

KICK RACISM OUT OF YOUTH SOCCER

BY WAYNE NEUNIE



KICK IT OUT

TACKLING RACISM & DISCRIMINATION

KICK RACISM OUT OF YOUTH SOCCER

- **RACISM IS ALIVE AND WELL IN SPORTS. MANY BELIEVE THAT SPORTS ARE A REFLECTION OF SOCIETY BUT WHAT MY CHILDREN, THEIR TEAMMATES AND THE CLUB HAVE ENDURED IS SICKENING, SHAMEFUL, DISHEARTENING AND JUST PLAIN WRONG**



LAUDERHILL YOUTH SOCCER ACADEMY

- OUR SOCCER ACADEMY IS A TRUE GRASSROOTS PROGRAM, 99% MINORITY AND OVER 90% BLACK AND THIS IS NOT THE NORM IN SOCCER IN THE USA WHERE IT IS A PAY FOR PLAY SPORT AND IS CLASS-RESTRICTIVE. THE CLUB IS LOCATED IN AN URBAN COMMUNITY SUPPORTED BY THE CITY AND IS COMPRISED OF GREAT PLAYER'S WONDERFUL PARENTS AND EXCELLENT COACHES



COMMUNITY & CITY SUPPORTED

- THE LAUDERHILL LIONS SOCCER ACADEMY HAS A UNIQUE AND EXCELLENT PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF LAUDERHILL WHO HELPS SUBSIDIZE THE COST AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILDREN. THE CITY UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING YOUTH SPORTS AFFORDABLE FOR ITS RESIDENTS AND ACCESSIBLE TO ITS KIDS.

INCIDENTS OF RACIST BEHAVIOR

- AN EXAMPLE OF THE ADVERSITY WE HAD TO OVERCOME WAS IN THE BAZOOKA TOURNAMENT THE OPPOSING COACH LENT OUR U11 TEAM AN EXTRA PLAYERS BENCH THEY HAD THAT THEY WERE NOT USING; DURING THE MATCH, BECAUSE WE WERE WINNING, A PARENT STARTING HURLING INSULTS AT OUR KIDS AND PARENTS TELLING US TO GET OFF THEIR BENCH AND ASKING IF WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY OUR KIDS THEIR OWN BENCH, THANKFULLY A LINE REFEREE HEARD AND EJECTED HIM FROM THE FIELD, BUT HE LATER CAME BACK CLOSE TO THE FIELD TO CONTINUE INSULTING THE PARENTS. THE KIDS HOWEVER UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THEIR COACH DID NOT ALLOW THEMSELVES TO GET DERAILED, THEY WERE ABLE TO SHAKE IT OFF, KEEP FOCUSED ON THE GAME, AND WIN THE TOURNAMENT. IN THAT SAME MATCH ONE CHILD WAS UPSET THAT OUR PLAYER TOOK THE BALL FROM HIM AND HE CALLED THE PLAYER A DEROGATORY NAME.

INCIDENT OF RACISM CONTINUED

- BOTH PLAYERS AND PARENTS WERE THE RECIPIENTS OF A HOSTILE GROUP OF PARENTS. OUR PLAYERS AND PARENTS WERE VERBALLY AND RACIALLY ABUSED. THE OPPOSING TEAM PLAYERS WERE TOLD BY THEIR PARENTS TO BE VIOLENT (PUNCH OUR KIDS IN THE FACE IF THEY ARE TACKLED HARD OR FOULED). OUR PLAYERS WERE PSYCHOLOGICALLY AFFECTED BY THIS AND THE COACHING STAFF AS WELL THE PARENTS HAD TO SPEAK TO THE PLAYERS ABOUT THE UGLINESS THAT THEY WILL FACE IN THE WORLD. THE TOLD THE PARENTS GO BACK TO THE GHETTO WHILE WE GO HOME TO OUR MANSIONS AND BOATS AND CALLED OUR PLAYERS ANIMALS THROUGHOUT THE GAME.

