

## Sports News from Dexter, 31 October, 2004

[This is the fourth in a series of occasional press releases from the Dexter Sports Agency; they are prepared and released to addressees when the editor engages in work-avoidance strategies at his computer. The latest edition includes previous press releases, below. To avoid bounces and full mailboxes, releases will henceforth not be sent with photographs attached; instead, all Dexter Sports Agency images will be available through links in the texts]

Anglo-Russian brothers [Gordon and Neil Makin](#) continue to dominate the Dexter sports scene, while also proving their considerable abilities as demolition experts and furniture distressers at their home in rural Dexter Township.

Gordon's [Ann Arbor Arsenal Blue Under-Nine team](#) swept all before them in Division II of the WSSL under-nine league ([www.wsslsoccer.org](http://www.wsslsoccer.org)), finishing the season with a perfect record, scoring nearly sixty goals in nine matches, and conceding only eight. [Gordon](#) finished among the leading scorers (third, with twelve goals, just behind Gino with fifteen and Michael with fourteen; team statistics reveal that he had by far the highest ratio of goals scored to shots taken, somewhat to the surprise of observers who have been heard to sing "You'll never play for England" after watching particularly wayward shots sail past goals defended only by ageing academics). He began the season with a vital hat trick against Brighton, breaking open, with three quick goals early in the second half, a match which had entered half time at 2-1, and he ended the season with another hat trick against Plymouth away. In between he contributed at least a goal in all but two matches, and drew particular praise in press reports for his play in the match against Canton (<http://www.aaysa.net/weeklyupdatefall045.htm>; other reports at <http://www.aaysa.net/weeklyupdatefall046.htm>, <http://www.aaysa.net/weeklyupdatefall047.htm>, and <http://www.aaysa.net/latestnews.html>; complete reports to date archived at <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~rickey/soccer/arsenalu9/Weeklyupdate.html>). Notwithstanding his goals (one scored directly from a corner, and claimed by Gordon to have been bent as if, in fact, struck by the boot of the England no 7), Gordon's most significant role on the team has probably been as a midfield playmaker. Gordon has announced his intention to become a professional footballer, taking particular delight in the fact that, in Europe, top players begin their professional careers as teenagers (and therefore leave school early and avoid further education).

Many have explained the success of Gordon's team by referring not only to the excellent coaching provided by [Barry Scott](#) (who has enjoyed

particular popularity with every player's mother), but also to the strong support provided by parents, many of whom are employees of the University of Michigan, and thus have considerable time on their hands -- as is suggested by the team web site, itself the work of a UM employee -- [Ann Arbor Arsenal U9 Blue Team and White Team](#) , where not one, but two sets of team statistics may be found, both, of course, maintained by UM employees. Loudest support at matches has probably come from another UM employee, Gordon's father, who was threatened with a yellow card by a referee at the match with CW3 in Walled Lake (the referee seemed offended by a strident appeal for an obvious offside, when Arsenal Blue were playing two men down because of officiating errors (the referee had erroneously insisted on Arsenal taking one man off when they took a five-goal lead, and another off when the lead increased to six -- this was later revealed as a league rule for *\_recreational\_ not \_competitive\_ divisions*)). In general, match officials may have sometimes been perturbed to hear loud, critical comments from the Arsenal touchlines in both Scottish and English accents. The nadir of officiating probably came at Northville, when the referee attempted to give a penalty for a back-pass to the goalkeeper; Barry Scott and Michael Makin were reported to need intensive care after this match, won 14-1. Other parents have looked on in wonder and bemusement when chants such as "To the Arsenal One-Nil" and "England, England's number seven" (Gordon wears no 7 in honor of the England captain) have come from the touchlines. At the end of the Plymouth match, chants of "Champions" and a jocular rendition of "O, lucky, lucky; lucky, lucky, lucky Arsenal!" were heard, but not understood by any of the scores of spectators, including at least two people who were not related to any player, but had been persuaded to attend. Many parents have also widened their vocabulary, learning such terms as "Clean Sheet" and "Pitch" (thought by most Americans to refer to the action of delivering a baseball to a batter); the apparent eccentricity of always providing [Gordon with orange quarters](#) has also been noted. Ironists have also remarked that over-ambitious parents all seem to compete for early arrival at matches -- even Gordon's ever-anxious father has only managed to arrive first at one of the five away matches.

It has, moreover, been observed that the team's only disappointments came in the early-season Global Soccer Tournament, where a strong start was followed by two disappointing losses, both to Division I teams who apparently looked beatable. One explanation for these two defeats is that Gordon's father was absent, claiming to be working in Russia (his wife has stated that *work* should be placed in heavy quotation marks).

