

# Simmons desperate to follow in the Youngs brothers' footsteps

Harry Simmons looks set to be the latest to roll off Norfolk rugby's conveyor belt of talent.

**DAVID FREEZER** reports on his rise.

**H**arry Simmons' hopes of becoming a professional rugby player have been given a major boost after making a surprise debut for the Leicester Tigers first team.

The 17-year-old was introduced as a second-half replacement as a young Leicester XV beat Loughborough University 43-12 in pre-season.

Unlike some of Leicester's academy players, Simmons was allowed to continue studying locally and is in his final year at Gresham's School, near Holt.

It means the teenager, from Lenwade, is following in the footsteps of the Youngs brothers, who also played at Holt and studied at Gresham's before going on to be major players for Leicester and England. Ben, 26, started three of England's four World Cup games before succumbing to an ankle problem - winning his 50th cap in the opening-night victory over Fiji at Twickenham - and Tom, 28, started all four matches at hooker.

Simmons has not yet had a proper chance to get advice from the Youngs brothers but is targeting earning an extension to his current academy contract so hopes that opportunity will arise.

"I would say Ben Youngs is my number one idol in the game," Simmons said following his Welford Road debut. "His running game and his ability to create tries and speed up the tempo



■ Gresham's School's Harry Simmons made his debut for the Leicester Tigers first team recently.

**STAR QUALITY**

■ Harry Simmons hopes to get his chance with England Under-18s later this year.

of the game, he's certainly not a boring number nine. "Sam Harrison (another of Leicester's senior scrum-halves) has

been helping me a lot, with my passing and kicking, he's a really nice guy."

The former Corpusty Primary pupil is now looking to follow in the



■ Tom Youngs also came through Gresham's before starting for En

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Youngs' footsteps into the national set-up, having also recently taken part in an England Under-18 training camp.

"I missed out on all the England stuff at under-16 because I injured my knee, my patella tendons, so it was a nasty one," added Simmons who played for Holt from under-16 up to under-16 level.

"So I'm looking to get into the England Under-18s squad.

"I'll be playing in the academy league which starts in December. I'll look to play in that and hopefully we can win that league, which obviously be quite good, and then try and get into England Under-18 training in February."

**■ Have you got a rugby story? Contact sports reporter David Freezer on 01603 772418 or david.freezer@archant.co.uk**