

# Soccer Resume

## Darren Bird

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### Playing experience

- School soccer in Derby, England. Amateur soccer in Derby and Dorset, England and Chattanooga, TN

### Coaching experience

- Recreational soccer coach, Rochester, NY YMCA (1998)
- Recreational soccer coach, Pittsford Mustangs Soccer Club, Pittsford, NY (1999)
- Select soccer coach, Pittsford Mustangs Soccer Club, Pittsford, NY
  - Pittsford Blazers Boys U9 (2000 - 2001)
    - Won Rochester District Youth Soccer League Division 3 (12-0 record)
- Recreational soccer coach, Signal Mountain Recreational Soccer League (2001-2002)
- Select soccer coach, Signal Mountain Soccer Club, Signal Mountain, TN
  - Signal Mountain Storm Boys 93 (2002 - 2004)
  - Signal Mountain Storm Girls 96 (2004 - Date)
    - Our tournament successes, including U13 Division III state champions in 2009, are shown on our team website page

### Coaching qualifications

- USSF 'E' License (April 2001)
- USSF National 'D' License (July 2006)

### Growing up in England

I played soccer and rugby during my high school years in England. My love of watching and playing soccer has made me passionate about coaching kids age-appropriately so they develop a wide range of skills to enjoy playing this great game.

I grew up in the city of Derby, England and am a lifelong Derby County supporter. My grandfather played soccer at a high level and introduced me to the game. He and I regularly went to soccer games together and he taught me a lot about the game. During my time living in England (until 1996) I visited 30+ different professional soccer grounds with my grandfather and friends to watch Derby County play, so you could describe me as a serious soccer (or the 'real' football) fan!

### Coaching philosophy

- As a soccer coach I am always looking for new ways to more effectively teach all aspects of this great game. Over 8 years of coaching select soccer I have found the following to be particularly valuable and effective for coaching youth players:
  - Weil Coerver foot-skills and Horst Wein concepts for mini-soccer.
  - The Dutch system of coaching, particularly the extensive use of different 4v4 games.
  - Peter Schreiner's concepts for teaching creative dribbling.
  - Street soccer for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – a small-sided games coaching model by Larry Paul.
  - The FA Soccer Stars Challenge to measure technical progress of players.
- I believe that at young ages the main focus should be on developing foot-skills and good fundamental technique, while having fun. Every practice should include some fun, competitive games where the kids learn good soccer technique and develop good habits while simply playing games.
- Composure on the ball and good first touch are important characteristics of talented soccer players which take time and patience to cultivate. Players have to be able to learn to play the game under pressure, but if players are put under too much pressure from an early age they do not develop good technique and never realize their full potential as soccer players.
- I believe that player development is much more important than winning at young ages. However, I do believe it is important for a team to find the right level to play in order for a good team spirit to develop by players believing their team can be competitive in every game. It is usually more fun to win than lose, but playing a close game and losing where every player played well and gained valuable playing experience should be celebrated more than winning a game big against a team of a lower competitive level.
- I try to stay humble as a coach because the players are more important than me. I aim to maintain an atmosphere where the kids are relaxed to play and do not fear the consequences of making mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes and I emphasize that all you can do is learn from them and aim to get a little better every time you practice or play a game.