ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS

A LIFETIME MONTESSORI JOURNEY

ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE

INTRO

james lawrence

Jamie Lawrence is a 27-year-old professional footballer, playing for RSC Anderlecht in Belgium and currently on loan to FC St. Pauli in Germany. Jamie started playing football as soon as he could walk. After playing in some high profile youth academies (Arsenal, QPR, HFC Haarlem and Ajax) he turned professional at the age of 20.

In 2018 he was called up to play for the National Team of Wales alongside stars such as Gareth Bale and Aaron Ramsey. He made his debut for Wales against Albania in November of that year and in March 2019 made his first competitive start for Wales against Slovakia, in a Euro qualifying game.

EARLY STEPS

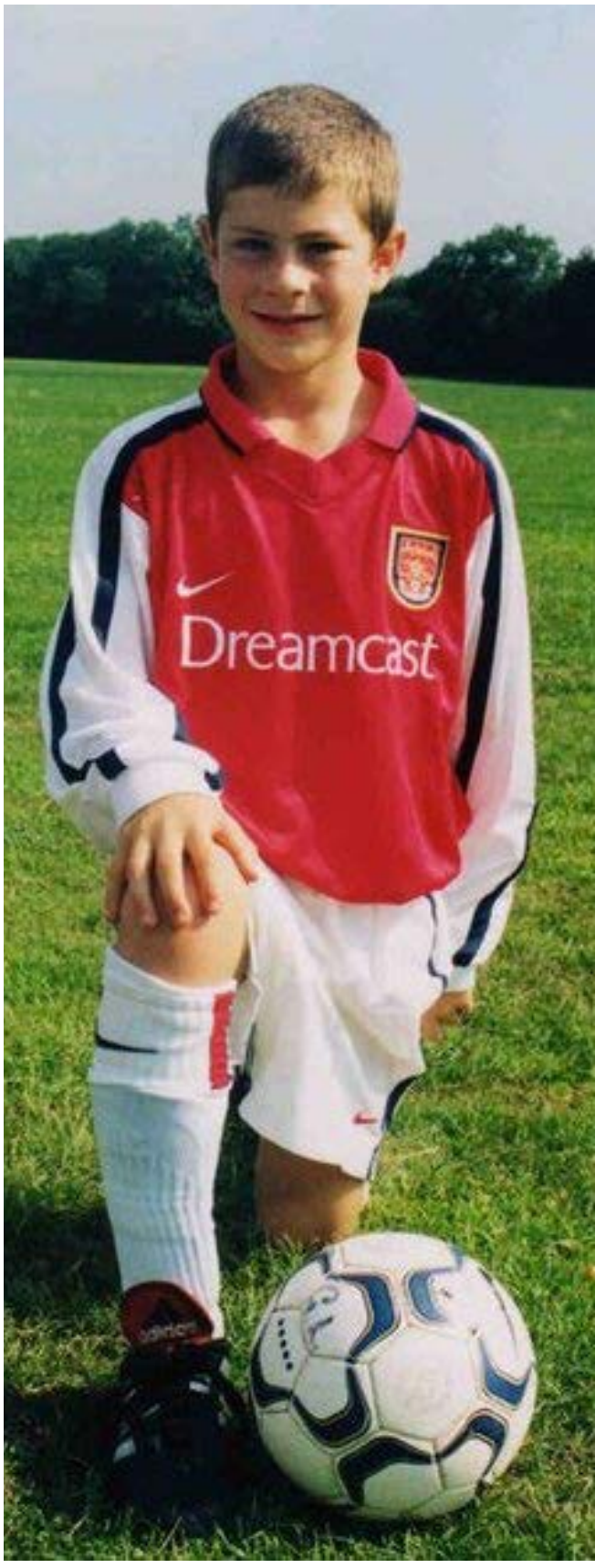
james lawrence

Where did you go to school?

I started school at age 3 at the Maria Montessori School (MMI) in Hampstead Heath, London. I studied there up until the age of 6 and then moved to Rainbow Montessori School as there wasn't a 6-12 class in Hampstead at that time. Shortly after, the Elementary school in Hampstead was started and I became one of the original 5 pupils. I stayed there until I was 12 and then left to go to Mill Hill (Belmont).

What do you remember most from your Montessori school?

I guess what I remember the most is the freedom of movement that I had in the classroom. The lack of feeling constricted or unable to move around was one that has stuck with me. Also, the ability to decide how I wanted to structure my day made a big impression on me. Aside from that, I loved the outdoor space in the garden. Being a very energetic child, I loved exploring and all outdoor activities. After expending all of that energy, I loved being able to sit down in the reading corner we had in the classroom.



MONTESSORI IMPACT

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What skills or approach to life do you now have as a direct result of Montessori?

There are honestly so many that come to mind. Learning self-discipline and being able to intrinsically motivate myself are two that jump out at me right away. Being in an environment where I was encouraged to develop these naturally and not be forced into doing things has really helped me

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to keep these values as I get older. I deeply believe in equality and justice as well. I find that if I witness something unjust, it reaches my very core and I feel as though I must set it right. My compassion for others is another life skill that I gained through Montessori. I have the ability to empathise strongly with almost anyone and I believe that this started at a young age and growing up in a Montessori classroom.