At the last practice of the season, Gordon received his evaluation from coach Barry Scott. His three greatest strengths were listed as "Recognizing open teammates and passing to them": "Wall pass"; and "Turning with the ball (Cruyff, pivot, drag back)". His three greatest

weaknesses were listed as “Turning away from pressure”; “Block Tackle” (Gordon is nearly always one of the slightest players on the pitch; he welcomed parental suggestions of a winter weight training program, and asked for the most expensive weight machines to be bought and installed in his bedroom); and “Lack of positive attitude after a mistake” (Gordon has noted that he did not cry once this season; however, his huge distress at his failure to score after a bad bounce sent the ball past the post instead of into the goal for what would have been the team’s *tenth* strike against WAZA was indicative of his problems in coping with disappointment). His coach suggested that his first strength had something to do with his father, but Gordon, thinking that his coach had in mind footballing ability rather than many hours spent in front of the TV watching Premiership and international matches, insisted – rather touchingly, some felt -- that it was not his incompetent father, but his *grandfather*, whom Gordon never knew, but who was a very distinguished amateur footballer in Lancashire amateur circles in the 1920s and 1930s, who was responsible for his own possession of this skill. However, Barry Scott’s remarks have been used within the family to justify the enormous satellite TV bills, received when it has been necessary to purchase several matches in a single month from pay-per-view providers (“it will improve Gordon’s game...”).

Gordon’s parents have observed that their own passion as sports fans has finally found its most natural outlet. Mrs Makin, who previously regarded football as a necessary evil, has not missed a match or a practice, and has constantly demanded such further financial outlays as the purchase of a large and gaudy “Soccer Mom” blanket. She even survived two bitterly cold and wet weekends, when four away matches were watched on sports fields so open that the wind felt as it had come all the way from Siberia without obstruction. Rumors that the Makin family brought tea laced with a Russian liqueur to one away match have been hotly denied by sources close to the family. Mrs Makin has also promised Gordon “David Beckham boots” (ie, the Adidas Predator model advertised by the England captain), if he and his team can distinguish themselves in Division I. His father has reportedly commented that “another two hundred bucks for boots would just be a drop in the ocean” after all other football expenses have been taken into account.

Younger brother Neil Makin spent the autumn season playing in the BAYSA Academy program. In the spring Neil played for Manchester United, and proudly emulated Jez, the heroine of *Bend it Like Beckham*, by hanging his [MUFC shirt on the wall](#) (stating, moreover, that it was Nicky Butt’s, since the label read “8” – Butt’s number at Man Utd), but the new season brought astonishing revelations of Brazilian family ties, and [Neil has recently played for the penta champion](#), quite unperturbed by his father’s alarm at this apparently unpatriotic gesture. Despite being the

youngest player in the program, Neil repeated distinguished himself "between the sticks" (a favored position), and also did quite well as an outfield player. He scored a goal from the penalty spot, later describing it as an "Alan Sheawa Wocket", and appeared on the score sheet on a few other occasions. In a tense fathers vs boys match at the end of one academy session, Neil scored the winning goal when a cross floated over statuesque middle-aged defenders to find him unmarked (partly because he is so small and thus hard to see) at the far post: as the ball came down, he pivoted and volleyed home from close range, revealing that all those sessions of "pwacticing volleys" he has insisted on while attending his elder brother's training sessions have not been entirely wasted.

As the indoor season begins, Neil (age five) finds himself on a [Wide World of Sports Center](#) house team which, for reasons that were not immediately apparent, will play in an *Under-Nine* league. In his first match, which was lost by an interplanetary margin, Neil had one of his team's two shots on goal, despite being given only two shifts by a coach who might have had difficulty seeing him on the bench. Notwithstanding his team's opening loss, he has aggressively taunted future opponents, announcing that his team will "cweam" them all. Gordon's team will play in an Under-Ten competitive league; Gordon has already bet \$20 (which he does not possess) with a future opponent on the result of their meetings.

Gordon and Neil are also devoted to spectator sports, having watched with some interest the recent World Series, and having rejoiced in the breaking of the "curse of the Bambino". Mrs Makin's opinions on baseball have not been recorded, but it is thought that she did not watch any of the games. More surprising is the familiarity of both boys with the stories of the Busby Babes, the 1966 World Cup, and the 1978 FA Cup final (these last two events are regularly watched on DVD). It is thought that few boys of their age in the United States know the identity of Sir Bobby Charlton, Sir Geoff Hurst, and the late Bobby Moore, and still fewer ask to be told the story of Duncan Edwards.

In their spare time the Makin brothers attend Dexter Community Schools, where they recently both participated in [Halloween Parades](#), and where, early this autumn, they both attended an [after-school cooking class](#) (being the only [two boys](#), apart from the instructor's son, in a class of over twenty).

Regular readers may also be interested to learn that the anticipated autumn repatriation to Cornerstone School of rats Missie and Molly did not in fact take place. A distressed Mrs Makin (who had begun the summer standing on a bed and squealing whenever Missie and Mollie appeared, but had ended it announcing her love for the two rodents) begged Gordon's

second-grade teacher Mrs Pam Bullock not to ask for the rats back. A kindly Mrs Bullock assented.

Late-breaking news suggests that Gordon and Neil have promised to prepare for the Arsenal Under-Nine victory party at their home on Saturday, 6 November, by spending at least ten minutes on leaf clearance (making football matches easier to run in the Makin garden). Approximately fifty Arsenal family members have accepted the [invitation](#) to attend, although it is thought that the players' mothers will be bitterly disappointed if Barry Scott brings his girlfriend.

