

Published June 22nd, 2011

Julie Foudy Hosts Soccer Camp at SMC

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Julie Foudy's Sports Leadership Academy teaches soccer, fun and leadership skills Photo provided

Julie Foudy, two-time World Cup Soccer Champion and three-time Olympic Medal winner, is once again coming to the Saint Mary's College campus this summer. On July 24-29th, 150 girls will attend the Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy (JFSLA) for six-days of soccer and leadership training. There are only three Julie Foudy Leadership Camps held in the United States; Saint Mary's College hosts the only west coast location.

Foudy loves the Moraga site for her Sport Academy. "It's intimate, cozy and beautiful. Since it's a residential camp, the girls are close to the fields and to each other."

This year, Foudy will be joined by Aly Wagner, 2002 Hermann Trophy recipient and 2004 Olympian Gold Medalist, as well as several collegiate coaches for a "high energy week with the best of the best in soccer."

The camp isn't only about soccer; there's also emphasis on leadership and service. "You don't have to be a pro to come. We have all ability levels; and though girls leave better soccer players, they also realize that anyone can be a leader. Not just the team captain or the popular girl. Anyone."

Two examples of camp leadership activities include clinics for Special Olympic kids and visits to Senior Centers. "At the end of the week, campers go home with a leadership activity for their communities. Some start recycling programs, organize park clean-ups-- whatever cause they are passionate about."

Foudy expects many returning campers, but is excited about bringing 15 soccer players from India to the SMC campus. "They live in the slums featured in Slumdog Millionaire and they've never traveled outside India."

Foudy heard about these players from Magic Bus, a San Francisco organization. JFSLA provided scholarships for them because Foudy wants "...this journey to give them hope and strength." While in the Bay Area, the players will also participate in programs with Stanford University and the Bay Area Women's Sport Initiative. In past years, players from Morocco and Afghanistan have attended Foudy's camp; adding multiculturalism to an already dynamic sport camp.

"It's on the field that you learn about adversity no matter where you're from," Foudy said. She hopes to impart to her campers not only soccer skills, but budding friendships, and the eternal truth that each of us can be remarkable with or without a ball, on or off the field.

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