How much of that experience has contributed to your success today?

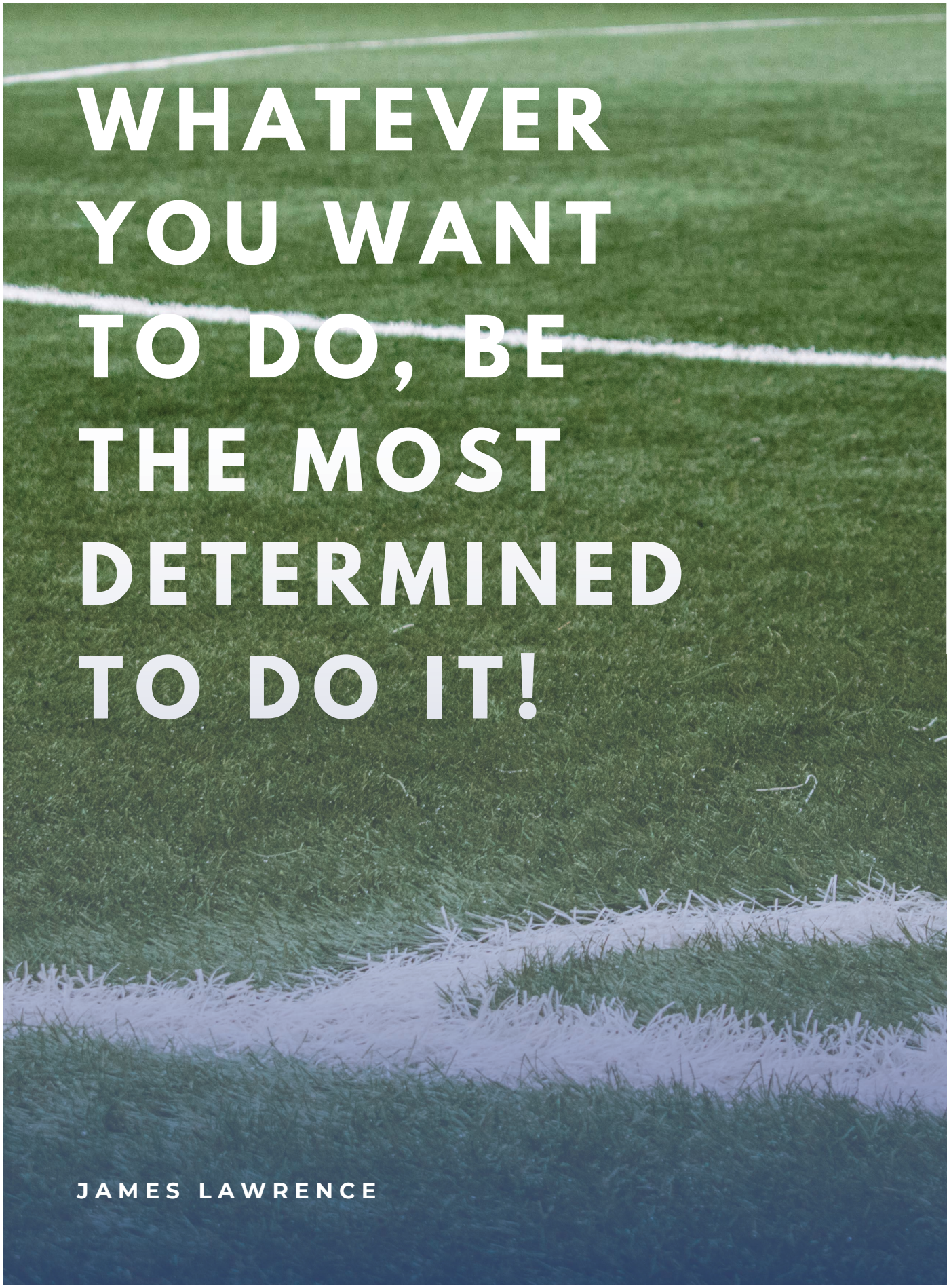
Well, the self-discipline and motivation has played a huge role in my career so far. In any professional sport, the need for this is paramount. My diet, sleep, health and fitness all require a lot of discipline and motivation to maintain my body at the highest level. The ability to motivate myself to do all the extra work that it takes to maintain this level has helped me massively.
The other skills have all helped me on a more personal level and within the team. It's important in any team sport to be able to form bonds with others and create a real sense of community. As well as that, to help the younger less experienced players to learn, has been something that I am having to increasingly do as I get older. Because Montessori has different ages in one classroom, I learned to help others and share any knowledge that I had obtained with them. This peer to peer learning is also a key aspect of helping any team to be successful.

PRO TIPS

james lawrence

What's your top tip for others who want to follow your career?

My top tip, although quite cliché, would be **to never give up** if you really believe in something. My career hasn't taken a 'normal' path by any means. I've had plenty of setbacks and low points but I always believed in myself and that I could make it eventually. Now looking back, I've played for two of the most world renowned academies at Arsenal and Ajax. I've played at senior level for a European giant and the most successful football club in Belgian history with RSC Anderlecht and I've represented my country at an international level for Wales. Whatever you want to do, be the most determined to do it!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