

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

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THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



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Hello and welcome to Issue 59!

One month to go until the Euros! Hard to believe it's almost here.

Our Special Printed Edition with everything Euros is now available for pre-sale on the website.

Our subscribers can get hold of a printed issue for just £3 using the code TWFMEuro .

We also have some amazing prints for sale covering England, Northern Ireland and Europe.

Make sure you check them out.

Also keep an eye on the socials as we have a number of exciting competitions coming up to win tickets to the Euros games—all will be revealed soon.

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief

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THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE
Football
WINNER
Grassroots Player
of the Season 21/22
Neve
Renwick

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE *Awards*

We were delighted to be able to travel to Hemsworth to attend Wakefield Trinity vs York City in their final league game of the season.

Hosts Wakefield Trinity started strong, scoring three in the first half through a Neve Renwick brace and Megan Brackenbury.

During the second half York, who are the league winners and were applauded onto the pitch with a guard of honour, came into their own.

Six goals in 15 minutes saw York dominate and take the well deserved victory.

Following the match fans were stayed around for a number of celebrations.

The game was Danielle Biglin and Emily Heckler's final appearances for Wakefield as they announced their retirement from the game.

The pair were emotional as fans applauded and cheered them into the dressing room.

Finally, after hiding with family for the game, it was time for the reason we were there—Neve Renwick.

Renwick was named Grassroots Player of the Year in the 2022 TWFM Awards and we were there to surprise her and present her with her award.

Originally nominated by assistant manager Garry Willis, Neve Renwick was one of four who made the shortlist in this season's awards.

Willis introduced Renwick to the makeshift stage and announced that our editor Helen Rowe-Willcocks was in attendance that afternoon to present her with her award.

Speaking after the award was presented, Renwick said: "Thank you so much, it was such a shock you were here—I had no idea.

"It's amazing to win the award, I feel really honoured."

It was fabulous to spend the afternoon with Renwick's

family. They were out in full force to support her along with one of her teammates from Barnsley as well.

Garry Willis' original nomination:

Neve has just turned 17 in November, and has been playing for two teams.

For Barnsley U18s she has scored 100 goals in this season and she is also playing for Wakefield trinity ladies open age in the North East Regional Premier League.

This too is her first season in adult football and she has scored 27 goals in 21 games so far this season and she has been amazing in attitude and the way she has combines her football with college and part time work is amazing , everyone at her club loves her to pieces and she settled in form day one , and for a young girl to do what she is currently doing on and off the field to me is amazing and surely one for the future.

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



Kerr and Miedema lead PFA shortlist



Professional
Footballers'
Association

The Professional Football Association have announced the nominees for the awards.

PFA Player's Player of the Year

Chelsea striker Sam Kerr, who was named Football Writers' Association's women's footballer of the year is joined by teammate Pernille Harder and Arsenal's Vivianne Miedema and Kim Little.

Manchester City duo Lauren Hemp, who is also nominated for Young Player, and Alex Greenwood finish the list.

The Women's Super League's top scorer Kerr netted 20 goals in 20 matches to help Emma Hayes' Chelsea to a third consecutive league title.

Miedema was second in the WSL goalscoring charts with 14 goals to her name for second-placed Arsenal and also provided eight assists - double that of Kerr.

Meanwhile, Little, who has rejoined former club OL Reign on a short-term loan until the start of Arsenal's WSL campaign, played in every league game for Jonas Eidevall's side during the 2021-22 season, scoring six times.

Denmark forward Harder also scored six, which included a vital penalty against

Birmingham to maintain Chelsea's one-point advantage over Arsenal heading into the final two matches.

Hemp, 21, scored 10 goals for Gareth Taylor's side in the WSL.

Greenwood filled in for injured captain Steph Houghton at centre-back this season and is the only defender on the list. The 28-year-old also added four goals and three assists to her record.

PFA Young Player Award

There are six nominees for the Young Player award.

Hemp is joined in the six-player shortlist by Manchester United midfielder Ella Toone and Chelsea forward Lauren James.

Arsenal's Frida Maanum, Tottenham striker Jessica Naz and Brighton's Maya Le Tissier complete the nominees.

2021 winners

Player's Player of the Year: Fran Kirby

Young Player: Lauren Hemp

Winners will be announced on June 9.

Jill Scott to leave Manchester City

Midfielder Jill Scott is set to leave Manchester City this summer upon the expiration of her contract.

The 35-year-old joined City in 2013, has gone on to make 194 appearances and has helped the Manchester Blues to win one WSL league title, three League Cups and three FA Cups.

Scott has most recently spent half a season on loan with Aston Villa and has also had a loan spell with Everton.

Scott said, “In a way, I never thought I'd be here saying goodbye to Manchester City, but all good things come to an end eventually and I've had so many amazing memories along the way.”

Leicester City release five players

Leicester City have announced that Esmee De Graaf, Paige Bailey-Gayle, Sophie Harris, Abbi Grant and Luana Zajmi will all leave the club this summer.

Bailey-Gayle departs after three seasons with the Foxes whilst De Graaf has established she will return home to the Netherlands.

Pair set to leave Manchester City

Manchester City have confirmed that midfielder Caroline Weir and goalkeeper Karima Benameur Taieb will leave when their contracts end this summer. Weir, who has been an essential outfit for City in her four-year tenure, leaves having made 124 appearances, netting 38 goals. Taieb, who joined in 2019 has made 24 appearances, notably stepping in to Ellie Roebuck's shoes early this season when she was side-lined with injury.

Caitlin Foord is staying in North London

Arsenal forward Caitlin Foord has signed a new deal. The 27-year-old Australia international joined the Gunners in 2020 and has gone on to make 62 appearances and scored 23 goals across all competitions. Foord has become an integral part of Jonas Eidevall's Arsenal in being able to operate both wide and centrally over the latter half of the season. As ever, Arsenal have not disclosed the length of Foord's contract.

Steph Catley puts pen to paper

Arsenal left-back Steph Catley has signed a new contract with the club after playing a significant role in the Gunners success this campaign.

Arsenal have not disclosed the length of the 28-year-old's new deal however implications point to a lengthy spell.

Arsenal boss Jonas Eidevall commented, “[Steph's] played an integral role this season for us, making big contributions in both defence and attack, so we're very pleased that she will be staying with us for the coming years.”

Dagný Brynjarsdóttir is here to stay

West Ham midfielder Dagny Brynjarsdóttir has signed a new deal, keeping her with the club until 2024. The 30-year-old has played a crucial role for the Hammers this season and registered the second highest number of minutes played as well as netting six goals, joint first along with Claudia Walker. Brynjarsdóttir commented, “I have really enjoyed the last year and a half here and I'm looking forward to making some more memories in Claret and Blue.”

Cissoko signs extension

West Ham defender Hawa Cissoko has signed a new deal keeping her with the club until 2024.

The France international enjoyed a successful season with the Irons, becoming a mainstay in their backline and making 23 appearances.

Cissoko commented, "I think we created something amazing last season with the squad that we had, but football is football, and players move on. We now have to show the new players that will be coming in the West Ham way, and look to improve on what we achieved last season."

Birmingham City announce retention list

Relegated side Birmingham City have offered new contracts to Jamie Finn, Emily Whelan, Eleanor Ryan-Doyle, Christie Murray, and have exercised the option to extend Jade Pennock's contract by another year. A new deal was offered Veatriki Sarri however the midfielder has decided to part ways with the club and will leave upon the expiration of her current contract. Discussions are also ongoing with forward Lucy Whipp in regards to her future with the Blues.

Marie Hourihan will be released upon the expiry of the contract, whilst Lisa Robertson will return to Celtic following her season-long loan spell at Blues. Cecilie Sandvej, Harriet Scott, Louise Quinn, Lily Simkin, Sarah Ewens, Libby Smith, Lucy Quinn, Gemma Lawley all remain under contract for the upcoming season.

Josie Green amongst Spurs leavers

Tottenham Hotspur will release five players this summer, one of which is club favourite Josie Green.

The 29-year-old midfielder has been with the club for six seasons and was named as captain for the 2020-21 season.

Other departures include experienced striker Rachel Williams and zippy winger Angela Addison. Tang Jiali and Viktoria Schnaderbeck have also been released and will return to their respective parent clubs.

Kerys Harrop signs new deal

Experienced defender Kerys Harrop has signed a new contract with Tottenham Hotspur.

The 31-year-old joined Spurs in 2020 after 20 years with Birmingham City, and has made 43 appearances for the Lilywhites so far.

Harrop commented, "I'm excited. There's a fantastic group of girls here - we've got a really good team spirit and culture. The Club is going in the right direction and it's a direction that matches my own values."

Jonas Eidevall signs extension

Arsenal head coach Jonas Eidevall has committed to the club for a further two years until 2024.

Eidevall enjoyed a positive first term with the Gunners after taking the title race down to the very last day of the season.

On his extension, Eidevall said, "It allows me to continue to work for a club that I love so much and be around people that I really, really like, and to be able to achieve things together, so I'm really looking forward to that."

