# Twitter Thread by Arsenalog

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## [Thead] Ben Knapper - Arsenal's Loan Manager.

## It is usually the big guys, your Artetas, Edus and Vinais who make the headlines for Arsenal but there are so many more men and women who are putting in their best to make Arsenal successful and Ben Knapper is one of them.

His presence might surprise a few but Ben Knapper would be playing a key role during this transfer window as he would looking after some of Arsenal's brightest prospects in William Saliba and potential Joe Willock and Reiss Nelson.

In this thread, I'll discuss

- The background of Ben Knapper and the post he holds.
- His primary duties.
- His impact.

Ben Knapper first joined Arsenal in 2010 as an Analyst from statistical analysis firm Prozone. He has since then worked his way and was promoted from the post of senior football analyst to newly created post of Loan Manager in February 2019.

Arsenal didn't have a loan manager for a long time, though after observing several top Premier League adopt the new model and employing loan manager and few incidents of mismanagement of players out on loan, Arsenal final created a post of loan manager.

His primary job was to work alongside then Head of Football, Raul Sanllehi, and Academy Manager, Per Mertesacker, to ensure the players who were in need of a loan move were sent to the right clubs in order to facilitate their growth and development.

As a loan manager, Knapper had to deal three different profiles of players.

- Fringe payers who are struggling for game time and the club wants to send them on a loan move to boost their transfer value or keep them motivated and occupied in case they're needed next season.

- Academy players who were to be transitioned from U23s to first-team football and required a loan move to a club which can facilitate the transition.

- Players who were waiting for their work permit to play for the club and needed a loan move in order to earn the permit.

As loan manager, Knapper is responsible for choosing the right club to loan out the player. He has to consider some key factors before finalising a club.

- Style of football.
- Competition at the club.
- Manager's view of the player.
- Player's view of the club.

After everything is taken into consideration, the player is sent on loan. However, that's not where his job is done. After sending a player on loan he has to keep in contact with them to regularly be updated about his welfare, playing time and just making the player feel valued.

When Eddie Nketiah had to be loaned out last season, a committee was set up which consisted of loan manager Ben Knapper, the then Head of football operations Huss Fahmy and Nketiah himself, who sat down and finalised on three clubs amongst all those to register an interest.

The three clubs were Leeds United, Bristol City and Fortuna Dusseldorf. They were each then invited to present a presentation to make their case and Leeds finally won the battle.

During his loan move at German club VFL Bochum Arsenal loanee Jordi Osei-Tutu had to, unfortunately, face racial abuse from an opposition player, he was reduced to tears and he walked out from the match before returning back after composing himself.

Ben Knapper travelled as a representative of Arsenal and checked up with Osei-Tutu about his welfare and to underline Arsenal's concerns.

In an interview with @charles_watts Osei-Tutu was quoted saying “Ben’s been magnificent to be fair, for someone who has just come into the role he’s been perfect.

“He calls me, I call him. He always messages me as well to see how training is going.

“When I play a match, he’ll sit down and watch the game and call me afterwards to give me a summary of how he thought I played, which helps me a lot.

“Previously I heard a lot of players were forgotten about when they went on loan. That’s why they’ve brought Ben into place and I think the system now is working better.”

Arsenal goalkeeper Dejan Iliev was on loan at Ekstraklasa side Jagiellonia when he had to quarantine himself in Switzerland after Covid-19 outbreak across the world. Arsenal, and in particular Knapper, made sure that he didn't felt alone and

constantly checked upon him.

Iliev: "Ben has been very important, I'm constantly in touch with him.

"When I was in Slovakia I was constantly speaking to him and he came over there to see me. We speak after the games, whether it's been a good game or a bad game, he give me positives and he believes in me.

"So he has been very good for me, very supportive. I really respect him and I appreciate what he does."

Given what has happened to players to Serge Gnabry on loan at West Brom and others, a loan manager was a necessity and it's not wrong to say that while not every move has worked for Ben Knapper and the player, he has still done a great job.

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