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Southgate says he'd recommend Toulon trip for England again



Southgate believes the Toulon Tournament has a lot to offer future England squads

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England are playing for third place in the Tournament when they meet Portugal on Sunday afternoon, after finishing second in the group stage where they faced the likes of Brazil, Colombia, Qatar and South Korea.

Portugal v England

The Toulon Tournament
Third-fourth place play-off
3pm, Sunday 1 June 2014
Parc des Sports, Avignon
Live on BT Sport

And whilst the Under-21s head coach is hoping that he'll be preparing his squad for the European Championship Finals in Czech Republic this time next year, he believes Toulon would be a worthwhile expedition for next season's group, especially after the U19s missed out on qualification for the U20 World

Cup this week.

"I'd recommend sending a team here, or to something similar," admitted Southgate, ahead of Sunday's match in Avignon.

"We're delighted with how we've been looked after and, in a way, it's taking them out of their comfort zone, which is important.

"The pitches have been difficult, as we're asking our lads to play out from the back and there are difficulties with that.

"So I'm not going to be overly critical on mistakes that happen, because it's quite hard and if we want them to keep playing out you accept that we might give the opposition chances because of that.

"We haven't watered the training pitch, because we knew that's what we'd have in the games and if we went away somewhere in a qualifier or play-off next season, you could get that.

"And we haven't slaughtered them if things haven't gone right, because the purpose of the tournament is to pick up that experience."

The competition has also given Southgate's players a chance to test themselves against nations from around the globe and there has been an additional learning curve which has come with that.

It was Southgate's hope that the tournament would provide his squad with such a challenge and they would have to find a way to overcome that, which is what has happened so far.

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"Every nation has played different styles, and in the first half of the Korea game, we only had 37 per cent possession," explained Southgate.

"We said to them at half time that we needed to keep possession better and in the second half, we had 52 per cent and we were definitely better throughout.

"They [Korea] almost played without a centre-forward, so that was a different tactical challenge for us whilst Brazil were very direct and physical, which was different to what we've faced before.

"They're all important experiences for us and all of the players here will have come out of the competition better for it."

The match with Portugal takes place at 3pm on Sunday afternoon and you can watch the action live on BT Sport.

[England settle for fourth](#)

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