

# Barclays ISF league capped off with four finals Sunday

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**The final standings in the four divisions of the 2010 Barclays Capital ISF Youth Football League were decided Sunday by finals at the National Football Centre**

**D**espite the brutally hot conditions Sunday, a large number of keen young footballers gathered at the National Football Centre, on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, to do battle in the finals of the 2010 Barclays Capital ISF Youth Football League. The players shrugged off the extreme heat to focus hard on the pursuit of lifting the trophy in one of the four categories that have been competed by 33 teams since January 17.

The Indochina Starfish Foundation (ISF), a local NGO focusing on providing education and sporting activities to some of the poorest children in the Kingdom, organised this league for the first time. Nine girls' teams played each other in one category, while boys' teams were divided into three divisions according to age and skill – labelled the First Division, Premier League and Champions League.

The Champions League featured nine-a-side games played on half pitches, while the other leagues saw seven-a-side matches on quarter fields.

## Girls final doesn't follow the script

The Girls Final Sunday pitted the league's top two teams from SOS and ISF against each other. The SOS girls were clear favourites after a 5-0 thrashing of ISF in their league game a few weeks. But as everybody knows, finals are rarely a foregone conclusion.

Not long into the game, Ok Srey Not of SOS opened the scoring with a shot from distance. Just minutes later, 11-year-old Song Srey Mom struck a free kick with her left foot past the SOS keeper to draw things level.

Despite many good chances on both sides, and with both goalkeepers providing heroics, the score stayed at 1-1 until the final whistle. The deadlock remained throughout extra time, with ISF's Kim Thida squandering some great chances to fail to add to her Golden Boot winning tally of 17 during the season.



Photo by: Kate Griffin

Onslow Boys (blue shirts) from local NGO ASPECA play the Maruhan Japan Bank team from NGO Pour un Sourire d'Enfant in the Barclays Capital ISF Premier League final.



Photo by: Kate Griffin

Members of the ISF Flying Tigers celebrate with their trophy as champions on Sunday.

The penalty shootout saw three saves by ISF stopper Tschuen Srey Mien to ensure her team emerged as champions of the Girls league.

### **Sunshine lads beam back to win**

The First Division final seemed almost decided by half time with the HFCA team leading comfortably 2-0 over the Sunshine boys. However, a half time pep talk apparently worked wonders for the Sunshine players, who came back on the field invigorated and on a mission.

It took just a few minutes for the scores to be evened, and the momentum had shifted for good in Sunshine's favour. The HFCA defence simply couldn't handle the onslaught, allowing Saum Rotanak to net twice and Sun Salim to nod in another to finish the game 5-2 for Sunshine.

The trophy for top scorer in the First Division went to young Song Rithy from the ISF team, who managed to score an impressive total of 43 goals in only 10 games.

### **PSE push past ASPECA to win 4-2**

ASPECA boys and the PSE team then took centre stage to vie for glory in the Premier League. It was end-to-end stuff with great skill and effort displayed by both sides throughout. With five minutes to go, the scores were deservedly tied at 2-2.

Heartbreak then hit for ASPECA, as PSE's Suen Sovan gave his side the advantage after a failed clearance by the keeper. Then in the last minute, with ASPECA going all out for an equaliser, Thorn Makara sealed victory for PSE with a powerful header in a highly entertaining final.

### **PKR youth team dominate league**

Metfone C-League club Preah Khan Reach's U14 youth team were widely tipped to storm the Champions League final Sunday, having not dropped a single point during the regular season and won their previous game against fellow finalists Kumar Takhmao 6-1.

The game stayed open for the majority, with Preah Khan Reach (PKR) maintaining slightly more possession and creating some great chances, although the young Takhmao keeper kept his side in it.

Eventually, PKR found their opener through Sok Nang, who's well timed wall pass with a teammate and some fabulous control left the Takhmao defence with no chance.

In the second half, Meng Tout Reaksmey came close to a grabbing a leveller for Takhmao when his shot from outside the box careered off the crossbar.

It was a wake up call for the PKR team, and within minutes they took the reins with Sary Isa scoring a beautiful goal after some great short pass play.

Another two PKR goals put the fixture to bed, and the side went on to lift the Barclays Capital ISF trophy as expected.

Kate Griffin, country manager of ISF, had the honor of closing the league and thanking everybody for their great efforts. With a three-year commitment from sponsors Barclays Capital and successful cooperation between the Football Federation of Cambodia and ISF, this inaugural season was the perfect start to what promises to be a lot more enthralling football for Cambodia's young players.

