

Coaches' Reactions to the Unique Experience in Buenos Aires, Argentina

2009

"The Argentina Coaching Tour was an excellent, excellent educational opportunity. To be certain, without the work of U.S. Soccer a coach on his or her own would not have gained the inside access that we had—I mean, we spoke with the Argentine Youth National Team coaches, not just on one occasion but two! And they spoke to us at great length; I still shake my head in disbelief at the access we had. It was incredible the insights we were able to be a part of. The trip was extremely worthwhile—for a youth coach, college coach, for anyone excited about trying to make soccer in their area better. Watching the Estudiantes 10 year-olds train provided things I could use as a college coach; watching the Argentina Juniors first team train provided insights that I can use with Regional ODP players or my club teams. I would sign up again in a heartbeat! Oh...and watching Boca Juniors play at home wasn't bad either!" - *Sean Bushey, National "A" License coach and Region IV staff coach and head coach at Whitworth University in Spokane, Wash.*

"This innovative step taken by U.S. Soccer to expose coaches in the U.S. to the influences of long established soccer cultures around the world will greatly benefit growth and development of soccer in this country. The week I spent studying the Argentine Youth Soccer Program enriched my ability to develop the youths that I coach and train in the U.S. The whole experience enhanced my knowledge as I go forward in my pursuit of advanced licenses through the USSF." - *Ernest Harmon, National "B" License coach of South Ozone Park, N.Y.*

"Thanks to the U.S. Soccer Federation for this opportunity. I am looking forward to repeating it." - *Luis Mendoza, "A" license coach and Technical Director for PASCO Soccer Club in Wayne, N.J.*

"An unforgettable trip, full of educational soccer content, spectacular presenters, friendships and emotions. I loved every minute of it." - *George Mihalopoulos, National "A" License coach and Director of Coaching for Huntley Heat Soccer in Ill.*



U.S. Soccer International Coaching Education Workshops Reaction from Attendees

"It's hard to find the right words that can give a trip of this nature the justice it deserves. But the best way for me would have to be to say "special". From the moment we arrived in Argentina to the moment we left, it seemed that every instance that we had was filled with those "special moments". Whether it was at the Argentinean youth matches having an open dialogue with Luis "Negro" Enrique, or listening to "Tata" Brown and "Vasco" Olarticochea speak of their World Cup experiences, or even just talking with other coaches about the day's occurrences, moments like these and many more allowed every moment of the trip to be incredible." - *Jimmy Obleda, National "A" License coach and Director of Coaching and Player Development for Fullerton Rangers in Fullerton, Calif.*

"As a Director of Coaching and Player Development for a youth club, it was important for me to see how a country that has produced some of the greatest footballers in the world, and continues to do so, works and develops their players from the earliest ages to the senior teams. The things I got from the training environment created in Estudiantes were simple things that are easily applicable in the United States and can further help in the development and growth of our youth players within our country." - *Jimmy Obleda*

"As a Technical Director of a youth club I found the trip invaluable. Observing firsthand how a great soccer nation operates and the environments created to produce players cannot be replicated through local coaching courses. The commitment to the game by all the soccer leaders from the A.F.A to local supporters of the clubs was very impressive. The trip was a great learning experience that I would highly recommend." - *Don Gemmell, "A" license coach and Technical Director for Texas Rush Soccer Club in The Woodlands, Texas*

2010

"Living in Canada and having taken all my licenses with the USSF it was a good decision. When I had to do my audit I saw a trip to South America that was the best of all the trips I've done. Argentina's culture, the food and especially the soccer made this trip 100 percent worth it. We visited the top teams over there and had a chance to see several age groups and see what they do and how they work with them. The games we watched were awesome. We met world renowned personalities as well. Overall I think that the USSF did a fantastic job trying to deliver a variety of topics for all different coaches that made the trip. I won't even think twice to go back again to another trip like this. Thank you to all that make the trip possible." – *Ruben Flores, National "A" License coach and Ontario Soccer Association Region 2 and Ontario U-14 boys coach from Ontario, Canada*

U.S. Soccer International Coaching Education Workshops Reaction from Attendees

"This was one of the most educational experiences of my life. All (lectures) were very valuable but in my opinion, Gerardo (Salorio) was the best. His passion, mannerisms and experiences were brilliant." – *Aaron Brunner "A" license coach and Director of Youth Development in Woodbridge, Va.*

Coaches' Reactions to the Unique Experience in Madrid, Spain

2010

"My trip to Spain was certainly not an expense but an investment. I had an opportunity to spend time with some of the finest individuals who represented the U.S. Soccer Federation and the many coaches who were a part of the U.S. delegation. The translations by Alfonso Mondelo made it quite easy to follow all lectures and added to the enjoyment of the experience. The visit to Estadio Santiago Bernabeu, tours to see firsthand the inner workings of the various academies such as Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid was a dream come true.

