

Football Clubs Utd (NI)

Report 2023

Training and coaching

In September 2022 after telephone discussions with England, Scotland and Wales coaches it was agreed to hold a home nations tournament in Pontefract in Yorkshire for the end of July 2023

Training sessions were held in Downpatrick and Newry once a month with 13 players, male and female, of mixed ability levels and from various clubs and organisations. We had used social media outlets and flyers sent to all clubs advising of our plans for the incoming year.

It was agreed to move the monthly sessions to various locations to make it more amenable to everyone. Each session lasted 2 hours and involved various drills which included basic skills of ball control, passing, heading, shooting and tackling. Most sessions finished with a game designed for the players to put into practice what they had learned from the skills training including one touch and two touch passing and movement.

The sessions focused on who suited each position, worked on defending and attacking, set plays and playing as a team. Advice and guidance was provided on healthy eating, and fitness improvement for each player.

Fundraising

The players all paid a contribution towards the trip and helped with organised fundraising – a store collection and a night of the races

Yorkshire Trip

The total group of 20 players, coaches and volunteers travelled to Yorkshire on Thursday 26th July and returned on Sunday 30th July. We stayed in a Premier Inn near the ground where the tournament took place. The one day tournament took place on Saturday 29th July. We won the tournament by defeating Wales, England, Jersey and Scotland.

Northern Ireland 2
Wales 0

A hard fought win over a much improved Wales team thanks to two goals from Curtis Waters and Philip McCartney - one in each half. A good team performance right across the pitch - captained on his debut by Richie Brown.

Northern Ireland 2
England 0

Its two from two this time against a solid England team.

Curtis Waters opened the scoring early on in the first half with a clever free kick from the edge of the box after Michael Corrigan was upended in front of goal and then a delightful chip over the keeper out wide on the left from an acute angle to put us 2-0 up at halftime. Despite Englands best effort the boys in green held firm- with Noel Galbraith rock solid.

Northern Ireland 2

Jersey 0

Its three from three this time against an unbeaten Jersey team.

Philip MCCARTNEY opened the scoring early on in the first half with a great finish after being sent through by Curtis Waters

In the second half Michael Corrigan was on hand to finish from a rebound of the keeper when a Curtis Waters thunder bolt was too hot to handle for the keeper and the "predator" Corrigan said "thanks very much" and made the game safe for the boys and girl in green.

Northern Ireland 1

Scotland 0

And it's now four from four this time against a very determined Scotland team who pushed us all the way. 0-0 at halftime it took a piece of magic from Philip MCCARTNEY who latched on to a great Curtis Waters through ball and he volleyed it over the keeper and in of the far post for the goal that wins us back to back Home Nations titles

Our players were a credit to themselves, their families, clubs and to Northern Ireland as a whole. Their conduct on and off the pitch was exemplary at all times and they returned home as winners.

Thanks

Football Clubs Utd (NI) would like to thank Mark Summers and his team for organising a fantastic tournament- Thanks to Trevor Waddington for the hospitality - second to none- Thanks to Eamon Rooney coach hire and our friend Joa our driver - nothing was too much problem for Joa.

Thanks to John "Feet" Beattie and Harry Walsh senior for our new track tops . Most importantly thanks to our players who are just an incredible bunch of young people- they are a credit to themselves- their families and their clubs and have just won back to back Home Nations titles.

Curtis Waters won the referee's award for our player of the tournament while the coaches pick went deservedly to Luke Blaney who was outstanding during the tournament

We would like to thank players families, carers, volunteers and all our sponsors for making this trip possible but most importantly a huge thanks to our players for their dedication and commitment during the year

Stephen Lenaghan

Chairperson

1/9/2023