



Elite Soccer Schools Bangalore Tour to London - August 2026

Elite Soccer Schools Bangalore travelled to England for a football and cultural tour designed to give the students an opportunity to experience football in a new environment, compete against different types of opposition, and gain a broader understanding of the standards required to develop as players.

The tour combined football training, competitive fixtures, futsal, stadium visits, cultural experiences, educational learning and community engagement. We hope it was a valuable experience for everyone involved.

The tour was organised by Estudiantes London, a registered charity based in Tottenham in North London that uses sport to improve the lives of young people in the local community through a range of sports provision, mentoring and employability programmes.

Saturday 8th August

The tour began with the students travelling via their hotel to the University of Hertfordshire to take part in a football tournament against teams from across the South East of England, as well as a touring team from Iceland. This provided an immediate introduction to the intensity and competitiveness of football in England. It gave each child the opportunity to test themselves against players in an international setting. The matches provided the opportunity to assess the players in a competitive setting while also helping the students understand the technical, tactical and physical demands that would shape the rest of the tour. The players approached the day with a positive attitude and showed a willingness to compete, learn and adapt. The team won their first game against Grotta B. Following this the team lost 3-2 to Croydon District. In the final day of the game, the Team won 3-0 against a local football school called Talent X. Striker Amog scored an excellent hat trick in this game. Aryan led the team brilliantly from the back during the games on Saturday, showing great character to keep motivating the players to keep going. We spoke with the team after each game about the importance of winning and losing in the right way. Following the victories it was important to remain humble and provide a genuine and supportive handshake for the opponents. In defeat, it was important to control emotions to congratulate the opposition on their victory. In general the students demonstrated this brilliantly on the tour. A special mention for Manaam who was playing up to two years, but showed commendable spirit and a great deal of quality and confidence to compete well at the tournament.

These are some of the standards we set at Estudiantes London and it has allowed us to gain a reputation for excellent behaviour since we started the club.

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Sunday 9th August

On Sunday, the tournament continued, giving the students more competitive football and the chance to build on what they had experienced the previous day. The final group game would determine whether the team would qualify for the Gold or Silver Cup. Sadly, the performance wasn't quite as hoped as they lost 2-1 to Bucks Football Academy. Moving into the Silver Cup, the team took on the A team of Icelandic professional club Grotta. A vastly improved performance was great to see against much taller and physically stronger opposition. However, the team were unable to score the goals their performance deserved, with score ending 2-1 to Grotta. The final game, which was a final play off against Talent X was a chance for those who had not played as much as the more experienced players. The team put in an excellent performance, with Rushil playing brilliantly throughout to help the team cope with the talented opponents. Despite a 2-1 defeat, the team should be proud of their performances during the two day tournament, especially when considering they had flown from India through the night before the tournament started.

The intensity of the tournament challenged the players to maintain concentration, effort and technical quality over an extended period.

Prior to the all important last group game against Bucks Football Academy, we had focused on remaining compact as a team, both in width and depth. At higher levels, the distances between the players are important, and regardless of the results, the tournament gave the players a chance to work on and improve in their tactical play and defensive shape. Despite defeat in that last group game, it was clear that Vishak had taken on board the advice. He demonstrated a great maturity to maintain a good position throughout the game, and this allowed him to make numerous interceptions and tackles.



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Following the tournament, some of the more experienced and impressive players were given the opportunity to represent Estudiantes London in an important game against a local league representative team. Prior to the game the group also attended an educational talk delivered by Jeremy Jonata, Head of Football at Estudiantes London and a graduate of Loughborough University. He spoke about studying and living in England, the university application process, scholarship opportunities, and the importance of developing interests and strengths beyond academic study alone. This session reinforced the wider message of the tour: that football and education should work together as part of a young person's overall development.

The game itself was a significant step up, exposing them to older, stronger and more experienced opposition. It was an excellent learning opportunity and highlighted the importance of courage and self confidence. It was encouraging to see just how many of the team were keen to take on the challenge.

