

أرى فيكم آفاقاً مدهشة فيكم آفاق مستقبل جديد  
نعيش الحاضر بما وادار المستقبل  
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تعلّموا لهذا اليوم العظيم الذي آفاق مستقبل جديد

## Graduates Reflect on Positive Power of Sport To Excel In Leadership, Entrepreneurship And Teamwork

**Doha, 6 May 2014** – As Qatar continues to nurture an active sporting culture, students graduating from universities within Qatar Foundation say that participating in team sports has helped enrich their overall academic experience.

In 2010, Saleh Al-Raisi joined Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q) and decided to try out for the football team. Being an avid football player, the 21-year-old Qatari enjoyed sports from a young age and was keen to join his school's tournaments.

“When CMU-Q held tryouts at the start of the semester, I was chosen as a goalkeeper. I played throughout my four years at university and participated in all the competitions,” he says. “I think the exposure and experience that I gained from playing and interacting with new players, helped me develop my own skills and learn new ones.”

In 2012, Saleh joined his teammates in accepting the Hamad bin Khalifa University League Title and that same year, the team's perseverance helped them achieve an impressive rank, placing second in the Ministry of Interior Universities Cup.

On a personal level, Saleh has done exceptionally well both on and off the field. He credits sport for playing a fundamental role in developing his leadership skills and self-confidence. The high-achieving student was recently recognised for his extensive contribution to university life by being awarded the CMU-Q ‘Senior Student Leadership Award 2014’ with distinction, and the Business Senior Leader 2014 award. Saleh also had the privilege to represent his class by speaking at the CMU-Q graduation ceremony, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

“I think my first year was a little overwhelming and sport is one thing that kept me going. You get to meet new people, you learn from your classmates, and it helped me to leave my comfort zone and become more of an extrovert,” he explains. “It led to me being more confident; I took on leadership roles on campus, whether it was in student government or football. I captained the football team, so it was a big leap from where I started four years ago.”

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And now that he is nearing the end, Saleh hopes to apply the many inspiring lessons he has learned both in and out of the classroom to his upcoming business venture. He believes the diversity and overall experience at Education City serves as an “incubator” for personal development.

“I’m going to be starting up a business with some of my colleagues. We have an idea set and we want to get it up and running. It’s a marketing company that is specifically for small and medium enterprises, which aims to provide low-cost, high-quality marketing to suit their needs,” he explains.

Saleh’s commitment to the values and principles that are commonly found in sports, like leadership, excellence, commitment, and teamwork, is self-evident. He enthuses, “I really want to see our start-up become successful. Hopefully, we will get more people on the bandwagon and get them excited about starting their own businesses.”

Another outstanding graduate who is eager to highlight the merits of sport is Tala Mohammed Hammash, aged 22. The star basketball player has also garnered impressive academic and athletic achievements that showcase her fortitude, intelligence, and determination.

Over the past four years at Georgetown University – School of Foreign Service in Qatar (SFS-Qatar), the Palestinian student has made a remarkable effort to balance her studies and extracurricular activities. Her success has resulted in well-deserved recognition, which includes the Qatar Foundation/Hamad bin Khalifa University All-Star Female Athlete award for three years, as well as the Georgetown Scholar-Athlete Award in 2014.

“I’m a firm believer in the power of sports, specifically for women’s self-empowerment, self-improvement, and in realising our potential,” says Tala. “Interaction with other people teaches you a lot. It gives you a little insight into how the real world is going to be beyond the bubble of school or university, because there is competition and sometimes you’re not going to like that competition, but you’re going to know how to deal with it in a respectful way.”

This year, Tala was nominated as Captain of the Georgetown Women’s Basketball team and felt very lucky to be a part of a cohesive group that functioned well as a unit. “I think a leader is just a facilitator that encourages everyone to do their best, and basically he or she does that for the better achievement of results.”

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Tala's dedication to academic excellence has also paid off. She has graduated with honours, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service, Culture and Politics; with a minor in American Studies from SFS-Qatar. She hopes to gain work experience in Qatar for a few years before pursuing her postgraduate studies in international education.

The talented graduate is grateful for the valuable opportunities provided by Qatar. She feels that what sets Qatar apart and makes it so special is the active role that it has taken to advance sustainable development and focus on its long-term objectives.

"I see myself in development, I see myself in human and social development, and I see myself approaching development through the tool of education. I can't even stress enough how important I think education is and it's not about whether you get an education or not, but it's about the quality of education that you get. I also see myself shedding a very bright light on [the multiple facets of] sports development," explains Tala.

She adds: "I wouldn't have developed at this pace if I wasn't in an environment that nurtured this interest and passion that I have. Qatar did nurture this passion, and it helped me develop my interest and knowledge, so I think it's a two way-street, I don't only owe it to myself, I owe it to the environment too."

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