



The participating teams at the end of the tournament.

# Qatar Foundation wins inaugural Qatar Lacrosse Invitational Tournament

By Anand Holla

In an event that promises to usher in the fascinating sport of lacrosse in Qatar, the Qatar Lacrosse Association (QLA) hosted its inaugural Qatar Lacrosse Invitational Tournament in celebration of Qatar's National Sport Day 2017, at the Al Jazi Gardens in West Bay on Friday noon.

QLA leading light Gibran Jamal Nasser S. al-Bader told Community, "Qatar's National Sport Day is special to us. As a Qatari, the synergy between sport and community, is one to be proud of and to celebrate." Al-Bader also emphasised on "the commitment of the QLA in full support of the state's annual celebration under the patronage of HH the Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani".

Regarded as one of the fastest games on two feet, lacrosse is a contact team sport

played between two teams using a small rubber ball and a long-handled stick called a crosse or lacrosse stick. QLA founder David Heywood said, "The continued growth of lacrosse in Qatar's education, sport and community groups is a reflection of the game's instant appeal to junior, youth and adults alike. Along with a strong community spirit to be inspired and get involved, lacrosse has a bright future in Qatar."

All the teams and players in participation left the tournament with their heads held high, yet it was team Qatar Foundation that placed the crowning glory onto their campaign, last weekend at Al Jazi Gardens, sponsored by Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim (SFQ) Sports.

Five rounds of high-octane lacrosse saw teams from West Bay and Dubai come close to the gold medal showdown. However, it was Qatar Foundation and Barwa City who met in an exciting finale, a game that went down

to the wire and saw the Qatar Foundation lacrosse philosophy pay its dividends in the end.

Coming out of the first whistle, Barwa City looked confident, settling possession and showing some good ball movement. Patience in attack resulted in the kind of look on goal that would typically have meant the lead. However, it was Qatar Foundation's defence that made the first stop, before driving up the other end restricting Barwa City's momentum to go ahead.

It wasn't long though before a clinical pass through the middle of Qatar Foundation's defence found Barwa City in shooting range for a finish on crease. End to end action continued to test both teams and with the score all tied with a minute to go, it was Qatar Foundation that put away a quick series of breakaway goals to see the game out, eventually winning 7-4 before the scenes of elation began. In a short awards ceremony

thereafter, all participating teams were handed medals whereas Qatar Foundation, the winning team, went home with a shining trophy.

One of QLA's major ways of engaging with the community is to focus on schools. When asked how lacrosse can strengthen bonding and break down barriers among school students in a way few other sports can, Heywood explained, "Lacrosse is a powerful mechanism for engaging and inspiring young people to improve their leadership and other life skills. It is facilitated by the Qatar Lacrosse Association (QLA) through school Physical Education curriculum and after-school activities as well as sport and community academy programmes. The sport has a unique and rich history that sets it apart from other sports. Thus it goes a long way to strengthen bonds as an inclusive sport for all students regardless of age, gender, or physical ability. Lacrosse is a fun and high energy sport that is growing quickly. Girls and boys alike are lining up to play lacrosse. The athleticism, skills and finesse needed are pulling kids from all over to engage in Lacrosse. The sport requires both a mental and physical approach that encourages the breakdown of barriers through its cohesive nature both on and off the field of play."

If any school wants to establish lacrosse as part of their Physical Education curriculum and/or offer lacrosse as an extra curricula activity, they can contact the QLA at: [www.qatarlacrosse.leaguerepublic.com/](http://www.qatarlacrosse.leaguerepublic.com/) [qatarlacrosse@gmail.com](mailto:qatarlacrosse@gmail.com)