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Prostitute soccer girls banned

From Edgar Calderon in Guatemala City

September 24, 2004

A GUATEMALA soccer team made up of prostitutes cried foul after being ejected from a tournament because of their profession.

"Just for being prostitutes, society marginalises us, and we want to exercise our rights as women and as mothers," said the team captain, Valeria, who did not give her last name.

Her team, the Stars of the Line, lost 5-2 to the Blue Devils, fielded by an exclusive girls' school in the Guatemalan capital, and were ejected from the tournament after Monday's game.

Officials cited the use of foul language from the team's fans as the reason.

The Stars of the Line take their team name from Guatemala City's red-light district, called the Train Line, because it faces the city's railway line.

The squad was drawn from the 200 women who work there.

"What we want is to play soccer with any other team," Valeria said.

"Being prostitutes does not mean that we are violent, because we are well disciplined," she said.

The officials heard things differently.

"One, two, three, whore," went the grandstand cheer, according to the judges' decision.

"We have a lot of children here, and it is not very nice to hear such language," said Eduardo Navas, manager of the Futeca stadium. Valeria said

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that foul language was not the issue.

"When they found out we were prostitutes, they tossed us out like cockroaches," she said.

"It is really discrimination."

The Stars began training daily with the backing of a group of Spanish journalists who were in Guatemala to make a documentary about prostitution.

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