

# Orange Rec soccer clinic teaches skills to youngsters

## Orange Transcript

Orange Recreation held a four week soccer clinic that started on July 12. The clinic, headed by coach Al Prophet, has two components to it. The first component is a skills clinic for ages 3 and up which meets every day between 9: 30 a. m. and noon at the soccer field in Orange's Monte Irvin Park. In this component, Prophet and his volunteer staff show and apply the different skills in dribbling, passing and shooting the ball, which he attributes the drills to the similarity of basketball.

" I like to draw the example of basketball because the drills are very similar," said Prophet. " Instead of using your hands to maneuver through the cones and other skill stations, you are using your legs and feet to build up your coordination and speed."

Prophet has been around top notch players, including world renowned player Pele, hailing from all walks of life ranging from French Creole and Spanish via the Caribbean/ Central American/ South American nations to American/ European/ African backgrounds.

Much like the other sports in the area, Prophet sees the potential in developing a soccer league that is competitive to those throughout the area, state, region and nation. He said of his immediate group of 82 kids, there were roughly 18 kids who can afford the equipment, uniforms, travel and fees that are associated with the sport. " We have kids who enjoy the game and are natural talents but they only come out in flip flops," said Prophet. " The average cost for tournaments and equipment is roughly \$ 2,000, with the initial club fees starting at \$ 750 for training with suburban clubs. In all honesty we need help."

Prophet has several players who went on to successful careers as professional international soccer ambassadors where they played in top world stages like the English Premier League, FIFA and FIFA International, and Haitian National teams for both men and women.

Former 2004 Orange High School standout Pierre Odige is looking to continue the tradition with Prophet. Currently, Odige is training in preparations for joining a professional team in Brazil in the coming weeks. " I haven't really thought much about life after soccer, but maybe I will look to coach after my career is done," said Odige. He said that having a coach like Prophet gave him the opportunity to do something more in life and learn the lessons that he may not have otherwise learned.

Another member of Prophet's former players is an all- star in her own right. Marie Gilles is a former member of the Haitian National Women's World Cup soccer team and the all time National Junior College Athletic Association scoring champion as a forward for Essex County College. She amassed an impressive 58 goals over the 2003 and 2004 seasons in Region 19 of the NJCAA, a record that still holds today. Gilles echoed Odige's thoughts while adding, " It takes hard work and dedication to play a sport that is competitive internationally and also brings everyone together with a common love of the game."

The second component of the clinic is taken over by Prophet's Total Soccer Academy that shares field space with others in the evening hours of 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., also at Orange's Monte Irvin Park. All skill sets and ages are welcome as they play among each other in pickup games or play in tournaments that would help bring the level of the players up higher.

In speaking with some spectators, some felt that the game is now coming on, with popularity of the U.S. National Men's team making it to the quarterfinals of the FIFA World Cup, while others like Pastor Henry of Light of God Ministries, Inc. feel that soccer can help out in other communities across the globe. "I like to see soccer become a tool for the youth in providing the basics," said Henry. "Here in America, the levels are different and more fanciful where the kids in other areas of the globe like Haiti and Nigeria don't necessarily have the access to this type of facility." He feels that with the necessary help in the area, the youth who are less fortunate will be able to reap the

benefits of programs like the soccer clinic in the city, with the possibility of expanding internationally. For more information on the Orange Recreation Youth Soccer Clinic, call 973-266-4045.