



2016 Holland Trip Recap

The 9th Spring Trip to Holland was another smashing success as we took the largest group yet, 55 people (25 players) for our annual jaunt ‘across the pond’. The 2016 version featured the same variety of activities and a wicked daily pace that kept everyone in constant motion. Once again, Jan Pruijn, the Dutch master of organization, put together an incredible itinerary that included a combination of soccer, culture, history and lifetime experiences that will be the talking point for years to come. It truly is an experience of a lifetime to be able to immerse into a different culture and experience life on different terms. The Dutch have a way of welcoming and treating their guests with the utmost of hospitality, and we experienced that many times over the course of our trip.

Our flight over arrived as scheduled, our bus took us from Schiphol International Airport in Amsterdam to our friendly destination in Groesbeek where Jan and Astrid were eagerly awaiting our arrival. The first day is always a long, tiring day, with the time difference (6 hours ahead) and the jet lag, but the excitement of being in Holland fueled the adrenaline, and on we go. After a brief orientation on the accommodations, (and how to properly put the bedding together, aka Astrid), we had a full day ahead of us, culminating with our first game of the trip later that evening. We played the Trekvogels club of Nijmegen, coached by Joost van Elden of our very own Dutchtouch staff. With 25 players, we were able to form 2 teams – U13 and U15, each group played 5 games. The U13 group played some outstanding competition and improved from game to game, with the last game being the best by far! The U15 group had more success in their games, ending the trip with a winning record. They also played some steep competition with the U13 Academy team of Vitesse and the JVC Cuijk teams.

As much as we value winning games, when we go to Holland, the main purpose is to learn from them as much as we can about developing young players. What impresses me the most is how solid their foundation is at the younger ages. After our first game vs Trekvogels U 13, that word **foundation** just stayed on my mind. Foundation is always the basis of any development, and in soccer, it is the overall development of everything that the individual player needs to be successful, with and without the ball, 1 vs 1 on both sides of the ball. It is about the ball skills,

using both sides of the body equally well - winning, keeping, using the ball – first touch, last touch, shielding, tackling and integrating into total team play. The Dutch build the foundation through age 11, and then they add other elements. It was common to see that in all the Dutch players wherever we played.

The 2016 trip featured many of the usual ‘Dutch treats’ from the previous trips:

full day in **Amsterdam** with a canal cruise, browsing Dam Square area, visit to Ajax – stadium tour, fan shop, youth complex and an exciting game between the 2nd teams of Ajax and PSV (strong rivals) and a women’s game between Ajax and FC Twente

2 visits into **Germany** ... one to see a professional game at Bochum and the other to Dortmund to visit the famous team of Borussia Dortmund (stadium tour and fan shop), and a stop off in Dusseldorf for sightseeing on the return to Groesbeek.....

2 **school** visits – the first to our usual visit of the OBC bi-lingual school in Bommel and the second, and a new one, to the school in Silvolde, where we stayed in guest family homes

’44,’45 **War Museum** in Groesbeek and the visit to the Canadian War Cemetery...

5 **games** for both teams vs local Dutch teams, 3 **training** sessions with Dutch coaches, a 5 vs 5 tournament on the mini-pitch at the accommodation, and a U 19 game Vitesse vs NEC ...

Rendezvous at the **de Oude Molen** to talk over the day’s activities....

3 night stay with **guest families** in Silvolde ... Farmer’s Golf .. dutch dinner and social with guest families

Great meals and lunch boxes, pizza at Ls Stalla

Shopping in Groesbeek, Nijmegen and Arnhem,

Tour of EUSEBIUS Church and their Museum in Arnhem, pancake lunch

A little sunshine, mostly cloudy, damp, a little rain, windy (cold at times)

New this year – players stayed in Old Mill (new) and parents stayed at Het Uitzicht – all meals in the new Old Mill dining room

Special thanks to all the players, parents, grandfather, brothers and sisters who blended so well to make this a very special group. To our Dutch hosts and helpers – Jan, Astrid, Isabella and Caroline for all they did to make our stay very enjoyable and memorable – to our friends at de Oude Molen for allowing us to enjoy their friendly hospitality – to the guest families for allowing us into their homes and lives – you will always be fondly remembered – to our opponents for showing us the dutch way of playing – to the dutch coaches Jan, Remco and Joost who trained us.

Holland Spring Trip 2017 -- March 8 – 18