



Terry Michler * michlert@cbchs.org * www.cbcdutchtouch.com * 314.985.6051

Holland 2015 Recap

The 2015 version of the CBC Dutchtouch trip to Holland was a smashing success - another outstanding journey to the soccer capital of the world, the land of windmills, bicycles, tulips and friendly people. With comfortable weather, a balanced daily program of varied activities, plenty of soccer activities, and a very compatible group of travelers, Holland will remain a pleasant lifetime memory for the 40 people in our group.

The group consisted of 14 players, born 2000 through 2004, parents, coaches and a few other adults. The bonding began once we arrived in country and grew stronger each day. New friendships were made and with that more memories. As the days progressed, the parents felt comfortable to make small group plans and travel about on their own. Midway through the week, we had parents in Bruges, Belgium, Amsterdam, Nijmegen and coaches in Genk, Belgium.

The flights, though long, were smooth and we actually arrived in Amsterdam ahead of schedule. Luggage arrived, customs cleared and we were on our way. Sunny skies greeted us as we stepped from Schiphol International Airport in Amsterdam and our very comfortable bus took us to our destination in Groesbeek, to the east of Holland, bordering Germany. We quickly settled in to our accommodations at Het Uitzicht, had a meal, walked into the village, and the boys had their first 'international' that evening vs Joost's team from Trekvogels. The boys played well, but jet lag may have contributed to 2 late goals against.

Friday we once again attended the OBC school in Bommel and joined in 2 classes with the Dutch students and had a dutch lunch at the school. After school, we went to the Castle at Doornenberg. A short training session followed with Henk Schaap and then we were off to Arnhem for the Vitesse vs AZ Alkmaar professional game. A very full day to say the least!

Saturday was a game day with 2 games in the morning and then a pizza dinner in Nijmegen and then a free evening to catch up on rest.

Sunday we had training in the morning with Bas (core fitness) and Henk (technical) and then we travelled to Germany to see Borussia Monchen Gladbach vs Hannover in the German Bundesliga before a capacity crowd – great German atmosphere and support of the home team! **Monday** was Amsterdam – canal cruise, shopping in downtown, visit to Ajax – Arena tour, gift shop, youth complex – and then back to Nijmegen for the NEC vs Volendam

professional game. **Tuesday** was training at the 5 a side courts across the street at Seven Hills with the Rene Muelenstein trainer and with Remco (NEC and JVC Cuijk), the annual visit to the War Museum and Canadian war Cemetery, and the evening game vs DVOL Lent with the traditional dutch dinner in the canteen, provided by the host team.

Wednesday was training in the morning, a visit to the Richard Kregtin soccer shop in Nijmegen and a return match vs Trekvogels. **Thursday** was a highlight day as we visited Borussia Dortmund (Germany) – toured the stadium, fan shop, training facilities and were able to participate in a state of the art training facility for passing and vision – one of only 3 such facilities in the world!! We were able to meet with Christian Pulisic, a USA U 17 national team player who signed a 5 year contract with Dortmund! When we left Dortmund, we headed to Silvolde to meet with the guest families. The players were to stay the last 3 nights with the guest families – always a highlight of the trip and this year was no exception.

Friday was a morning training session in Silvolde with Wim van Zeist and then to Arnhem for a visit and tour of the Vitesse stadium, and then return to guest families in Silvolde. **Saturday** was family day with the guest families (farmer's golf – cut short by rain) and dinner and social with all the parents and players and guest families. **Sunday** was up early and return to Schiphol for our flight back home.

The weather was nice – only a couple of typical dutch days – Saturday it rained off and on – but mostly it was comfortable. Many thanks to **Isabella, Caroline and Astrid** for their help in many ways, but particularly for the meals they provided us and their hospitality!! Special thanks to **Jan Pruijn** whose expertise brings all this together and makes the trips so incredibly memorable. Jan has the knack to make each trip better than the previous one – and they have all been truly outstanding. As we left we all acknowledged we will miss Holland - the nice, friendly people – the incredible soccer facilities – the people at the Oude Molen – the guest families – the coaches who trained us and the teams we played – the lifestyle – the bicycles – Amsterdam – the stadiums and the fans -- so many things that we will remember.

The dates for the 2016 trip are: March 16 – 26, returning on Saturday to be home for Easter Sunday. Make plans now to be part of another exciting trip filled with a lifetime of memories.