



Resolve on the Path of Great Resistance – Yasamin Rasoul

At the Julie Foudy leadership camp last year, I said I wanted to start some soccer teams. I had a planned budget and no real funds, but when I returned home to Kabul, I did start two teams, one for boys and one for girls. Players aged between 11 and 17 years old.

The teams were formed in September – 12 girls and about 10 boys. We started well. Players came from very far way, loved to learn new things and were doing very well.

I received donated equipment from the U.S. The donations included jerseys, soccer socks, pants, shin guards, cleats and soccer balls. What we couldn't use we gave to other teams.

I had to get special permission from school for coaching time. Most students in Afghanistan attend classes for four hours each day, in the morning or afternoon and they have time to participate in sports. At my school, classes are all day, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. It wasn't easy, but I did get permission to leave school an hour early.

I'm very proud of my teams. The girls worked especially hard. They tried often to keep up with the boys. The girls were younger – all different ages and most under the age of 16. To help pay for their transportation (only the girls who had to travel by taxi) I paid each player about \$2 each day they played. They practiced for three months but due to on going problems, stopped coming.

Here is what happened. Every few days there was some sort of argument and after several weeks, I was kicked off the soccer field. I looked for and found another field, but it wasn't safe for the girls because others who disagreed with girls playing soccer would watch and cause problems. Boys would come and make fun of them and give them a hard time when they left practice. It was a problem for them and their families, so the girls in my team stopped coming. It was also starting to get cold and winter came early. I didn't think I'd be able to keep a girls' team working together. Without the girls, I decided to work only on a boys' team.

In December, my friend Barbara Goodno delivered the letter and the money from the Julie Foudy Foundation. I took the money and with my father, changed the dollars into Afghani and opened a bank account for the soccer coaching project. We used the money to help pay for transportation, equipment and the lease of the field.

I found about 35 boys of different ages between 11 and 17 years old. I found a soccer field, but they asked for money to pay them – they wanted 1,200 afi per month (about 60 U.S. dollars). I didn't have any money for the first month to pay. When the money from the camp arrived, I started to pay and use the soccer field; we still pay them every month and I pay another coach (who works for me) \$80. To help pay the costs not covered by the Julie Foudy Foundation, I work as a sports advisor to World Health Vision, a consulting firm owned by Duaine and Barbara Goodno. (They have several thousand players in the provinces of Ghazni, Malistan, Jaghori, and others).



My team has competed against other teams who had played for years and years. My team played very hard and worked hard. They played against girls – my team had scored 12 goals and the girls 1. On the second game with boys, they were 2 goals and the other team got 3 -- it was a close game!

The Julie Foudy grant money was very helpful for my team. So now I have 40 boys and I am trying to have 100 boys and 100 girls when I return after this summer.

Believe me, it was very hard for the first time and I was going to give up with it teaching boys. I now I am used to it. The leadership camp helped me a lot, I learned to never give up; and without the grant money I would have had to stop the soccer team. So I will always be thankful for this soccer camp and the Julie Foudy Foundation.

Thank you very much.
Yasamin Rasoul