



Press Release

Mumbai, 12th May 2016

22 of ISL's Reliance Foundation Young Champs to get a unique experience to train and compete with 9 Premier League Academy teams- Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Reading, Aston Villa, Southampton, West Bromwich Albion, Manchester City, Manchester United and Liverpool

Starting today onwards, Reliance Foundation's Young Champs (RFYC) will train at various prestigious Club academies in the United Kingdom. The RFYC group comprises of 22 young Indian footballers in the age group of under-12 and under-14, who have been training at Navi Mumbai for the past one year under the RFYC residential scholarship programme. They will embark on their twelve day journey on 12th May 2016, accompanied by Young Champs Head Coach Mark Vaessen and assistant coach Jose Barreto.

The Premier League is a strategic partner to the Indian Super League (ISL) and the visit is part of their Mutual Cooperation Agreement. Earlier, in April 2015, the Premier League, along with Arsenal, Crystal Palace and West Bromwich Albion hosted a five day event, sharing best practice with ISL club owners and senior management, with a focus on Club Organisation, Youth and Community Development and Fan Engagement.

Speaking on the unique initiative, **Mrs. Nita Ambani, Founder and Chairperson of Football Sports Development and Reliance Foundation**, says, "We are proud to be associated with the Premier League and are extremely thankful for their support in providing this huge opportunity for the 22 Young Champs. Since last year, our Young Champs children have shown tremendous growth being developed as future footballers for India. Our endeavour has been to provide the best available means of training to our next generation. I am of a firm opinion that the 12 day program for Young Champs with 'learning and experience' at its core will not only gain them knowledge on football skills but also return them as more self-believing individuals."

Their schedule begins with training at the Chelsea FC Academy in Cobham, followed by friendly matches over the following two days against the Crystal Palace, Southampton and Reading academies. The group will also get an opportunity to watch the last game of the Premier League season at St. Mary's Stadium between Southampton and Crystal Palace on Sunday 15th May.

The following week will see the group visit the Premier League offices, where the young people will hear from the Youth Development team around expectations of players, alongside fun and engaging workshops delivered by the Education department and a photo opportunity with the Premier League Trophy.

Additionally, there will be an opportunity for the ISL central academy coaches to hear from Ged Roddy, Director of Youth at the Premier League, about the development of the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP)

The afternoon will see the group take a city sightseeing tour bus around London organised by 'Visit Britain', the official tourism partner of the visit.

On Wednesday 18th May, West Bromwich Albion, partners of ISL's club Delhi Dynamos, will host a training session at their academy, which will be followed on Thursday 19th May by an opportunity for the Young Champs to participate in the Albion Foundation disability and schools programme before they move onto Manchester City for a tournament with the City Academy.

The last leg of the tour will see the RFYC play against Aston Villa, Reading and Liverpool at the Liverpool Academy.

Mr. Ged Roddy, Director of Youth at the Premier League, stated: "We are very much looking forward to welcoming the Young Champs group and their coaches to the Premier League and hope that they enjoy their visit and everything it will entail.

They will have access to great facilities, working alongside coaches who are key to the development of the talent at our clubs, whilst also taking a look at some of the stadia and training facilities our clubs use on a day-to-day basis.

We hope this successful partnership with the ISL will assist in the development of these young players, allowing them to learn more about elite football and encourage them to continue on their own football journey."

Ms. Patricia Yates, VisitBritain Director said, "We welcome the Young Champs to the 'home of football' on this once-in-a-lifetime trip, visiting and training at the home of our legendary Premier League football clubs. We know they will be working hard but will also get the chance to experience our vibrant cities, stunning countryside and culture as they travel across our regions as part of their tour.

"Football is the number one sporting draw for international tourists to Britain and we encourage visitors from all over the world to travel to Britain and enjoy a Barclays Premier League football match with our 'Football is GREAT' campaign."

~ENDS~

The 22 young people travelling to UK are Bunando Singh, Koustav Dutta, Yashvender Singh, Ronik Singh, Tushar Kumar, Rashid Cherukad, Mustaque Ahmed, Mikhil Patil, Muhammed Nemil, Muhammed Basith, Ranit Sarkar, Ayush Chhikara, Sumit Das, Aqib Nawab, Aritra Das, Subhajt Belel, Razibul Mistry, Basker Singh, Supriyo Sardar, Zidan Singh, Birendra Singh and G Balaji

For further information, please visit: <http://www.indiansuperleague.com/rfyoungchamps>

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