Reuters and Agence France Presse contributed to this report.

### **Sports News from Dexter, 28 August, 2004**

[This is the third in a series of occasional press releases from the Dexter Sports Agency; they are prepared and released to addressees when the editor engages in work-avoidance strategies at his computer]

Anglo-Russian brothers Gordon and Neil Makin face the end of the summer and the beginning of the school year, but seem to have no intention of abandoning sport.

On Tuesday, Gordon Makin enters Mrs Black's multi-age class at Wylie Elementary (<http://teacherweb.com/MI/WylieElementary/MsBlackandMrSmith/index.html>). So far, his only questions about his new class have been about the scheduling of gym lessons. Meanwhile, Neil Makin will enter Jessica Madley's all-day kindergarten class at Cornerstone Elementary (school web page -- <http://web.dexter.k12.mi.us/STAFF%20Pages/corner/corner.html>). The beginning of Neil Makin's academic career has been viewed with relatively little excitement, although, on a recent visit to the school, he did insist on viewing the cafeteria (where his parents will allow him to eat once a week, relegating him to "healthy" home-prepared packed lunches for the other four days).

The Ann Arbor Arsenal under-nine travel team, coached by Scot and Rangers supporter Barry Scott, began training in early August, and so far Gordon reports satisfaction with his progress at the twice-weekly ninety-minute practices. The ten members of the squad (which plays in the six-a-side, small-pitch format set for the age group by the Michigan Youth Soccer Association, a format which also allows for unlimited substitutions, as is the practice in the United States right up to the college level) will play a nine-match autumn fixture list in the regional Western Suburban Soccer League ([WSSL Soccer League](#); team fixtures at

<http://www.aaysa.net/ArsenalSchedules/9BoysBlue.pdf>), where they are likely to face tough and experienced opposition – some teams in the area actively recruit top players even at the under-eight level. However, the recent three-day trip for training to the Blue Chip USA complex near Fort Wayne, Indiana, indicated that the Under-Nine Arsenal Blue team will be a strong, competitive team. All Arsenal travel teams between the under-nine and under-twelve levels – a total of fourteen teams – went down to Blue Chip ([Bluechipusa.net](http://Bluechipusa.net)), accompanied by coaches and family members. This trip, long-awaited in the Makin family, proved a major success: Gordon and his team trained for two hours on Friday evening, for approximately six hours on Saturday, and another two on Sunday. They also won every scrimmage they played, including a match against one of the under-ten teams, and gave every indication of being a solid and enthusiastic group (their coach's suggestion that they play an under-twelve girls' team was greeted with only moderate enthusiasm, while reports suggest that the girls themselves declined to play them, reasoning that nothing good could come of such a match-up). Gordon scored two goals, passed well, and kept goal bravely when placed between the posts (including two fine saves at the feet of oncoming opponents, one with his studs clearly raised). However, Gordon's parents expressed some alarm that he seemed the slightest boy on his team, and could be knocked off the ball with relative ease by bigger opponents the same age. Coaches, however, praised his passing and his reading of the game, and issued assurances that his physical game would improve with time (although Barry Scott has repeatedly objected to Gordon's habit of appearing for practice in England kit). Neil Makin, as ever, played on the touchlines (his usual routine consists of a one-on-one victory against his incompetent father; volley practice; one-touch passing; bicycle kick practice; and a tantrum). Both boys also fished in Sylvan Lake, which adjoins Blue Chip – on the site of a former spa -- in Rome City, but without success, despite reports of large quantities of Walleye. Gordon expressed his surprise that Blue Chip was not blue, and said that he had thought that all the buildings would be modern (in fact, they are nineteenth-century structures, built for a Catholic monastic and spa community, sold during the 1980s to a secretive cult, and only recently given over to the beautiful game; a team meeting took place in one of the complex's former chapels). Also of note at Blue Chip was the food served in the cafeteria: several parents expressed surprise in discovering that powdered eggs still existed, while the absence of fresh fruit and vegetables was also a cause of concern. Some parents remarked that the food was typical for summer residential camps, which gave other parents pause for thought over next year's summer plans. Alina Makin, in a gesture of personal sacrifice, drove to a nearby town to buy Mexican food from a local restaurant for her family and the family of one of Gordon's team-mates, and also provided a large and rapidly consumed water melon for the team (she guarded it jealously from attacks by members of other teams). Gordon

shared accommodation with teammates, while the rest of his family occupied a private room in another part of the complex, much to the delight of Neil Makin. Mr and Mrs Makin are reported to have concealed three liters of wine in their luggage, anxious not to create the wrong impression in public, only to see scores of cases of empty beer bottles removed from the coaches' accommodation on the morning of departure. Sunday's training concluded with a boys vs parents match, narrowly won by the boys, despite a rocket goal from Michael Makin, which flew past his son, at that moment keeping goal. Subsequently, a yellow card was issued for unsportsmanlike conduct, after Michael Makin was seen to taunt the goalkeeper for his failure to make a save. Neil Makin, playing for the parents, was regularly open at the far post on corners, but apparently could not be seen by the man on the ball. The elder Makin's suggestion that a defibrillator be installed for the match was ignored.

