



PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Rugby Football Union
Kent County RFU

Penguin Coaching Academy Tour to Kuala Lumpur

15th to 26th June 2023

by Ben Fisher, Steve Hill, and Craig Brown



It is an easy choice for Penguins to go to COBRA in Malaysia. We have been partner clubs for many years and the chance to go and help the COBRA Club coaches develop was a must do. Through the offices of COBRA President Darryll and Penguin CEO Craig a series of coach development modules were developed and dates set. The Penguins were fortunate that long standing Penguin coaches Steve Hill from London and Ben Fisher from Wellington in New Zealand were keen and available.



Steve and Ben embarked on a week long coaching and coach development trip to Kuala Lumpur. Both coaches are experienced Penguin tourists and didn't take long to settle into the rhythm and start making an impact with the locals.

COBRA has done a fantastic job over the past 10 years to further develop their youth section 'Cobrats' ranging from 5 to 18 year olds. The dedication and commitment from many of the volunteers has created a club that is a very open and warm environment for locals to experience the many benefits of being a member of a club brings.

Session 1 – Player Development – Saturday. This was with the Under 16 COBRA team combined with the Victoria Institute High School team. Coach Felix guided the Penguin coaches through the session with a focus on 'games based training' where players were tasked with putting into practice some of the passing and contact work they had learnt.

Session 2 – Observations and Support. Sunday was an opportunity to see the Cobrats teams in full force at the usual Sunday training. All the teams gather at the padang, dressed head to toe in their outstanding yellow and black kits, with each age group areas neatly mapped out. The club has many volunteer coaches and parents, many who are learning the game of rugby themselves as well as the skill of coaching. It wasn't long before Ben and Steve were right in the middle helping out and meanwhile gathering a sense of where they could add the most value during the week.



To see the many families gathering around the edge watching and then hosting some shared meals after training was amazing to see and showed a lovely community.

Session 3 – **Coach Development** Monday evening was a chance to connect with the coaches of the u6 – u8 teams. Firstly spending some time inside talking of the challenges they face, and what they would like to learn. Time was spend discussion how to structure sessions and what type of activities are relevant for that age group. Following that outside was the practical session where many fun warm up and skill development games were introduced.



Session 4 – **Player Development** Tuesday afternoon. Felix Too took us to De La Salle School to do some coaching with the u13 – u15 players, alot of new to rugby and some established. Many small and skillful backs and new forwards to rugby. The focus was games to help attack understanding and catching and passing. It was very hot but the players improved alot over the session.

Session 5 – **Coach Development** Wednesday evening. Much like session 3 it was coach focussed with coaches from the u9 – u14 age groups. Some fantastic in depth conversations about the game of rugby, how it should be played, the skills involved and then how you can break down skills in key factors to coach them effectively. Outside we focussed on many games that can be used to coach skills and develop players understanding. We took time to focus on creating space for the attack and using key factors to improve the performance of the players.

Weekly summary – Over the course of the week the Penguin coaches were able to form a good bond with the COBRA coaches and share many stories. Spending time sharing food and beers in the COBRA corner each night, was a great way to connect and set things up well for the weekend ahead.



Coaches Retreat Saturday and Sunday. The highlight was the trip was the 30 coaches and managers of the Cobrats all headed to the coast for a weekend of learning, fun and connection. Friday was all about arrival, settling in and allocation of tour polos. So much effort from the organising committee was put in to ensure the weekend had a fun tour feeling whilst allowing many sessions



for the practical learning. Each tourist was allocated a tour name generally from the disney and movie world, to which they had to be referred to the whole weekend – Ben being ‘Hulk’ and Steve being ‘Venom’. An amazing sea side setting and everyone looking beautiful in their tour t shirts - the scene was set for a fantastic weekend (oh did i mention a swim up bar!).

Session 6 – **Coach Development** Saturday. A big day with a strong focus on the principles of play, ways to coach the game through whole-part-whole methods, coaching of safe contact in the tackle and ruck, working with key factors and breaking down of the core skills of rugby and safe coaching of the scrum. A continued focus on ensuring the sessions are fun for the players and constant use of the ball in the practices which are core aspects of Penguin coaching.