Alex Greenwood: The Saving Grace



By Charlotte Stacey

Despite placing third in the league and winning a Champions League spot, Manchester City had a turbulent 2021-22 season. The Manchester giants were plagued with injury early in the campaign and subsequently, albeit harbouring a number of internationals within the squad, played a number of subpar matches. Nevertheless, there were standout performers for City across the term. These include Lauren Hemp, Georgia Stanway, but perhaps most of all, Alex Greenwood.

Greenwood joined City in 2020 after a yearlong stint with French champions Lyon. During her time overseas, Greenwood won the quadruple of trophies, including the French League and the prestigious Champions League.

Prior to this, Greenwood circulated between a number of

clubs, including playing for Everton and Liverpool, as well as captaining Manchester United and now Manchester City. Greenwood's moves have proved controversial for some and have seen her become something of a pantomime villain during certain derby matches. However, if players wish to be at the very top of their game, to win trophies and experience the highest level of women's football, unfortunately loyalties must occasionally be broken. As they say, for some, variety is the spice of life.

Greenwood's experience playing at different levels and in different leagues has abetted in becoming a well-rounded yet refined defender. One that simply should not be omitted from any starting eleven, so much so that in the frankest of terms, Manchester City would not have achieved the bronze bill without Alex Greenwood.

In particular, this season, Greenwood has been the underpinning prop that has grounded, not only the backline, but the entire City line-up in every single league match. It has been Greenwood that has anchored a floundering City ship in choppy and uncharted waters.

Leadership is not an attribute that comes naturally to all, but Greenwood has stepped into these shoes with professionalism and poise in the absence of other senior players. Whilst she may not be overtly vocal, Greenwood has the communication skills to organise and convey her expectations. Further to this, Greenwood leads by example and generally keeps a level head under frustrating circumstances, she has a composure that encourages those around her to adopt the same approach.

By trade, Greenwood has typically operated as a left back owing to her desire to tank forward and her weapon of a left foot.

However, over the past two seasons we have seen Greenwood convert into a left sided centre back, a position that she has taken to remarkably well.

Moving across to central defence comes with its challenges. The role requires a disciplined defensive acumen and a consciousness of the movements of fellow centre halves.

In comparison, as a fullback, Greenwood assumed a more pressing and offensive duty. But Greenwood has managed to pull off a seamless merging of the two and develop into a rather layered defender.

Defensively, Greenwood continues to iron out the kinks and has shown great growth in positional aptitude.

Her starting position is, more often than not, optimal in allowing her enough time to break up play and block off channels. The quality of Greenwood's pressures on opponents who are in possession also shows improvement, demonstrating a use of physicality to a greater strength than previous years.

Nevertheless, what sets Greenwood apart is her quality on the ball. Being gifted with exceptional technical abilities, however, is not the be all and end all, and players need to utilise this with good decision making.

Fortunately, she pairs this raw skill with an equally profound vision and anticipation.

Greenwood is, without doubt, an exquisite reader of the game.

It is this combination that makes Greenwood so integral to Manchester City, whose style of play is focussed more on the application of accurate passing and build-up as opposed to being over-reliant on quick-fire transitions.

Greenwood is able to distribute the ball any which way over the pitch with incredible precision, often finding City's primary attackers in the first instance. She has ended this campaign as the player who has made the most passes into the final third, the most progressive passes, as well as achieving the highest progressive passing distance in the league.

Her days of playing as a fullback have not been quashed and Greenwood uses these now ingrained traits to elevate her game further.

She remains a player who likes to take control, step out and drive the ball herself. Placing first in the league for the number touches of the ball with 2213 this term, it is interesting to note that over half of these have taken place within the middle third.

Using this evidence, it becomes apparent that Greenwood is not only tasked with serving as City's lead centre back, but also their principal playmaker. Greenwood was the target of 1664 passes and successfully received a whopping 98.3% of these, furthering the notion of her significance.

One final attribute that cannot be overlooked is Greenwood's deliveries from dead balls. Greenwood has long been viewed as a set-piece specialist

and for good reason, her ability to direct a corner or free-kick is quite extraordinary and will continue to be a huge asset to City as other ball technicians Caroline Weir and Georgia Stanway depart.

Internationally, Greenwood has come up through the ranks having played in U-17, U-19 and U-23 squads before making her senior debut in 2014.

Most recently, Greenwood has secured herself as a permanent figure in Sarina Wiegman's favoured line-up and this looks set to continue as England host the Euro's this summer.

Greenwood offers a preferable technical balance to compliment partner Millie Bright's no-nonsense defending. Having Greenwood play primarily as a centre back with England also allows Wiegman to use Greenwood, Bright and Leah Williamson simultaneously, along with defensive midfielder Keira Walsh.

This central square affords the Lionesses a solid core equipped with security, accuracy and creativity.

Greenwood should indeed be commended for the domestic season she has had with Manchester City.

In what has been an uncertain period, she has remained the reliable constant for both teammates and supporters alike. Looking forward one only hopes she is able to showcase the very best of her game on the international stage and beyond; simply, a talent such as Greenwood deserves to be celebrated.

Gilly Flaherty departs West Ham

Captain Gilly Flaherty has announced she will be leaving the Irons this summer after four years in Claret and Blue.

Flaherty said, “I have genuinely loved every minute of my time with this Club.

“I am so proud of my role in the journey this team has undergone in the last four years.”

The 30-year-old confirmed in a social media post that although she is leaving West Ham, she is not retiring from professional football.

Player of the Season announced

Chelsea’s Sam Kerr has been voted as the Women’s Super League’s ‘Player of the Season’ bagging over 70 per cent of the public vote.

Kerr has enjoyed another formidable season in Blue netting 20 goals in 20 games, winning her the Golden Boot award for the second year running.

Olli Harder moves onto pastures new

West Ham have announced that head coach Olli Harder has left the club after a season and a half in charge.

Harder led the Irons to their highest placing in the league to date this campaign. Former West Ham player Paul Konchesky has been appointed manager with a two-year deal.

Emma Hayes named as Manager of the Season

After another successful year at the helm, Chelsea boss Emma Hayes has been voted for as the WSL’s manager of the season for the third consecutive year.

Chelsea won their third successive WSL title this year, beating out London rivals Arsenal by a single point.

Bronze leaves Manchester City

England international Lucy Bronze is set to leave Manchester City this summer after two seasons at the Academy Stadium.

The 30-year-old fullback re-joined City after a highly successful stint with European Champions Lyon and has made a total of 111 appearances in City Blue.

News outlets report that the club did not offer Bronze a new contract and are looking to bring in a high volume of signings during the transfer window.

Kim Little to go on loan

Arsenal captain Kim Little is set to join NWSL’s side OL Reign on a short-term loan.

Having retired from international football, and with Scotland not qualifying, Little will not be partaking in this year’s Euro’s, and so, has opted to play abroad for a short spell in order to keep up fitness levels.

Little is expected to return to Arsenal for the first day of pre-season training in August.

Noelle Maritz signs on the dotted line

Switzerland international Noelle Maritz has signed a new deal with Arsenal.

The right-back joined from German side Wolfsburg in 2020 and quickly established herself as a mainstay under both Joe Montemurro and Jonas Eidevall having made 49 appearances across all competitions so far.

Maritz looked to the future of the club commenting, "I think everybody has the ambition to take it to the next level and the club is really pushing for it. Hopefully in the future we can make a big step in that direction."

Miedema is staying put

Arsenal have announced that their top goal scorer Vivianne Miedema will remain in North London after the forward signed a new deal earlier this month.

Miedema has scored 117 goals in 144 games for the Gunners and has been a crucial figurehead through their last four campaigns.

The 25-year-old was transparent in confirming that she had interest from several other high-profile clubs, however has since stated that Arsenal is where she wants to be for the time being. I feel like for me, winning titles with Arsenal will mean a lot more to me than winning them with another club at the moment.

And that's what I obviously hope to achieve with Arsenal."

Claire Emslie set to leave Everton

Everton have confirmed that Claire Emslie will leave the club when her contract expires at the end of June.

The 28-year-old forward joined in 2020 and scored six goals for the Toffees in her 18-month tenure.

Aileen Whelan leaves Brighton

Brighton and Hove Albion midfielder Aileen Whelan announced in a social media post that she has played her last game in Blue and White.

Whelan wrote, "I've had the best five years here and made friends and memories that I'll cherish forever. This decision has been one of the toughest I've ever had to make and I thank everyone at Brighton for believing in me, and helping me grow both as a player and a person."

The Hammers confirm depatures

West Ham have announced that Lois Joel, Anna Leat, Kateřina Svítková and Zaneta Wyne will all leave the club this summer.

In addition, Halle Houssein will return to Arsenal and Lisa Evans' loan has also come to an end.

General manager Aidan Boxall commented, "I would like to thank all of those that are departing us this summer for their important contributions during their time with the Club, both on and off the pitch."

Why the men's game must back the WSL



By Sian Dennis

As an advocate of women's football, there's nothing more gut-wrenching than attending a match and seeing over half the stadium empty.