Other accomplishments at Blue Chip are rumored to include three showers taken by Gordon Makin.

After Blue Chip the Makin family stopped briefly at Long Lake in the Indiana Chain of Lakes State Park (<http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/parks/chainolakes.html>). Gordon and Neil both recorded small catches, while Alina Makin hooked her largest ever Bass – on a plastic Anise Worm – only to fail to land it. Her excitement was doubled when she gathered from boaters returning from lengthy fishing outings on the lake that nothing had been caught by anyone else. She claims that she did not blame her husband when she failed to land her bass. Unlike him, moreover, Mrs Makin had justified her purchase of a one-week Indiana state licence.

After Blue Chip, the Makin family traveled to Chicago, where two days were spent in the Windy City, staying at the modest but convenient Essex Inn ([Chicago's Essex Inn: Your Key to the City!](#)). The major visits were to the Field Museum ([Welcome to The Field Museum](#)) and the Shedd Aquarium ([Shedd Aquarium](#)), but the Makin brothers seemed to enjoy their Olympic competitions in the hotel pool as much – water polo, the 15 m crawl, and dunking one's brother were especially popular. During the stay, Michael Makin is reported to have renewed his US passport – done in person to assure swift receipt of the new passport. The first new passport he was issued stated his place of birth as “Ukraine” (instead of “U.K.”); although he was only хохол на час, Mrs Makin is said to have repeatedly congratulated him on the success of his nation's gymnastics team in the Olympics.

In addition to the regular league season, Gordon Makin's football team hopes to play in the Global Soccer Tournament ([Global Soccer](#)

[Tournament](#)) in suburban Detroit over the 24/25 September. Gordon and Neil Makin have expressed dissatisfaction at their father's likely absence that weekend --in Russia, while Alina Makin has noted that her added parental duties during his absence (taking Gordon to three practices and a tournament; compensating Neil for missed football while his father is driven to the airport; finding child care during her two-hour hair appointment) will be banked for future use.

The Dexter Scorpions coaches-pitch baseball team finished their season in early August with some success. After starting their season slowly (see earlier press releases), the team roared into the final stretch, winning four of its last five games, and finishing with a record above five-hundred (more wins than losses), much to the surprise of many parents. Gordon Makin reinforced his enthusiasm for baseball, and performed creditably, striking out only once. In the final game, a come-from-behind win that guaranteed the team's overall winning record, he batted in the winning run. This summer, Gordon has also discovered batting cages (structures with pitching machines, where players can practice their hitting without risk to windows or parental arms). During several visits to such cages, he has successfully faced "little league" speed and height pitches – traveling at approximately 45 mph – and has taken considerable pleasure in dispatching several balls far over the machines and into the distant back netting. Gordon's evident enthusiasm for baseball (he now watches it on TV, and has taken particular interest in the coverage of the Little League World Series – for under-twelve players) has caused some alarm in his father, who spent part of the evening of Saturday, 27 August, arguing for the creation of a Dexter Cricket Club, while drinking beer with noted expatriate athletes and beer connoisseurs David Stagg and Paul Burke.

Batting cages are often located at mini-golf ranges, where the Makin family has played a number of times. Neil Makin has been (almost suspiciously) successful in several rounds, while both Michael and Alina Makin have had embarrassing blow-ups on certain holes. After one such fiasco, Mrs Makin failed to complete her round, and was feared to have thrown her putter into a nearby pond, only for her to be discovered, with putter, morosely playing on a slot machine by the entrance. Mrs Makin, however, has asked the editor to point out that she won some rounds (although no documentary evidence remains to prove this claim).

Another major summer event was the impromptu game of rounders played at the home of David and Shirley Stagg in early August. The Stagg, Burke, and Makin families gathered after a generously-lubricated dinner to play this game – an ancestor of America's baseball, played in England since at least the seventeenth century, and close to Russia's *lapta* (details of the game at [National Rounders Association](#)). The match was played between males and females in the sporting spirit which always accompanies such

events: Gordon Makin was prevented from completing a rounder by a rugby tackle from his mother; Michael Makin, who scored the first rounder in the first male at-bat (leading to remarks from the opposition, subsequently reiterated, about the tedious competitiveness of men), was easily stumped in his second at-bat, when it proved impossible to run and carry a glass of wine; Neil Makin hit with aggression belying his five years.

Alina, Gordon, and Neil Makin have also spent several afternoons in ethnographic research on local working-class life, visiting bowling alleys, where, again, Neil has displayed remarkable prowess for his age.

