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# Onside Ministries Newsletter

## The Italian Connection



The vast majority of children who come along to our coaching sessions come from incredibly poor backgrounds and it has always been the Onside philosophy that we try to provide the best coaching for them that we possibly can. We want them to come along to professionally run training sessions for free and to receive coaching that is at least the equivalent, if not better, than fee-paying football academies in their areas. It is therefore fantastic news for us that we have been able to set up a partnership with two professional Italian coaches, Mirko Mazzantini, current U-16 coach with Serie A side Fiorentina, and Simone Bombardieri, current U-14 coach at Serie B side Empoli, who are designing a coaching structure for our overseas academies. Mirko and Simone have written numerous coaching manuals while both Fiorentina and Empoli have very successful youth academies which are widely considered to be the among the best in Italy, with both clubs producing players who have gone on to represent Italy at national level. Mirko and Simone heard what Onside has been doing and felt that they wanted to get involved with our work. They have therefore designed a structured football training schedule for all of our coaches to follow, which covers simple football drills for junior players right through to more complex drills for older players. All of our coaches will be trained to use this method of coaching, which will take our training sessions up to a whole new level of



Mirko Mazzantini and the Fiorentina U-15 side after winning the Serie A youth league

professionalism. This is a very exciting development and promises to enhance our training programmes for the children who come along every week. We are also hoping that Mirko and Simone will run a coaching clinic in the UK later in the year for local coaches. Full details will appear on

the website nearer the time.



Mirko (l) and Simone (r)



### Dates for the Diary

2nd - 11th May 2014 - Coaching trip to Chennai

8th June - Jude Thomas is taking part in the Whiteley Village 5k to raise funds for Onside

### Other News

Congratulations to Moses, our Coach in Uganda, and his wife Kirabo on the birth of their son Arthur on 12th February.

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## Progress Report from Uganda

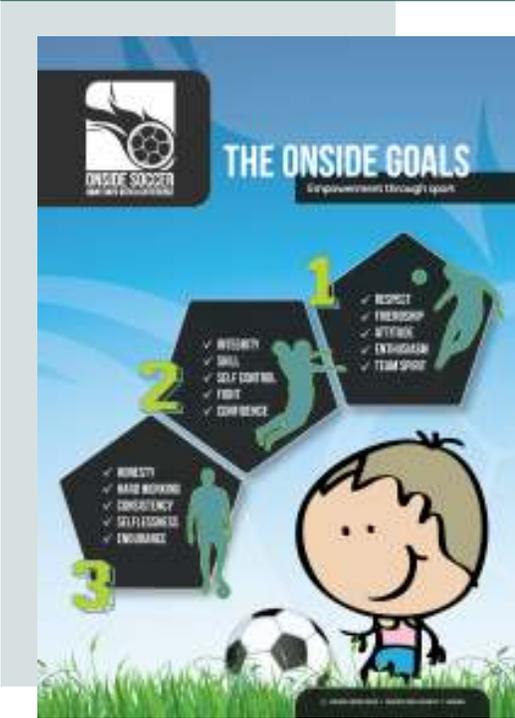
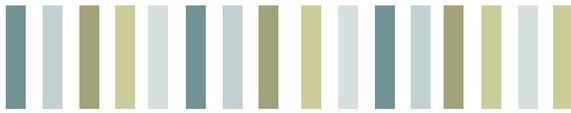
In March the Onside Kampala team travelled to the town of Masaka in south west Uganda to play a friendly match against the Alpha Soccer Academy, which is a similar project run by a Danish coach who has relocated to Uganda. Despite the long bus journey the boys did well, scoring early in the game and eventually drawing the match 1-1. Travelling to play is a great opportunity for the boys, the majority of whom have never left Kampala before, and getting a draw was a good result. Moses has organised further friendly matches for the team in the coming months. Our Onside Chennai team were also in action this month, losing narrowly to the American International



School. The team has shown great improvement recently so hoping for a better result next time.

Follow us on twitter at [www.twitter.com/OnsideSoccer](http://www.twitter.com/OnsideSoccer)





## Mentorship Model

Since starting Onside Ministries one of the things we have focussed on is the mentorship of young people, specifically by using sport as a way at looking at behaviours and attitudes and encouraging good decision making in these areas. To allow us to do this, in recent months we have developed a learning programme called the 'Tower Model' for both football and basketball, which is split into fifteen weekly lessons and looks at, amongst other things, topics such as friendship, integrity, teamwork and endurance. During training sessions we then have talks for young people on each of these 15 topics, spending 10-15 minutes during each session looking at what these mean on a day-to-day basis, both in the sport being played and also in the

context of everyday life outside sport. Our 'Tower Model' programme is still in it's infancy, with the pilot project being held in the UK with the Feltham Warriors Basketball team, but initial feedback has been good and we are now looking at the best way to expand the programme into our projects in Uganda and India. Crossing cultural barriers can be difficult and what might work very well in the UK may not work quite as well in another context, which is why we have designed our model to be flexible, based on the needs of where we are working. The model is designed to be used in conjunction with our new Italian coaching structure (*described overleaf*) and it is our hope that we will be able to implement both mentorship and coaching models in India and Uganda from the end of July.

## Prayer Requests

- For wisdom for the Onside team, that they remain focused and that they continue to seek God's will in their work.
- For financial support to allow Onside Soccer and Cross Over Basketball to function and for projects to grow and develop.
- For Henry as he tries to establish further football reconciliation projects in northern Nigeria.
- For discernment for new opportunities in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, and that the correct people come along at the right time to make these opportunities a reality.

## Meet the Team—Paul

Over the next few issues we will be introducing you to some of our team. In this issue we will be hearing a bit more about Onside founder Paul



Paul originally comes from Ballymena in Northern Ireland but moved to London just over five years ago to work for Compassion, the child sponsorship charity. While helping lead a Compassion tour to Rwanda he spotted a group of children playing football and came up with the idea of setting up football academies in the developing world, combining professional level football coaching with youth mentorship to allow children from impoverished backgrounds the opportunity to play the sport they love in a safe environment. On his

return to the UK he took an F.A. coaching course and started figuring out how to put his idea into action. In 2011 he worked as tour chaplain with Ambassadors in Sport in Spain and later in the year, along with Onside trustee Rob Powell, he set up the first Onside academy in Chennai in India in partnership with the Dr John Joseph Foundation. In 2012 he then set up a similar project in Kampala, Uganda and also a peace and reconciliation project in Jos in northern Nigeria. He is currently Chairman of the board of trustees and splits his time between working for Onside Soccer and Compassion UK. He is married to Joanne, has two sons called Finn and Zachary and his dream is to see Ballymena United crowned European champions (although he would be happy with the Irish Cup in May!)

## Final Whistle...

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and also for your on-going support and prayers—we really appreciate it!

*The Onside Team*