trenkvin Slowakigie in the final ; Howarth saved two penalty kicks in the 4 ? 2 penalty shoot @-@ out victory . At the age of 17 he made his first team debut for Third Division York in a 1 ? 0 victory at home to Swansea City in the opening game of the 1999 ? 2000 season on 7 August . He started the season as York 's first @-@ choice first team goalkeeper ahead of the experienced Bobby Mimms , keeping clean sheets in the first three games of the campaign . On 26 August , two days after making his fifth successive appearance , Howarth signed a three @-@ year professional contract with York . However , after conceding 11 goals in three games , and having played in York 's first six games of the season , manager Neil Thompson dropped him in favour of the more experienced Mimms . York 's management team insisted Howarth 's exclusion was intended to safeguard the player , and was not based on merit . His next appearance came as a 72nd @-@ minute substitute in York 's 2 ? 0 defeat away at Plymouth Argyle

on 19 February 2000 following an injury to Mimms . Howarth was favoured over Mimms for the following game , a 0 ? 0 draw at home to Exeter City on 26 February , in which he gave a " solid showing " . However , following the signing of Northern Ireland international Alan Fettis , Howarth was once again restricted to the York bench . His first season in senior football finished with eight appearances .

In May Howarth played for Premier League club Leeds United in a seven @-@ a @-@ side tournament in Singapore , because their own goalkeepers were unavailable . He also represented York in the Candia @-@ 66 International Under @-@ 20s Tournament for a second successive summer , although he only played one game as he was being rested after playing for Leeds . His first appearance of the 2000 ? 01 season came in York 's 5 ? 1 defeat at home to Stoke City in the League Cup first round first leg . During the match he fumbled a Graham Fenton cross , and Stoke were able to open the scoring from the error . He garnered praise from York 's part @-@ time goalkeeping coach and former Everton player Neville Southall , who Howarth held as a boyhood hero , by saying " Russ can be as good as he wants to be . He works hard and has a great attitude when a lot of youngsters today at big clubs don 't have such a good attitude . He will succeed . Even if it is in three , five or even ten years , he will succeed . " With Fettis being rested Howarth made his second appearance of the season on 9 January 2001 , starting in a 4 ? 0 defeat at home to Darlington in the Football League Trophy Northern Section first round . Despite conceding four goals he was the only player to escape criticism from manager Terry Dolan , who said " He was let down by everyone else around him . He had no protection whatsoever . His kicking was excellent and he did everything else he had to do without a problem . " Due to the good form of Fettis , Howarth finished the season with only two appearances .

Howarth made his first appearance of the 2001 ? 02 season in the 2 ? 0 defeat away at Notts County on 16 October in the Football League Trophy Northern Section first round . Having made a number of fine saves he was named man of the match and Dolan remarked that " he is playing as well as I have seen him and he is putting real pressure on Alan Fettis . " Despite not featuring regularly for York he spent four days on trial with Premier League outfit Sunderland , training with the side for three days and playing 45 minutes of a practice match against Huddersfield Town . Howarth then spent a brief period on trial with Wolverhampton Wanderers of the First Division in January 2002 . He played in a reserve team game against Huddersfield and reportedly impressed manager Dave Jones . Howarth made his first league appearance for York in over two years as a substitute for an injured Fettis in the 65th minute of a 3 ? 0 home win over Bristol Rovers on 17 April . Two days later he was offered a new contract by York . With Fettis still injured for the following game , Howarth was selected to start for the first time since February 2000 in the 1 ? 0 defeat away at Scunthorpe United , York 's final game of the season . He finished the season with three appearances .

Larger clubs became interested in buying him during the summer and he decided to consider his options before deciding on his future . He trialled with Everton in May 2002 , and played in a friendly against Falkirk in the Alex Scott Memorial Trophy , in which he kept a clean sheet . He later revealed he was interested in a move to Everton and due to Fettis ' good form for York he decided to pursue a move from the club . After his York contract expired on 30 June Howarth joined Wolves for a second trial in July for a two @-@ week period . After playing in Wolves ' opening pre @-@ season friendly against Morecambe he was invited to join them for their pre @-@ season tour of Portugal . Despite being out of contract at York the club was entitled a fee as he was under 24 years of age , but a bid of £ 60 @, @ 000 from Wolves was rejected . He was recalled by York to take part in a pre @-@ season friendly against Sunderland , although he refused to participate . Howarth told Dolan he did not want to play for the club as any potential injury could have ended his proposed transfer to Wolves . His proposed move to Wolves continued until August and late that month he trained with Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur . He played in a practice match for Tottenham , but after they failed to follow up their interest in him Wolves made a bid to sign him on loan , which York again rejected . After Marlon Beresford left York and Howarth 's proposed moves elsewhere fell through he re @-@ signed for the club on a week @-@ to @-@ week contract . Despite this , he spent two days on trial with Premier League side Newcastle United in late September . Howarth 's

first appearance of the 2002 ? 03 season came in a 4 ? 3 defeat to Lincoln City on 22 October in the Football League Trophy Northern Section first round after Fettis was rested due to injury .