Field sports have also been practiced this summer, and not only in Indiana. Gordon and Neil Makin successfully fished in nearby Pickerel Lake (despite the closure of the access road and the removal of the fishing pier), with Gordon Makin catching good-sized Smallmouth Bass on his first two catches, and Neil Makin also catching his first Bass. A three-day trip to a friend's cottage on Mitchell Lake, Cadillac (northern Michigan) also saw considerable angling success: Gordon and Neil hauled in large quantities of perch, Sunfish, and Bluegills from the cottage's dock, although a pike-trolling trip across the lake in a rowing boat ended ignominiously, when their parents found themselves obliged to paddle the *rowing boat* home, in the face of a strong wind, large wakes from speed boats, and their own failures as oarsmen. The highlight of the Cadillac trip, which also included mini-golf and the inevitable batting cages, was a trip, guided by cottage owner and friend Paul Becker, to the Little Manistee River ([Fly Fishing Michigan's Little Manistee River](#)). There, at a carefully selected site in this major Michigan trout and salmon stream, the Makin family waded across shallows to tempt a whole pod of salmon clearly visible in a three-meter hole. Gordon and Neil took particular pleasure from the name of the wet fly used in this activity – the Woolly Bugger. Unfortunately, the salmon were not biting that afternoon, but one large female swam right up to Gordon's feet, fins above the water surface, only to ignore disdainfully the Woolly Bugger dangled above her nose. On the other hand, both boys hooked small trout, with Neil triumphantly pointing out a two-to-one lead at the end of the day.

The Olympic Games, which end today, have also been followed with some interest in the Makin household, despite the efforts of U.S. TV to disguise the success of Russian and British sportsmen and sportswomen. In response to parental enthusiasm, Gordon and Neil have both run indoor hurdles races, competed in long jumps, and, during a party at the home of Paul and Claire Burke, demonstrated gymnastic prowess.

In general, the Makin boys report satisfaction with the summer's sport. However, shocking rumors have been circulating that the four-year-

old Ipswich Town and Barcelona kits in which the boys used to sleep have been replaced. Observers at Blue Chip claim to have seen both boys in Galatasaray kit; Gordon's new sleeping outfit is said to be the kit of Galatasaray no 11, Hasan Sas, who supposedly distinguished himself by spitting at Ashley Cole during the bad-tempered meeting of England and Turkey at the Stadium of Light in 2003; while Neil reportedly sleeps in the kit of no 25, Necati. Other shocking reports from Blue Chip stated that Michael Makin was seen wearing not only a cap from St Petersburg Zenit (currently in second place in the Russian Championship), but also a cap from Galatasaray's bitter Istanbul rivals Fenerbahce. The only Ipswich Town cap in evidence was worn by Dan Saferstein, father of the team's star Josh (reports suggested that he had been persuaded to wear it after lengthy discussions of European football). The unexpected Turcophilia on the part of the Makin family has been attributed to family friends, the journalists Fatih and Idil Turkmenoglu. Rumours that they had fled the USA for Turkey in fear of retribution from other English fans have been denied by sources close to both families.

In other news, Neil Makin is said to have expressed great distress at the transfer of Michael Owen to Real Madrid, and to have proposed burying his Michael Owen Liverpool shirt, while Mrs Makin is equally unhappy that her two favorite England players (favored, it is said, more for looks than football prowess) are now playing abroad. The relative success of Ipswich Town in the new season has made for (relatively) quiet weekends in the Makin household, while the Makin boys have shown more interest in Manchester United and Liverpool – and were shocked to find their father cheering for Arsenal yesterday. Readers should note that Arsenal were playing Norwich City.

Finally, it should be noted that the Cornerstone Multi-age Class rats, Molly and Missie, are said to be nearing repatriation, much to the distress of family members. Negotiations may begin soon to prolong their stay in the Makin household.

Photographs attached (all by Dexter Sports Agency): Arsenal under-nine Blue Team with coach Barry Scott at Blue Chip (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/ArsenalBlue.jpg>); all the Arsenal teams and coaches at Blue Chip (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/BlueChi%5b.jpg>); Gordon at Ann Arbor batting cage (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordBatCage1.jpg>); ditto (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordBatCage2.jpg>); Gordon in his Galatasaray kit ( <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordGala.jpg>); Gordon takes refreshment, Blue Chip (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordRefresh.jpg>); Gordon swings in a Cadillac batting cage (

[personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordSwing.jpg](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordSwing.jpg)); the Makin family fishes the Little Manistee (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/ManisteeFish.jpg>); Missie considers traveling in Neil's football kit (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/MissieBag.jpg>); the family fishes Lake Mitchell from Paul Becker's pier (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/MitchellFsh.jpg>); Neil sullen in Galatasaray kit (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilGala.jpg>); Neil with his trout, Little Manistee River (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilTrout.jpg>); Boys vs Parents match at the end of the Blue Chip weekend (Michael Makin is the elderly, overweight father in the Fenerbahce cap, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/ParentsMatch.jpg>); Gordon and Alina by the Field Museum's most famous exhibit (note Gordon's obvious interest, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/FieldMus.jpg>); Gordon and Alina survey the sharks at the Shedd Aquarium (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/ChicagoShark.jpg>); the Makin men in a Chicago sushi restaurant (Gordon's choice, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/ChicagoSushi.jpg>); Neil and his turtle queue for admission at the Shedd Aquarium (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilTurtle.jpg>).

Reuters and Agence France Presse contributed to this report.

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#### **Sports News from Dexter, 18 July, 2004**

[This is the second in an occasional series of press releases from the Dexter Sports Agency, for copies of the first release and photographs (26 June 04), contact the email address at the bottom of this text]

Anglo-Russian brothers Gordon and Neil Makin continue to prove that energy can always be found for sport.

