

Tottenham Hotspur Training



On Tuesday, February 3rd, our group had the amazing experience of visiting the Tottenham Hotspur Training Centre. It gave us a look behind the scenes at a top Premier League club, with access to facilities that fans don't usually get to see. While we were waiting outside for everyone in our class to arrive, we stood near the entrance watching a myriad of fancy cars drive by. Filled with the excitement of meeting someone famous, we joked that one of them belonged to a Spurs player.



We were welcomed to the turf field by a U7 academy coach and youth academy goalie coach. Within the first couple of moments of talking with the coaches, their intensity was at a different level than anyone had experienced before. These were professional academy coaches whose purpose was to produce players who would one day play in the top leagues around the world. After some introductions they ran us through a typical Tottenham academy training session, beginning with some ballmastery and technical work, followed by a one on one drill, finishing with a game. The ballmastery worked on getting comfortable with the ball through change of directions and skill moves, while taking breaks with some juggling. Then we partnered up and passed back and forth getting comfortable with receiving the ball. Tottenham's mentality on youth training revolves around winning one on one duels in all parts of the field. Our one on one drill concentrated on the area around the goal and beating the defender then scoring. Finally we split into two teams and played 7v7. Our group consisted of those who had played soccer their entire life and those who had never touched a soccer ball before this trip. Even with the wide range of skill levels, the coaches were impressed with our enthusiasm and athletic ability.



Following the training session, our coaches answered various questions about the academy process and their experiences as mentors to young players. One striking fact was that many big clubs (although not Spurs, apparently) will pay the families of young players to move into a new neighborhood in order to be recruited into their youth squads. While the majority of these players will not even make it into the first team, it was explained to us that clubs see it as a worthwhile investment which, when successful, far outweighs the cost of relocating players. The coaches also explained to us the various traits they look for in upcoming ballers. Aside from technical ability and fundamentals, recruiters also look at the players' parentage as an indicator of how they will develop. For instance, a player with tall or athletic parents will be favored over other players with similar technical abilities. Even at the U10 level, it was incredible to see how competitive the academy system can be.

It was truly unfortunate that a large portion of our group was not allowed to participate in the training. It would have been extra special to have everyone on the same field, learning more about the game of football in the footsteps of Spurs legends. Despite the setback, the group felt lucky to get a behind-the-scenes look at one of the biggest clubs in England.