

Visit of two Football Coaches from Lower Saxony to Eastern Cape 4th of June to 12th of June 2015

Football Courses for South African Coaches in East London and Port Elizabeth

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The visit to Eastern Cape included the provision of two courses for coaches and two courses for referees (for the referee courses, please see separate report).

The first course for coaches took place in East London from the 5th to 7th of June and the second course in Port Elizabeth from the 8th to 10th of June.

We arrived in East London on Thursday, the 3rd of June, in a very stormy weather. We were delighted to be greeted by Lars König and Gugulethu Adam, who picked us up from the airport. They have been our friends since our first visit to South Africa in 2013.

Because of the stormy conditions, high waves dominated the Indian Ocean, which was very impressive. Luckily, the weather forecast for the days to come was okay, and we looked forward to the courses, which also included outdoor modules on the pitch. However, it became dark every day already at 17.30 h. This is in strong contrast to the late sunset in Germany at around 21.30 h during this time of the year.

We had prepared everything in detail, but planning was not straight forward, because it was unclear, which participants would join the courses. (starters/non-starters, women/men) and which expectations they had.

On Friday, the 5th June, we started with nine female coaches, on the following Saturday and Sunday we had 10 female participants. None of them had an official coaching license, but all were very interested in learning more about coaching, because in their hometowns they work as amateur football coaches with children and teenagers.



So, on Friday morning we started with theory. First all women informed us about their expectations with regard to the course and their wishes for their future careers as a coach. Then, we discussed the question 'what' is good training. The answers were that it should motivate, stimulate, challenge, be applicable for the long term and be well organized. There was an agreement that good communication and a positive atmosphere are very important in training. All players should have fun and the feeling of success. Every coach always wants to learn something new about how to improve physical, tactical, technical and psychological training. A good training is a combination of all. It needs to be four dimensional and adapted to age and skills of the players in the team, but it also has to take into account the entire personality of an individual player.

After discussing the theory of football coaching, we tasked the participants with preparing exercises, which they should demonstrate later on the pitch. This was a little bit of a challenge for many of the course attendees, but they managed the task successfully by sitting together in small groups of 3 or 4 participants and dealing with different focal points, such as dribbling, passing or goal scoring.

Unfortunately, we had to stay inside in the afternoon, because the pitch was still wet and slippery due to the rain on the days before. Therefore, the participants presented the exercises they had prepared before lunch on a board.



On Saturday morning we started again with theory by summarizing the lessons learnt on the previous day and then talking about the organization and timetable of a training lesson and how to train players of different ages. We divided the course attendees again in small break-out groups, each responsible for planning training sessions for players of a particular age. Afterwards, we all discussed together the special requirements of coaching each particular age group.

In the afternoon, we were finally able to put theory into practice on the pitch.

It was a useful lesson for us instructors to recognize that some of the course participants actually had difficulties with talking to a group, explaining the different exercises and arranging the set-up of the cones. This allowed us to organize the course in a way, so that these issues could be addressed.

Sadly, we had to realize that not all of the participants could afford suitable shoes for playing football. They also told us, that at home, they have only 1 or 2 footballs for 15 players while bibs and cones are rarely available. However, we all are hopeful, that these circumstances will improve over the next years.

All course participants had much fun in playing and learning new things, and far too soon it became Sunday, which was the last day of the course. In the morning we had again lessons outdoor and we showed the course attendees some easy and useful exercises for dribbling, passing, shooting on target and goal scoring. At the end of the course we played a little tournament before we went inside for awarding the course certificates.



The attendees were very happy to receive a certificate, because it is very important for their confidence, their careers and their future lives. They all are fully aware that learning is very important and that possibilities of participating in football courses are rare. One attendee of the second course in Port Elizabeth put it into words by saying at the end, that “you have to seize these opportunities with both hands”.

In Port Elizabeth there were 12 participants, nine male and three female coaches. Six of them had already a D-license. When we asked them about their wishes, expectations and plans for this course, they gave answers such as : “I will love to achieve more in future”. “To build up the youth that like to play football”. “How to be a good coach”. “How to deal with different age groups”. „Training preparations“. „To learn how to talk with my players“.

In three theory and three practice sessions all participants learned a lot and they were very grateful for the newly acquired knowledge and skills.



Notably, Akhona Totwana (holder of a D-license) is a very good coach already, and we strongly recommend that she should be especially supported over the following years.



In total, we instructed 22 coaches during the two courses. All of them are very friendly, ambitious and were very happy with the course content. Many of them asked us about the possibility that similar courses will be arranged in the future, too.

We are sure that the South African Women's Football will improve and be more successful over the next few years, because numerous South Africans make a strong effort to reach this target. With the good cooperation between the Sports Association of Lower Saxony and Eastern Cape, every project has a good prospect of being successful. We like to point out that Mr. Lars König and Mr. Gugulethu "Gugs" Adam again did a fantastic job, and we felt safe and welcomed as friends all the time.

We as German women's football coaches are proud that we had the opportunity to teach coaches from the Eastern Cape in order to help them in a 3-day-course to learn how to organize and run successful training sessions and how to become a good coach.



We were all very happy about the opportunity to actively contribute the cooperation between Eastern Cape and the Sports Association of Lower Saxony, which is planned to continue over the next years. Every year this bilateral cooperation will be put into practice, and we hope that many more meetings and projects will take place in the future to foster this really fruitful and successful cooperation.

Over the coming years both regions – Eastern Cape and Lower Saxony – will hopefully work together in the same way as we did during our recent and past visits. We will be very happy, if we are given the opportunity to welcome 2 or 3 coaches and 2 or 3 referees from Eastern Cape in Germany in the near future, and we will do our best to improve this great cooperation.



With many greetings
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Please find attached the complete program of the visit.