



# Tom Palmer's Reading for Pleasure Comprehension Challenge



# Introduction

**Tom Palmer's Reading for Pleasure Comprehension Challenge** features short passages and interesting questions from my Puffin *Football Academy 7+*, *Foul Play 9+*, *The Squad 9+* stories and the rugby book *Scrum!* 8+ published by Barrington Stoke.

The short reading comprehensions with 6 questions are set out on 1 side of A4 for easy photocopying. The texts can stand alone without the pupils having read the stories first, but the main aim is that the passage read will tempt them to pick up the book in the library later!

There is a sample certificate at the end. I am happy to produce, sign & dedicate for any pupils successfully taking part at either a 7+ or 9+ levels. Please email me at [info@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk) with your pupil's names and school address.

You may also like to use the video links below (or click on the video link web addresses on this web page [http://www.tompalmer.co.uk/index.php?page\\_id=61](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk/index.php?page_id=61) ) in class to watch me reading aloud the selected passages & asking the questions in conjunction with the passages.

I really hope the pack inspires children to enjoy reading. Thanks



## Contents

Title	Video link	Page
Foul Play 1	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tEQtL5BTko&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tEQtL5BTko&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL</a>	3
Foul Play 2 : Dead Ball	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87-divFBQTA&amp;feature=relmfu">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87-divFBQTA&amp;feature=relmfu</a>	4
Foul Play 3 : Off Side	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkJHQsb18SA&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkJHQsb18SA&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL</a>	5
Foul Play 4 : Killer Pass	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqa3R4GF_Zs&amp;feature=relmfu">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqa3R4GF_Zs&amp;feature=relmfu</a>	6
Foul Play 5 : Own Goal	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u23PrDT7330&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u23PrDT7330&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL</a>	7
Football Academy 1 : Boys United	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFfsas2CSws&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFfsas2CSws&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL</a>	8
Football Academy 2 : Striking Out	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Kie48WXaYk&amp;feature=relmfu">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Kie48WXaYk&amp;feature=relmfu</a>	9
Football Academy 3 : The Real Thing	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJhbsxsKkPo&amp;feature=relmfu">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJhbsxsKkPo&amp;feature=relmfu</a>	10
Football Academy 4 : Reading the Game	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9_9hn0dWJY&amp;feature=channel_video_title">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9_9hn0dWJY&amp;feature=channel_video_title</a>	11
Football Academy 5 : Free Kick	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYafXteQ6U4&amp;feature=relmfu">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYafXteQ6U4&amp;feature=relmfu</a>	12
Football Academy 6 : Captain Fantastic	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Nr_yzzeOZs&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Nr_yzzeOZs&amp;feature=mfu_in_order&amp;list=UL</a>	13
Scrum!	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0C0Q6UhGs8">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0C0Q6UhGs8</a>	14
The Squad : Black Op		15
The Squad : White Fear		16
Answers		17
Sample Certificate	Email <a href="mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk">info@tompalmer.co.uk</a>	18

# Foul Play by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141323671



### From Chapter 1

Danny crouched when he heard the footsteps.

Then, after counting to ten, he looked carefully over the top of the wall through fragments of broken glass set into a line of concrete. There were two men. Both dressed head to foot in black. Both wearing ski hats low over their heads, their ears, their eyebrows.

This was it.

What Danny had been waiting for, sitting out in the cold every night for the past week. He felt excited. Or afraid. He wasn't sure which.

Danny watched the men, the tip of his nose touching the cold brick of the wall to make sure his head stayed still.

1 What did Danny hear?

2 How many numbers did Danny count to before looking over the wall?

3 What were the two men wearing on their heads?

4 What time of day is it?

5 How did Danny feel as he watched the men?

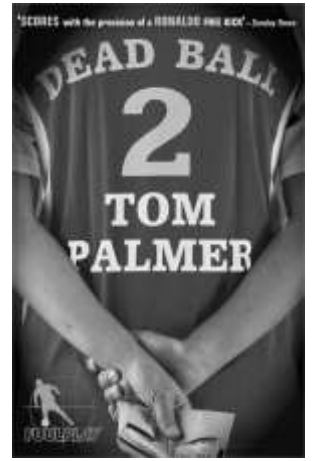
6 What part of Danny was touching the cold brick wall?