I was delighted that the Estudiantes team made the boys from Bangalore feel very much welcome, and this was best demonstrated when Vishak was given the chance to take a penalty in a game that meant a lot to both teams as it was a local derby. A special mention to goalkeepers Likith and Garv who both put in a great performance in this game. Indeed all of the players who took to the field, played very well on the night. Rushil, who had been so very impressive in the last game of the tournament was rewarded for that performance with being introduced at right back early in the second half. He played brilliantly, especially in passing the ball calmly from defence. Amar was also able to take part and he put in a positive cameo performance at left back. It was a wonderful feeling to see the way the players from London and Bangalore mixed, and to be honest it is a team photo I will treasure for some time as it represents how we can work positively across cultures.

The Estudiantes team on the night included many of the Estudiantes Elite team who have played against clubs like Arsenal, Chelsea and Paris Saint Germain Academies this year. The likes of Jaydan Rowe, Abee Salami and Bernardino Andeme are some of the best young players in the area of North London at the moment and so I hope it was a positive experience for the boys to play alongside them.



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Monday 10th August

Monday began with a football training session focused on developing the players in their ability to defend. The main focus was on pressing, but we also spoke about the need to remain compact as a defensive unit. The attacking focus of the session was on passing forwards to break defensive lines and we worked on this in the match at the end. The session was a very positive one with the players showing a brilliant attitude.

I spoke to the players about making sure they utilised every moment on the pitch to improve. Even in the most simple 2 metre passing drill, it is performed correctly, with enthusiasm and precision, then it can be of benefit. Players were reminded to maintain their high standards even if they are training in their PE class at school with players of less ability.

During the session, Likith and Garv were coached by Owen Locke, who is one of the best futsal goalkeepers in England and presents England in blind football. Owen is an extremely talented and passionate young person, and it was clear to see how much he wanted to pass on his knowledge to the group. The game at the end of the training session, was keenly contested and gave players the chance to try and score against Owen.

Later in the day, the group visited Haringey Sixth Form College to take part in a community football festival. Here, the students joined coaching activities alongside young leaders from Estudiantes London and members of the local Tottenham community. Some of the Estudiantes players from the previous night coaches the players, as well as other players such as Djibril Diallo and Kadu.

We were delighted that while the players were eating their lunch, Mahesh spent time talking to our young leaders from London about his journey to create a successful football academy. It was an inspirational talk and one I hope will inspire some of my guys in Tottenham to improve their futures.

The day created a meaningful cultural exchange, allowing young people from different backgrounds to connect through football.



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Tuesday 11th August

On Tuesday, the group travelled to Stevenage for an Under 13 fixture against Stevenage Futsal. This was especially important for some of the younger and less experienced players, as it gave them the chance to play a full competitive match in England. The quality of the facilities, which were similar to what would be found in a professional club in. Elite Soccer Schools Bangalore performed well and secured a 2-1 victory, with the opening goal from Krishna. Stevenage equalised but the team showed great maturity to settle well, and it was Virat that scored a truly brilliant winning goal. Sumedh has his most impressive game of the tour, with Yashraj our player of the match.

After the match, the group travelled into central London for sightseeing. The students visited major landmarks including Big Ben, Westminster Abbey and Buckingham Palace, and also enjoyed time at Sports Direct and a dinner at Spud Bros as Krishna has put in a special request after seeing the restaurant on youtube. The day successfully combined football with an enjoyable and memorable tour of London.



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Wednesday 12th August

On Wednesday morning the students played against the Estudiantes Inclusion Team. This fixture offered another opportunity to experience 11 v 11 football and to compete against players who were, in many cases, considerably older than them. The match ended in a 4-4 draw and was played in a positive and friendly spirit. The players showed that they could compete effectively against older opposition, especially Agastya who put in a fantastic performance throughout and the experience of playing on a full-sized pitch was especially valuable. The venue for the match was Enfield Grammar School, one of the most respected schools in the area.

Prior to the match, we welcomed Samuel Nwabuko, who is one of the top young goalkeepers in London. Samuel spoke about the demands of top level football, and how the likes of Jordan Henderson are highly respected because of their ability to maintain high standards every day. Whilst some of the students showed Samuel the respect he deserved, I did remind the students they were representing India and Bangalore and they should treat any guest with respect.

