



“The Lord is my strength and my shield” (Psalm 28:7)

PRE-SEASON TRAINING – WEEK 1

FINALLY...WE'RE BACK ON THE FIELD! What an incredible blessing to see so many smiling faces and hardworking athletes this week as pre-season started up. After such an extended period away from the game, it was refreshing to embrace the simple joys we often take for granted such as kicking a soccer ball, being challenged mentally and physically, joining up with friends, sharing God's Word and praying together.

As is often the case, players entered training at different levels of fitness, and that's okay. The primary objective is to build up stamina over the course of the next three weeks, as well as improve each player's first touch and confidence on the ball. It may not happen overnight, so if this first week was a struggle, press on! Keep turning up and giving 100% effort and you'll reap the rewards.

Unlike our “regular” (pre-COVID) end of session devotionals where we would meet together as a large group, we observed social distancing protocol and split into small groups to challenge players in two important ways:

CHALLENGE 1 – DON'T BE AN EGOIST! Life does not revolve around you (or me). We are foolish to think too highly of ourselves, and we demonstrate a real lack wisdom if we fail to look out for the interests of others. Putting ourselves on a pedestal away from the field, or “show-boating” on it is not a way to win (or keep) friends! Instead, we should intentionally pour life and encouragement into those around us by giving our time, talents and treasures for their benefit. After all, “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7)



CHALLENGE 2 – STAND UP FOR TRUTH! In a culture saturated with lies about what is “cool” for young people to engage in, we must constantly return to the fact that God's Word is always the last Word on ANY and EVERY subject. We often hear the phrase, “Everyone is doing it”, and the temptation is to think that whatever “it” represents is totally acceptable because “it” has become the norm. Not so! We're living in an age where evil is called good, and good is called evil, and we need the Spirit of God to lead and direct us in the direction of Christ-like living. It's not an easy task because peer pressure and the desire to “fit in” are such strong motivators. Nonetheless, we must prioritize the goal of becoming a “God pleaser” rather than a “people pleaser”, even if it means standing alone – away from the crowd – seeking the approval of our Lord over and above the acceptance of our (so called) friends. Isaiah 7:9 gives us a strong reminder that, “If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all”. Or, as one quote says, “It's much better walking alone in the right direction than following the herd walking in the wrong direction”



More challenges to come in the weeks ahead, so stay tuned, stay humble and stand strong!

Looking forward to seeing you next Tuesday!

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“Sharing Biblical truth to reach,
teach & encourage next generation
leaders through soccer”

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13)