## Foul Play 2 : Dead Ball by Tom Palmer

### Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141323688



### From Chapter 1

“Come on England!” Danny shouted at the television.

On the screen England’s star striker, Sam Roberts, collected the ball up in the centre circle. He played it wide to the national team’s short but speedy winger. The winger moved slowly at first, then accelerated past two Russian defenders and played an early ball into the box. Roberts was already bearing down on the penalty area, having run half the length of the pitch in seconds.

He leapt for the ball.

“Go on!” Danny was on the edge of his seat now. Literally. Ready to leap into the air if Roberts scored.

1 How was Danny watching the match?

2 What position does Sam Roberts play?

3 How many defenders does the winger accelerate past?

4 Who is England playing against?

5 How far did Sam Roberts run down the pitch in seconds?

6 Was Danny standing or sitting?

# Foul Play 3 : Off Side by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141323671



### From Chapter 1

Garish adverts for club merchandise. The offer of a City credit card.

Announcements about an expensive dinner where you can meet City stars from the past.

All coming over the tannoy. All at deafening volume, so it was impossible to have a conversation.

But today, for once, half-time was different.

Dad picked up on it immediately.

“What’s going on, Danny?”

A group of fans were clambering over the advertising boards and on to the pitch. And a strange silence had fallen across the stadium.

“I’m not sure,” Danny said. “A pitch invasion?”

“Hooligans?” Dad suggested

“No. It’s not like that,” Danny said.

“A protest?”

“Maybe. There’s about twenty of them. And they’ve got ... they’ve got a banner.”

1 What is the name of the football club Danny is watching?

2 Who could you have an expensive dinner with?

3 What level is the volume of the announcements?

4 Who is Danny watching the football match with?

5 What did the fans have to climb over to get on the pitch?

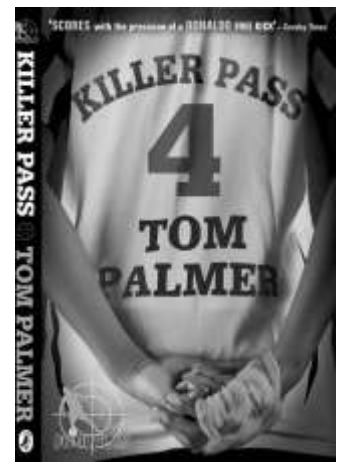
6 How many fans were on the pitch?

# Foul Play 4 : Killer Pass by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141331188



### From Chapter 1

Danny Harte saw more than he had expected to over the fence. He was looking into the large garden of a *very* large house. The house backed on to a thick area of woodland, where Danny was carrying out a vital piece of surveillance.

There were five windows on the ground floor. All with lights on. Four of the windows had curtains or blinds drawn. But through the fifth window Danny could see a massive TV screen. So big it had to be a cinema screen. Not a TV screen at all. He'd never seen one like that in the shops. It was amazing.

But he could see more than that.

A gold-plated mirror on the wall next to the screen.

Several huge vases full of fancy flowers.

A giant model of a Ferrari 300 parked between two L-shaped sofas that looked like it was being used as a coffee table.

1 What was Danny Harte looking over?

2 What does the house back onto?

3 How many windows were on the ground floor?

4 What colour was the mirror?

5 What shape were the sofas?

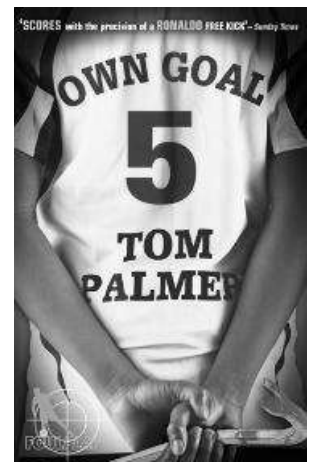
6 What was being used as a coffee table?

# Foul Play 5 : Own Goal by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 978-0141331195



### From Chapter 1

'Who are you? Who are you?'

