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Mixed Football Team Crowned  
Global Champions



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The women's sports industry has experienced a remarkable surge in popularity and recognition worldwide. From the grassroots to elite levels, this is creating new opportunities for women to compete in sport and bringing greater gender equality for the long-term.

In the Middle East, the growth of women's sports is creating exciting new prospects for female athletes and sports industry professionals in the region.

**Izzy Wray**, Sports Business Group Director, and Middle East Lead said:

**"The Middle East is providing new foundations for the growth of women's sport, both through government-backed grassroots initiatives and investment support at the highest levels of professional sports. For example, the formation of the Saudi Women's Premier League in 2022 has since led to a 195% increase in the number of professional female footballers."**

**Maria Almushcab**, Sports Business Group (Middle East) Senior Associate was born and raised in Saudi Arabia and has witnessed first-hand the changing shifts in attitude towards women's sports. She adds:

**"The mindset towards women being part of sporting communities is changing rapidly, and there are significant efforts being made to make sports more accessible for women and girls. More than ever, sports are becoming an integral part of Saudi society, and the next generation of Arab women will have more opportunities to become leaders in sports, whether that's as aspiring professional athletes or policy-making trailblazers in the industry. I will continue to play my part in the development of and for sport."**

At Deloitte we pride ourselves on supporting the movement for sporting change and have made conscious efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in sport, stretching from the boardroom to the football field. Deloitte Middle East's football community has grown significantly in recent years and recently sent the first Middle East Mixed Football Team (Deloitte's 'Falcons') to Deloitte's global annual football tournament, the Prague Cup.

The Prague Cup is an annual football tournament hosted by Deloitte in the Czech Republic. This year's edition saw over 1,300 participants, forming more than 115 teams from 24 countries.

The Falcons went undefeated and were crowned eventual tournament champions after beating reigning champions Munich in the round of 16, and the United Kingdom's Gatwick 2-0 in the final. For **Reem Zaabalawi**, Investigations and Disputes Assistant Manager, it was the first time she had competed in a mixed-football tournament, which was made even more significant as she scored the winning goal in the Prague Cup 2024 final. Reem said:

**"The Middle Eastern Deloitte footballing community has had a profound impact on both my personal and professional life. The sports ecosystem in the region, especially the role of women in it, is changing right before our eyes. The growth and inclusivity of our footballing community is helping to further promote and accelerate the new movement of women's sport, and I am incredibly proud to play a part in it."**

**Jennifer Haskel**, Knowledge and Insights Lead in the Deloitte Sports Business Group has been leading research on the growth of women's sport and joined the Falcons squad at the tournament. She said:

**"The Prague Cup is an exciting event that brings together people from across our offices, with a shared love of football. It's been inspiring to see the positive impact—both on and off the pitch—that this experience has had on women competing in mixed-gender teams, particularly those that hadn't played in a tournament of this scale before."**

Deloitte research has identified the significant growth of women's sport and its societal impact. Recent research, for instance, has predicted that women's elite sports revenues will surpass \$1 billion for the first time in 2024. Meanwhile, 85% of surveyed women in the US who played sports say the skills they developed playing sports were important to success in their professional careers, rising to 91% among women in leadership roles.

To learn more about the global growth of women's sport and Deloitte Middle East's participation in this year's Prague Cup, please visit:

[Deloitte Insights | Sports Business Group](#)

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