It's a strange sense of disappointment which leans into both sadness and frustration. Why are so many football fans missing out on spectacular games by the women's team? Unfortunately, this is a feeling many of us share when attending matches played at larger, flagship stadiums.

As true supporters of the beautiful game here at The Women's Football magazine, we understand that football is football, no matter gender. We're also painfully aware of what more needs to be done in terms of industry support, commercialisation/sports sponsorship and wider fan

engagement before our beloved WSL league can play to sell out crowds in larger flagship stadiums as a norm.

So, what needs to happen to give the WSL the boost it so desperately deserves? Well, often the smallest, simplest acts can be a catalyst for change. In this instance, it's for better allyship from the men's game.

The Wrighty affect

One stand out ally for the women's game is Arsenal legend and charismatic pundit, Ian Wright.

Ian Wright is a fierce ally for women's sport. Via his social media channels, punditry and podcast, he actively champions, promotes and emotionally invests in the women's game. It's infectious.

One standout example of Wright's unwavering commitment happened during the build up to the anticipated Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur's North London Derby grudge match. It was an act so small but yet so powerful.

On 17 March 2022, Wright tweeted to his 2.1 million followers "Listen, we better turn up for the women [...]", a tweet which was shared over 281 times within hours of uploading the post. Wright's followers such as Mail Online Women's Football Correspondent, Kathryn Batte, and British cyclist, Tao Geoghegan Hart, shared his message urging fans to attend the match at Emirates Stadium.

How many of those who attended the game purchased a ticket after

spotting Wright's Twitter post? Probably a few.

When it came to game day I was lucky enough to be sitting amongst the small, but mighty crowd of Arsenal supporters. In the build up, Arsenal did promote the match quite substantially across the club's social channels and website. However, with rows and rows of empty seats in the stadium's 60,000 capacity, I couldn't help but wonder how many more tickets would have been sold if the Arsenal men's team (whose silence was deafening) promoted the match on their social channels? I suspect a lot.

It would be unfair of me not to state that the North London Derby was rescheduled from a Saturday to a Wednesday due to Covid-19 which likely affected ticket sales. However, when it came to it, a respectable 12,800 spectators witnessed the Gunners thrash visiting Spurs 3-0 in a thrilling match which saw a super Caitlin Foord double, a Beth Mead stunner four minutes in and a dramatic penalty miss from the opposition. For any football fan - no matter gender - it was a fantastic night of deliciously competitive football.

Perception matters

So, what extra juice can be added to the mix to further maximise attention of the women's game? In this case, sometimes the simplest of



actions - such as giving more airtime to women's sport via a tweet - can be hugely impactful. Even more so if it comes from a high-profile male ally.

Perception matters at tournaments such as the WSL. And when you see the huge impact support from the likes of Ian Wright has, it does beg the question why more Premiership footballers (past and present) don't publicly support the women's game. Ask yourself this: how many male players do you see actively endorsing their female colleagues on social media? The answer I suspect is very few, but not none.

Chelsea FC and fan favourites Cesar Azpilicueta, Mason Mount and Ben Chilwell are known to celebrate Chelsea Women's triumphs on their Instagram accounts whereas Manchester United's goalkeeper, David De Gea, recently urged fans to attend the women's clash with Everton at Old Trafford via his Twitter account. Ahead of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2019, David Beckham showed his support to number 9, Nikita Parris, on Instagram saying "good luck, we will be watching" and most memorably, in 2019 Man City men's manager, Pep Guardiola, hit back at a journalist who asked whether his team was going to win the "first domestic treble in this country". Guardiola simply replied with "the women have won

it" - a clip which generated 7617 retweets and over 28.8K likes.

It's amazing the effect a simple social media post can have. And that's why the lack of promotion from Arsenal's men's team in regards to the women's North London Derby is both frustrating and disappointing.

Looking to the wider male football allyship

The responsibility of allyship cannot solely be on the men's game and its players. The same principles relate to wider team staff - from top to bottom - and also commentary leaders and journalists. It is a collective responsibility to create awareness of the women's game as echoed during the FA Cup final by Wright: "[The] women's game must break from the shackles of every broadcast having discussions about the growth of the women's game. The football in this game has been brilliant. Talk about it."

That's not to say the women's game hasn't grown organically. In fact, women's football is booming. We're gearing up for a high-profile and what is expected to be a thrilling summer of football, with England hosting the Euros. The final will be at the 90,000-seated 'Home of Football', Wembley. The tournament has already passed the record of 240,045 tickets sold for

Euro 2017 in the Netherlands.

Away from the pitch, the sports minister, Nigel Huddleston, also confirmed that the government will launch an in-depth review of domestic women's football with the aim to close the gap with the men's game.

We can't deny, however, that seeing the men's game engage with the women's offers a level of exposure that will boost perceptions of women's football. Whether that's Wrighty cheerleading through his punditry, a club footballer celebrating his team's win on Instagram or David Beckham taking his daughter to watch the Lionesses play, the support of men such as these has proven to have a significant impact in the past.

What it does is give credence to the women's game. An endorsement of a high level product full of world class talent. It is this sort of legitimacy aimed specifically at wider male audiences who I hope one day will watch the women's game with the same eye and level of respect they do the mens. This will go on to fuel the growth of an entire league in the national consciousness.



Molly Bartrip:

WSL Original to WSL Star

By Charlotte Stacey

Tottenham Hotspur enjoyed a fruitful season, becoming early contenders for a spot in the top three, as well as churning out impressive performances across the board. Spurs eventually finished in fifth place with a respectable 32 points, achieving their highest ever billing in the top-flight.

Boss Rehanne Skinner, came in midway through the 2020-21 season replacing longstanding coaches Karen Hills and Juan Amoros and immediately set to in overhauling the struggling Lilywhites, releasing and signing a total of 11 players' last term. Nesting amongst Skinner's new troops lies a player that has made a wealth of difference; centre back Molly Bartrip.

A WSL original, Bartrip joined Tottenham Hotspur last summer, departing from Reading where she had been since the inception of the rejuvenated league. Bartrip made over 100 appearances for Reading and was evidently an essential figure in her final season with the Royals, featuring in 21 out of 22 league games.

Bartrip's form has only improved since her arrival at Spurs, noted, not exclusively, by the fact she has played every single minute of this campaign. Pairing up with captain Shelina Zadorsky, the duo have forged an on-field

partnership that saw the Lilywhites keep eight clean

sheets, as well as a positive goal difference for the first time in the top division.

Morphing into a more progressive centre-back, Bartrip is the ying to Zadorsky's yang, each contributing equal weight to the decision making of the backline. When one steps forward, the other inherently remains put to cover, and vice versa. Although both defenders offer plenty in terms build-up play, it is Bartrip who is taking up this role slightly more regularly.

Registering, not only as one of the top two players to attempt the most passes, but the player with the highest passing accuracy rate, one can begin to understand Bartrip's evolution.

Central defenders are, more so nowadays, becoming auxiliary playmakers during preliminary attacking phases. They are expected to spur positive passages of play from the back and to offer support as players situated higher afield flood forward. However, of course, they must also fulfil their defensive duties and ensure that the goalkeeper has adequate protection should play swing the other way. This is where Bartrip is emerging as a standout performer.

Bartrip is already well known for her defensive qualities.

She is well versed in applying pressure in one-on-one situations, winning over

possession and positioning herself readily enough to make numerous blocks and interceptions. These attributes have not dwindled one iota in her first season in North London, they have, in actuality, enhanced.

This is seen in several of Bartrip's statistics, namely in individual challenges. Although her number of players tackled has dropped somewhat from her time with Reading, the quality of these pressures has improved greatly. An example can be seen in the number of dribblers challenged, in which Bartrip had a 61.5% success rate, up from 21.7% last year.

Being able to get the balance right between pushing forward and retaining a stout defensive disposition is a difficult skill to perfect, and Bartrip does have a little way to go in getting this consistently right. However, with her recognised development improving year after year, the foundations are quite obviously stable enough to build upon.

It is no coincidence that Tottenham's rise to the top coincided with Bartrip's arrival and she will almost certainly continue to be a core component in Spurs' development over the coming year, perhaps longer.



WSL summer transfer window: movers and shakers



By Sian Dennis

With the Women's Super League wrapped up for another season, attention swiftly turned to this summer's transfer market.

From 17 June 2022, clubs will look to strengthen their squads for the next campaign, while trying to retain top-talent for what is set to be another bumper year of WSL football.

However, with a number of players nearing the end of their contracts, there are still plenty of discussions to be had.

Now, before we move on I must start this with a caveat: the market has already seen huge changes with movers and shakers being announced everyday before the official opening of the window. It's been difficult to keep up. However, here's a deep dive into what we know so far (at the end of May) and what else

could happen over the coming weeks.

Strap yourselves in.