Danny was walking down the long corridor than ran the length of the main building at school when he heard it. Someone chanting a football song. One he knew well.

But he carried on walking. Although he was the only one in the corridor that morning, there was no reason to think it was being aimed at him.

'WHO ARE YOU? WHO ARE YOU?' It came louder now.

Danny looked round this time to see three figures at the far end of the corridor. He knew who they were immediately. Theo Gibbs, from the sixth form. And his two mates, Andy and Ryan.

Now what? Ignore them? Shout something back? Just stand there, like he was now? They wanted to get a reaction out of him: he knew that much.

1 What part of school was Danny walking along?

2 What sort of song was being sung?

3 What time of day was it?

4 How many people were walking towards Danny?

5 What school year was Theo Gibbs in?

6 Why were Theo, Andy & Ryan chanting the song?

# Football Academy 1 : Boys United by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141324678



### From Chapter 1

Ever since he could walk, Jake Oldfield had played football. And ever since he could *remember*, he had dreamed of being a professional footballer. Not because he wanted to be rich and famous like Steven Gerrard or Wayne Rooney. It wasn't that. He wanted to be a footballer because he *loved* football.

If football could be his *job*, that would be great.

He didn't want to go to a boring office every morning like his mum. Or to a factory like his dad. Both of them indoors all day. Jake wanted to be on football pitches: running, tackling and scoring goals.

1 When he could do what skill had Jake first started playing football?

2 What did Jake dream of wanting to be when he grows up?

3 Does Jake want to be rich & famous?

4 Name one of the two footballers Jake mentioned

5 What did Jake think working in an office would be like?

6 Where does Jake's dad work?



## Football Academy 2 : Striking Out by Tom Palmer

### Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141324685



### From Chapter 1

It was five-one. And Yunis's goal total for the season so far was eight.

He couldn't believe this was happening to him.

The first thing he did every time he got to the Academy on a Sunday was check the team sheet, pinned to the wall. And every time he read it, there was his name: Yunis Khan. Wearing the number nine shirt.

But, even with all these good things happening, deep down Yunis wasn't completely happy. Because when he'd looked at the row of parents, all clapping and cheering him, there was one set of parents missing.

His.

1 What was the final score?

2 How many goals had Yunis scored this season?

3 On what day does the new team sheet go up?

4 What is pinned to the wall?

5 What shirt number does Yunis wear?

6 What is making Yunis sad?

# Football Academy 3 : The Real Thing by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141324692



### From Chapter 1

“No, *this* is a football shirt,” Ryan said, pulling his jumper off, displaying the latest Real Madrid top. It was white with purple trim.

Tomasz’s top was white with black trim. The club badge read “Legia Warsaw”. It was the team he had always supported. And it was the team he missed since he had moved to England with his parents over a year ago.

“Nice top,” said Ben, looking Ryan up and down.

“And who are Legia Warsaw?” Ryan said ignoring his friend.

“My team,” Tomasz said calmly.

“Never heard of them,” Ryan said. “Are they Polish by any chance?”

A couple of boys sitting down laughed.

1 What was Ryan wearing over his football shirt?

2 Which team’s shirt was Ryan wearing?

3 What colour was the trim on Tomasz’s top?

4 When did Tomasz move to England?

5 Who did Tomasz come to England with?

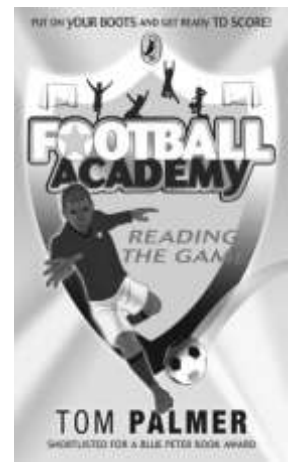
6 What did the two sitting boys do?

# Football Academy 4 : Reading the Game by Tom Palmer

## Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141324708



### From Chapter 1

Then Ben looked at the parents. A row of figures in cagoules and jumpers at the far side of the fields. They were standing behind a cordon, a line of string stretched the length of the pitch. On the opposite side of the pitch to the United coaches and substitutes.

