

SUMMER CAMP

Camp at Buck Lodge Middle School

Messi taught himself instead of a coach saying run from cone to cone with the ball, do this do that.

JOHAN CRUYFF



Hanging out under the tree is synonymous with our summer camp. The three trees on the bank near the school, right in front of the gymnasium, are refuge from the grueling heat of the June and July sun.

Summertime, usually for four weeks, Buck Lodge becomes a haven for ball. Kids play for fun the entire day. There are games, upon games upon games. There are no coaches, no parents, no pressure.-just fun! That is what soccer is all about. FUN!! This is the time when a soccer player progresses the most.

More days of soccer + more hours to just play = more touches. More touches equals more technical skill, more fitness, and more confidence.

In the early years, the program attracted less than 10 players per week. But you could be assured that Araya, Samuel, Edwin, and Kemit were among them. Like clockwork, the phone would ring if I had not picked up Edwin by 9:30am. The familiar voice would say “Coach, where are you?”



Who could forget the games?! The kids played games with all type of “international implications”. We had: Mexico vs. the Rest of the World; Africa vs. the Caribbean and the infamous Central America battles like El Salvador vs. Honduras, the “Blue versus White” game. Our kids, battle for their country supremacy on the hollow grounds of Buck Lodge. They battle for bragging rights- if only for a day.

Then there was the Color game. These meant teams were chosen based upon shirt colors. All the reds colors on one team or all the light-colored shirts on another. After a while, the players would communicate at night via the phone or Facebook to determine which colored-shirt they should wear the next day. Each day they could construct their very own “dream team”.

These games could have as little as 6 v 6 or as many as 15 vs. 15. It did not matter. All they wanted to do was play. We implemented a promotion and demotion program. Players that performed well would move up to an older age group. Commonly known as, “The Big Boys Group”. Conversely, if you did not work hard you would be moved to a lower age group.

Buck Lodge summer camp is the time when creativity is at its highest point. You can see stunning moves, turns, dribbles, and tricks you thought only professionals could do. You name it and our players tried it.

World Cup, No 1, and soccer tennis, (which was a game that used a five feet metal fence as the net), are popular games first thing in the morning and during lunch break. All of this enhances the player’s soccer development because the game requires the players to touch the ball in many different scenarios.

Chapter taken from a book released in 2012 by Metropolitan Futbol Club titled **THE POWER OF SOCCER - "A Journey into Prince George's County Soccer Community"**.