

AFC to introduce Hyun Jin Moon's Midnight Football programme to other countries in Asia

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Photos by BRIAN MOH

THE Asian Football Confederation (AFC), encouraged by the positive results, have decided to extend the community programme Midnight Football to other countries in the continent.

The pilot programme, with 64 participants who were mostly teenagers, was initiated last year. The idea was to provide a platform for youngsters to be involved in healthy activities.

AFC Social Responsibility Department director Ra Ingill said AFC had organised some prestigious tournaments for their affiliates.

“We have had excellent competitions and attracted a big following among football fans in Asia. We felt that the time was right to give back with community programme for the less fortunate.



Limbering up: The participants going through a warm-up session before training.

“We initiated the Midnight Football programme with five components — education, social, fair play, peace building and poverty issue — which will inculcate good values to the participants.

“It was discovered many youngsters tend spend late nights outside their homes. They had many reasons. The AFC wanted to do something for these kids, who liked playing the game,” said Ingill.

The programme was well received and the participants showed excellent enthusiasm. Besides the training sessions, the participants were also exposed to other activities like character building, social programmes

and health promotions.

However this year, the AFC worked with the Department of National Unity, Sports Planet and Global Peace Festival Malaysia.

The participants were from Sentul. The Rukun Tetangga sector in Bandar Baru Sentul as well as the Federal Territories Education Department were given the responsibility to identify the students.



Listen up: Former international K. Ramachandran (right) briefing the participants.

This year's programme was held during the day time. The participants attended futsal training. The coaches also organised a competition among the participants.

There were also monthly camps as well as a programme for parents and teachers. The feedback from participants was encouraging.

Ingill said they would be initiating similar programmes in China, Qatar and India.

“But the programmes will have the same values and components. In India, it will be Midnight Football; Happy and Healthy Life in China and School Challenge in Qatar.

“Before we decided on the programmes in China, India and Qatar, we had to evaluate the logistics. In Qatar, it was not possible to organise events at night. So we opted to initiate the programme in schools.

“Likewise, we would be able to have midnight football in India because the kids chose to spend their nights on the streets.

“We are convinced the programme will succeed in other countries in Asia also,” said Ingill.