Manchester City sees mass exodus

Following their FA Cup defeat, Manchester City has already started to see a high-profile exodus of first-team regulars. Midfielder, **Georgia Stanway**, already confirmed her move to Bayern Munich on a three-year deal once the Euros is wrapped up. Team-mate **Caroline Weir**, who also received interest from Bayern Munich, confirmed her departure with a move to Real Madrid looking likely. Right-back, **Lucy Bronze**, will be leaving in this summer with a rumoured move stateside to the NWSL and has been heavily linked to the San Diego Waves FC. Goalkeeper, **Karima Benameur Taieb**,

who replaced injured first-choice **Ellie Roebuck** at the beginning of the season, has also confirmed her departure from the Academy Stadium, while Paris Saint-Germain is reportedly interested in poaching forward, **Khadija Shaw**.

After eight-and-a-half years Man City legend, **Jill Scott**, will depart the club at the end of her contract having spent time over the last two seasons on loan at Everton and Aston Villa. Scott will be honoured at a to-be-confirmed City home game next season for her contributions to the club. Where she will end up next is still to be announced.

A look at the rest of the league

WSL and FA Cup champions, Chelsea, look to strengthen its midfield by tapping up West Ham's **Katerina Svtkova** for

a move across the river. Norway's captain, **Maren Mjelde**'s contract expires at the end of the season, however, it is expected she will stay at the Blues on a new deal.

Arsenal winger, **Nikita Parris**, has had interest from other teams within the WSL, with both Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur showing interest. Long-standing Gunner, **Anna Patten**, is also set to continue at Aston Villa following her surprise loan to the Midlands side in January 2022.

West Ham's winger, **Adriana Leon**, has attracted interest from Real Madrid and Barcelona. However, the Irons has reportedly offered Leon a 2-year extension in a bid to keep hold of the Canadian - which she has since turned down.

Those rumoured to be heading to the WSL

Following its return to top-flight football, Liverpool is expected to be busy in the transfer market this summer with the likes of Wolfsburg winger, **Shanice van de Sanden** (a former Red) rumoured to be top of their hit list. Charlton Athletic goalkeeper, **Eartha Cumings**, is also set to join Merseyside.

Manchester City is also expected to be active in the transfer window to plug the gaps filled by departing players. The club is rumoured to be in talks with Atletico Madrid defender, **Laia Aleixandri**, as well as forward, **Deyna Castellanos**.

Manchester United reportedly has its sights on Athletic Bilbao forward **Lucia Garcia**, but faces stiff competition from

Real Madrid who has also shown interest in the Spaniard.

What has been confirmed so far

Leicester has confirmed that five players - **Esmee de Graaf, Paige Bailey-Gayle, Sophie Harris, Abbi Grant and Luana Zajmi** - will leave the club in the summer after narrowly avoiding relegation, finishing only two points ahead of Birmingham City at the bottom.

Rumours surrounding Arsenal striker **Vivianne Miedema**, and her future with the Gunners have been circulating for months following the end of her contract with the club, with former-European champions, Barcelona, sliding in. However, Gooners around the world rejoiced when Miedema signed a new contract with the North London club stating, "...winning titles with Arsenal will mean a lot more to me than winning them with another club...".

The good news continued for Arsenal with **Lotte Wubben-Moy, Caitlin Foord, Steph Catley** and **Noelle Maritz** signing new deals..

Manchester City's Manager, Gareth Taylor, has already tied **Lauren Hemp, Chloe Kelly** and **Esme Morgan** down to new, long-term contracts with all three likely to play a central role in future campaigns.

It's unlikely **Signe Bruun** will return to Manchester United permanently following her loan from Lyon last season. The forward only started five times in the WSL due to injury.

Icelandic midfielder, **Dagný Brynjarsdóttir**, has penned a new deal with West Ham

United until the summer of 2024.

Tottenham looks strong heading into the new season with **Ashleigh Neville, Kerys Harrop, Shelina Zadorsky** and **Becky Spencer** all extending their contracts.

Everton forward **Simone Magill** has confirmed she will leave the Toffees when her contract expires after nine years with the club. It is not clear where Magill will be heading next, but she is expected to represent Northern Ireland at the Euros in July.

The summer transfer window should be interesting for Everton under new manager, Brian Sorensen. Up to nine players are understood to be out of contract in the summer and the BBC reported that as many as four players under contract could leave the club.

Ji So-Yun has departed from Chelsea and returned to her native South Korea to join Suwon FC following eight years at the club. Defender, **Jonna Andersson**, also leaves West London for the Swedish side, Hammarby IF. And after over 10 years at the club, the Blue's longest-serving player, **Drew Spence**, also confirmed her departure from Kingsmeadow.

Two WSL legends announced their retirement from the sport. Aston Villa captain and England legend, **Anita Asante** and Manchester City and England goalkeeper, **Karen Bardsley**, both hung up their boots for the final time.

CHAMPIONSHIP



Carter becomes Birmingham City permanent manager



Darren Carter has been appointed as permanent manager of Birmingham City.

Carter, 38, had been named as interim manager last November following the dismissal of Scott Booth.

He has signed a two-year deal after their relegation from the Women's Super League.

Former England and Blues midfielder Jo Potter also has a two-year deal as assistant head coach.

"My full focus is driving this team back to where it belongs in the Women's Super League," Carter said.

"We want to be competing at the top level, and that is the drive for us now. My drive and passion for this team has only got stronger."

Blues Women's general manager Sarah Westwood added: "We are delighted that Darren has extended his stay with the club and look forward to continuing our work with him over the next two years.

"Darren knows what it means to play for

Birmingham City, and we have already seen that passed onto the players during the second-half of last season.

"Darren's ambitions match that of the club and we are excited to enter this new period with him in charge as we look towards a successful season in the FA Women's Championship."

Potter made over 100 appearances for the club and said joining the coaching staff "is surreal".

"I've always got Blues in my heart," she added. "It didn't take much convincing for me to come back."

Previous assistant head coach Tony Elliott will now be lead goalkeeping coach, a role vacated by Daniel Matraszek who has left the club.

Birmingham City only managed to win three games during the season but were relegated following a 6-0 defeat to Manchester City with one game remaining.

This will be the first season they have not been in the WSL since it was introduced in 2014.

Cross announces retirement

Lewes midfielder Zoe Cross has announced she is retiring from playing elite football.

The 24-year-old midfielder joined the club in January 2021 and she made 16 appearances.

She started at Brighton & Hove Albion then joined Chelsea's academy before moving to the United States where she combined playing football whilst studying at the University of Missouri.

She was a member of the England Under-20 team that finished third in the FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup in 2018.

Lionesses announce award winners

After finishing second in the league, London City Lionesses held their end of season awards at Princes Park. Carly Girasoli won the Supporters Player of the Season and Shae Young took home the Players' Player of the Season prize. Amy Rodgers won the Supporters Goal of the Season award for her goal against Crystal Palace in February. The PRIDE award was given to Hayley Bennett.

Phillips wins award

Melissa Phillips has won the FA Women's Championship Manager of the Month award for April.

The London City Lionesses manager led her side to three wins out of three during the month with victories over Charlton, Lewes and Bristol City.

Phillips said on the Lionesses official website that "I am honoured to receive this award, but any individual award is always a reflection of the team and staff. "We have a humble, hungry and hardworking group who I am so grateful to work with everyday. With a great run of form through April, we feel this is a very fitting way to finish off the season as this team has worked so incredibly hard to compete at the top all season long."

United end of season awards

Sheffield United end of season award winners have been announced with Courtney Sweetman-Kirk winning both the Manager's Player of the Year and the Golden Boot after scoring 11 league goals and 14 in all competitions.

Other award winners were Alethea Paul who won the Players' Player of the Year and 16-year-old Mia En derby won Young Player of the Year.

Lewes awards night

After their final game of the season, Lewes made their end of season awards.

Rebecca McKenna picked up both the Manager's and Players' Player of the season prizes whilst Paula Howells won the Supporter's Player of the Year. Howells also won the Goal of the Season for an effort against Coventry United and Rhian Cleverly won the VBV (vision, values and behaviours) award.

Palace celebrates record-breaking season

Crystal Palace's end of season awards took place on 10th May at the BOXPARK in Croydon.

Defender Aimee Everett won Player of the Season whilst Leigh Nicol took home the PFA Community Champion award.

These awards follow a record breaking season for Palace where they finished in their highest ever league position of fourth in the Championship.

Defender Murray leaves Bristol City

Bristol City have announced that defender Satara Murray is leaving the club.

The Jamaican international joined in the summer of 2021 and made 24 appearances for the club.

They also announced that Aggie Beever-Jones will return to Chelsea after her season on loan at City.

Other players leaving the club this summer include Izzy Cook, Maisy Collis and Simran Jhamet.

United duo move to the USA

Sheffield United's Matilda Taylor and Sam Sharrocks are moving to the USA after accepting scholarship opportunities.

Taylor made 11 appearances for the Blades whilst Sharrocks made her sole appearance against Watford in March. Both players had come through the club's academy before moving up to the senior team.

Sheffield United new contract extensions

Courtney Sweetman-Kirk, Maddy Cusack and Charlotte Newsham have all signed new contracts with Sheffield United for the 2022/23 season.