Then Ben saw his own family.

His mum leaning on the pushchair. The baby, Tom, sleeping. His brother and sister, Molly and Cameron, four and five, kicking a small ball about, falling over, laughing.

Ben's mum waved to him and grinned. She knew he'd set the goal up. She *knew* about football. She'd taught him how to play when he was younger than Molly or Cameron. When he was her only child. After his first dad had walked out.

1 Who were wearing cagoules and jumpers?

2 What was Ben's Mum leaning on?

3 What was baby Tom doing?

4 What were Molly & Cameron kicking?

5 Who had set up the goal?

6 Who had taught Ben how to play football?

## Football Academy 5 : Free Kick by Tom Palmer

### Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 978014132471



### From Chapter 1

James sat staring out of his bedroom window – desperate for it to snow.

The weather forecast had been full of warnings all day: twenty centimetres of snow on its way to northern England. But, although the clouds were heavy – and the light strange – there was still nothing.

‘Are you packed, James?’ a loud voice came up the stairs. Dad’s voice.

James looked at his bag. It was packed, his pair of shin pads sticking out of one of the side pockets. Three days’ clothes. His football boots. A towel. Everything they were told to bring by Steve, the team manager, for a three-day tournament in London.

They were meeting at the United stadium that morning.

‘Yeah, Dad. I’m packed,’ James shouted back.

‘Okay. We’ll head off to the stadium in half an hour.’

‘Alright,’ James said. Then he frowned.

1 Which room was James sitting in?

2 What weather had been forecasted?

3 How many days was James going away for?

4 Who was their team manager?

5 Where was the tournament?

6 Who was taking James to the stadium?

## Football Academy 6: Captain Fantastic by Tom Palmer

### Reading Comprehension

Puffin

ISBN 9780141324722



#### From Chapter 1

In December, just before the Christmas break, Premier League United's under twelve's had won a tournament in London, beating both Arsenal and Chelsea. And not long before that they had beaten Real Madrid. They had been written about as one of the best under twelve teams in Europe. A crop of players that would go all the way.

But today they were at Tranmere Rovers. And they'd just let a third goal in.

0-3.

Ryan – the team captain – was furious. But not with his team mates: with his mum.

She was on the sidelines shouting, like she often did. Arguing with the referee. Questioning the under twelve coach' tactics. Making Ryan feel embarrassed.

1 In which month had the Under twelves team won a tournament?

2 Where was the tournament where the team beat Arsenal and Chelsea?

3 How many goals had they let in today?

4 What is the name of the boy who is team captain?

5 Who was Ryan cross with?

6 Why was Ryan cross with this person?

# Black Op by Tom Palmer

## READING COMPREHENSION

Puffin ISBN 978-0141337784



### From Page 1

Three small figures moved rapidly across the night-time desert floor, sliding over shifting sands, keeping low.

Low because if they were visible they could be shot within seconds.

They stopped when they located a flickering light coming from an isolated camp. Their target. They knew from satellite images taken earlier in the day that the camp consisted of a large tent, a fire, a dozen camels, a Land Rover and a small army of men. They also knew that the target was heavily armed and, no doubt, under strict orders to fire at anything that moved. It was the base of one of the most dangerous terrorist cells in the world and it would be well defended.

The three figures had to get close to the tent without being spotted and listen to what was being planned.

It was a tough mission, but the trio was up to the job. Rob, Lesh and Lily worked for the British Government, half of a team of six who were deployed around the world and were known as the Squad. They were extremely clever, highly trained and had already been involved in a number of successful missions. The only difference between them and the other spies working for the British Government was that they were all just thirteen years old.

1 What time of day was it?

2 Why were the three children crawling?

3 What had taken photographs of the camp earlier in the day?

4 How many camels were there?

5 What might happen if they were spotted?

6 The children are described as being “half of a team of six who were deployed around the world”. What does the word deployed mean?

# White Fear by Tom Palmer

## READING COMPREHENSION

Puffin ISBN 978-0141337814

### From Page 1



Four children crouched motionless on the top of the tallest building in the most northern city in the world, waiting for the order to jump.

