

#GOAL

SARAH ROMERT AND HER GANG OF GIRLS TACKLE TOUGH AND SCORE EASY



The finalists — Modern High School for Girls and German Football Academy — with Sarah Romert and the organisers, at the end of the 5-a-side Women's Football Carnival at The Newtown School on July 22. The carnival saw 12 participating teams including La Martiniere for Girls, GEMS Akademia International School and Julien Day School, with German Football Academy emerging winners, beating Modern High School for Girls 3-0 in the final. "We are thinking long-term. India's football culture is growing fast, and we want to bring in professionals from abroad to help us improve," said Krish Roy (far left), co-founder of German Football Academy. "I want to show the girls they have a future in sports. They can become pros just like me," said Sarah Romert (standing, sixth from left), a former Bayern Munich Women's footballer, in Calcutta for a week promoting women's football and training kids at the German Football Academy. Highlights from a day-long tourney...



Jessica Broughton (in yellow) of Julien Day School showed some serious football. "I started playing football five years ago. I am interested in all sports but football is something else," said the midfielder. Who's her favourite? "I love both Messi and Ronaldo!"



Garima Manglani (sitting, second from left) led a bunch of youngsters from GEMS Akademia International School. "I love football and it brings out the best in me. I really fell in love with the sport. As a team, this is our first time here and we are really improving," said the Class X student.



Sarah was spotted chilling on the sidelines. "I always wanted to give something back to football. Flying to India was so sudden but now I am here and it seems like something that I would want to keep doing," smiled Sarah.

Watching a bunch of girls play football is a refreshing sight but it wasn't easy getting them to the field. "It's hard to convince their parents to allow them to play. Sport helps children to channel energy, stay focused and communicate better to play as a team. That's why we have boys' and girls' teams in every sport in our school," said Satabdi Goswami Bhattacharjee, principal, The Newtown School.



Kuntala Ghosh Dastidar, Indian football legend, was felicitated by Sarah at the prize distribution ceremony.



Navya Khanna, the captain of Modern High School for Girls, led from the front, finishing with seven goals. "There is no better feeling than scoring a goal and watching all the supporters and the coaches go crazy. It's tough with a lot of pressure but the constant support of the team helped," said the Class XII student.



"Keep the ball moving," was Sarah's message to the girls from Techno India Group Public School, Ariadaha, during a pass-and-move training session. "She is really nice. She taught us really easy techniques that we could grasp quickly. It also improved our old techniques. It is our first time in a tournament like this and even though we lost our matches, we had a lot of fun," said captain Adrita Roy (not in picture).

Rhea Rao, one of the coaches at the German Football Academy, with mother Kavita. "My daughter started playing football at the age of seven and there were a lot of questions about the future of her as a girl in football. But now she is affiliated to GFA and she can prove to people that there is a career in football. Parents should encourage their daughters to play football," smiled the proud mommy.



Bend it like Sarah! The midfielder had a kick in the grass with the girls.

Text: Tiash De and Thomas Widrow
Pictures: Shuvo Roychaudhury

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