



The Yellow Jersey

Nothing But The Best | Nil Satis Nisi Optimum

At Far Post, we have a practice that is making its way through each of our teams where we award a 'Yellow Jersey' after training to the player that goes 'above and beyond.' The Yellow Jersey symbolizes what it does for the Tour de France for all of you bike enthusiast – The one that is the best. The question is – 'what does it really mean?' It doesn't just go to that player who is widely regarded as the best or most popular. It goes to the player that works the hardest, does all that they can do to be better, that pushes their game beyond their comfort zone that tackles their challenges and is not satisfied with anything but their very best.

On the shirts, we have a saying printed on the back that read – **Nil Satis Nisi Optimum**. For all you Everton fans out there, you know this saying since this is a motto they use – It has been on their shield and is prominently displayed throughout their training facility at Finch Farm where their youth academy and first team train. The motto is in Latin that translates into English as '**Nothing But The Best**.' If you do a Google search of its meaning, you will find that most links mock the saying, but the essence of the motto is exactly what we are trying to strive for. Like at Everton, we understand that all that we do and have is not the very best – Not all clubs have the endless resources and deep money pockets of the major soccer clubs in the US and world – BUT our effort, attitude and the way we respond to our challenges must always push us towards that ultimate goal of providing the very best for our players, families and teams.

In this world where trophies are given to everyone for participating, clubs like Far Post are charged with teaching kids the realities of life – Life is not fair and neither is soccer. Because of this, we must push players to be better. Sometimes they will do it and sometimes they won't. We are trying to get them to first see what it looks like to play a certain way, recognize those players that are performing the best and rewarding them for their efforts. We must be clear that it is not a popularity contest AND it is not who they perceive as being 'the best player.' We actually ask players who they believe should earn this recognition, and they do a pretty good job at it. But whenever these decisions are made, there must be a legitimate reason. We know that kids love this and it is very motivating for them. Yes, there are times when kids will be disappointed they didn't get the jersey. Yes, people will disagree with who was selected. But, it is not about 'wanting the Yellow Jersey' – It is about striving for the very best. It is like the game – everyone wants to win, but there can only be one winning team.

We know that for every training session, there are a number of players who could be awarded the Yellow Jersey, but the coaches have the tough job of identifying the ONE player that is most deserving. The award goes to the player that demonstrates the following qualities:

- *Works hard all practice long* – we are looking for the hardest working players
- *Listens well & follows directions* – we are looking for players that are really paying attention
- *Applies lessons learned in training* – we are looking for players that are getting better and learning from their mistakes
- *Good teammate?* – we are looking for players that play for the team and support teammates
- *Working on their game on their own* – we are looking for players that are self-motivated and willing to practice on their own
- *Competes* – we want competitive players always training and playing to win
- *Plays with confidence* – we are looking for players that believe in themselves
- *Takes chances and risks and responds well to mistakes* – soccer is a game of a 1,000 mistakes – we are looking for players that are willing to take risks and try new things

We just wanted to make sure that all families knew of this practice that we have initiated. It was first started by Coach Kevin Barber, which quickly spread to the U10s as well as other teams.