

SPORT **GAVIN STRACHAN'S BLOG**[« Previous](#) | [Main](#) | [Next »](#)[Jump to more content from this blog](#) ▼**A sticky patch and a bumpy pitch**[Gavin Strachan](#) | 15:51 UK time, Monday, 24 November 2008

As I have mentioned before, there have been one or two sticky patches during my career.

Probably the scariest was just a couple of weeks before the start of the 2003 - 2004 season when I was still without a club having been released by [Southend United](#). Drastic times call for drastic measures. We were a young family living with my wife's mum and dad (very nice of them I might add), so I needed to get something sorted!

Having managed to get hold of a list with all the managers' phone numbers, I tried to make contact with as many as I could. In addition to all the managers in [League One](#) and [Two](#), I also chanced my arm with those in charge of some of the smaller [Championship clubs](#). In an ideal world it would have been nice to give [Sir Alex](#) a call but I decided to go for the more sensible approach!

I am sure a lot of players in my position have tried the same tactic and invariably you don't manage to get hold of all the managers. One manager I did get hold of, though, was Glyn Hodges, who according to my list was manager of Barnsley. He answered the phone and I immediately went into my spiel including [the clubs I had played for](#) etc, not giving him a chance to interrupt for fear of rejection! He listened patiently and when I was finished, he commended me on my determination to get a club but added that he was not in a position to offer me anything. Why? Because [he had been sacked four months earlier!](#) Nice one Gav!

As a result of these phone calls, and ultimately putting up with the inevitable rejection that comes with them, I was offered a trial at Hartlepool United, which thankfully turned out to be successful. It led to arguably [the best years of my career](#) so far.

Without wishing to give the impression of patting myself on the back, the moral to this story is that to stay in this game, you have to stick at it. You have to be prepared to travel up and down the country [going on trial at clubs](#), being the lad sat in the corner with the different kit on (because when you are on trial they normally just give you bits of old kit that do not match)! Ultimately, it boils down to having the desire to do it.

About this blog

Hello, I'm Gavin Strachan. I describe myself as a "journeyman" player after 13 years in the game as a professional. I'm currently between clubs, having been released by Notts County. I'm also studying journalism and the aim of my blog is to provide an insight into the life of a footballer. Here are some [tips on taking part and our house rules](#).

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Football headlines

- [Sheff Utd name Clough as manager](#)
Sheffield United appoint former Derby County boss Nigel Clough as their new manager to replace David Weir.
- [Pellegrini condemns Moscow pitch](#)
Manchester City boss Manuel Pellegrini questions Uefa's decision to allow the match at CSKA Moscow to go ahead.
- [Sportsday - breaking sports news](#)
Man Utd and Man City set for Champions League ties, Tuesday's reaction and latest on Sir Alex Ferguson's book.

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- [Reuters soccer](#)
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- [The offside](#)
- [Off The Post](#)
- [Inside Futbol](#)
- [World Cup blog](#)
- [Soccer Lens](#)
- [Who ate all the pies](#)
- [A different league](#)
- [Stoppage time](#)
- [When Saturday Comes](#)

Football Blog: Questions

First of all, read the blog entry.

1. Who do you think the target audience for this blog is? Tick an answer.

Footballers	
Fans of Southend United	
Girls	
Boys	

2. Give a reason for your answer:

3. Look at the second paragraph of the blog. **In your own words** explain why the start of the 2003-2004 season was a 'sticky patch' for Gavin.

As a result of these phone calls, and ultimately putting up with the inevitable rejection that comes with them, I was offered a trial at Hartlepool United, which thankfully turned out to be successful. It led to arguably **the best years of my career** so far.

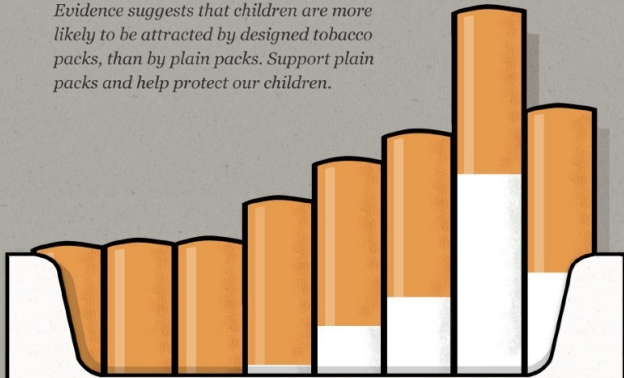
4. **Quote** the part of the above paragraph which links back to the previous paragraph in the blog.

5. Look at the last paragraph of the blog. **In your own words**, explain what Gavin thinks the 'moral' of the story is.

CHILDREN. HOW CAN WE STOP THEM STARTING?



Evidence suggests that children are more likely to be attracted by designed tobacco packs, than by plain packs. Support plain packs and help protect our children.



