

Road to Rio 14 – Football Match (SSFC Vs KUFF)

“Sir, I want to play”, said ‘A’ just after the final whistle was blown in a football match between Street Strikers Football Club (SSFC) Karachi United Football Foundation (KUFF) organized by Azad Foundation (AF) in cooperation with UNICEF and KMC at KMC Football Stadium near Central Fire Brigade Office, Saddar Town on 14 November 2012. ‘A’ lives on streets of Karachi. “I’ve seen my friends practice football on streets and I want to be a part of this. Can you give me a

In October 2012, Azad Foundation’s proposal was



accepted to represent Pakistan in Street Child World Cup 2014 to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Azad Foundation had selected children connected with

those children. KUFF has been supporting AF in this initiative and organized some training sessions for SSFC children. Street connected children from other parts of the country will also be participating in the national trials through organizations across the country who would partner up with Azad Foundation.

With this match, Team Pakistan’s Road to Rio officially began. The Street Child World Cup initiative is a part of Azad Foundation’s Sports for Development strategy adopted to support



chance?” he asked. This is the power of sports and the ‘human game’ i.e. football.

streets of Karachi to take part in national trials, Street Strikers FC comprises of

its Outreach Programme in accordance with UNCRC article#31 for providing

healthy sports and games opportunities to this most underprivileged group.



Karachi United Football Foundation has introduced this beautiful game to many backward and poor communities of Karachi and established training centers with additional services such as literacy and life skills education. The children of KUFF team have been playing football for years now. On the other hand SSFC children have only recently started playing football.

Mr. Ahmed Jan, a local football legend and the administrator of the ground volunteered for the role of match referee.

The match was thrilling and fast paced. Even with the little experience SSFC displayed good defensive skills. They lost 4 – 0 but it was never about winning or losing for them but to experience the sheer joy and excitement that was also shared by the people in audience. From the starting

whistle to the end of the match everyone was on their toes cheering and shouting, some even booed. Both teams showed respect to each other in and out of the ground as no physical fouls were given from both sides. Considering the aggressive nature developed due to street life this was a great improvement on SSFC children's part. They kept their cool and used their energy in building strikes and defenses in the game.



The match was covered by several electronic and print media. They interviewed players from both teams. The children expressed how much they have enjoyed playing this match and against each other. Many of them shared that they would like to be friends with other team's players as they interacted during half time.

The match was attended by AF staff, KUFF staff, IRD staff, children of local community, children connected with

streets and general public.



To take this initiative further Azad Foundation is planning to collaborate with KUFF and other organizations. AF is also working on a proposal for KMC to establish a football ground for SSFC to carry training sessions and matches.

The real match has just begun and much more will be seen and experienced by players of SSFC on this road to Rio.

