



# KHARI RANSON

TEXT Brian Motowu

PHOTOGRAPHY David Price & Stuart MacFarlane

## THE BASICS

<b>BORN</b>	London, 13/09/2007
<b>JOINED</b>	Under-10
<b>HEIGHT AND WEIGHT</b>	6ft 2in, 78kg **
<b>POSITION</b>	GK
<b>BOOTS</b>	Adidas Predator Elite
<b>SCHOOL</b>	Colfes' School, Greenwich
<b>NUMBER</b>	93

## RATE YOURSELF

<b>HANDLING</b>	87
<b>POSITIONING</b>	92
<b>REFLEXES</b>	83
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b>	95
<b>STRENGTH</b>	90

**A** Khari in training earlier this summer

I grew up in East London and began playing football at a very young age, around three or four years old. Although my school didn't have a football team, I played during lunchtimes in the intense Year 5 versus Year 6 games.

My mum is from Ghana and my dad is from Nigeria, which leads to a lot of friendly debate about which jollof rice is better! Personally I side with Nigerian jollof. I have two younger siblings: a brother and a sister. My sister is into athletics, my dad runs his own five-a-side team, and my mum plays netball, so sports run in the family.

Initially, I played in midfield as a holding player and at centre back before being moved to goalkeeper because our team needed one. I fell in love with the position and enjoyed diving around – essential for a keeper.

In terms of role models, I looked up to Manuel Neuer for revolutionising goalkeeping with his ability to play out from the back and to Jason Steele from Brighton for his exceptional distribution.

My first team was HD All Stars, and at the same time, I trained at Focus Football. Both were renowned for their coaching, and many talented players emerged from there. That's how Charlton first noticed me. Soon after, Chelsea showed interest, followed by Arsenal. I was offered trials at all three clubs, but as an Arsenal fan I chose to join them.

Hale End was an incredible experience. One of the main highlights was reaching the national final at Under-14s, even though we lost on penalties. That defeat motivated me to improve. I was also fortunate to travel to Dubai and Brazil for football tours, both of which were amazing experiences shared with close friends.

Receiving the scholarship offer was a big milestone for me. I got the news in March last year and was thrilled. While I've known for a while, the real work begins now. I'm excited to start on this full-time football journey and ready to embrace the challenges ahead. My family was very proud when I shared the news, and their support motivates me.

## THE PAST

**Favourite Arsenal player of all time**  
Alexis Sanchez

**Earliest Arsenal memory**  
My first goalkeeper session on the astro at Hale End

**Favourite goal I've ever scored**  
The one and only goal I've ever scored! On tour with the Under-11s in Poland at a seven-a-side tournament. I booted it long from a goal kick, the keeper had a poor touch and it went in!

**Memory that makes me smile**  
Being selected to play for England

**Moment I realised I could make it**  
Signing my first contract at Arsenal

**A piece of advice I would give to my younger self**  
Confidence is the key to success

**Best subject in school PE**, although I was good at physics too

**First player who made me fall in love with football** Alexis Sanchez

**Coach who's impacted my game most** Adam Birchall, he played a key role in signing me. I still remember his advice back then about being good with my feet.

**My most 'clutch' moment so far is** Saving a pen in the group stage of Hale End Cup to put us through to the quarter-final

## THE PRESENT

**Favourite rising baller**  
Bukayo Saka

**My best attribute on the field**  
Playing out from the back with the ball at my feet.

**Favourite food and drink**  
Sushi and orange juice

**Favourite current Arsenal player**  
Leandro Trossard

**Favourite movie** Hunger Games

**Hardest working team-mate**  
Cameron Ismail

**Most skillful team-mate**  
Louis Zecevic John

**Score or assist**  
As a keeper I'd say assist

**Sliders or crocs** Sliders

**Favourite training drill**  
Small-sided games

**Favourite music artist** Gunna

**Somewhere I'd love to visit** Miami

**Strong Young Gunners are Sustainable Gunners. How do you help the environment** Reusing plastic and glass products

## THE FUTURE

**A player who could go all the way** Max Dowman

**If I could play with anyone**  
Cristiano Ronaldo

**I will be happy with my career if I can play in the Champions League and represent Ghana, Nigeria or England**

**I want to make a difference by** Bringing my strengths into the modern game

**One thing I want to add to my game** Ability with my weaker foot

**If I could get a degree in anything** Property management

**I would be a better player if I always had confidence even during tough times**

**Dream first-team squad number**  
Number 1 or 17

**If I wasn't playing football, I would play...** Basketball



A standout moment in my career was saving two penalties on my England debut against Turkey. I was determined not to lose that shootout, especially after the Under-14 finals loss on penalties.

I've had the opportunity to play for both the Under-18s and 21s, which are big steps up from under-16 level. My Under-21s debut against Enfield Town was particularly memorable due to the different experience of having supporters behind me and the unique challenges of the pitch. I enjoyed it and look forward to more of these experiences this season.

On game day, my ritual involves walking onto the pitch with my left foot, touching the crossbar with both hands, and touching both posts. I then walk across the six-yard box in the direction of the crowd, which helps me get ready for the game. ■



B Training with the first team last week

C Warming up before the Under-21s match against Manchester United earlier this month

D Talking to the pitch for a pre-season Under-18s game against Rangers

