

Wood River girl Kate Jose has soccer chance of lifetime to train with FC Barcelona

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WOOD RIVER — The sport of soccer has come a very long way in the United States since the country's hosting of the 1994 FIFA World Cup, still considered the most successful in the event's history. And now, a Wood River girl has the chance to train with one of the most successful clubs in the world.

Kate Jose, who's 10, was recently selected from more than 5,000 youth players to attend a special clinic in Barcelona, Spain, which will be held by FC Barcelona and will be held October 21-30 on the grounds of the FC Barcelona academy and at the club's famed Nou Camp stadium.

“We were looking into camps for Kate, and on the advice of her coach, we found the FC Barcelona camp,” said Stacy Jose, Kate's mother. “She was learning some new techniques from some of the best coaches in the world.”

What the coaches were also looking for were players who displayed what's known as the Barcelona Method. It's a style of play that has helped them to become one of the world's most popular and successful clubs. Since its founding, Barca, as the club is known as, have won 24 championships in La Liga, the Spanish First Division, along with five UEFA Champions League titles, the old European Cup Winners' Cup four times and the Copa Del Rey, the Spanish national cup, 24 times, among other honors.

In addition, the club's matches against arch-rival Real Madrid CF are among the most anticipated in the world every season. The rivalry has become known as El Clasico.

Needless to say, Kate is very excited about the opportunity to travel to Spain and learn from some of the best in the world.

“I'm very excited,” Kate said. “I think it's going to be a lot of fun.”

Kate started into soccer at her local YMCA after watching her brother, Collin, play. She currently plays for St. Louis Scott-Gallagher, considered the St. Louis area's top youth club and the owners of Saint Louis FC, who are in their third year of play in the second-tier United Soccer League.

“I tried soccer for the first time to see if I would like it, and I love it.” Kate said.

The club held approximately 25 similar camps across the country, and from the over 5,000 players who participated, 10 percent were hand-picked by the Barcelona coaches for invitations for the camp in October. The Jose family were notified July 13 of Kate's

invitation to the camp, While in Barcelona, the campers will receive professional training and coaching from the staff, attend two matches involving Barca and its crosstown rival, Espanyol, and engage in other cultural and soccer-related activities.

While the family is excited, they also know that it will be very pricey. To that end, Stacy created a Go Fund Me page, where friends and family can donate money towards Kate's trip. The goal is to raise \$4,000, which will be applied towards camp fees, airfare and other expenses.

“We thought that would be the quickest way for friends and family who want to donate to do so,” Stacy said. Stacy, her husband, Darrell, and Collin also will travel with Kate to the camp.

Stacy thinks that having family along with Kate will ease the burden and stress that's often related for a long trip.

“When I was 16, I made a select team, and we played in Norway, Sweden and Denmark,” Stacy said. “It was a month long, and I didn't have my parents with me. So I know how stressful it was without them.

“I'm really excited for Kate to travel to another country, experience soccer in a different country and improve her skill and technique,” Stacy also said.

Stacy is also a survivor of Stage-4 breast cancer, and to be with her daughter on the trip would be the icing on the cake.

“It's pretty exciting, and we're hoping to make the dream come true,” Stacy said.

Barca's players are among the world's best known, and the list includes stars such as Lionel Messi, Neymar, Jr., Xavi Hernandez, Andreas Iniesta and Gerard Pique, among others. Kate is hoping to meet her favorite player, Messi.

“He's really fast, and he's really a good player.” Kate said.

And there's other things the young player would like to do on her trip.

“I really want to go,” Kate said. “I want to see the ocean and have my family watch me play in the stadium.”

For more information or to donate toward the family's trip, please log on to www.gofundme.com/9jp6fw-send-kate-to-barcelona-clinicspain