

Academy chooses the guinea pig 23

TWENTY-THREE young footballers have been selected to take their place at the FootballCV Academy, which opens on September 3.

Following trials, the lads were chosen from hundreds of hopefuls for a place at the Academy which is the first in the world - an independent, residential football academy, dedicated to the footballing and educational needs of its students.

Based at Rushden & Diamonds' Nene Park ground, the Academy will play a number of friendlies against Premiership and League opposition in addition to daily training programmes. They will also compete in the Football Conference Youth League against the likes of Birmingham City and Wycombe Wanderers.

After training, the squad will head

to the classroom to continue a comprehensive football education with seminars, workshops, visits to football games. Guest speakers will include some of the biggest names in football.

Former Northern Irish international Kevin Wilson, Academy team manager, said: "This gives young footballers the opportunity to make a career in the game. The lads have

all worked hard to get to this point and we'll make sure we give them the best platform to make the most of their talents."

The Academy is already celebrating its first success without a ball being kicked after 16-year-old Odysseas Economides signed a two-year scholarship with League One club Northampton Town. Odysseas had attended the

Academy trials and was offered a place in March. He accepted and had committed to start in September when Northampton Town moved in.

The cost of attendance at the Academy is £15,000 per student, per year. This includes kits, equipment, transport, tutoring, coaching, entertainment, excursions, guest speakers, accommodation and meals for seven days a week.