

**Harrison Pithers**  
**Liverpool Academy, England**  
**Two Weeks of Training, and The Milk Cup**

**Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> 2015 (First day at Liverpool Academy)**

- Arrived at the facility around 9:30 and began to meet the staff as well as the players.
- Around 10:15, Myself and 3 other trialists began the fitness and medical exams before training in the indoor turf fields/gym. (consisted of stretching, timed sprints, measured jumps, and some agility work lead by Connell)
- Then headed out to the fields to intense technical work with the ball, a version of possession, head tennis, an in-house scrimmage with teams picked by coach, and a cool down.

**Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> 2015**

- No Training.

**Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 (Second Day at Liverpool Academy)**

- Arrived at the facility at 9:30 – Changed in locker room and headed into the indoor facility to warm up. (Bikes, foam rollers, vibrating machines, and balls were provided to get ready for training. All individual.)
- Then a series of circuits set up by Connell with ladders, and other exercises to “excite” our muscles for training and get them firing.
- Then proceeded out to fields to training where we were allowed 15 minutes with a partner to work on whatever we wanted to improve upon. “Freetime training” (Heading, volleys, long balls, etc.)

- Then we did a version of mini possession/going to goal with 3 teams constantly rotating based on goals, then a shooting carnival, & lastly a penalty kick challenge.
- (If you make your penalty you pick someone to go out. If you miss you go out. If the goalie catches your penalty then he chooses two people to come back in. The last one standing wins – fun way to end session)

### **Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2015 (Third day at Liverpool Academy)**

- Arrived at 9:30, headed to the indoor facility to warm up by ourselves then Connell put us through a similar circuit as the day before.
- P.s as a side note, all players must be carrying two Gatorade bottles at all times to stay hydrated. One filled with water and the other with Gatorade. Hydration was highly emphasized by all the coaches throughout my stay on the field and off the field.
- We then proceeded to training (which is light due to the game on Saturday), where we did head tennis, a heading game, finishing, and penalties again.

### **Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 (Match vs Malmo Fc U17's)**

- The match was scheduled for an 11:00 AM kick off so we were told to arrive at 9:00 at Liverpool. (2hrs before game !)
- Everyone had to be fed before they came to Liverpool so that we could go straight into the meeting room and begin warming up.
- At 9:15 we began in the meeting room talking about the formation, style of play, key points, etc. We were then given time to get ready and fill both water bottles up with Gatorade

**& water as they wanted us sipping both before, throughout, and after the match.**

- **At 9:45 we began warming up. We were allowed 10 minutes with a partner to do individual things, then were brought over to the side of the pitch where cones and ladders were set up and led by Connell.**
  - **We played a 4-3-3 with a diamond in the midfield. Unfortunately we lost 4-1 against an older more physical and experienced side (U17's) but Coach Des Maher was pleased because we played the right way & deserved more goals than we scored.**
  - **Unfortunately I had to come off in the first half due to being kneed in the Oblique muscle above my hip, which made it much more difficult to run and function without a lot of pain.**
  - **I was tended to by the physio (which said ice on and off for an hour till Monday).**
  - **After the match, a 20 minute cool down was led by Connell, and we headed back into the academy.**
  - **Shaker bottles and Gatorade protein were handed out to everyone when we got inside and was mandatory to have. (it helps build upon the muscles used, and helps prevent soreness after the match).**
  - **Then alternating showers were required switching 3 times for periods of 2 minutes (cold, hot, cold, hot, cold, hot.), then we all went home.**
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- **Unfortunately, on Saturday night I along with my injury, I ate some bad fish and got food poisoning which made me miss Monday and Tuesday's session at Liverpool.**
  - **Also there was no training on Wednesday.**

**Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015 (Light, no contact training before the tournament)**

- Warm ups and pre-training went as usual. (as seen above)
  - Strictly a non-contact training session due to the upcoming tournament.
  - Training consisted of a partner exercise with different small ball drills given.
  - Then we did soccer tennis in pairs of two.
  - Then a small light game of possession. (more fun than competitive)
  - Then we finished off with a shooting carnival & the penalty game \*\*\* Fun element to add to end of our DA training \*\*\*
  - An extensive cool down occurred then we headed inside to head home for the day.
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- No training on Friday.
  - Saturday was a packing and off day.
  - Sunday was a traveling day.

**Daily Schedule for Match Day's in Northern Ireland.**

- Breakfast: 9:00 AM sharp.
- Breakfast ends at 10:00 AM.
- Each individual player gets a physical assessment at the end of breakfast which is logged. (Ex. How many hours of sleep did you get? Any Soreness? Etc.)
- From 10:00 to 11:30 we were allowed free time in a conference room with speakers, a ping pong table, music and table soccer.
- During the free time at some point, we had to go get a second meal. (Ex. Granola, cereal, etc.)
- At 11:30 a stretching and roller session was led by Connell to “excite our muscles” a few hours before the game.

- **An hour after the session inside the conference room, we went to have a full lunch around 1:30. (3<sup>rd</sup> meal of the day)**
- **After lunch we went into the conference center, closed the curtains, turned all the lights off, and lied down. We had a physio speak to us and help us to fall asleep in the conference room floor. If you weren't asleep after 15 minutes, the door was left open to exit and go straight up to your room to take a nap. Either way, sleep or relaxation was a must.**
- **At 3:00 we would come down for a pre-match meal.**
- **At 4:00 we would have a meeting talking about strategies, main points of the match, etc.**
- **We would then travel to the stadium.**
- **Before the match we would have 5 minutes to walk around the field then go back in to get ready for warm ups.**
- **Before warm ups began, Gatorade powder was handed out to everyone in the locker room so that one bottle had Gatorade and the other had water.**
- **After warm ups we came back into the locker room where we were given the starting 11 and then were allowed 10 minutes to play music and get ready for the game.**
- **The game would then be played.**
- **After the match, Coach Des would say a few words on how he thought things went, what we could've done better, etc.**
- **Everyone who played a full half or more in the game would be required to take an ice bath for 5 minutes.**
- **Also for anyone that played at all, protein powder & a protein bar was handed out to help with recovery and build upon muscles used.**
- **We would then go back to the hotel, have dinner then be in bed around 11:00**
- **We would then repeat that schedule every day.**

## **Rules for the tournament:**

- **You always had to be carrying a water bottle for hydration throughout the day. If you were caught without your water bottle anywhere in the hotel, on route to the game, or at the game you had to sing a whole song in front of the team.**
- **You couldn't be late to any meeting, session, meal, etc. & if you were late, even by a minute, you had to sing in front of everyone.**
- **If you break anything, rude to staff, too loud, get caught not resting in your room during rest time, etc. then you would have to sing.**
- **Rules for your bag: At all times you had to have a piece of fruit in your bag, a Gatorade shaker for protein, two Gatorade bottles (One for water, the other for Gatorade), and the protein bar they give you on the way to the game for after.**
- **If any rule is broken whatsoever the consequence was singing.**
- **NB. Lots of constructive and sometimes very critical comments from players to each other on the field BUT nobody took offence. They each held each other accountable and it was left on the field.**
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