Sweetman-Kirk finished as the club's top goalscorer with 14 goals in all competitions during the last season.

Cusack will be entering her fifth season with the club having made 84 appearances so far.

Newsham joined the Blades last summer and made 18 appearances before injury ended her season early in January.

Aileen Whelan leaves Brighton

Brighton and Hove Albion midfielder Aileen Whelan announced in a social media post that she has played her last game in Blue and White.

Whelan wrote, "I've had the best five years here and made friends and memories that I'll cherish forever. This decision has been one of the toughest I've ever had to make and I thank everyone at Brighton for believing in me, and helping me grow both as a player and a person."

Championship player of the month announced

Coventry United's defender Natalie Johnson has been named as the Championship player of the month for April.

Johnson helped Coventry to an undefeated month in which they won two and drew two and stayed up on the final day thanks to the late 1-0 win against Watford.

Aggie Beever-Jones won the Championship goal of the month for the goal she scored for Bristol City against Liverpool.



Lewes appoint new manager

Lewes have appointed Scott Booth as their new manager on a two-year contract.

The former Scotland international had a successful spell as manager of Glasgow City in the Scottish Women's Premier League, leading them to six consecutive league titles, two Scottish Cups, one Scottish League Cup and reached the quarter-finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League in 2020.

He had a brief time as manager of Birmingham City at the start of the 2021/22 season.

Booth said on the club's official website "I'm absolutely delighted to take up the role of Women's 1st Team Manager at Lewes FC. It's a fantastic club run by extremely professional and committed people.

This was a key aspect for me in joining Lewes. The board, staff, supporters and local community are all incredibly invested in the team. It was clear to me throughout the interview process that the club's values are aligned with my own".

Head of Performance Kelly Lindsay said on the website "Scott is a brilliant addition to our team.

"He brings professionalism, a passion for player development, values that clearly align with the club and a positive energy and enthusiasm that shone through during the recruitment process.

"We believe he is extremely well placed to take Lewes FC through an ongoing transition towards a high achieving, high performance club".

Bradford leaves Coventry United

Jay Bradford has left her role as manager of Coventry United.

Bradford was manager for 158 games and lead Coventry to two County Cups, one Premier Division Plate, the Southern National League title and three successive seasons in the FA Women's Championship.

She led the club to 'the great escape' as they avoided relegation in the final minutes of the 2021/22 season.

The club said on their official Twitter account that "We can not thank Jay enough for her loyalty and brilliance throughout her time at the club".

This follows on from the news earlier in the month that coach Jo Potter will be leaving the club. Potter played a big role in Coventry's great escape and survival in the Championship. The club said on their website "We wish Jo the very best of luck with her next venture. Thank you for everything Jo."

Hodgson and Jukes leaving Rovers

Blackburn Rovers have announced that both Aimee Hodgson and Chelsey Jukes are leaving the club.

Hodgson is moving to the United States to study on a scholarship.

She progressed through the Rover Regional Talent Club youth ranks and moved up to the senior team for the start of the 2020/21 season. She made her debut against Leicester in September 2020 and made 36 appearances for the club and scored three goals. Jukes joined the Development side in 2016 before moving into the first-team ahead of the 2017/18 season.

She helped the club to back-to-back FA Women's National League North titles in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 seasons then played her part in Blackburn's inaugural Championship season in 2019/20. Jukes made her 100th senior appearance for the club in December 2021.

Championship player of the season announced

Bristol City's Abi Harrison has been named as the FA Women's Championship Player of the Season.

Harrison finished top goalscorer in the league with 17 goals.

Mia Smith won Save of the Season for a stop she made for Watford against Sunderland.

Goal of the season went to Durham's Mollie Lambert for her strike against Sunderland.

It has also been announced that Matt Beard has won the League Managers Association FA Women's Championship Manager of the Year after guiding Liverpool to the title.

Bristol City duo sign extensions

Both Ffion Morgan and Lia Cataldo have signed new one-year deals with Bristol City.

Morgan made 22 appearances and contributed to five goals from midfield during the 2021/22 season.

Defender Cataldo made 27 appearances for the Robins during her first season with the club after joining from Leicester City.

Bronze leaves Manchester City

England international Lucy Bronze is set to leave Manchester City this summer after two seasons at the Academy Stadium.

The 30-year-old fullback re-joined City after a highly successful stint with European Champions Lyon and has made a total of 111 appearances in City Blue.

News outlets report that the club did not offer Bronze a new contract and are looking to bring in a high volume of signings during the transfer window.

Coventry announces players departures

Coventry United have confirmed that Anna Colville, Phoebe Warner, Fran Orthodoxou and Becky McGrother have all left the club.

The club thanked the four for their contribution in 'the great escape' and wish them all the best for the future.

Durham announce award winners

Durham's defender and captain Sarah Wilson has won their Player of the Year award.

Beth Hepple won the Golden Boot and the Players' Player of the Year trophies after scoring 14 goals in all competitions.

The Young Player of the Year prize was won by Grace Ayre.

Charlton Athletic announce departures

Charlton Athletic have announced the departure of nine first-team players at the end of their contracts.

Sophie Hillyerd, Rebecca Jane, Vyan Sampson, Hollie Olding, Jess King, Elisha Sulola and Elise Hughes all leave the club whilst Jorja Fox and Katie Robinson both return to their parent clubs after spending the second half of the 2021/22 season on loan at Charlton.

Trio to leave Liverpool

Liverpool have confirmed that Jade Bailey, Meikayla Moore and Rianna Dean will leave the club at the end of the season when their current deals expire.

They also announced that Charlotte Wardlaw has returned to Chelsea following her loan spell and Academy graduate Evie Smith will also be leaving.

Liverpool manager Matt Beard said on their official website “I would like to thank all these players for their important contributions during their time with the club – whether in games, in training or just as valued members of the group”.

Watford Player of the Season

Amber-Keegan Stobbs has been named as Watford’s Player of the Season.

The midfielder featured in 20 of their Championship games during her first season with the club.

The Goal of the Season award went to Anne Meiwald for her strike against Liverpool.

Four Rovers players extend contracts

Hannah Coan, Alex Brooks, Helen Seed and Emma Doyle have all signed new contracts with Blackburn Rovers.

Coan joined the club on loan in January 2021 before making the move permanent last summer and sign her first professional contract during the New Year.

Brooks made 26 appearances for the club across all competitions during the 2021/22 season.

Seed came through the club’s youth teams before making her senior debut when she was 17.

She then left for a new challenge abroad but returned last summer after seven years away.

Doyle is recovering from an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury but is set to make her return during the first half of the 2022/23 season.

Rovers hold end of season awards

Blackburn Rovers have announced their end of season awards with Annabel Blanchard winning the Supporters and Coaches Player of the Season.

Hannah Coan won the Young Player and Players Player of the Season awards.

Blanchard and Saffron Jordan jointly won the top goal scorers and Blanchard also picked up the most Player of the Match awards during the season.

Jordan won the Goal of the Season for a free kick she scored against London City Lionesses.

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE



League Cup and Plate trophies decided



The FA Women's National League Cup was won by Southampton FC, while Nottingham Forest narrowly beat AFC Wimbledon in the Plate.

League Cup final:

Southampton FC 3-0 Huddersfield Town

Southampton FC Women secured the double with a 3-0 win over Huddersfield Town in the final of the National League Cup.

Alisha Ware gave Southampton the lead just before the break.

Lucia Kendall had been amongst it all afternoon and Huddersfield struggled to keep her underwraps.

She received the ball on the edge of the box, before placing her shot into the bottom corner.

Kendall notched her second and the decisive third seven minutes from time, finding the same corner with a sweet strike from just outside the penalty area.

Saints were unchanged from the side that claimed the National League Southern Premier title over rivals Portsmouth on Wednesday night.

League Plate final:

AFC Wimbledon 1-2 Nottingham Forest

The Plate final was a close affair but it was Nottingham Forest who came out on top.

The Division 1 Dons gave Forest a game, as Rachel Brown's opener was cancelled out when Kelly Highman scored via Ashlee Hincks' free kick.

But the Northern Premier side won it with a set-piece of their own, Rebecca Anderson finding the back of the net.

Speaking afterwards, manager Kevin Foster said: "Credit to Nottingham Forest, I thought they were excellent in the first half. They moved the ball well, played between the lines and they got in between us.

"It's frustrating because the first goal came after we had a player off the pitch for a minute and a half.

"We were trying to get her back on, so it was frustrating. In the second-half we showed a bit of resilience, we could've scored a couple, and we came back well against an excellent Nottingham Forest side."

Women's National League Play-Off:

Southampton v Wolverhampton Wanderers



By Paul Donegan

A first half goal from Sophia Pharoah was good enough for Southampton to win the FA Women's National League Championship Play-Off Final against Wolverhampton Wanderers and gain promotion to the FA Women's Championship.

