

CPL All-Stars clash with ASC prior to Ontario trials



By Jake Courtepatte

Jim Brennan may be on the sidelines when York 9 FC makes its Canadian Premier League debut in 2019, but on Saturday, he took to the field one more time in support of a good cause.

The former Canadian national team member, and current head coach of York 9 FC was joined by past teammates and CPL executives in a friendly against the Aurora Soccer Club on Saturday, in support of Southlake Foundation and the Aurora Food Pantry.

Supporters young and old waved their banners as Brennan and his squad showed off some new white and green kits, in a match they won 4 ? 1.

Some well-known names from across the Canadian soccer landscape joined Brennan for the cause, including former Toronto FCers Marco Reda and Terry Dunfield, as well as CPL Director Kurt Larson.

The excitement in the air wafted farther than just the pitch: those in the stands were heavily decked out in fresh York 9 FC gear, many in anticipation of the CPL trials coming to Ontario in less than a week's time.

Scouts and head coaches from across the league will be in Hamilton on October 1 ? 2, before visiting Toronto on October 11 ? 12, where Brennan is hoping to scoop up some homegrown talent.

With hundreds of attendees expected from across York Region, is there any certain aspects that will give one player an advantage over another? No, according to Brennan, who said he and his staff will be looking for ?a good balance of players.?

?We need some experienced players, we need some youth, we need some guys that can lead by example, that can take control in the dressing room,? said Brennan.

Even positionally, the gates are wide open for any hopeful to pull on the green and black.

?You need utility players as well, guys that can play all over the park in different positions.?

For Brennan, he brings experience to the position in filling in a roster from scratch: he did so in 2016 in building the AYSC's branch of the semi-pro League1 Ontario squad, the Aurora FC, as the executive director.

Yet on a larger scale, and representing not just Aurora but the nine municipalities of York Region, the grandiose task allows a much larger and more widespread pool of players to choose from: something he thinks will benefit the program.

?I think a lot of times, when a coach inherits a team and he wants to play a certain formation, he can't because the players can't adjust to it and he's got to take a little bit of time in order to move players on and get the players he wants,? Brennan said. ?We're in a good situation here where we can really build our squad to suit our style of play and our system.?

The hundreds in the stands on Saturday may have caught a glimpse of the type of play Brennan hopes to bring to the team's inaugural season, opting to prefer to fill his roster down the middle of the field when they take to the pitch in 2019.

Though you can guarantee he and his staff are doing their research daily to find their best fit, regardless of position.

?The key to success is a difficult one, and everybody has to find the right ingredients that are going to make them successful. And it's not an easy task in world football.?

?It's hard to win and it's hard to get your systems right, your formations right, and get the right players in place, so we've got a hard task ahead of us but we're going to make sure we're very thorough in what we do and make sure we get the right players in.? More information on the upcoming trials can be found at www.york9fc.canpl.ca.