Yesterday, Gordon played in the UM 13th Annual 3v3 Micro-Soccer Shootout Camp (<http://www.umsoccer.com/3v3.asp>). Team management struggled to put together a team for the tournament (agents for several potential players reported prior engagements or commitments to other teams); as a consequence, an *ad-hoc* team consisting of Gordon Makin, classmate Tristin Rojeck, Tristin's friend Logan Brennan (all age eight), and Tristin's younger brother Chase (age six) was formed. Neil Makin (age five) was listed as an emergency substitute. Noting that there was a team entered in the adult bracket under the rather shocking name "Blitzkrieg", Anglo-Russian management decided to name this makeshift team the "Spitfires", as reminder that attempts to destroy their countries in the middle

of the twentieth century were actually repulsed. The kit, designed by Dexter Sports Kit, Inc. (co-owners Michael and Alina Makin), showed R.A.F. Spitfires dominating the skies over southern England in the summer of 1940. Rumors suggest that negotiations continue with Umbro for a licensing agreement. The team practiced once, on Thursday evening at Hudson Mills Metro Park, which allowed the teammates to meet one another. By then, management had seen the schedule for the tournament (<http://www.umsoccer.com/upload/tourneyschedule.asp>), and realized that almost every other team in the Under-Eight bracket came from organized clubs, and would consist of boys who had played together for at least a year. Tournament rules meant that every man played nine minutes and spent three minutes of each twelve-minute match on the touchline; every team member had to play sweeper-keeper for three minutes. Notwithstanding high-quality opposition, the Spitfires acquitted themselves well; they scored in every match, were competitive with the first two teams they played (BAYSA Gold and Maumee Express), won their third (Sting) and narrowly lost their fourth against what turned out to be the losing finalist (BAYSA Stingers). Gordon Makin led the Spitfires in scoring, with a total of nine goals; he scored in every game. Magic moments for the Spitfires included a splendid save to push a rocket shot over the bar in the first match and a fine free kick that beat the wall and thumped down from the cross bar just outside the goal line in the last match (Gordon Makin); outstanding goalkeeping throughout the tournament (Tristin Rojeck); a rising curve of confidence for the bracket's youngest player, Chase Rojeck, whose goal in the third game led to wild touchline celebrations from Spitfire fans; and a fine two-goal performance in the last game from Logan Brennan. Catering was provided by Dexter-Whitmore-Lake Sports Catering, Inc. (co-owners Alina Makin and Marlo Rojeck); the muffuletta sandwiches attracted especial interest from other spectators – “where did you buy those?”, one parent inquired – although Spitfire players seemed to prefer the “fast food” available from tournament concessions stands, with the possible exception of Gordon Makin, the boy who asked for sushi and miso soup to be made and served at his birthday party. Neil Makin did not play, but was seen warming up on the touchlines prior to the second match, after team officials reported that one of their players was reluctant to play. Earlier in the day, Gordon Makin had passed a late fitness test (running around the dining table, waving his arms, to demonstrate full mobility), after suffering an injury in football camp the day before – details below.

Earlier Dexter sports activities have included two weeks of swimming for both Gordon and Neil Makin. At the end of their courses, both swimmers fulfilled all requirements for the levels at which they were entered (Advanced Beginner and Young Beginner, respectively). Gordon Makin showed good form in his diving; Neil Makin jumped from the diving board with alacrity. Rumours that their father attended every day just to monitor the swimming costumes of the (female) student-coaches were hotly denied by sources close to Michael Makin.

Last week both brothers attended the SoccerBlast Camp (<http://www.soccerblast.net/>, <http://www.lookatmyweb.com/blast/faqs.pdf>) run by Soccer City Michigan Director John Spisak, with coaching from Argentinean professional Neil Gilbert, Uruguayan star Gonzalo, and US Under-fourteen player Jonathan Gilbert. Both Makin boys distinguished themselves, although Neil Makin had to be warned several times for tackles on his brother that would have made Roy Keane wince. Gordon Makin's most notable moment might have come on the last day of camp when, during a drill involving an oversize, heavy ball, he was hit in the head by a hard shot, upended, and, after a somersault, landed on his head and shoulder. Initial talk of broken limbs proved excessive, but the player has discussed his injury every day since its occurrence, and had to pass a late fitness test before the 3 v 3 tournament yesterday (see above).

With neighbor Paul Becker away fishing in northern Michigan, Paul's pool was the next stop after camp every day last week, followed on two evenings by baseball for Gordon (one win, one loss; several base hits; inches away from his first successfully caught fly ball), and on a third evening by Spitfire practice – see above. A fourth evening was spent fishing. Rumors that parents are suffering from severe exhaustion have been denied. Molly and Missie, Cornerstone Elementary Multi-Age Class rats, spending their summer at 7200 Mountain Ridge, have also denied reports that they have registered official complaints with Cornerstone Summer Pet Adoption Services after another week when sport took their official carers away from their room for up to twelve hours a day. However, they have acknowledged that Alina Makin has become their official principal guardian (she carried one of them around on her shoulder yesterday evening, while other family members watched Argentina defeat Peru).