Pharoah's strike came during a first half in which Southampton had the better of the chances and could have been further ahead at the break. Wolves had to play with ten players for the whole of the second half after Kelly Darby got sent off for two bookings on the stroke of half time.

Southampton had the first chance in the 7th minute when Pharoah played a lovely ball to Lucia Kendall but she saw her lob saved by Wolves goalkeeper Shan Turner.

From the resulting corner, Alice Griffiths sent a long range shot well wide.

Wolves had their first efforts in the 9th minute when both Beth Merrick and Marie Gauntlett saw shots blocked. Both sides had shots easily saved in the next ten minutes, Pharoah for Southampton and Amber Hughes for Wolves.

In the 21st minute, Southampton's Leeta Rutherford saw her header from a free kick saved. A minute later, Southampton had another opportunity when Kendall saw her shot from around 18-yards out kept out by Turner.

Southampton did take the lead seconds later when Georgia Freeland's nice through ball found Pharoah in space who controlled, went round Turner

and finished low into the net from about 12 yards.

The game then went into a bit of a quiet spell chance wise during which Darby was booked for a foul in the 33rd minute.

Southampton went close to extending their lead in the 35th minute when Kendall's free kick from around 20-yards hit the post and bounced out to Griffiths but she sent the rebound over.

A dangerous Southampton corner caused problems with Turner colliding with the post and needing some treatment. Rosie Parnell was booked for Southampton as she stopped a quick Wolves attack.

Wolves had a chance just before half time when a header back from a free kick bounced

off Tammi George and went behind.

In first half additional time, Darby committed a foul right in front of the dugouts, and after referee Lauren Impey had had a quick word with the assistant referee, the Wolves number 15 was shown a second yellow card followed by a red and was sent off.

Southampton had the first opportunities of the second half when Pharoah saw an effort saved in the 47th minute, and a minute late Kendall's lob went just wide.

Despite being down to 10 players, Wolves did cause Southampton problems and they had some chances during the second half. The first of these came in the 51st minute when George played in Merrick but her shot was blocked. In the 60th minute, Hughes saw her curling shot from the edge of the area held by Southampton goalie Kayla Rendell. Eight minutes later, Merrick dragged a shot wide from about 20 yards after some

sloppy defending from Southampton.

Southampton brought on Katie Rood in the 75th minute, and two minutes later she sent a shot from an angle just wide.

Anna Price headed wide a corner for Wolves in the 81st minute as they continued to look for an equaliser.

Rood had another opportunity for Southampton in the 86th minute but this time saw her header from a long free kick go wide.

In second half additional time, Wolves had their final chance when Alie Miller headed the ball back to George who sent her shot over.

The final whistle went a few minutes later and the celebrations could begin for Marieanne Spacey-Cale's Southampton as they won 1-0 and secured promotion to the Championship after just one season in the National League Southern Premier Division.

Line ups

Southampton (4-2-3-1):

Rendell, Mott, Rafferty, Par-nell, Collett (Rood 75'), Rutherford, Griffiths, Freeland (Morris 62'), Kendall, Ware, Pharoah

Unused substitutes

Luce, Watling, Pusey

Goal – Pharoah 22'

Booked - Cross

Wolverhampton Wanderers (3-5-2):

Turner, Darby, Cross, Morphet, Cross, George, Price, Cooper, Merrick, Hughes, Gauntlett (Miller 69')

Unused substitutes

Dicken, Walker, Elsmore, Bur-ridge

Booked – Darby

Sent Off – Darby (second yellow card)

Referee – Lauren Impey

Attendance – 1,354



New FA WNL Strategy announced to bolster women's football pyramid



The FA Women's National League has today launched a new strategy to strengthen the third and fourth tiers of women's football in England.

The strategy, titled Empowering For Success, is backed by £1 million of investment per season for the next three years from the Premier League.

It will aim to ensure the advancements in quality across the professional game are also harnessed throughout Tiers 3 and 4 of the women's football pyramid.

Empowering For Success is focused across eight priority areas, each with their own strategic goal, ultimately enabling FA WNL clubs to flourish both on and off the pitch through the development of players, workforce, and infrastructure.

The eight priority areas are:-

1. **Players:** Developing the training, playing and overall environment players experience so they can be the best they can be, on and off the pitch.
2. **Coaches and leaders:** Developing coaches to be exceptional across the FA WNL, ensuring they are representative of society.
3. **Referees:** Driving upwards the standard of refereeing alongside improving the opportunity and experience of match officials in the FA WNL.
4. **Club Development:** Creating an inclusive, player-centred and sustainable club network.

5. **League Development:** Ensuring the FA WNL keeps pace with the growth of the women's game and offers the best-possible development opportunities to member clubs.
6. **Facilities:** Ensuring FA WNL and clubs have access to the required infrastructure on matchdays, at training venues and off-field.
7. **Commercial:** Defining the FA WNL's commercial value and engaging with partners to grow revenues and inward investment.
8. **Marketing and Communications:** Growing the reach and appeal of the FA WNL by increasing exposure and awareness through

matchday activity and league channels, driving bigger attendances and league following.

The strategy unveils multiple commitments from the FA WNL across the eight priority areas to achieve each strategic goal.

These include increasing the number of female coaches in the FA WNL, as well as those from historically under-represented communities; creating a dedicated pool of match officials specialising in women's football; reviewing the competition structure; introducing minimum club requirements to support player development; providing opportunities for players to engage in non-playing roles within football.

Empowering For Success was created in collaboration with FA WNL member clubs, ensuring a range of voices from administrators and coaches to players and fans were all given the chance to help shape the future of the league.

By 2025 the strategy hopes to increase the recognition of the FA WNL amongst women's football fans, decrease the number of weather-related postponements per season, increase the number of league commercial partners and increase the average attendance of league fixtures.

Baroness Sue Campbell, the FA's director of women's football, said: "The launch of this strategy is game-changing for the women's football pyramid.

"It will ensure the FA WNL can maintain pace with the wider growth of the women's game, and the clubs and their players can thrive both on and off the pitch.

"We want to say a huge thank you to the Premier League for their support, without which none of this would be possible.

"The money they are investing will transform the experience of everyone who plays in the third and fourth tiers of women's football."

The Premier League has also announced additional support for clubs in Tiers 3 and 4 of the women's football pyramid through the Premier League Stadium Fund.

Eligible clubs can apply for grants of up to £20,000 to support the improvement of their stadium facilities, making grounds more welcoming for all and enhancing the playing and spectating experience within women's football.

The FA will be working with clubs to identify their facility needs, with funding being made available this summer. The Football Foundation will be handling the grant administration.

Sandi Dosanjh, FA Women's National League board chair, said: "I'm incredibly proud and humbled by the collective efforts of the FA WNL board and management committee and the FA to develop a strategy that will prove to be a watershed moment for women's football.

"For the players, coaches and fans of our clubs, we have truly

been inspired by your passion for the game and will implement this strategy to take the league to the next level.

"The FA WNL is uniquely placed within women's football to inspire positive change for communities around the country, whilst taking on-field quality to new levels.

"With the support of the FA, and with our strategy in place, the league and its clubs can continue to grow as the heartbeat of women's football."

Richard Masters, chief executive of the Premier League, said: "It's an exciting time for women's and girls' football in this country and we're delighted to be able to assist the development of the game with investment that will support the FA Women's National League clubs. Along with our funding for the Girls' Emerging Talent Centres, it shows the Premier League's commitment to provide opportunities for female players of all ages to progress.

"We're proud of the investment we make to help develop football at all levels and this funding expands on the wide-ranging support we provide.

"Many of our clubs are committed to women's and girls' football and it's important that the Premier League plays a role centrally."

Women's National League:

A look back over the season and a look to the future



By Jonathan Cotterill-Bolsover

The end of the season has arrived and what a season it has been. The grand finale saw Southampton and Wolves battle it out for the title of English Champions and a bold step into the FA Women's Championship before a weekend of celebrations and awards, joy and heartbreak, laughter and tears.

In a huge move forward, the whole nation got to witness this season's play-off match as the BBC streamed the game live via their red button service, a first for this match and a welcome move for the ever growing army of supporters of women and girls football. But thanks to the promotion from both clubs, the television coverage did not seem to affect the attendance figures to Stockport as supporters from

both sides turned out in droves for the game.

The match itself resulted in a 1-0 victory for Marieanne Spacey-Cale's Saints outfit who now take the step up into Tier 2, with Wolves missing out despite a hardy display. But the occasion felt like a real step forward for the game with media exposure growing constantly for women's football with this event adding to brilliant coverage of the WSL over the season and the FUTSAL Series finals on the same weekend, a real warm up for the Euros over the summer.

Just days after the weekend had passed came the launch of a new strategy for women's and girls' football which appears to great news for our tier 3 and 4 clubs. The Empower for Success strategy claims to be

backed by a million pound per season investment from the Premier League for the next three seasons, this coupled with an additional facilities support grant of up to £20'000 for eligible clubs to improve facilities.

