



Press Release

MORE SUCCESS FOR ASPIRE'S FOOTBALLERS IN EUROPE

SILVERWARE WON IN CZECH REPUBLIC, SWEDEN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Thursday, July 29th, 2010, Doha, Qatar: Footballers from ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence have had another successful week in their European summer tours, winning silverware in three tournaments and knocking Manchester United out of the Milk Cup.

ASPIRE 1993 were in Northern Ireland, where they defeated Queen of the South from Scotland 3-0 in their opening match of the Milk Cup, before upsetting two-time defending champions Manchester United 2-1.

ASPIRE Football Head Coach Michael Browne described the result as “one of the best performances by an ASPIRE side since we started in 2004.”

In the quarter-finals, ASPIRE 93 lost to Deportivo of Brazil 2-1, after conceding a late goal.

The squad had arrived in Northern Ireland from Sweden, where they finished third in the prestigious Gothia Cup. Having reached the semi-finals without conceding a goal, they lost on penalties against Swedish side, IF Elfsborg, who themselves went on to win the tournament.

ASPIRE 1996 were also in action in Northern Ireland, taking part in the Foyle Cup in Derry. Two wins and a defeat in the group stage meant they went into the Plate tournament. Victories in the quarter- and semi-final (the latter a 12-0 thrashing of Spanish sports academy CET) saw them reach the final.

There, they faced hosts Derry District and, after the scores finished level (1-1) at the end of normal time, the game went to penalties. Thanks to two excellent saves by Sulaiman Bilal Al Abdullah, ASPIRE 96 won the penalty shoot-out 4-3 to lift the trophy.

ASPIRE 1998 entered two teams in the Under-12 Mladsich Zaku tournament in the Czech Republic. ASPIRE A won the tournament with a one hundred percent record (winning six out of six games), while ASPIRE B were runners-up (winning five out of six, the only loss being to their A team colleagues).

Hassan Palang, with 10 goals, was the competition's top scorer, while Saoud Ibrahim was voted Player of the Tournament.

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ASPIRE Media Information

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Notes to Editors:

Created in 2004, the ASPIRE Academy for Sports Excellence in Doha has the dual aims of identifying and transforming promising student-athletes into world-renowned champions across a wide range of sports, and to act as a beacon to draw sporting culture into the center of life in Qatar and the surrounding region.

The Academy is distinguished by a philosophy which aims to develop the student as a whole, providing him with full academic, social and sporting development.

Unrivalled facilities, housed in and around the world's largest purpose-built indoor sports dome, ensure the Academy's reputation as one of the foremost sporting and educational institutions in the entire international community, enticing an ever-increasing number of visitors and users, from sporting legends to global political leaders.

Every aspect of the development of elite athletes is catered for by one indoor and seven outdoor football pitches, athletics tracks, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, diving pool, combat arenas, gymnastics arena, special fitness weight rooms, lecture halls, dormitories to accommodate what will eventually become 1,000 students, a medical center and many more facilities.

In 2010, ASPIRE hosted the IAAF World Indoor Athletics Championships, attracting a record number of countries (149) and participants (more than 1,100 athletes and officials). The event also witnessed the first-ever world record on Qatari soil – Teddy Tamgho of France setting a new world indoor record of 17.90 meters in the Triple Jump.

The WIC saw too the first ASPIRE graduate to take part in a major world championship. High jumper Mutaz Essa Barshim is also the first graduate of the Academy to hold a national record in an Olympic sport.

In a move unique in world sport, ASPIRE has signed a cooperation agreement with the Qatar Association of Athletics Federation (QAAF), the core objective of which is to produce elite athletes able to represent Qatar, with success, at major international athletics events and meetings. QAAF's most talented young athletes are to become student-athletes at ASPIRE Academy, where they will receive both their training and education.

Launched in 2007, the ASPIRE Football Dreams project annually tests more than 600,000 young footballers from all over the world, including Africa, Asia and Latin America, as part of the largest-ever talent search within the sport.

The ASPIRE ACTIVE initiative is a community engagement program spread across the country, ensuring that thousands of the nation's residents have accessible and advanced health and fitness activities as routine aspects of their lives. Each social group is catered for by tailor-made classes and programs.