

Save the Dream and Sasol join forces on National Sport Day 2017 to promote education and inclusivity through sport



High-profile athletes and footballers from Al Sadd Football Club, including Xavi Hernandez, show support for blind football

"A ball for all" – landmark event pioneers new football for blind and visually-impaired young people in Qatar



14 February; Doha, Qatar: High-profile Qatari athletes and footballers from Al Sadd Football Club, including Xavi Hernandez, came together today on National Sport Day 2017 to show their support for blind football at a special event hosted by Save the Dream with the support of Sasol and the Qatar Social & Culture Center for the Blind.

Taking place at Qatar Foundation and to show their support for the power that blind football has in educating young people and encouraging inclusivity within society, a range of high-profile athletes and celebrities - including Xavi Hernandez, Hassan Al Haydous, Sabri Lamouchi and Qatar's first international female golfer, Yasmian Al Sharshani - joined forces to take part in host of matches and penalty shootouts alongside children and members of the public.



Organised as part of Save the Dream's overall mission to use sport as a tool to educate and empower young people and with the support of Sasol - the international integrated chemicals and energy company, the activity was led by IBSA Blind Football World Referee Coordinator, Elias Mastoras, and involved over 100 children from Al-Yarmouk Preparatory School and Khalifa Secondary School who participated alongside blind, visually-impaired and able bodied athletes and members of the public.

Including a variety of National Sport Day-related activities, community matches and penalty shootouts, the day showcased how people of all abilities and areas of society can play blind football and learn about the positive values sport can teach.

Of note, the event was also a landmark milestone for many young and aspiring football players in Qatar as it trialled for the first time in the country a new football, designed especially for young people who are blind or visually-impaired.

Described by many on the day as "a ball for all", the football - which is smaller and lighter than those currently used in blind football - will aim to be introduced into schools across the country.



Speaking of the event, **Mohammed Hanzab, Founder of Save the Dream and ICSS Chairman**, said:

“National Sport Day is a special and important day for many people and communities across Qatar.

“To have so many high-profile athletes and sporting heroes come together is incredible show of support and highlights the power that sport and blind football can have in bringing together people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds and encouraging inclusivity within society.

“In addition, by pioneering a new football in Qatar for the first time, this joint activity run by Save the Dream and Sasol will hopefully make a real, lasting and positive difference to the lives of blind and visually-impaired young people across the country.

“On behalf of Save the Dream, I would like to extend my special thanks to Sasol and the Qatar Social & Culture Center for the Blind for supporting Save the Dream on National Sport Day, as well as Xavi Hernandez and the many sporting heroes who attended and gave many young people the opportunity to experience and play sport.”

Phinda Vilakazi, President of GTL Ventures at Sasol said:

“Sasol is proud to be the sponsor of the “A Ball for All” event. Ever since the initiation of Definitely Able in 2012, Sasol has been committed to empowering people with disabilities to find their place in society through sports.

“We have seen the positive impact that sports can have on the disabled community. In the past, we have hosted the South African Paralympic Wheelchair Basketball team in a friendly match

against the Qatar National team and organized a race between a blade runner champion and an Arabian horse.

“Building on the legacy, we have partnered with Save the Dream, a well-established organization, in order to promote inclusive sports, in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. We thank Save the Dream for this unique event and will continue to empower the disabled community through our ongoing Definitely Able and Accessible Qatar initiatives.”

Accessible Qatar builds on Sasol’s ongoing Definitely Able initiative. The concept for the initiative grew out of an engaging session called “Finding the Accessible Doha” held during the Definitely Able Conference in March 2015, where disabled individuals from around Qatar, the region and the world discussed inclusion for people with disability as full members of society.

Accessible Qatar is a smartphone application and website, the first of its kind in the region providing the disabled community instant and reliable information about the accessibility of public and touristic locations in Qatar.

Combining expertly-audited data with user-submitted reviews and ratings, Accessible Qatar gives the disabled community and tourists the confidence to visit different accessible destinations. Moreover, having accessibility information publicly available on Accessible Qatar will encourage venues to make necessary modifications in support of accessibility for all patrons.

The Accessible Qatar app is available for download free of charge on App Store, Google Play store, Windows Phone Store and on the website (www.AccessibleQatar.com). More information can be found on the Definitely Able social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), where users can keep tabs on the latest developments.