

Year 7 and 10 pupils “Go Dutch” on tour of Arnhem

After months of planning and preparation, the time finally came for the Year 7 and 10 football teams to embark on their much anticipated tour to Holland, to participate in the widely acclaimed Arnhem Cup.

As the vast majority of Paignton Academy pupils were making their way to bed, readying themselves for their day of Friday lessons, the group of 28 boys met at Waterleat Road at 11pm on Thursday evening, at the start of what was to be a 22 hour trip to their Center Parcs destination.

After a 7-hour journey to the ferry port in Dover, a 90 minute ferry crossing and a 2 hour travel through France, the coach was then held up for a total of 5 hours in Belgium due to a combination of bank holiday traffic and a collection of rogue pigs who decided to escape from a trailer pen that was housing them.

This still didn't unsettle the boys, who capitalised on the extended wait time by catching up on some much needed sleep, before the coach arrived at the Center Parcs site at just before 9pm.

After the marathon day of travelling, the group quickly settled into their lodges ready for an early night ahead of a huge day of football on Saturday.

Saturday morning saw the Year 7 team play three pool matches against teams from Scotland and two different areas of Holland, including a team from the satellite centre of local professional club, Vitesse Arnhem.

The team battled throughout each of their games against incredibly strong opposition, and were very unlucky not to pick up any points from these games, despite some highly spirited performances.

Goalkeeper, Alex Veysey, proved to be the man of the day for the team, with a string of excellent saves that caught the eye of many.

The Year 10 team started their campaign on Saturday afternoon and, similar to their Year 7 counterparts, they were also to play out their pool fixtures against teams from varying backgrounds.

Games against Tring Tornados from London, as well as local clubs DVOL, AZSV and VDZ saw the team pick up a total of 10 points from a possible 12, after some incredibly strong performances.

Forwards Callum Nightingale, Charlie Rowe and midfield maestro Oliver Groves were the main goal getters, but goal of the day went to captain, Jack Winsor, who smashed home a last minute free kick in the final pool game to set up a dramatic 2-1 win.

After an exciting day of fixtures, both teams had plenty to look forward to for the second day of play.

If the thought of another day of football wasn't exciting enough, an evening of swimming in the Parcs' Aqua Mondo leisure facility, followed by home cooked Chicken and Tomato Pasta would definitely prove to be a highlight for the tour, and the boys took full advantage of these opportunities before making their way to their lodges ready for an early night.

The Year 7 team progressed to their second day of fixtures on Sunday morning, hoping to build on some promising performances from the day before.

Once again, the Year 7 boys demonstrated great determination and effort throughout their second set of pool games, and were able to register a respectable three points from their three games against some stern opposition. The 1-0 win over English rivals, Tikton Pythons, proved to be the highlight of the team's results, with captain Jacob Wellington scoring the crucial goal.

Defender Noah Green and Midfielders Ashton Ballard and Harry Madge were the team's stand out performers on day two, with the latter also getting his name on the score sheet in the process.

Sunday brought new challenges for the Year 10s as well, as they looked to continue their fine form from Saturday into their afternoon fixtures.

Similar to their Year 7 peers, the U15s also registered three points from their four fixtures on the second day of the tournament, but were desperately unlucky not to better that. Two narrow losses in their first and last games will prove to be valuable learning curves about the importance of being clinical in tournament football, as the team dominated both games in large patches.

The highlight of the day for the U15s was a convincing 3-0 win over Dutch team, VV Hoogland, where Alfie Slough, Sam O'Mara and Nightingale were the men on target, as the team put together some breath taking play in a highly dominant performance.

After an exhausting two days of tournament football, the teams were able to let off some more steam with their second visit of the weekend to the Aqua Mundo Water Park, before settling down into their lodges for their final evening on tour.

As the checkout procedures started on Monday morning, there was still time for an awards ceremony, where players and staff alike voted for their "Players' Player of the tournament" and "Managers' Player of the tournament" for both age groups.

For the U12s, Alex Veysey scooped the "Players' Player" award, while Ashton Ballard was rewarded for his fine form with the "Managers' Player" accolade. In the U15 age group, Sam Lamburn was presented with the honour of being named "Players' player", while Oliver Groves secured the vote for the "Managers' Player" after an excellent campaign.

The long journey home to Paignton, which saw the group arrive back at Waterleat Road at 10pm, bought an end to incredibly memorable tour, one which the students will be talking about for many months ahead.

Huge thanks go to all of the sponsors who provided very generous donations to support the funding of the teams' new playing kit and training gear, to all parents who supported the boys along the way, and to all of the players who represented the Academy superbly across the weekend, both on and off the pitch.

Special mentions must go to Mr Scott, Mr Power and Mr Young for organising and facilitating such an excellent trip, as without their efforts, the trip simply would not have been able to go ahead!

Well done to everyone involved

Mr Smith







