

Coach Ormsbee Takes Team To Play In England

Thirteen lucky young men, two lucky young ladies and their families are headed to England April 9-17 for a trip of a lifetime. The 12- and 13-year-olds are members of the Niskayuna Soccer Club, the town's travel soccer organization. The soccer diehards will be traveling over spring break, from Newark International Airport to London, to play four games against teams in South London.

The trip was initiated by Jeff Ormsbee, the Niskayuna High School Varsity Boys Coach, who is also the Niskayuna U12A Boys Soccer Club Coach. He also invited some U14 players to make the trip, as well. This will be the second time Coach Ormsbee has taken a group to England. His first team adventure was in 2004. "April is a great time to go to England for soccer," said Ormsbee. "All of the leagues and major tournaments are nearing an end so all of the talk is about soccer."

Ormsbee, whose wife is English, travels there at least annually and has developed a number of friendships with local club coaches. "Most of the games we played in 2004 were against local town clubs in the London area, and they all invited us back to the clubhouse after the matches for parents and players to mingle," said Ormsbee. "The sportsmanship and camaraderie on the tour is a different experience from what we are used to in the US."

Ormsbee has set up "friendlies" against local clubs in South London. One of the games, however, will be against a school team, he said. "This team comes to the US every two years on a soccer tour and we traveled to their school in 2004. All the other games are against town-based clubs very much like Niskayuna," Ormsbee said.

But soccer aside, Ormsbee said he thinks this is a great opportunity for kids to be exposed to things that are outside of what they normally experience. "Playing matches against local English clubs gives the kids the opportunity to be part of everyday life in England; to be more than just a tourist," he said. "Since I know most of the coaches that we play against they really do a lot to make us feel welcome. Parents and kids get to see a side of England that they would not otherwise experience."

In addition to the soccer matches, the group of 43 strong will also be doing some sightseeing and attending a professional game.

"Something happens live in the stadium that television cannot capture," said Ormsbee. "It is impressive to watch the big clubs and see the passion of the players and fans. We will be going to a game when we are there with the kids and I hope it has the same effect on them."

No doubt, the players and their families will take many memories of this trip with them. Coach Ormsbee recalls one of the 2004 trip's highlights with humor. "Most people from that trip will tell you that one of the highlights for them was when I drove the minibus under a "height restrictor" in Dover pulling the luggage rack off and destroying the parking lot entrance in the process," he recounts. He certainly won't repeat that episode with the 2009 trip. "The families from the 2004 trip still talk about the experience, so I know it touched a lot of people in a positive way," he said. "I hope that families enjoy their time in England, make some connections with people and learn about a part of the world outside of Niskayuna," Ormsbee said. "I also hope to win a few soccer games!"

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| A special thanks to Joe McDonald, Marjorie Rosenthal, Liz Chapman and Coach Ormsbee for their efforts in coordinating this trip! |
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**One of the teams' players, Kevin Chrisey, will be keeping a journal of the trip. Check back after the adventure to read about his experiences. You can also check out some photos of the trip on this page.

**2009 England players include Riley and Tara McDonald, Brennan Colby, Mike Law, Brian Vermilyea, Tyler Hanft, Bobby Chapman, Alex Stansbury, Alex Hay, Tim & Meghan Doyle, Logan Casella, Mateo Parzych, Sam Finn and Kevin Chrisey.