ANOTHER INCIDENT OF RACISM



- **THEY WERE ONCE AGAIN THE RECIPIENTS OF DEROGATORY AND RACIAL ABUSE. OUR U13 TEAM HAS EXPERIENCED 2 VERY SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS THAT THE CLUB HAD TO REPORT TO SFUYSA. OUR MOST RECENT INCIDENT THE LAUDERHILL LIONS PLAYERS WERE ONCE AGAIN THE VICTIMS OF RACIAL ABUSE. THEY WERE CALLED NIGGERS, MONKEYS OTHER RACIAL EPITHETS AS WELL AS CRUDE AND ABUSIVE PROFANITY.**

ANOTHER INCIDENT OF RACISM

- THEY WERE AGAIN CALLED NIGGERS, GHETTO AND OTHER NAMES FROM NOT ONLY PLAYERS BUT ALSO PARENTS; THEY WERE SPAT AT; AND ATTACKED ON THE PITCH; AFTER THE GAME SOME OF THE OPPOSING PLAYERS SPAT ON THEIR HAND BEFORE SHAKING OUR KIDS HANDS. FORTUNATELY THE COACH INTERVENED.

AGAIN ANOTHER INCIDENT

- DURING A GAME AGAINST WESTON FC A PLAYER FROM THEIR TEAM WAS CALLING OUR PLAYERS NIGGER. HE SAID LOUD ENOUGH FOR OUR COACH TO HEAR. THE WESTON COACH FIRST BRUSHED IT OFF, BUT IT WAS THE COOPERATION OF HIS PLAYERS ON THE BENCH WHO INFORMED THE COACH HE DID CALL OUR PLAYER A NIGGER. IT WAS WRONG THAT THE WESTON COACH DID NOT BELIEVE THE LAUDERHILL COACH AND ONLY ACCEPTED IT WHEN IT WAS CORROBORATED BY HIS PLAYERS.

INCIDENT OF RACISM IN THE DISNEY TOURNAMENT

- AT THE END OF THE GAME AT THE SEMI-FINALS OF THE MEMORIAL DAY DISNEY SOCCER TOURNAMENT THAT LAUDERHILL LIONS WON THE OPPOSING COACH WAS FURIOUS THAT WE WON THAT HE TOLD HIS PLAYERS NOT TO SHAKE THOSE NIGGERS HANDS BOTH IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH. OUR COACH AND SOME PLAYERS HEARD THIS IN ADDITION TO THE REFEREE ON THE FIELD NEXT TO OURS. THAT REFEREE RAN OVER AS SOON AS HE HERD IT AND INFORMED THE CENTER REFEREE. THE CENTER REFEREE DID NOT DO ANYTHING BECAUSE HE SAID HE DID NOT HEAR IT. ON THE ADVICE OF THE REFEREE WHO DID HEAR IT WE LODGED A COMPLAINT.

HOW WE A DEALING WITH IT

- DEALING WITH RACISM AND CLASSISM ON THE PITCH, AS WE CONTINUE TO EDUCATE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT THE NAMES THEY ARE CALLED, BUT RATHER THEY ARE ABOVE THE NEGATIVITY AND SHOULD NOT ALLOW IT TO AFFECT OR PULL THEM DOWN.

WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS!

- **OUR CHILDREN CANNOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THEY ARE BLACK AND MINORITY BUT WHAT CAN CHANGE IS HOW THE USA SOCCER HANDLES THIS SITUATION THROUGH ZERO TOLERANCE AND EDUCATION. IN THE UK GOVERNMENT CALLED SOCCER LEADERS TO A SUMMIT TO TACKLE RACISM. IT CONTINUES TO BE PROBLEM AND THE USA SOCCER BODY, STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO TACKLE DISCRIMINATION AT THE YOUTH LEVEL. THE GAME OF SOCCER IS THE BEST SPORT IN THE WORLD IN MY HUMBLE OPINION BUT FAR TOO OFTEN WE ALLOW RACISM TO STAIN THIS BEAUTIFUL GAME.**

EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND ACTION

- LAUDERHILL LIONS IS A CLUB THAT IS ATTACKING THE PROBLEM OF RACISM, CLASSISM AND THE PAY TO PLAY SYSTEM. OUR PLAYERS ARE LEARNING HOW TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY, RACIAL ABUSE AND ARE SHOWING THE GRIT THAT WILL HELP THEM SUCCEED IN LIFE. HOWEVER EDUCATION, SUPPORT AND ACTION ARE KEY

LAUDERHILL LIONS YOUTH SOCCER ACADEMY

