

Bournemouth Website

AFC Bournemouth development squad coach Shaun Cooper insisted new signing Dominic Sadi would keep his feet on the ground following his whirlwind start to life at Vitality Stadium.

Sadi joined the Cherries ahead of the start of the 2022/23 season after catching the eye of the academy coaching staff during run-outs for the under-18s in the EFL Merit League.

The teenage frontman impressed sufficiently to be invited on the first team's training camp to Portugal and spent ten days in the Algarve with Scott Parker's squad.

Sadi, who came through the ranks at West Ham, featured as a substitute in the training match against Portuguese top-flight outfit Braga, coming on for the final 20 minutes.

He was back on duty with the development squad on Friday and turned in a lively display during a 2-0 defeat by Wycombe Wanderers at Brockenhurst's Grigg Lane headquarters.

Cooper told afcb.co.uk: "We liked him as soon as we saw him. He handles the ball really well in tight areas.

"Physically, there's a lot of development to come and I think he will be a late bloomer in that department, which is a good thing for him because he's a nice player and he's got good ball-winning qualities.

"He made some good tackles against Wycombe and he's got really rangy legs. If anyone around him has a loose touch, he can nick the ball off them.

"He's a fantastic lad with a great attitude. He's just been away with the first team and did well over there so he's had a good start. What he needs now is game time and I'm looking forward to continuing to work with him."

Asked whether he may have to manage expectations due to Sadi's eye-catching start, Cooper replied: "I don't think we need to manage his expectations.

"He's a grounded and hungry young man. I picked up on that straight away. I met his family when he signed and he's from a good family. He won't get carried away with what's happened so far.

"He's well aware of the journey that's ahead of him and what he needs to do and what needs to happen for him to fulfil his potential. Managing his expectations won't be an issue."

Christian Saydee, another member of the development squad who went to Portugal with the first team, went close to opening the scoring against the Chairboys when his thunderous effort was turned behind for a corner.

An early goal from Brandon Hanlan and a second-half penalty, scored by Ali Al-Hamadi after Chris Francis had handled, settled an entertaining contest in favour of the League One club.

The Cherries created a number of presentable chances with Nathan Moriah-Welsh twice going close, the midfielder seeing one effort superbly saved and a second flash past the upright.

Cooper added: "It was a really good run-out and I thought the lads' effort and application were spot on.

"They've had really good energy over the past couple of days and a real togetherness and I thought that was on display.

"The game got physical at times which was brilliant for our lads because it was a really good test and there were some mistakes to learn from.

“For the first goal, we didn’t secure well enough on the halfway line. It was our corner, they cleared it and ended up going on to score.

“We were caught out of position for the penalty and it was a bit of a panic decision which led to it. They are really good lessons for the lads at this stage of their careers.

“We had some good chances and I thought we got in some good crossing areas and put some balls into the box but didn’t quite have anyone on the end of them.

“Losing the game was harsh and I was disappointed we didn’t score a goal but the effort was there and we’re getting in the right areas. It’s early days so I’m confident they’ll come.”

Former Cherries striker Sam Vokes was among the crowd for the game and is expected to feature for the Chairboys when they face Southampton B at Staplewood on Saturday.

Cooper played alongside Vokes as he progressed through the youth ranks at AFC Bournemouth under the tutelage of Joe Roach who had a reunion with the Lymington-raised frontman at Grigg Lane.

“It was great to catch up with him,” said Cooper. “He’s had a great career and he’s such a grounded person. He was like that as a young lad and he’s exactly the same now as he was when he was 17.

“It’s a shame he didn’t play. They were physical up top at times and it was enough of a test for our lads anyway but it would have been great to see them up against someone of the calibre of Sam.

“I wish him all the best for the season and the rest of his career. He’s a great example to all the young lads coming through now.

“He’s a real success story for the club and is one of many that came through when we needed them back in the day. He’s gone on to do what he’s done and it’s really pleasing and a credit to the club.”

Cooper also extended his thanks to Brockenhurst Football Club for staging the game and to the Cherries supporters in attendance.

“It’s a nice place to come and it was nice to see quite a few supporters in as well,” he added.

“That’s always good for our players and it definitely gives them a lift. When the game got a bit stretched and we were chasing it, hearing a few dozen people clapping or cheering on your side of the pitch gives you that extra burst of energy.”

AFC Bournemouth: Terrell, Gidaree, Trialist A, Kinsey-Wellings, Boutin, Francis, Wadham, Moriah-Welsh, Sadi (Burgess, 55), Saydee, Scrimshaw (Trialist B, 64).