**EVERY YEAR
340,000 CHILDREN
TRY SMOKING FOR
THE FIRST TIME** ⁽¹⁾



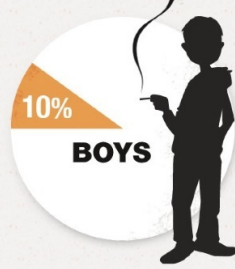
That's over **3** times the capacity of Wembley Stadium...



or over **2** times the ticket sales at Glastonbury



**PERCENTAGE OF ALL 15 YEAR
OLDS WHO REGULARLY SMOKE...** ⁽²⁾



**TWO THIRDS OF SMOKERS
START BEFORE THEY ARE 18** ⁽³⁾



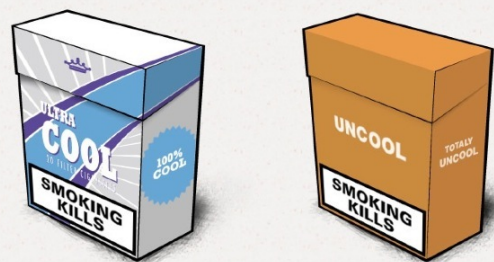
Aged under 18

Aged over 18

**87% OF CHILDREN RATED
PLAIN PACKAGING AS UNCOOL...** ⁽⁴⁾



**...AND SAID THEY WOULD NOT LIKE
TO BE SEEN WITH PLAIN PACKS** ⁽⁴⁾



**HELP PROTECT
OUR CHILDREN FROM
SMOKING.**

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Smoking Infographic Questions

1. Who do you think the audience for this infographic is? Tick an answer.

People trying to quit smoking	
Parents	
Teenagers	
Doctors	

2. Give a reason for your answer.

3. What is the purpose of the infographic? What does it want the reader to do?

4. **Quote** a part of the advert which supports your answer.

5. Explain **why** this part of the infographic might convince the reader:

6. Overall, how **effective** do you think the infographic is? Give a reason for your answer.



MAX RIVLIN-NADLER RHINOS Yesterday 4:40pm

30,423 9 245

Texas Hunters Will Kill Endangered Rhino In Attempt To Save Them All



1

Now this just doesn't make any damn sense: A hunting group based in Dallas will be auctioning off a permit to kill an endangered black rhinoceros, to raise money to save the endangered black rhinoceros.

"First and foremost, this is about saving the black rhino," Ben Carter, executive director of the Dallas Safari Club, [told the Agence France Presse](#). Namibia has the right to kill five endangered rhinoceros, and it just so happened that the Dallas Safari Club won the right to do the deed this year. But at least they're trying to do good!

The permit is expected "to sell for at least \$250,000, possibly up to \$1 million," at the club's convention next year. The black rhinoceros population in Africa has been decimated by hunters looking to sell its valuable horn, which many believe possess special healing powers. The money would go to The Conservation Trust Fund, which protects black rhinos.

But not everyone is so enthusiastic about the plan.

"The world is seeing a concerted effort to preserve the very few black rhinos and other rhinos who are dodging poachers' bullets and habitat destruction," Wayne Pacelle, president of the Humane Society of the United States, told Al Jazeera. "The last thing they need are wealthy elites from foreign lands coming in to kill them for their heads."

But it would saaaave them. C'mon!

Rhino Article Questions

1. What is the **tone** of this article? Tick an answer:

Formal	
Informal	

2. Pick a **word** or **short phrase** from the article which supports your answer and write it below:

3. **In your own words** sum up what the Dallas hunting group are doing which the author thinks “doesn’t make any damn sense”:

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4. From this paragraph, what do you think the word ‘decimated’ means?

5. How does this paragraph make this meaning clear?

Acid by James Kelman

In this factory in the north of England acid was essential. It was contained in large vats.

Gangways were laid above them. Before these gangways were completely safe a young man fell into a vat feet first. His screams of agony were heard all over the department. Except for one old fellow the large body of men was so horrified that for a time not one of them could move. In an instant this old fellow who was also the young man's father had clambered up and along the gangway carrying a big pole. Sorry Hughie, he said. And then he ducked the young man below the surface. Obviously the old fellow had had to do this because only the head and shoulders – in fact, that which had been seen above the acid – was all that remained of the young man.

Acid Questions

1. How would you describe the language in this short story? Tick an answer:

Simple	
Complex / Difficult	

2. Why do you think the author has chosen to write in this way?

3. **In your own words** explain what the man's father did at the end of the story?

4. Why did he do this?

5. Why do you think the author doesn't say exactly where this took place? ("In **this** factory in the north of England")



Westmuir
High School

Westmuir High School

English Department

S4 Homework Booklet

Name: _____

Teacher: _____

