

25.11.2024 Role Models: Laurie Cunningham

The children came into soul and funk music from the 1970's as this was Laurie's favourite music that he loved to dance to. The children were asked to think about the following as they came into the hall:

Today's assembly is about this man.

- **Why do you think he was famous?**
- **What clues gave you your answer?**
- **What interests you about this picture?**

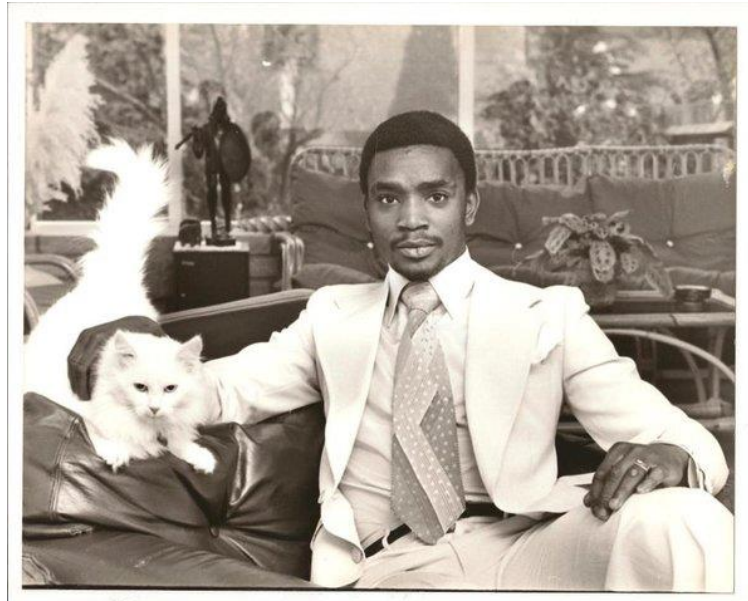


We revealed that it was Laurie Cunningham, a trailblazing footballer who was an inspiration to everyone and a role model for millions of young black children. He was one of the very first black footballers to play for England. Laurie began his career at Leyton Orient in London and went on to play for West Bromwich Albion, Real Madrid and Manchester United. He was in fact the first every English Galactico! Laurie was a winger and his play was characterised by great speed and skill. In his spare time he enjoyed music and dancing.



We then watched a video together which explored Laurie's history. Born in London, England he grew up in this country to parents who had travelled over from the Caribbean - a country called Jamaica. The video explored how there are over 2 million black people in the UK who work really hard to make a difference to the lives of the people that live here. Laurie loved playing football with his brother, he had really quick feet and was a really good dancer!

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Laurie was so good at football that when he was 21, he signed for a very big club called West Bromwich Albion. He joined two other fantastic black players, called Cyrille Regis and Brendon Batson. Laurie was one of the best football players in the country. People enjoyed watching Laurie on TV, where they saw him dazzling defenders and scoring incredible goals. He was an inspiration to everyone, especially young black children who dreamt of joining a big football club.

In 1977, at the age of 21, Laurie was asked to play for England. He made history by becoming one of the very first black players to play for his country. It was a fantastic achievement that Laurie had worked very hard for.

When he wasn't playing football Laurie liked to dress up in cool clothes and dance. He would practise his dance moves for hours, doing turns, kicks and even the splits. He was so good that he actually won dancing competitions.



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Then in 1979 Laurie joined the great Spanish team Real Madrid. Many superstars like Cristiano Ronaldo would later do the same. But Laurie was one of the first. He stayed at Real Madrid for three seasons, winning the Spanish league and the cup. When his time at Real came to an end, Laurie came back to England and played for Manchester United, amongst other clubs. His influence on football remains enormous. You could say that famous players like Marcus Rashford and Raheem Sterling owe him a great deal.

I then asked the children 2 questions to see how well they had remembered and to see if they could understand the challenges Laurie had overcome:

- **How do you think Laurie felt when he was first chosen to play for England?**
- **Laurie inspired many of today's top players. What does it mean to be 'an inspiration'? Why do you think that Laurie was an inspiration to others?**

Finally, I asked if the children could guess who the second English Galactico to play for Real Madrid was? The answer is of course:

