

## PREMIER LEAGUE AND BRITISH COUNCIL LAUNCH KOLKATA COACHING PROJECT

Kolkata today (Monday 10th March) witnessed the launch of the Premier League's innovative coaching development project 'Premier Skills'. The project, run in conjunction with the British Council and launched by former Premier League football stars Warren Barton and Robbie Earle and current Premier League coaches Gareth Prosser (Derby County) and Vic Bettinelli (Fulham), will work with a number of young football coaches in the city to enhance their football coaching skills and develop their English language ability.

Premier Skills is one of the Premier League's first international football projects, having launched in 2007 in Egypt, where two projects now exist in Cairo and Alexandria. In February Premier Skills started in New Delhi before moving to Kolkata, commonly referred to as the home of Indian football, where it will be run in conjunction with the All Indian Football Federation (AIFF) and ESPN Star Sports, the Premier League's television rights holder.

The coaching project will see Barton, who played nearly 400 games for Wimbledon, Newcastle United and Derby County and former Wimbledon and Jamaica international midfielder Earle, both of whom have UEFA coaching qualifications, lead a series of football coaching and skills sessions for 40 local youth leaders. These will help them develop so they can continue to run football schemes to benefit their own communities for years to come.

In addition to the coaching sessions, the British Council will deliver intensive English language courses. The participants will be able to continue their language development after the week-long session has finished through the British Council's dedicated education resource website [www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish](http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish)

Premier League Chief Executive, Richard Scudamore said:

"At home the Premier League and our clubs have a long-held commitment and reputation for investing in community and education programmes and given our popularity and success internationally we felt it only right to take this approach to a wider community.

"It is clear to us that there is a growing interest in football – and the Premier League - in India. Working with an organisation with the reputation the British Council has, as well as top coaches like Robbie Earle and Warren Barton, we intend to use this interest in the



Premier League to help develop the core skills of local youth leaders for the long term benefit of their communities.”

British Council Chair, Lord Kinnock, said:

“This is a truly exciting, creative initiative. Football transcends race and language among people everywhere. By putting the British Council’s experience and global network together with the Premier League’s great know-how, we can reach countless young people and help to enhance their skills on the pitch, their self-development, and their understanding of other cultures.”

ESPN STAR Sports Managing Director, Manu Sawhney said:

“We are proud to partner with the Premier League in this unique initiative. Our strong relationship with them has been built on our commitment to grow the Premier League brand in India and across the region and we continue to build this through broadcast of over 250 live and same day telecast matches, production of over 350 hours of original football programming annually and through our unique grass roots programme targeting school children in India.

“We are committed to raise the awareness of this community project and create a positive impact amongst Indian youths. With the strong equity that our brands enjoy and the extensive reach of our network in India, we are confident of building this initiative, thus garnering maximum participation and exposure for the programme.”

Premier Skills uses a number of innovative training tools to help aid participants’ development. These include the ‘Skill Factor’ interactive training CD-Rom, which was designed by Dutch coach Michel Mommertz. The CD-Rom breaks down how a player can complete a certain football technique by allowing the user to zoom in and out and watch a skill from different angles and in slow motion.

The course will also use a DVD of interviews with a number of the Premier League’s top foreign players as an educational resource. The likes of Didier Drogba, Dirk Kuyt and Petr Cech are interviewed about their experience of living in the UK, adapting to a different culture and learning the English language.

Premier League  
30 Gloucester Place  
London W1U 8PL  
[premierleague.com](http://premierleague.com)  
T +44 (0) 20 7864 9190  
F +44 (0) 20 7864 9072  
E [press@premierleague.com](mailto:press@premierleague.com)





#### **About the Premier League:**

- The Premier League is involved in a wide range of community projects both at home and overseas. For more information on any of these, read the Premier League Community Report at: <http://www.premierleague.com/staticFiles/a2/71/0,,12306~94626,00.pdf>
- If you want to contact the Premier League Press Office, call +44 (0)20 7864 9190

#### **About the British Council:**

- The British Council is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.
- We operate in 233 towns and cities in 109 countries and territories worldwide.
- We build relationships and understanding between people in the UK and other countries and increase appreciation of the UK's ideas and achievements overseas.
- The areas we focus on are creativity, education and civil society.

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30 Gloucester Place  
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