In the evening, the group travelled to the Emirates Stadium to watch Arsenal v Como. This gave the students the chance to experience a live match at one of the most famous football stadiums in England. Arsenal are (sadly!) the champions of England, and there was a wonderful feel good atmosphere in the streets outside the stadium. The atmosphere and diversity of the crowd made a strong impression and offered another insight into the culture of English football. Arsenal are seen to be leaders in diversity, and I think this was quite evident on the night. The players were able to see many of the top quality players like Odegaard, Eze, Gabriel, Saka, Dowman, Madueke and even world cup winner David Raya who is arguably the best goalkeeper in the world. Marli Salmon started the game for Arsenal, and this was interesting for me, as he had played against Estudiantes last season when we played against Arsenal u21s. The game ended 1-1, with Arsenal winning the penalty shoot out to send the crowd home happy.



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TOUR REPORT

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Thursday 13th August

On Thursday, the group returned to Stevenage for an Under 14 fixture. The match was played on a slightly reduced 11 v 11 pitch, which at first disappointed some of the students. However, this became an important teaching point, as reduced pitch dimensions are often used in European player development environments to increase the technical demands of the game. A smaller playing area requires quicker decisions, more accurate passing and better control under pressure. Although the team found the opening period challenging, they adapted well and eventually took control of the game, winning comfortably.

The team did take their foot off the pedal when they were winning this game, and I spoke to the boys about the need to try and continue to play seriously. At one stage it looked like the team may lose a game where they were clearly superior. Vishak's late goal managed to secure the win, but hopefully the players will remember not to take the game for granted until the win is secure. A special mention to Vedant who put in an excellent performance in this game, especially considering he was playing two years up, and he played much of the second half in an unfamiliar position.

The students were given the chance to wear the Tottenham Hotspur Academy kit, that had been kindly donated to Estudiantes last year. It gave the boys the chance to wear professional kit

After the match, the group visited Stratford Shopping Centre, one of the largest shopping centres in London. The children had the opportunity to buy gifts and souvenirs and enjoy some time away from football.



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Friday 14th August

Friday was another busy and varied day. Three students - Likith, Amog and Agastya - were selected to represent an Estudiantes Under 16 team at a high-level grassroots tournament in Tottenham. This was another valuable opportunity to experience the standards of competitive football in England while representing an established London team. At the same time, the remaining players took part in a futsal session led by Ivan Dju, widely regarded as one of the greatest futsal players in England in the last 10 years.

The session was highly productive and helped the players further develop their understanding of futsal, work on some specific movements that could be applicable to football. The best example would be Vishak practicing hold the ball up as a striker. Following the session, we spent time listening to Dju talk about his career. The humility Dju represents was extremely impressive, especially considering only a few years ago he was captaining his team in the UEFA Champions League of Futsal.

Later in the day, the group reunited for a surprise fixture against Tottenham Hotspur Kicks at Under 14 level. This proved to be a significant challenge! The physicality and pace of the opposition gave the students a realistic insight into the level of English grassroots football.

With the score at 0-5, a water break after 20 minutes was much needed, and the students were reminded of the need to show a positive attitude and give their best. The players responded well after the break, and as we moved into the second half they showed strong character, effort and improvement. Aryan, Vedant and especially Arya were particularly impressive in their performances after the break as they repelled attack after attack.

To be fair to the team, it had been a long day, and many were visibly tired during the game, so it was difficult to display their full potential. Players such as Virat and Amog should be congratulated for their enthusiasm to keep going in a challenging situation.



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Saturday 15th August

On Saturday, the group visited Tottenham Hotspur Stadium to watch Tottenham v Hoffenheim of the Bundesliga. This was another outstanding experience for the students, who were able to see one of the most modern and impressive football stadiums in the world. Indeed, the stadium is widely regarded as the best in the world.

Watching the match from an elevated position gave the players an excellent tactical view of the game and helped reinforce an important lesson: that football at the highest level is often built on consistently performing the fundamentals well. The players were able to observe the importance of passing accurately, winning individual duels, maintaining shape, covering ground effectively and understanding tactical responsibilities.



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Sunday 16th August

Sunday was one of the most memorable days of the programme. The group travelled to Manchester for a tour of Old Trafford, where the students explored some of the stadium's most iconic areas, including the changing rooms, players' tunnel, dugout and team bench, before visiting the club shop.