The Open Golf Championship and two Copa America quarterfinals provide relaxing TV viewing today after days of constant activity.

Photographs: Spitfire team photograph (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/Spitfires.jpg>); Spitfire kit (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/SpitfireKit1.jpg>, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/SpitfireKit2.jpg>); Gordon dives into Dexter Community Pool (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordDive.jpg>); Neil jumps from the springboard (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilJump.jpg>); Neil (wearing Barcelona kit) with Missie (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilMissie.jpg>); Neil swimming (! <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilSwim.jpg>); Neil with his swimming coach (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilSwimCoach.jpg>); warm-ups at SoccerBlast camp (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/SoccerBlastCamp.jpg>); Neil, Gordon, and their coaches at SoccerBlast camp (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/SoccerBlastCoaches.jpg>) Gordon (wearing Ipswich kit) and Missie (<http://www->

[personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordMissie.jpg](http://personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordMissie.jpg)). All credits – Dexter Sport Photography, Inc.

Reuters and Agence France Presse contributed to this report.

### **Sports News from Dexter, 26 June, 2004**

English and Russian football supporters, currently no doubt depressed after European Championship disappointment, may take modest comfort from recent performances of the Anglo-Russian brothers Gordon and Neil Makin, residents of Dexter, Michigan.

Ten days ago, after two days of demanding try-outs, Gordon Makin was chosen for what many regard as the area's top under-nine travel team, the Ann Arbor Arsenal Premier Team (details of the travel teams at <http://www.aaysa.net/arsenaltravel.html>). His coach, Barry Scott (picture at <http://www.aaysa.net/coaching.html>), citizen of a third-world country in North Britain, reported that he was resigned to having a player turn up to every practice wearing his England kit. Scott also remarked that Gordon had impressed all the coaches (including another from the British Isles), with his knowledge of the game: for example, he was able to answer the following questions – “Who scored for England against France; who made the mistakes that let the French steal the game...?”. At the try-outs Gordon did well one-on-one, passed, dribbled, and shot well, and tackled solidly, but his finest moment might have been a glancing header over the bar of his own full-sized goal to prevent the opposition in a final scrimmage from winning a tight match.

Gordon's mother, Alina, celebrated his success by buying a new cellular phone, choosing the “soccer” background for the screen, and installing the banner “Soccer Mum” on it. Both parents, however, found the cost of their elder son's success sobering. Team fees for the Autumn and Spring seasons, due within the next two months, come to approximately \$1,000 per player (costs of facilities and coach's salary); a cheque for \$200 has already been written for Gordon's kit; his first road trip will be to the Blue Chip USA complex in Northern Indiana this August (<http://www.bluechipusa.net>), where a weekend for Gordon, accompanied by at least one family member is likely to cost around \$300. Gordon has promised to clean his room annually, in acknowledgement of parental sacrifice.

Last week, Gordon also began his baseball career with the Green Scorpions in the Dexter Recreation and Education program (coach's pitch). Gordon's father was reluctant to see his son pick up a cylindrical bat, but finally relented, and, after further expenditure, Gordon made his debut at the plate, batting in two runs with his first at-bat. In his following two at-bats he has scored base hits, while making

every out when fielding at third base to end the second game he played. Unfortunately, the Scorpions have little sting in the tail, and have lost both games. After the second game, his coach asked Gordon's father if it was really true that Gordon had never played the game, so impressed was the coach with Gordon's hunger for the ball and competitive spirit ("yes", replied his father, "his only bat-and-ball experience has been playing cricket with his incompetent father in the back garden"). Gordon has agreed to make his bed annually, in acknowledgement of parental sacrifice.

This week saw the participation of both brothers in Ann Arbor soccer camps. Gordon attended the University of Michigan Commuter Soccer Camp, run by Andy Burns, Michigan Men's Soccer Head Coach (<http://www.umsoccer.com/campInfo.asp?cc=Commuters>; details of UM Men's Soccer at [http://www.mgoblue.com/section\\_display.cfm?section\\_id=192&top=2&level=2](http://www.mgoblue.com/section_display.cfm?section_id=192&top=2&level=2)).

Gordon, coached by a current UM player, played solidly within a good group of eight-year-olds. His team, "Great Britain", was defeated only once in five days, and he was awarded the Most Improved Player trophy. His coach remarked that had Gordon not insisted on keeping goal for the first two days (making this conservative choice in an attempt to insure defensive solidity for his team), he would have been the coach's choice for MVP. In the final two matches, watched by his parents, Gordon scored four goals in a six-two victory over "USA", and then scored a late equalizer in a tense one-one draw with "Brazil", the only team to defeat them all week. The second match was somewhat marred by an incident in the Great Britain goalmouth – a desperate scramble, in which three goal-bound shots were saved, one by Gordon's clearance on the line, concluded with the Great Britain keeper inexplicably throwing the ball at Gordon's head; rumours of ill-feeling among team mates were subsequently denied, although comparisons with Holland were inevitably drawn. Great Britain might have had more chance of victory in that match if they had not held back so often, evidently in fear of the opponents attacking prowess (this was reminiscent of another European nation in Portugal this week...). Gordon expressed frustration that his fine corner into the Brazil goal mouth was covered by four Brazilians with only one Great Britain forward in the box, while his free kick from the edge of the box eluded the goalkeeper at first but was cleared at the second attempt by men on the line (here in contrast to the set-piece defending of a well-known European under-achiever). At camp Gordon took especial pleasure in the free Gatorade, and in being the only eight-year-old sent to the trainer's tent (after acquiring an impressive set of bruises, cuts, and grazes while making a goal-saving sliding tackle). Gordon has agreed to brush his teeth once a week, in acknowledgement of parental sacrifice (the camp is not cheap).