Around them were some of the most spectacular views they had ever seen: vast snow-topped crags, deep gorges with fjords running through them, a row of black mountains in the distance. But they weren't there to look at the scenery. The trip was strictly business, not pleasure.

A fifth child – Lesh – sat in a wheelchair, waiting to relay that order and send the other four over the top. For Lesh, this was the first outing since his accident on their last mission. An accident that had left him paralysed from the waist downwards. So today he was determined to get everything right. To the second.

“Remind me why we are doing this?” Adnan, a stocky Asian boy, murmured to the two girls crouching next to him.

One was white with blond hair, Lily.

The other black with tight dark plaits, Hatty.

“There's someone we need to talk to,” Kester, the fourth member of the group, said. And this is the only way of reaching him.”

“Who?” Hatty asked.

“I'm not allowed to say.”

“Thirty seconds,” Lesh said.

“Why not?” Hatty pressed

“Orders.”

1 What order were the children waiting for?

2 What was on top of the craggy mountains?

3 What are fjords?

4 What is Lesh sitting in?

5 How do you think Adnan is feeling?

6 Which child do you think is the leader?

**Scrum!** by Tom Palmer

**Reading Comprehension**

**Barrington Stoke**

**ISBN 978-1-84299-944-8**



**From Chapter 1**

Steven saw the other player come from the left. He stepped up his pace until he was running fast. Very Fast.

That was all it took. Pace.

The other player, a winger, was left behind. He was so far behind that Steven could run back to the middle and dive over the goal line between the posts.

They won the game.

“That was fantastic, son, said Steven’s dad in the car on the way back to Leeds after the game. He was on a high.

“You were the best player on that pitch by a mile,” his dad went on. “It’s only a matter of time before some club comes and snaps you up. A Super League club.”

Steven smiled and looked at his dad. He loved this. His dad was so sure that one day Steven would be a famous Rugby League player.”

1 Was the other player coming from Steven’s right or left?

2 What position did the other player play?

3 Where did Steven dive over the goal line?

4 Who collected Steven?

5 What city were they going to?

6 What sort of club did Steven’s dad think would snap him up?

7 How did Steven feel about his dad’s belief that he would be famous?



# Answers

## Foul Play 1

- 1 Their footsteps
- 2 Ten
- 3 Ski Hats
- 4 Night-time
- 5 Excited and afraid
- 6 His nose

## Foul Play 2 : Dead Ball

- 1 On television
- 2 Striker
- 3 Two
- 4 Russia
- 5 Half the pitch
- 6 Sitting

## Foul Play 3 : Off Side

- 1 City
- 2 City stars from the past
- 3 Deafening loud
- 4 His Dad
- 5 Advertising boards
- 6 Twenty

## Foul Play 4 : Killer Pass

- 1 A fence
- 2 Woodland
- 3 Five
- 4 Gold
- 5 L-shaped
- 6 A giant model of a car, a Ferrari 300

## Foul Play 5 : Own Goal

- 1 The corridor
- 2 A football song
- 3 Morning
- 4 Three
- 5 Sixth Form
- 6 To get a reaction from Danny

## Football Academy 1 : Boys United

- 1 As soon as he could walk
- 2 A professional footballer
- 3 No
- 4 Steven Gerrard or Wayne Rooney
- 5 Boring
- 6 A factory

## F.A. 2 : Striking Out

- 1 5-1
- 2 Eight
- 3 Sunday
- 4 The team sheet
- 5 9
- 6 His parents not watching

## F. A. 3 : The Real Thing

- 1 A jumper
- 2 Real Madrid
- 3 Black
- 4 A year ago
- 5 His parents
- 6 Laugh

## F. A. 4 : Reading the Game

- 1 The parents
- 2 A pushchair
- 3 Sleeping in the pushchair
- 4 A small ball
- 5 Ben
- 6 His mum