At first glance this seems to be a fantastic boost for the WNL, a very much needed one that may go some way to narrowing the seemingly huge gap between tier 2 and 3, but a second deeper glance does not give much away about the how the money will be used or how it will be invested.

The strategy highlights eight key areas that will be targeted including players, coaches, referees, clubs, leagues, facilities, commercial and marketing. The strategy aims to make the WNL more

mainstream, hence gaining support for clubs within it.

But how far does a million pounds a year go? Not very far considering the cost of facilities and the hiring of venues alone being a huge drain on any clubs resources, with the rising cost of energy bills, even clubs with their own venues are started to see the pinch. The vast majority of clubs in the WNL are subject to the work of volunteers and the possibility of taking that any further still remains a goal well out of reach, no matter how many great volunteers you have 'time' still remains to be the rarest commodity in the game.

But is this the start of a new era? Are these grants building a platform for something bigger? Certainly the commercial element should not be underestimated. The exposure of the leagues can only seek to grow the exposure very much needed to increase the commercial value of clubs, in particular when it comes to sponsorship, many teams are still one sponsorship deal away from achieving their goals, yet sadly one lost sponsorship deal away from losing everything and being unable to pay the bills.

But one thing sticks out as a major positive, the women's

game is now being recognised as an entity in its own right now more than ever. Slowly going are the days where women and girls football made way for the more important men's game and slowly dying are women's teams being a subsection of a club with more and more clubs committing to a more equal platform.

Growing coaches for the women's game has to be seen as a major step forward, now more than ever are we seeing young up and coming coaches having a personal interest in the women's game alone and less using it as a stepping stone for something bigger later down the line in the men's game. The recognition of those dedicated to the growth of women and girls football above all else are rightfully receiving the support to do so.

So in the end, perhaps this is less about the amounts of money invested and more about the opportunities created, after all, who would have thought just three or four years ago that they would be settling down at home for a good old WNL play off match live on the BBC?

This could also have been said about the WSL not that long ago. Suddenly football seems more real and success more

achievable, the opportunity to be a role model for our younger players suddenly means something very different with the league being put into the limelight.

The whole strategy comes alongside a new 'performance centre' system that it would appear to be a new way of thinking for the development of our young players and maybe sees the beginning of the end for the much controversial RTC system which appears to have incredibly spectrumised views on its success and failures.

Once again this provides an opportunity for players to enter a player-centric system that puts the individual at the heart of an empowering environment that is designed for the many and not the few.

These schemes tied in with each other could provide a whole new platform of opportunities and put the National League in the spotlight as a great place to play, coach and work in the game in fantastic and progressive environments.



**TheFA Women's
National League**

Liverpool Feds – Club Grown Success Born Of Family Values And Independence



By Jonathan Cotterill-Bolsover

The growth of women's football has given us some wonderful stories in recent times, the growth of the game has been phenomenal. Clubs are constantly changing and evolving sometimes for the better, sometimes not so much.

But for one National League chairman, the family values that have been important to his club for over 30 years are still yielding results on and off the pitch. For Bill Stewart being part of Liverpool Feds is being part of the 'Feds Family', but just how far can an independent women's club go? We caught up with Bill after his sides momentous Northern Division 1 league title win.

Liverpool Feds have embarked on a modern journey with old school values and Bill Stewart could not be prouder of where that has taken his club. Always in touching distance of the step up from tier 4 to 3, this season 'felt like it was the right time' said Stewart reflecting on a title winning season, 'we have been a tough side to beat, I was always told that goals win games, but clean sheets win titles'.

In these times of craving for quick success, what Feds have achieved could be seen as nothing short of miraculous, but for Stewart the title comes by doing things right and patiently both on and off the pitch. 'Our club is family, every week we win or lose games but every week we look after our people, every year we win or lose leagues, but every year we look after our people, we are a caring club and I am proud of that every

single day, in fact I feel honoured to be part of it every single day'.

When asked how far an independent women's club could really go, Stewart told us 'Our plan is to consolidate our position in the next league and then push on from there, we have to be patient and we have to build', he added, 'do I think we are capable of winning this league, yes I do. Do I expect to win this league, not until the time is right'.

'We need people on board, organisations and individuals that can help grow our club, grow a solid financial base that can move us forward and help us build a foundation that can help us push on as a club', 'It would be great to get a big sponsor on board, not just from a financial perspective, but to be part of the story and part of the structure, to be part of the feds family'.

A final day 6-1 victory over FC United of Manchester sparked celebrations from a club that have been teetering on the edge of promotion for the last few years. 'We had people at that game who were around when the club was formed in the early 90's, they remarked that the values have not changed since our first day' remarked Stewart.

But where can this story go? With the backing and the input that this club more than deserves, we may see Liverpool Feds flying the flag for every independent women's club across the country for many years to come, a story that many could see themselves wanting to be part of.



GRASSROOTS



York City manager departs



York City Ladies have announced that “To do it after two seasons is a real manager Chris Hamilton has left the highlight for me. club.

Hamilton began managing York in staff and how they have achieved the 2020 within two years has been able to league and cup double. secure promotion for the team.

City competed in the North East challenged each other in order to reach Regional Women’s League premier the consistency needed to win the league. division last campaign and ended the “I know this group will continue to season as champions. improve and impress in the FAWNL, and

In all competitions, they lost just twice, I look forward to watching their winning 22 games and drawing two progress. games, scoring 105 goals and conceding only 23. “It’s all about getting the right people in and I have been lucky enough to work

Hamilton guided York to a double in his with some fantastic players and staff over final season in charge, winning the North the last six years at York City, Barnsley Riding FA County Cup as well as the and Nettleham. division.

City's promotion means they will be and the FA Cup runs were amazing playing FA Women’s National League moments, but the main thing is to leave division one north next year. the room in a better place than you find it.

“The aim was to win the league and get the club promoted in three seasons,” said “Now for some time off and then see Hamilton in a statement released by what the future holds, whether that’s in York City Ladies. the academy, men’s or women’s game.”



Grassroots News

AFC Totton announce women's side for next season

IN A historic move for AFC Totton, the New Forest-based football club have launched their own women's team, ready to compete in the upcoming 2022/23 season, reports Ben Rochey-Adams.

Jointly managed by Martin Kerr and Ben Macaulay, the team played last season under the banner of Pace FC and achieved a sixth-place finish in Division Five of the Hampshire County Women's Football League (HCWFL).

Speaking in front of the Wessex Heartbeat Stand during their first training session on the Snows Stadium pitch, Ben Macaulay, who played for Pace FC and Oakwood, said:

"My partner and my daughter got involved in women's football, and when the team needed a new manager, I took it on.

"These facilities are fantastic and during our discussions, it became clear that it's not just all about the AFC Totton first team.

"This is a community club, working hard on several fronts simultaneously to bring people together and make a positive difference.

"It's a great opportunity for us to bring the team here and enjoy the benefits of that, while also doing our bit to encourage more women and girls to come along and be part of it."

AFC Totton CEO Steve Brookwell is delighted to welcome the new women's team onboard:

"This is something we've been wanting to do for a while. Hosting Southampton FC Women's home games has really opened the eyes of anyone who might have been sceptical that women's football is in very good health, with interest and participation increasing rapidly," he said.

Sirens FC announce new partner

Notion announces shirt partnership and support for East London football club Sirens FC, an all women's and non-binary team based in Hackney.

Established in 2019, Sirens FC is a football team committed to championing change, both on and off the pitch.

Having met whilst working at the same agency, founders Morf and Georgy started building the Sirens community after realising there was a lack of opportunity for women and non-binary people wanting to get involved in the game.

Now with around fifteen players, the team members come from all paths and disciplines: from artists, music managers, photographers, designers and magazine founders, to charity and NHS workers.

Wymondham announce new development boss

Wymondham announces Lee Edwards as new development team manager.

In a statement they said: “We are pleased to announce that Lee Edwards has been appointed as the Manager of our Development Team.

“Lee is a level 2 coach & has worked with 1st Team Manager, Alex Guy, for the past 3 seasons at the club.”

Speaking on the announcement Edwards said: “I’m pleased to have been entrusted to take the development team on.

“This is a great opportunity & will suit my strengths well. I’ve learnt a lot from Alex & I’m looking forward to continuing the Wymondham philosophy with this team.”

Junior football club receives apology from AFC Fylde

Aspull Juniors Football Club said they were “bewildered” by the incident in a statement released on Tuesday evening.

In the statement, the Wigan-based club claimed Fylde refused to leave their pitches after being asked to do so.

But now, in a fresh update, Aspull say the Coasters have now apologised.

“The committee can confirm that it has received communication from the chief executive at AFC Fylde sincerely apologising for yesterday evening’s incident,” Aspull said in a statement.

“We have been assured that the team will not use our facilities again and the committee at Aspull Juniors is satisfied that the matter has now been dealt with. We will not be sharing any further details on the matter.

“We would like to place on record our thanks to members of the public who helped raise awareness for the issue, but would ask that you join us in allowing this matter to rest.”

Aspull’s initial statement caused uproar on social media, with many expressing confusion at why Fylde would use the facilities without asking for permission first.