"We were exposed to some of the best coaching minds in Spain from Michel (Head Coach of Getafe) to the likes of Antonio Diaz Cartavilla from Real Madrid, Gines Melendez the Spanish U-17 Men's National Team coach and Jose Luis Arjol who is currently the assistant coach and fitness trainer for Real Betis. It would be Jose Luis Arjol who would have the greatest impact on me based on his methods of coaching and his views on youth player development. The information I received on this trip will definitely go a long way in helping me affect the growth of the players I work with in the club, ODP and U.S. Youth National Team systems. The whole time I was there I kept thinking about the many friends who coach that would benefit from a trip like this in the future. This is certainly one of those must-do trips as a soccer coach." - *Anthony James, "A" license coach and Director of Coaching and Player Development Soccer Vision Academy in Ellwood City, Pa.*

"It was very reassuring to hear all the Academy Directors that spoke with us address that one of their main objectives is to assist in the development of their youth players as people. The reality is that even though those boys are part of the club structure not all of them will make a career out of soccer. It struck a chord with me because I constantly see too many coaches, parents, and clubs put all their emphasis on winning at all costs here in the U.S. Many times we forget that through soccer we can teach life lessons and this is what was reiterated to us during our time in Madrid." - *Guillermo Medina, "B" license coach and Rebels Soccer Club Director of Coaching in San Ysidro, Calif.*



U.S. Soccer International Coaching Education Workshops Reaction from Attendees

"The soccer culture in Madrid is a reflection of the standard of the culture in their people, very high in all aspects. It was evident in the matches of Real Madrid vs. Sporting Gijon, the Real Madrid vs. Atletico Madrid second division match, and the various training sessions we experienced from youth to Getafe's first division team, coached by Jose Miguel Gonzalez "Michel." He was a true professional and an ambassador of soccer for his country to us. From the various youth directors, U-17 National Team coach, to Michel, we were given a true glimpse as to why Spain is playing the most attractive soccer in the world today. The message is, 'Coach within the GAME.' Nothing else needs to be said except to watch La Liga to confirm what we experienced. My sincere gratitude to Scott Flood, Rene Miramontes, Greg Vanney and Wilmer Cabrera, for representing U.S. Soccer and allowing us coaches this most wonderful experience, that we may enhance coaching in the United States" - *Jaime Ramirez, "A" license coach and Technical Director of Soccer at Fresno Pacific University, Calif.*

"If the experience of last year in Argentina was excellent, because of the high level of the course, this year in Spain was even better. The level of the instructors and the soccer environment was at a top level. I hope that the U.S. Federation continues doing these types of international courses for the benefits and to increase the knowledge of the coaches in the U.S. We lived and saw how the teams work at the high level of competition." - *Luis Mendoza, "A" license coach and DOC for TSF Academy in N.J.*

"The trip to Spain was a tremendous experience on so many levels. As with the coaching courses I have taken, I had the opportunity to meet and network with other coaches with various backgrounds from the U.S. and Canada. Since I coach females, I was asked why I would take this trip which focused on the men's game and how boys are selected, developed, evaluated, and chosen for the top clubs and national teams. While there are different nuances between the men's and women's games, it's still soccer. So it was a great opportunity to learn from some of the best coaches in the world, and then implement it in my coaching. In fact, as soon as I returned from Spain, I used the Real Madrid U-14 boys training session I observed with my U-15 ODP Girls Team. While they may not have been quite as technical as the boys from Real Madrid, they certainly understood the concepts and executed them to the best of their ability.

"Not only did I take away many ideas about how to run training sessions and develop players, but I also witnessed how the culture plays a critical role in the success of the game from the youth academy levels all the way through the professional and national team environment. I have had the opportunity to coach teams from the U.S. that have competed in Brazil, Italy, Denmark, Sweden and England. So I have seen what it is like to compete in other countries; yet, this trip provided an insider's view at how it's all done.



U.S. Soccer International Coaching Education Workshops Reaction from Attendees

"Moreover, what impressed me most was the openness, charisma, and passion of everyone we met. They were so willing to share their ideas, thoughts, and philosophies and always admitting that their way was not the best way, but just one way of doing things. Regardless of their success and status in the world of Spanish soccer, every coach and trainer gave us an amazing amount of information, time, and energy. What amazed me was that they were honored that we were there to learn from them and they were extremely gracious with their time and answered all of our questions. Perhaps the most incredible experience I had was watching Getafe's first team prepare for an upcoming match against Real Madrid and then having the opportunity to hear Getafe's head coach, Michel, speak. He had just finished practice and was on his way to meet his wife to celebrate his birthday, but still took the time to talk to us and was quite engaging, entertaining, and down-to-earth. It was as if he was humbled to speak to us and honored by our enthusiasm to learn from him, while he didn't realize that we were the lucky ones!

"Overall, it was a trip where I got the chance to learn a lot about the game, the culture of Spanish football, and experience the training environment of the national and club teams. Staying at the same facility where the national teams train was also an added bonus especially because the Spanish Women's and U19 Girls National Teams just happened to be there training so I had a chance to take a peek at their sessions." - *Danielle C. Fagan, "A" license coach and Conestoga HS Girls Varsity Soccer, Head Coach*

"Gaining insight on youth player development from Spanish professional clubs will prove extremely valuable. I was impressed with the depth of knowledge and professionalism in our interactions with the lecturers, trainers and coaches on the trip. The common theme from these clubs was the necessity to create an environment that produces deceptive players capable of making good decisions. As a result my coaching paradigm has shifted to focus more on the intellectual aspect of player development. Overall, the experience deepened my understanding of the game and broadened my expectations for the players I develop." - *Joshua Stringer, "C" license coach and United Futbol Club - Southern California Assistant Director of Coaching Boys U7-U12*