## F. A. 5 : Free Kick

- 1 His bedroom
- 2 Snow
- 3 Three
- 4 Steve
- 5 London
- 6 His Dad

## F. A. 6 : Captain Fantastic

- 1 December
- 2 London
- 3 3
- 4 Ryan
- 5 His Mum
- 6 Embarrassed of her shouting & arguing

## The Squad Black Op

- 1 Night
- 2 They could be shot if they were seen
- 3 A satellite
- 4 12 or a dozen
- 5 To overhear the plans of the terrorists
- 6 No preferred answer – up to pupil

## The Squad White Fear

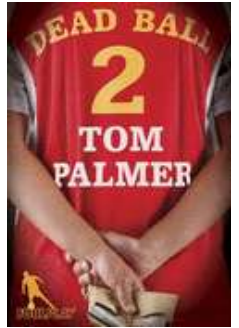
- 1 To jump off the top of a building
- 2 snow
- 3 deep valleys filled with rivers/sea
- 4 a wheelchair
- 5 No preferred answer – up to pupil
- 6 Kester is leader but Lesh is a suitable answer

## Scrum!

- 1 The Left
- 2 Winger
- 3 Between the goal posts
- 4 His Dad
- 5 Leeds
- 6 Super League Cup
- 7 Happy



Tom Palmer's  
Reading for Pleasure  
Comprehension Challenge



Certificate for  
**CHAMPION**  
**READING SKILLS**

awarded to

-----

Signed

-----

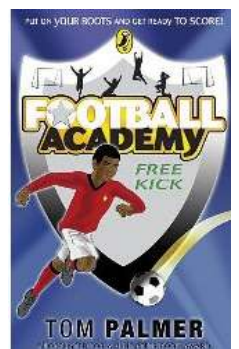
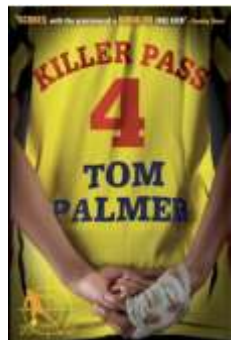
Date

-----

[info@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk)

Puffin Books, 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL

[www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk)



**Order Form for Class/Library set of books**  
**\*\*\*\*\*Special Offer 10% discount & carriage free\*\*\*\*\***

<b>Name</b>	
<b>School name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Tel</b>	
<b>Email</b>	

**The Squad**

*Black Op*  
*White Fear*

**Set Special £10.80**

**Tick to order**



The Squad is about a youth football team that represents the country around the world in international tournaments. But, secretly, five of them are spies, sent to stop foreign agents harming British interests.

**Football Academy**

*Boys United, Striking Out, The Real Thing, Reading the Game, Free Kick & Captain Fantastic*

**Set Special £32.94**

**Tick to order**



The stories of six boys who are part of a fictional Premier League football academy. (7+)

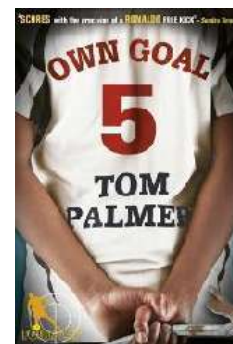
*'I wanted to write a series of books based at a real football academy, a series that would be just like the academies at Manchester City or Arsenal or Swansea. I went to a couple of real academies and met the coaches and players to see what academies are really like. Then I wrote the books, making sure I made it as realistic as possible.'*

**Foul Play**

*Foul Play, Dead Ball, Off Side, Killer Pass & Own Goal*

**Set Special £31.46**

**Tick to order**



A series about a boy called Danny who tries to solve crimes in the football world, using his experience reading detective stories to help him.

*'There is loads of crime in football around the world. Kidnaps, bribery, exploitation of young players. I wanted to create a boy hero who would clean up the game and show a new generation that football is about more than money and puffed-up egos.'*

**Please return to:**

Madeleine Lindley Ltd Book Centre,  
Broadway Business Park,  
Chadderton,  
Oldham, OL9 9XA

**Total £ Enclosed**

Tel: 0161 683 4400 Fax: 0161 682 6801  
 info@madeleinelindley.com  
 www.madeleinelindley.com

**Please ask for signed and/or dedicated books**