= = = Tranmere Rovers = = =

Howarth eventually completed a move away from York , signing for Second Division club Tranmere Rovers for an undisclosed five @-@ figure fee on 5 November . York chairman John Batchelor later revealed the transfer fee was an initial figure of £ 25 @, @ 000 . After signing Howarth said , " I felt I had gone a little bit stale at York and the time was right to move on " . He made his debut for Tranmere three weeks later in the 2 ? 1 defeat away at Cardiff City in an FA Cup first round replay on 26 November , entering play as a 72nd @-@ minute substitute after John Achterberg was sent off . Tranmere did not concede a goal during Howarth 's 18 minutes on the pitch and his performance was positive , as he looked " cool and composed between the sticks " . However , with Achterberg established in the Tranmere goal Howarth had to wait until 4 February 2003 to make his league debut against Cheltenham Town , coming on as a substitute in the 57th minute after Achterberg sustained an injury . He conceded two goals in 33 minutes on the pitch on as Tranmere went on to lose the game 3 ? 1 . Howarth returned to the substitutes ' bench for the following game against Swindon Town on 8 February as Achterberg had recovered from his injury . His first start in a Tranmere shirt came over two months later in a 0 ? 0 draw away at Luton Town on 5 April after Achterberg picked up an injury in training the previous day . He kept his starting place for the following match , a 1 ? 0 victory at home to Wycombe Wanderers on 12 April . Despite keeping clean sheets in both of these games , he was dropped for the next game against Notts County on 19 April .

Howarth continued to be kept out of the side in the 2003 ? 04 season and only made his first appearance after Achterberg was injured during the warm @-@ up against Swindon on 3 March 2004 . Tranmere lost the game 2 ? 0 although his performance was positive , making a number of good saves . However , Achterberg was declared fit for the following game against Millwall on 7 April and Howarth returned to the bench . He did not play another game for Tranmere that season . Howarth 's first appearance of the 2004 ? 05 season came as a 20th @-@ minute substitute after Achterberg was injured away at Hull City on 18 December . After conceding a goal scored by Ian Ashbee in the 34th minute , Howarth was then also injured in a challenge with Stuart Elliott , and was substituted at half @-@ time . He was available for Tranmere 's next game against Barnsley on 26 December , and with Achterberg ruled out for the Christmas period with a knee injury he started in a 1 ? 1 draw . This meant Howarth had a run of nine consecutive games in goal for Tranmere , with an appearance against Oldham Athletic in the Football League Trophy Northern semi @-@ final on 25 January 2005 being his last before Achterberg made a return against Luton on 29 January . He failed to play for the side again that season , and was released by Tranmere on 24 May .

= = = Bradford City = = =

On 8 June 2005 , Howarth signed a two @-@ year contract with League One club Bradford City . He was signed to provide competition for Donovan Ricketts ; manager Colin Todd said " It was a position we needed filling badly . I am delighted to have got a keeper of Russell 's calibre " . Despite being given a chance to affirm himself in pre @-@ season with Ricketts away on international duty , it was Ricketts who started the 2005 ? 06 season as first @-@ choice goalkeeper . Howarth made his debut in Bradford 's fourth game of the season away at Rotherham United on 20 August , coming on as a 27th @-@ minute substitute after Ricketts was injured . The match finished in a 1 ? 1 draw . He made his first start in the subsequent 5 ? 0 victory over League Two side Rochdale in the League Cup first round on 23 August . These were the first two appearances of a 12 @-@ game run in the team , before being dropped after nearly two months when Ricketts returned from injury against Port Vale on 15 October . His last two appearances for Bradford that season , which came when Ricketts was suspended , were a 5 ? 3 defeat at home to Barnsley in an FA Cup second

round replay and a 2 ? 1 defeat at home to Rotherham on 17 December . Howarth finished his first campaign at Bradford with a career @-@ record 15 appearances .

After starting the 2006 ? 07 season again as second @-@ choice to Ricketts , he revealed his desire for a loan away from Bradford for first team football , saying " It is approaching make or break in terms of my career . I need to start playing regularly again as soon as possible " . Former club York , by this time playing in the Conference National , made a failed bid to sign him on loan in September 2006 . Howarth 's first and only appearance of the season , a 2 ? 1 defeat at home to Scunthorpe in the Football League Trophy Northern Section first round on 17 October , proved to be the last game of his career . He was released by Bradford on 9 May 2007 and subsequently retired from professional football at the age of 25 .

= = International career = =

= = = England under @-@ 16 = = =

Howarth received his first international call @-@ up when he was included in the England national under @-@ 16 team to play Turkey on 12 January 1999 . He was the only player with a club from below the top two divisions to have been selected . He made his debut in the match as a 70th minute substitute for Chelsea 's Rhys Evans , with England winning 2 ? 0 . His second cap and first start for the side came two months later in a 1 ? 0 victory at home to Turkey on 30 March . Following the game , Sky Sports commentator Brian Marwood described his performance as " outstanding " .

