

Billy Gilmour has the potential to be a top, top player – Malky Mackay



Published 9 March 2020

Malky Mackay believes Chelsea teenager Billy Gilmour will be “the player of the next generation for Scotland.”

The 18-year-old midfielder has burst on to the scene in England and was lauded for his performance in last week’s 2-0 FA Cup win over Liverpool and again when Frank Lampard’s side hammered Everton 4-0 in the Premier League on Sunday.

Mackay, the Scottish FA’s performance director, stressed that it is national team manager Steve Clarke’s decision if the former Rangers youth player would be called up for Scotland’s crunch Euro 2020 semi-final play-off against Israel later this month.

However, Mackay is confident that Gilmour, a Scottish FA Performance School graduate, will in time prove to be a special player for the Dark Blues.

He said of a possible international call-up: “That is purely up to Steve, not for me to go anywhere near.

“I know that we have a youngster who will become the player of the next generation for Scotland. The player.

“Steve regularly speaks to myself and Scot Gemmill (Scotland under-21 boss) concerning the players and he has obviously been to watch him.

“I am also conscious that we have a jam-packed midfield of talented players in Scotland, by far our strongest area.

“I am not going to tag him with any name but I can only say I have been excited about him since he was 16.

“He is a player of the next generation. We had a chat with the staff and said Christian Eriksen played for Denmark at 18 and we have a kid that has the potential to be a top, top player.

“There is some good talent coming through now but I have not seen someone like him for years.”

Mackay has not been surprised to see Gilmour instantly make demands on his more experienced team-mates at Chelsea.

He said: “I noticed that in the Carabao Cup a couple of months ago at Old Trafford.

“There was a point when he got the ball, gave it to Kurt Zouma and screamed at him and pointed wide where he should play the ball and Zouma played the ball there.

“Again, over the last two weeks, you see that is part of his game.

“It is something that he does regularly in our (Scotland youth) games because he is dictating the game.

“But to actually do it to experienced full internationals and the fact that they are responding to it isn’t really a surprise because they are training with him every day and when you train with really good players, that respect comes quickly.”

Mackay recalled the impact Gilmour, as a 16-year-old, had on the Scotland Under-21 side when he was called up for the prestigious Toulon tournament two years ago.

The former Scotland defender said: “We had a wildcard spot left for a 20th player.

“We decided to give it to the 16-year-old to see how it went.

“Our first training session was here before we flew out and within an hour Scot is looking at me and thinking ‘wow’ because the 20-year-olds were giving the 16-year-old player the ball.

“He didn’t play in the first game, we started him against a fantastic France team and he was showing maturity beyond his years to the point where he started the semi-final and captained the team in the third and fourth-place play-off, and scored against South Korea.

“They gave him breakout player of the tournament.

“If you look at the brochure for that tournament they put the top 100 who have played in that tournament on the front cover and it is a who’s who of the best players over the last 25 years and he wins breakout player of the tournament.

“I am really proud of him.”

Topics
MALKY MACKAY, SCOTLAND, PREMIER LEAGUE, CHELSEA

Taboola Feed



Ranked! The 10 best forwards in the world

We’ve donned our tin hats to pick out the best attackers on the planet, with plenty of top-class talent missing the cut

FourFourTwo



How the Premier League table would look without VAR this season

Far from being the corrective force-for-good it was intended to be, VAR seems to have created more problems than it’s solved this season,...

FourFourTwo



Ranked! The 10 best forwards in the world

We’ve donned our tin hats to pick out the best attackers on the planet, with plenty of top-class talent missing the cut

FourFourTwo



20 Barcelona players you probably forgot ever wore the shirt

As Barcelona land the signing of former Middlesbrough striker Martin Braithwaite, Sam May takes a look at some of the more peculiar...

FourFourTwo



How Jurgen Klopp has identified Liverpool's big weakness – and made them even better

If the Reds from being anything last season, it was invention from midfield and more drive from the bench. Without a summer spending spree, how...

FourFourTwo

Related Stories



Malky Mackay mixes with key Brazilian coaches at Pro Licence presentation >



The FourFourTwo Preview: Chelsea vs Cardiff >



The FourFourTwo Preview: Cardiff vs Everton >



The FourFourTwo Preview: Hull vs Cardiff >