

This would prove to be a great experience for all the boys competing in this major competition in Salou on superb pitches and lovely weather - for a change!

Everybody arrived safely on Thursday and a tour to the Nou Camp Stadium was the first adventure for the boys. No-one knew what to expect when the football started but as the Spanish system does not accommodate under13s it was obviously going to be a stern test for our lads as they would be playing older and bigger opponents.

We knew that the three other teams in our group were all Spanish but no-one expected the first team we played would be a class apart. Bigger, faster stronger, and apparently in the second-tier of Spanish football with superb training facilities and regular sessions.

#### **Game 1 -**

#### **3/4/15 at Floresta v L'Hospitalet 'A'**

Apparently one of the top teams in their age group in Spain, they proved too big, fast and strong for Leeds and dominated possession and territory and won 4 - 0. Our boys gave everything and defended bravely and it was no disgrace to be beaten by such quality. A sobering start to the tournament left everyone wondering what was to come next.

Result: **L'Hospitalet 'A' 4 - 0 Leeds City Boys -3/4/15**

#### **Game 2 at Cusa v CD Gandesa**

Another bigger team faced our boys, but unlike this morning when they were simply blown away, Leeds showed a steely determination to prevent a repeat and turned the tables with a classy performance. Harry Sykes put CHARLIE WEBB through on goal and he beat the keeper with a cheeky lob. An Owen Hindley free-kick rebounded to him but his shot was saved and at the other end Leon, in goal, turned a shot for a corner which he then collected safely. As usual LEWIS BRANTON was a threat up front and was foiled by an excellent save but he was rewarded soon after when a Jonah Evans attempt was parried by the keeper and Lewis fired home the rebound. Leeds has a number of other goal attempts from Luke Owen and Charlie without reward until they cemented victory with two excellent headers from corners by JAMES SHAW and MATTY SWIFT.

A totally different feeling from everyone after the game thinking *'maybe these Spaniards aren't so hot'* but really we knew they were.

Result: **CD Gandesa 0 - 4 Leeds City Boys**

#### **Game 3 -4/4/15 - Camp Clar v Gimnastic Manresa**

This game would decide if we were to qualify for the later stages so it was a big setback when the opposition scored with their first attack before Leeds touched the ball. The game settled down for a while but the power and size of the opponents caused Leeds trouble more than once. Again LEWIS BRANTON came to the rescue when he fired in an excellent goal from the edge of the box to equalise. Leeds had another couple of attempts on goal but after a dubious free-kick was awarded the opposition took the lead when the ball fell to an unmarked attacker.

Another free-kick, which were given for the slightest of challenges, put Manresa 3-1 up as an unstoppable shot flew past the wall and keeper. Not downhearted, Leeds kept playing neatly in midfield with Owen, Jonah and Matty Kyle working hard to create chances against bigger boys. Leeds deserved a second goal and Owen fed Lewis whose shot across goal was inches wide. A Leeds free-kick was blocked in the box but fell to JAMES SHAW who took it wide of the keeper and slotted home to reduce the deficit. As Leeds strove for an equaliser, Manresa won a corner which was unfortunately headed into his own net by a Leeds defender leaving the boys disappointed, but with a creditable performance overall. A draw would not have been an unfair result.

Result: **Gimnastic Manresa 4 - 2 Leeds City Boys**

#### **Game 4 - 4/4/15 – Cusa v Ekkono (Japan)**

Leeds had finished third in their group and played this game to decide overall position in the tournament in their age group.

The tables were turned completely as Leeds were much bigger than their Japanese opponents. However, they were fast, skilful and intelligent which made up for their lack of size. They showed good control but Leeds had more possession and this paid off when Luke crossed to the far post where KIAN LINLEY finished neatly. Luke had a number of chances after this but two good saves and a shot over prevented any more scoring. Ekkono then surprised Leeds with a neat move that left their forward through on goal and he made no mistake to equalise. Stung into action, efforts from Kian and Joe Turpin brought no reward until a long ball down the middle from Harry found LEWIS BRANTON who rounded the keeper and found the net to give Leeds the lead.

Early second-half pressure from Leeds earned them a corner which Owen delivered well and the ball broke to JOE TURPIN who volleyed home. Leeds seemed to think they had done enough and Ekkono caused Leon to make a couple of good saves. They were attractive to watch and were causing Leeds problems. Whether it was the warm weather or fatigue but Leeds had gone off the boil although Harry and Jack Twyford didn't have too many problems at the back against small attackers.

Leeds finally did come to life and Owen just failed to connect properly with a cross from Lewis and Kian shaved the post as Leeds finished the game comfortably. A second win out of four games showed that Leeds could compete at this level against all but the best - who were exceptional.

**Result: Ekkono (Japan) 1 - 3 Leeds City Boys**