

Media Update
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Wolfgang Pikal Unveils the Significance of Nurturing Early Football Talents

Timika - Papua has consistently been recognized as a powerhouse in Indonesian football. Labeled as the pearl of the East, it has given rise to exceptional players renowned for their adept ball control. Figures like Ricky Kambuaya, Osvaldo Haay, and Yanto Basna have left an indelible mark by significantly bolstering different generations of the Indonesian national team.

The substantial representation of Papua in the Indonesian national team underscores the immense potential of Papuan players in soccer. **Wolfgang Pikal**, Director of Papua Football Academy (PFA), emphasizes the pivotal role of a holistic approach in fostering the development of early football talent to its fullest potential.

As a key figure in advancing early childhood football in Papua, Wolfgang spearheads the Papuan Football Academy (PFA), a program for the development of football athletes initiated by President Jokowi and implemented by PT Freeport Indonesia (PTFI).

Wolfgang has a vision for forging a robust and proficient generation of future footballers. "The cultivation of early childhood footballers should center on pivotal elements such as the accessibility of facilities, a well-structured academic system, and active engagement in regular and comprehensive soccer tournaments," said Wolfgang.

PFA remains committed to spearheading the advancement of young football talents in Papua, exemplified by the provision of dormitories and internationally accredited sports facilities at the Mimika Sports Complex (MSC) for selected PFA students. The aim is for MSC to play a pivotal role in fostering the growth of these budding talents, enabling them to realize their maximum potential.

Wolfgang and his team at PFA are dedicated to providing PFA students with a holistic education encompassing formal academics, soft skills, and soccer expertise essential for success in the professional arena. Beyond formal education and football tactics, PFA students are equipped with knowledge in financial management, ethics, time management, healthy lifestyles, public speaking, and prudent use of social media. This curriculum aligns with the Life Skills Education (PKH) module established by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection.

"Active involvement in inclusive and extensive soccer competitions forms a crucial component in enhancing the skills and mindset of young footballers in real match scenarios," Wolfgang elucidated. Over recent months, PFA students have engaged in diverse competitions, such as the East Java Regional Asiana Cup U-14 and the Asian Soccer Championship (ASC) Super Copa U-14, along with friendly matches against Farmel, Bhayangkara BSS, and Persija AC.

PFA actively engages its students not only in soccer tournaments but also in supplementary activities like regular coaching clinics. An exemplary instance was a clinic led by three legends from Germany's leading soccer club, Borussia Dortmund (BVB) **Marcel Schmelzer**, **Jörg Heinrich**, and **Paul Lambert**, a collaboration between PTFI and the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI).

In Papua, PFA enhances local academies by imparting expertise to eight soccer schools in Timika. Additionally, it actively promotes health awareness among junior high school students in Timika through soccer. The recent event engaged 25 student representatives from 10 junior high schools.

Beyond student education, PFA conducted a National D License coaching course for football coaches in Papua, with plans for this initiative to become an annual event.

"Training early age talents must be done from the grassroots. We hope that our continuous efforts can bring Papuan talents into the Indonesian national team, taking part to make Indonesia proud in competitions at the international level, such as the ongoing U-17 World Cup," said Wolfgang.

Investing in early childhood football talent development in Papua is a strategic commitment towards the future of Indonesian football. With collaborative support, Wolfgang envisions a robust generation of footballers who will bring honor to Indonesia in the international football arena.

PHOTOS	DESCRIPTION
<p>Photo 1a-d</p> 	<p>Director of Papua Football Academy (PFA) Wolfgang Pikal leads the soccer training of PFA students at the artificial turf football field at the Mimika Sports Complex, Timika, Friday (10/11).</p>





About PT Freeport Indonesia (PTFI)

PT Freeport Indonesia (PTFI) is a mineral mining company affiliated with Freeport-McMoRan (FCX) and Mining Industry Indonesia (MIND ID). PTFI mines and processes ore to produce concentrates containing copper, gold, and silver.

PTFI markets the concentrates worldwide, and primarily to its domestic copper smelter, PT Smelting. PTFI's mining operations are located in the Grasberg mineral estate, Papua - Indonesia. The large copper and gold mineral deposits contained in the Grasberg area make PTFI's mining operations one of the largest in the world. PTFI currently operates the world's largest underground mine that emphasizes responsible business practices.

About Papua Football Academy

Papua Football Academy (PFA) is a Papuan football athlete development program based at Mimika Sport Complex - Timika, which aims to produce world-class Indonesian football athletes. It pioneers the FIFA Children Safeguarding Principles and adopts the Indonesian Football Philosophy (Filanesia) curriculum. In 2023, PFA selected 60 talented players from a selection process of more than 2,000 applicants across two batches. The PFA students come from eight cities in Papua, including Timika, Jayapura, Nabire, Merauke, Waropen, Yapen Islands, Biak Numfor, and Sorong.

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