Some sun-downer refreshments at the pool bar late afternoon followed by a very amusing Kangaroo court. ‘What goes on tour stays on tour’ is a well versed saying, but imagine each tourist dressed as their tour character, sippy cups, kareaoke singing and general laughter long into the night.

Session 7 – **Coach Development** Sunday. This last session of the trip was a chance for each of the coaches to be issued a coaching task to complete for 5 minutes. Everyone did amazingly well demonstrating their new skills and confidently coaching the new methods they has learnt over the week in the very hot conditions.

Emotional goodbyes as the Penguin coaches departed for their long evening flights home. Many new friends and memories created

Feedback received

Taking this opportunity to share our sincere appreciation to both Steve and Ben for the engaging session this evening.

Shout out for their methodologies in targeting not only for the fine-tuning of how to address the young audiences but also for the coaching team in providing effective delivery. Best practices learnt today:

- * Both kept us engaged with various focus activities via tag format so that whilst one is sharing their training, the others prepare for the next session. Otherwise the other took on the role of supporting coach.

- * Keep the discussion interactive by asking the specific target questions. No telling but all asking opinions with open ended questions. Lots of 'what' for the players and 'why' for the coaches.

- * Focus on positive responses. When someone interacts, gets the rest to share

- * Mindful of where one positions themselves in order to secure the best angle of understanding. Understanding reasoning for where one positions themselves in a learning process.



- * Team morale in getting the best out of the players including the last 10 minutes of training. Follow up discussion.

- * Fantastic and wealth of knowledge information this evening. They made their training delivery seem so effortless through simple exercises. Cheers gent

- * Their expertise and how they conducted all the sessions was truly a level that none of us in COBRA had ever experienced before. They had observed our junior

programme, analysed our coaching methods and worked out an amazing programme with us and finished it with a coaching retreat that will go down as best ever for all who had participated.

* The learnings and the educational aspect was truly world class. And the impact of both Ben and Steve to COBRA rugby was witnessed so evidently on the pitches with our senior team and coaching sessions conducted immediately after.

* To Ben and Steve, words can't express really how meaningful it has been to have the 2 of you with the 10 days you gave us.

* The passion, dedication and commitment to the course demonstrated by you guys is truly admirable and so very commendable.

* You guys have a big family in Malaysia in Cobra and anytime you chaps are here, give any of us a shout and we will ensure the best of Malaysian hospitality.



PENGUINS & COBRA PROGRAMME

17 - 21 JUNE
COBRA Rugby Club

SATURDAY 17th Day 1	SUNDAY 18th Day 2	MONDAY 19th Day 3
8.30 am > COBRATS & VI - Joint Training U15/16/ 17	4 to 6pm > COBRATS Training All Age Groups	4 to 7pm > U6, U7 & U8 Coaches & Managers
TUESDAY 20th Day 4	WEDNESDAY 21st Day 5	
8.30 - 10.30am > School Development Team 5 - 7pm > Senior Team, Venom	4 to 7pm > U9, U10 & U11 Coaches & Managers	

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COACHES DEVELOPMENT & RETREAT 2023

23-25 JUNE
Thistle Hotel, Port Dickson

FRIDAY 23rd Day 1	SATURDAY 24th Day 2	SUNDAY 25th Day 3
3pm > Check in 7pm > Dinner 8.30pm > Intro & Ice breakers	8am > Breakfast 9am - 10.30am > Coach the coaches session Coffee break Intro to how to run a session for juniors (varying skills, varying ages) (stations based training, team runs, fun drills) 11am - 12.30pm > Lunch break 2pm - 3.30pm > Fun drills training for all ages Tea break Outdoor session 6.30pm - 7pm > Pool 7.30pm > Dinner/drinks/fellowship	8am > Breakfast 9 to 11 am > Walk like a Penguin 11.30am > Check out 4pm > COBRATS Training in PJ

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Great to also see Penguin Glen McLellan from Orkney drop into COBRA to support Ben and Steve as he was passing by!