“We are saddened to report that AFC Fylde have taken a decision to undertake their women’s training sessions on the pitches at Aspull Juniors Football Club this evening without prior warning, permission or communication,” Aspull said.

“When asked to vacate due to ongoing pitch works, the representatives of the Vanarama National League outfit refused to move or leave.

“Aspull Juniors Football Club are completely bewildered as to why a football team from over 30 miles away would choose to undertake their training at our home.

“It costs Aspull Juniors, a local grassroots team run by volunteers, tens of thousands of pounds per year to maintain the pitches.”

Joint manager Danielle Young was named in the initial post and she has since commented in a personal statement:

Whilst the situation has now been resolved, the fact that I am named in the statement in a disparaging manner has meant that I need to make this statement.

“It is disappointing that a written statement was issued online containing some false accusations.

“On release of the statement, we immediately attempted to contact [them].

“I would like to apologise again for the inconvenience caused.”

Grassroots:

Looking forward after lockdown



By Simon O'Neill

In 2022, many grassroots pitches and facilities are often in need of much needed improvements and with the country only just re opening after the lockdown it might be some time before there will be lots of money.

Ever since I first became interested in the women's game over 30 plus years ago, the women's game whilst having made huge improvements has still some way to go to be as recognised as the men's grassroots in my view.

The team I first supported, Oldham Curzon (now Curzon Ashton), from the

Tameside area of Greater Manchester have made massive strides. They were back in the 1990's one of the few women's clubs who were supported by the Curzon Ashton committee as much as the men's team. Oldham Curzon were fortunate to play on the same pitch as the men.

Often facilities back then for the girls and women's game was poor at best. They had to make do with the worst pitches on council own multi pitch facilities and made to feel second class. Spectators were few if any unless family were in attendance.

Funding to support the grassroots game had been slow to gain momentum in the early years of my support for the women's game Players had to go cap in hand to local businesses, who would rarely offer financial support in the form of sponsorship to cover kits etc. Clubs would have to hold raffles, and other fundraising just to buy small essential like training equipment.

As the England Women's team gained more publicity in the press, especially since around 2009 the women's game

overall became much more into the football fans conscious and wasn't just seen as a 'bunch of girls playing kick about'. As the national side grew more and more through the publicity of having central contracts and more people being aware of the professional side of the game at the top, this slowly spread to the grassroots level. More and more teams began to be formed and as a result their wads the requirement to add additional leagues to the expanding grassroots level.

Funding throughout the many years I have followed the grassroots game has been a major issue and through pressure not only have the football authorities been instrumental in increasing funding a little, but the government has become involved. Most recently the government has in a report published on 25th March 2022 explained that an initial £2m investment will be made into 18 grassroots clubs across Scotland with the aim to level up the facilities in Scotland.

Among the clubs receiving the funding are Drumchapel United in Glasgow, Kilwinning Community Football



Academy in Kilwinning, North Ayrshire and Buckie Thistle High School has seen additional funding from the council be put into a renewed 3G pitch for year round use for the girls football based there.

The growth in the women's game has seen many football clubs undertaking to set up a girls team or women's team or in some cases both.

This is because the impact and outreach that can be gained from clubs having a girls/women's team is immense.

This is backed up by a recent study from Wasserman, the sports group. In the report they found that 88% of people would watch more women's football is provided with the opportunity.

The same report also showed a 16% increase in female fans taking part in football in the pandemic.

Interestingly it showed that even women who hadn't real interested in football took up the sport in the same period.

With the growth in the women's games, 605 new girl's teams have been formed and 260 new women's clubs registered to play one underlying

issue remains, that is where do these new clubs not only train but play.

With the ever-rising costs involved in the grassroots game it as much as the growth in the women's game had increased the costs need to come down.

Due to cuts in council funding many grassroots pitches which even in good times were often poor quality are now so poorly maintained that teams struggle to find good standard pitches.

And with the costs going up to as much as £1,000 a season for a council pitch football is not a cheap sport anymore.

The costs in setting up a side can be huge from the cost of the pitch hire and depending on location can use be use of pitch and a rundown changing facility often with little no hot water in the showers to admin fees for County FA affiliation fees, league registration fees, insurances (personal accident and public liability), pitch equipment (nets/corner flags), team kit, first aid kits, training equipment, and match officials fees.

So, the costs soon mount up from watch might have been an initial idea to set up a team to ensuring you have the funds to

successfully complete your first season.

Once the team you have set up has completed its first season and along with it maybe a trophy or two sponsorships will hopefully become easier to source to help cover all the outlay your club has to pay out.

If your club is lucky it might have connections with a players employer who might be happy to provide kits and have their company name on to ease the financial burden.

If that is not the case, then often players will have to pay 'subs' to help cover the running costs. Many clubs try not to burden players with this and hold fundraising events throughout the season to ensure all costs are covered.

Despite all these costs the love for the women's game grows considerably each year and it will soon be seen as an excellent way of trying to emulate your favourite WSL players skills and helping to improve people's health in a fun and enjoyable manner.



Simon Says

This month Simon talks to Harminster Kaur Behal.

She is currently working as a scout for an agency in London, and is also restarting her coaching journey. As a member of the Amateur Football Alliance, she is looking to continue her professional development in talent ID and coaching.

How old were you when first interested in football?

It was when I was about 7 and one of my earliest memories was watching the World Cup 1994 game with my family all waiting in anticipation for Roberto Baggio to take his pen, and the reaction when he missed it and the atmosphere has always stuck with me. I've always played with my family and still do. It's always competitive and so much fun!

Did you play football?

Yes, I love playing football, it was one of the first things that brought out my confidence, I was vocal always telling my brother where I wanted to play and also physically I loved going in for challenges, running with the ball, having fun and being outdoors.

If so, at what age and what was the teams name?

I was about 7 years old, I played mainly on the schoolboy's team and with my family/friends in the estate I grew up in, there was a playing field right on our doorstep and we all came out to play for hours on end! I never played for a team, as I never knew that was a thing I could do and my parents never had access to this information otherwise they would have definitely signed me up to a team.

When did you make the step from any on field activity to that of a more off field activity?

My love for Football only grew with age, but there were never any options or knowledge about how I could make a career of working within Football. I went to university, worked in other fields whilst always thinking about how I could enter into the working world of football. There was no one out there that I knew that could help, so all I did was kept researching online into how I could make that break into football.

How did you make the first steps into being a football scouting? Did you apply for an online Talent ID course to start your career as a scout?

I've always been interested in talent identification and wanted to learn more. After completing my FA Level 1 in Football Coaching I then took my FA Level 1 in Talent Identification and knew it was where my interest laid and also with my HR background, I could use my Talent recruitment experience. I was due to join the Talent ID Level 2 course just as the pandemic hit, so was unable to continue via that route at the time but was eager to not let that stop me from progressing. I came across the Professional Scouts Association and the courses they were running and during the lockdown period I upskilled and went onto complete my online Level 2 in Talent ID, Level 1 in Performance Analysis, Level 1 in Technical Scouting and loved all the learning I gained and network. I joined Stevenage Football Club in August 2020 as an Academy Scout, it was a fantastic learning curve as I learnt about the academy pathway, emerging talent pathway, development centre and the strategies and plan for the season. I also began to go out to some games that were opening in late 2020 to live scout, which allowed me to build my

network with Coaches and Clubs and develop my individual scout reports.

Following a short period as a Talent ID scout for a football club you took the step to work with an Agency. Was that an intended step?

I always wanted to gain experience within an Agency setting, at the time it felt like the right step to be able to work at the professional level of the game. It was fantastic exposure to the Men's football English Pyramid, where I was working across the National League and also learning what is involved in signing a player to an Agency and the long-term plan/goals that are needed when scouting a player. I also developed my report writing and analysis skills. I also worked on the Women's side from 18 onwards attending live game across the country, building my network within the Women's games, and learning about the off-field activities/opportunities when looking to sign a player.

How did you find the work at an Agency, as compared to working for a football team?

I am now at Shrewsbury Town FC, working as an Academy Scout for London, I think working for an Agency was great exposure to all the different sides that are involved from the initial scouting of a player to the various meetings and steps that take place before signing a player and then working with the player on the vision for their playing career and future. Working at Academy level as a London Scout gives me the chance to work with grassroots clubs from underrepresented groups to showcase the talent that there is and how we can help develop and support them in the system from an early age.

My family say I am obsessed with it and it's probably true! I really enjoy working and learning within football, it is a steep learning curve as I have been navigating my career on my own which I love as there is no boundary/expectation to what I can achieve, and I have now joined the Sport Integrity Global Alliance Women Global Mentorship Programme working with my mentor to help develop my career

further. I am enjoying all the learning, the networking and development. I want to continue developing with my Talent ID qualifications and work as a Sporting Director in the future being able to shape the recruitment strategy either within an organisation or club. I am also looking to work internationally as I love learning about other cultures and learning languages. I am passionate about growing the game for underrepresented groups and to work towards getting more women playing and working in Football. