

“Afghanistan Women’s Soccer Team Unveils Jerseys With Hijabs.” By Juliet Spies-Gans. *Huffington Post*. 03/08/2016 10:18 am ET | Updated Jan 04, 2017



Hummel

When Afghanistan’s national women’s soccer team takes the field in the near future, the players will be decked in a uniform that marks both their country’s deep-seated history and how far it has come.

Just two years after FIFA gave the green light on head covers, sportswear company Hummel unveiled the newest iteration of the Afghani national team jersey on Tuesday, which now features a hijab.

“We don’t sponsor the biggest teams in the world, but we make partnerships with teams and clubs with a story to tell, like Afghanistan,” Christian Stadil, the owner of the Danish sportswear brand, wrote on Hummel’s website. “We try to meet the Afghan people where they are, and right now that is by helping the women play football with or without a hijab.”

Enabling players to maintain the modesty of their dress, this latest uniform will include “an integrated base layer which allows women to be covered from head to toe when they take to the pitch,” per CNN.

For a club that played its first official international game about a half-decade ago, the development of this kit will enable it to take yet another step forward, as it seeks to be both an inspiration for and an unquestioned component of its home nation for the foreseeable future.

“The national team shirt symbolizes all of our culture, our tradition, our history,” explained Khalida Popal, a former team captain. “To wear that shirt and to lead your country out onto the football pitch is something that stays with you forever.”

“I think the Afghanistan women’s team shows the huge potential football has as a unifying force. I like to think that we have given a lot of women in our country fresh hope.”

“In Afghanistan, Female Soccer Players Face Unique Challenges.” *Bustle*.
by Ruchi Kumar, Aug. 17, 2016.



It was a cold November afternoon, in 1999; thousands had gathered in Ghazi Stadium in Kabul after the Friday prayers. A mullah stood at the center of the ground and announced the executions of the day. It was a common practice to bring those convicted by the Taliban courts onto the stadium grounds for public executions. With most sporting activities banned under the Taliban regime, soccer fields were used for carrying out capital punishment.

On this particular day, it was a woman who was convicted for the crime of murdering her abusive husband, slated to be executed by order of the courts that found her guilty. Zarmeena, as she was later identified by several media outlets, was brought to the center of the stadium, covered in a sky blue burqa, and shot in the head as men, women, and children looked on.

Fast forward to 2007. Young Afghan girls take to a similar Kabul stadium in their new sports gear for their first soccer match, one that they have been training for months for. "We won that match against International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) women's team 5-0. But more importantly, we had started something new in Afghanistan," says Hajar Abulfazil, a 23-year-old Afghan who is among the first generation of female soccer players since the fall of Taliban in 2001. There are now 1050 registered female soccer players in Afghanistan, mainly from six provinces of Bamyán, Ghazni, Jowzjan, Balkh, Herat, and Kabul, as well as localized soccer clubs for women; in Kabul alone there are 22 clubs that play against each other.