From there, the group enjoyed a wonderful Indian lunch in Manchester, which gave everyone an opportunity to relax together.

The day then continued with travel to Liverpool for the Liverpool v Como fixture at Anfield. The atmosphere both outside and inside the ground was impressive, the attendance of 60,000 for a pre-season friendly showed the dedication of what are said to be the best supporters in England. Seeing the likes of Virgil Van Dijk, one of the best defenders in the world play in person is hopefully something that will be remembered for many years. Visiting two of the most historic and globally recognised football clubs in one day provided a wonderful end to the tour and left the students with more unforgettable memories.



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Monday 17th August

Monday provided an opportunity to buy some more gifts before the children went to Prezzo in Enfield. The players enjoyed Pizza or Pasta in a brilliant Italian restaurant, and were given a chance to vote for their player of the tour. 9 separate players gained votes, but Virat was the winner, after displaying an excellent attitude and performances throughout the tour. After this, we returned to the hotel, to pick up the luggage before going to the Airport for the flight home.

Conclusion

Overall, the England Football and Cultural Tour was an extremely successful and meaningful experience for Elite Soccer Schools Bangalore. It gave the students exposure to different standards of football, opportunities to compete and train in new environments, and valuable lessons about player development, character, education and cultural understanding. Beyond the results and activities themselves, the tour encouraged the students to grow in confidence, maturity, independence and resilience. It was an experience that will hopefully have a lasting impact on their development both as young footballers and as young people.



Likith - Player Report

Conduct and Attitude

Likith demonstrated a fantastic attitude throughout the tour. He is an intelligent and socially aware young person who was always respectful and trustworthy. He made a very positive contribution to the group and consistently helped to ensure that everyone had a positive experience. Likith gave the impression of being quite a shy young person, but at the same time he demonstrated an inner confidence and belief in himself which should benefit him greatly moving forward. His attitude, willingness to listen and overall contribution were excellent.

Level of Play

Likith was one of the most impressive performers on the tour. Following his performances on the first day of the tournament, he was given the opportunity to represent the Estudiantes Under 20 team. This was an important fixture and the opportunity was not given lightly. Likith started the game, which should give him a clear indication of how highly the coaching team regarded his performance. He was also selected to represent Estudiantes at Under 16 level in a high-level grassroots tournament. These opportunities were a direct result of his performances, attitude, willingness to listen and overall goalkeeping ability. Mahesh and Amar independently commented on the significant progress Likith has made in a relatively short period of time. One of his strongest qualities is his communication. His communication was exceptional and he should continue to develop this as he progresses. He is also a brave goalkeeper with very good shot-stopping ability, strong reactions and good handling. His reaction times were particularly impressive during the tour.

Areas for Improvement

As Likith progresses, he will need to continue developing his understanding of the game, goalkeeping and defensive organisation. A goalkeeper at a higher level needs to understand when the team should drop, press, compete, play out or break pressure with a pass. The quality of communication will also become increasingly important because higher-level players will expect the information they receive from their goalkeeper to be accurate. Likith should therefore continue studying the game and could benefit from watching high-level goalkeeping, listening to goalkeeping podcasts and learning from experienced goalkeepers. His positioning is another area that can continue to develop. The higher the level becomes, the more important it is for the goalkeeper to be correctly positioned and set before the shot is taken. The goals conceded against higher-level opposition also demonstrated the importance of team defending, particularly when an attacker is given too much time and space. There were situations where the goalkeeper had very little chance because the defending in front of him had broken down. Likith's kicking from his hands is good, but he should continue developing different types of distribution. Rather than relying only on high looping kicks, he should learn to strike the ball lower and more directly so that it can reach attacking players rather than higher balls which tend to favour defenders. His kicking from the floor can also improve. He should work on becoming comfortable striking the ball with different techniques, including curling passes, driven passes and longer distribution. Ball mastery is also important. He should become increasingly comfortable moving the ball quickly from one foot to the other and playing out under pressure. Additional physical development will also help, particularly strengthening the legs and developing explosive power. This can benefit both his distribution and his ability to reach difficult shots. Likith had an outstanding tour and should take great credit for the opportunities he earned.

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