= = = England under @-@ 18 = = =

Howarth 's next international call @-@ up came over a year later when selected for the under @-@ 18s for a game against Luxembourg on 27 April 2000 , this time being one of two players with clubs below the top two divisions . He debuted for the side after coming on as a 60th @-@ minute substitute for Evans in this game , in a 2 ? 0 victory for England . Howarth was then called up for a friendly with Israel on 1 September , although he did not feature in the game as Evans was chosen to start . In September he was named in the team that would participate in a 2001 UEFA European Under @-@ 18 Football Championship qualifying mini @-@ tournament hosted in Ancona , Italy . He failed to appear in the first game against Andorra on 7 October , but made his first start for the under @-@ 18s in the next game , a 5 ? 0 victory over the Faroe Islands on 9 October . Howarth was excluded from the line @-@ up for the final game against Italy , which England won to progress to the intermediate qualifying round .

Howarth was called up for a friendly against Belgium at Bradford City 's Valley Parade on 16 November , in which he started as England won 3 ? 2 , despite Evans having seemingly established himself as the number one goalkeeper for the under @-@ 18s . He was then included in the squad for another friendly against the Netherlands on 1 March 2001 , although Evans was eventually chosen to play ahead of Howarth . He was called into the squads to play Poland in the intermediate qualifying round , although he failed to play a part in either leg of the tie , as Evans started in both the 1 ? 0 loss at White Hart Lane on 22 March and the 0 ? 0 away draw on 26 April . With Evans omitted from the squad to play Switzerland at FC Grenchen 's Stadion Brühl in a friendly on 30 May , Howarth started in a 1 ? 0 defeat . The match , in which he was substituted for Boaz Myhill of Aston Villa , proved to be his final appearance for the under @-@ 18s .

= = = England under @-@ 20 = = =

Howarth was ineligible to play for the under @-@ 19 team due to an alteration to the England set @-@ up , and was subsequently called up for the under @-@ 20 game against Portugal at St Mary 's Stadium on 21 November . The game was England 's first at under @-@ 20 level since the 1999 FIFA World Youth Championship . He started the game and was substituted for Myhill after half

@-@ time , with the side winning the game 1 ? 0 . Howarth came on for England as a half @-@ time substitute for Evans in a 3 ? 0 victory over Finland in their penultimate friendly ahead of the 2002 Toulon Tournament . A call @-@ up came for the final friendly away at Portugal on 10 April , and he again entered as a half @-@ time substitute , this time for Myhill .

After originally being left out the squad , he was given a last minute call @-@ up to play at the Toulon Tournament in May , after Stephen Bywater was called up for the under @-@ 21 team . Howarth did not play in the first group game against Poland on 10 May as Bywater started , but in the second game against Portugal he was chosen ahead of Evans in a 1 ? 0 victory over Portugal on 12 May . However , he was dropped for the final group game against Brazil on 14 May to make way for Evans , who also played in England 's final game in the tournament against Japan on 17 May .

= = = England under @-@ 21 = = =

Shortly after the under @-@ 20s ' exit from the Toulon Tournament , Howarth was called up for the under @-@ 21 side playing in the 2002 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Football Championship after Bywater and Evans picked up injuries . He was on the bench for England 's final two group games against Italy and Portugal , and after losing both of these games the team was eliminated . Following the tournament he was re @-@ called by the under @-@ 21s for a game against Yugoslavia on 6 September , although Liverpool 's Chris Kirkland started . He was then included in the squad for the under @-@ 21s ' next game against Slovakia on 11 October in qualification Group 7 of the 2004 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Football Championship and , despite Kirkland being injured , he failed to play as Wolves ' Matt Murray was selected . For the following qualifier against Macedonia on 15 October Howarth failed to make the bench . Following his move to Tranmere his international call @-@ ups continued , and he was selected for a get @-@ together of the under @-@ 21s in November , ahead of their 2004 UEFA European Under @-@ 21 Football Championship qualifiers against Portugal and Turkey in March and April 2003 . However , he did not play in either game , with Bywater and Murray starting . He was given a late call @-@ up to the squad for qualifiers against Macedonia and Portugal in September , but did not eventually meet up with the team as an agreement was reached that he would only be on standby for the games .

= = Post @-@ football = =

Following his retirement from football , Howarth became a paramedic . He became a coach for City Football Development in August 2009 , which was set up to offer coaching to youngsters in York .

= = Personal life = =

Howarth has been an Everton supporter since the early 1990s . His girlfriend Victoria worked as a deputy head teacher and while Howarth was a Tranmere player the couple lived on the Wirral . Their daughter , Georgia May , was born in late 2004 . After signing for Bradford in 2005 , Howarth briefly lived with his parents in Riccall before purchasing a second home in Halifax , West Yorkshire to live in with his partner .

= = Career statistics = =