

MARYVILLE COLLEGE CAMP TOUR JAN 2018

Thursday January 11th

Headed to the airport on what can only be described as a typical 'sunny' Manchester day i.e. no rain and the sun trying to creep through! The first group headed through to the arrivals lounge and after jumping on the bus off they went with Barrie and Conor and Dave to enjoy a kick about in the sun in the village of the nearby Edgerton. After the second main group arrived we collected everyone on the bus and headed for our first trip to Anfield the home of the mighty Liverpool. A tour of the stadium took us behind the scenes of this great club and into the changing rooms where the players would be getting ready this Sunday for what we hoped to be the game of the season. After ending the tour it was on the bus to the red half of Manchester and a visit to Old Trafford the home of United. Starting to get cold now as the sun went in but a chance to go around the ground and then a rush through the club shop. After that it was back to our overnight hotel at Cranage Hall a former stately home. After a wonderful dinner then it was bed to catch up a night of missed sleep.

Friday January 12th

Full English breakfast then our driver Dean packed the bus again; surely he must be the best Tetris or Jenga player in England, before we set off south to the new training center of Spurs. On the way a stop off at a service station and a new world record in '1 touch bounce' as Barrie, Conor, Dave and Danny had the players working around the trucks and buses in the car park. Back on the bus then on to Enfield where Harry Kane and Deli Alli go through their paces every day. The Spurs coaching staff took the players through a 2 hour session on skill and technique development ending in a game and also some of the favorite drills of the first team players. On to the bus and then South to London and check in at the hotel next to Stamford Bridge where Chelsea play. A last minute change of hotel meant we were sharing the same location as the Chelsea first team and we got to see league winners Gary Cahill and N'Golo Kante as they boarded the bus. Pizza dinner then back to the room for bed and another busy day on Saturday.

Saturday January 13th

Check out of our hotel and off to downtown London for a quick walking tour to see all the highlights of the city. Starting at Buckingham Palace then heading along the Mall and then into Trafalgar Square. From there it was on to Horse Guards parade where we saw the changing of the guard, Downing Street the rather modest home of the Prime Minister and then Parliament Square. Unfortunately the London Eye was closed and Big Ben was covered in scaffolding but that did not deter the group from heading over Westminster Bridge before getting lost on the way back as the staff turned left instead of right! Back to Piccadilly Circus for all the souvenir shopping and a visit to Lillywhites sports store. After lunch it was time to head towards Wembley the home of England's national teams and the temporary home ground for Spurs. An awesome stadium and a great game made better by the fact that Spurs scored 4 goals with no reply. After our first live game of the tour it was back on the bus to head north and back to our hotel. To keep everyone awake Conor decided to test the adults with riddles and quiz questions. Not sure how we managed to find 3 hours of riddles but somehow Conor did it although Dean our driver must have seen the questions before hand judging by the number he got right!!! Late check into our hotel but the good news was we got to at least spend 2 nights there.

Sunday January 14th

Our last full day of the tour and it was off to Leigh for a training session with the one and only Tosh Farrell. A master coach and fantastic character who had the whole group in the palm of his hand as they played attack and defense and worked on individual ball skills. The parents managed to find a seat to enjoy a coffee and then it was time to get on the bus again to head to Liverpool for what we hoped was going to be the game of the weekend, we were not going to be disappointed! Before we headed to Anfield we went to downtown Liverpool and the incredible Albert Docks where everyone headed to either more shopping or fish and chips based on individual needs and wants! For those having fish and chips it looked like they had a small whale on their plate then it was back on the bus and up the hill to Anfield. After Dean managed to find an incredible parking space we all headed together towards the ground armed with our tickets which on the black market were changing hands for hundreds of pounds! Almost 2 hours later we were back together outside the ground with the whole group amazed at what we had just seen, a 7 game thriller which was surely the game of the season and an atmosphere that raised the hairs on the back of your neck. What an experience! Back on the bus once more to head back our hotel for a final dinner and the closing ceremony. Our chance to thank and recognize the group, parents and players. A simply wonderful tour with some wonderful people.

Monday January 15th

With everyone still talking about the night before we were back on the bus for a 6am departure to head to Manchester airport! Next time let's do it for longer and thanks for allowing us to share our wonderful country and soccer culture with you!