While Gordon dribbled on the manicured pitches of UM's Mitchell Field, Neil Makin attended the first week of the Brazilian Area Youth Soccer Association Camp across the road at Ann Arbor City's Fuller Fields. Neil has played all year in the BAYSA program (<http://www.baysa.net/>), promoted from the program for

children his age to the Academy Program ([http://www.baysa.net/Dev/academy\\_in.htm](http://www.baysa.net/Dev/academy_in.htm)), where he has played with seven- and eight-year-olds. Again, for camp, Neil was promoted from the half-day camp for young children to the full-day camp for children ages seven-to-fourteen. Despite occasional tantrums and refusals to accept being substituted, Neil seemed to do well in camp. Head coach Pedro Rita (Brazil) praised him, and did not gloat excessively over the second success of his fellow countryman Scolari in coaching against England. Director Ricky Saussuna (Brazil), who has given Neil the official BAYSA nickname of “King”, commented on Neil’s conversational skills, while Neil’s own (female) coaches expressed the desire to take him home with them. They also commented on his deep knowledge of the game for a five-year-old (“does he watch a lot of soccer at home?”), citing his superior understanding of the rules – in contrast to Swiss referees – “*actually*, it’s a free kick”, he told his team mates on one occasion, and, on another, was the only one to make a wall – to the delight of his coach. His own account of this last episode to his mother was more detailed (“Mummy, I was the only one to make a wall and cover my willie...”). At the end of camp, Neil won the MVP award for his team. His report sheet gave him high marks in all areas of the game (including heading), and noted that he had the best shot in camp. Neil was also instructed by Coach Pedro to kiss his coaches, which, his parents were told, he did with great alacrity. In acknowledgement of parental sacrifice (the camp is not cheap), Neil has agreed to look for the DVD of the cup final triumph of Ipswich Town in 1978, a present he received on his fifth birthday (along with an Ipswich Town rucksack, Ipswich Town shin pads, and a Michael Owen Liverpool replica shirt), which he has not been able to locate for the last two weeks, to the great distress of his father.

Apart from parental finances, the major losers during the week of football camp have been Mollie and Missie, the class rats from the Cornerstone Elementary (<http://web.dexter.k12.mi.us/STAFF%20Pages/corner/corner.html>) Multi-age Class. Mollie and Missie are spending the summer at 7200 Mountain Ridge, after a long pro-rat campaign waged by Gordon Makin, assisted by Neil and Michael Makin, was finally won. Every other mother in the Multi-age class expressed astonishment at Alina Makin’s capitulation (those *tails*...). During non-football weeks the rats receive a generous daily allowance of attention, plenty of yoghurt rat treats and other delicacies and many opportunities to run around the boys’ bedroom (while the lady of the house stands on a bed). However, exhausted sportsman only had time for brief rat petting last week. Mollie and Missie have squeaked their expectations that next week’s swimming program will have less impact on their own recreational opportunities. Neil Makin has enthusiastically endorsed the proposal to shampoo the rats and clean their tails (suggested on rat care web sites), and volunteered to provide his own toothbrush for the cleaning, but so far this underused instrument has not made contact with any rodent.

On Wednesday, after Gordon had played football from nine until four, been rushed back to change for baseball and go out again at five fifteen, only to return

home at nearly nine, he was asked if he had had enough sport for the day. Predictably, the reply was “not really”. However, he did sleep well that night. At the time of the composition of this press release, both boys appear to be playing football upstairs with a toy hedgehog (their mother has banned “soft” inside balls, because of the bills), while a DVD of the England triumph over Germany at the Olympic Stadium plays on the TV (consolation after Thursday’s loss). Mrs Makin is hiding in the conjugal bedroom. The author of this release is considering locking himself in his study until the Sweden-Holland match begins.

Photographs: Gordon and his coach, Joseph Kabwe, UM Camp, with Gordon’s trophy (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/TrophyMan.jpg>); Gordon at the Green Scorpions Picture Day (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordBBall.jpg>); Gordon catching for the Scorpions (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordCatch.jpg>); Gordon at the plate, about to score a base hit (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/GordPlate.jpg>); Neil bending it like Beckham (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilBeck.jpg>); Neil on the ball (<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mlmakin/NeilonBall.jpg>). All photo credits Michael Makin sports photos, except for last (BAYSA official photograph).

Reuters and Agence France Presse contributed to this report.

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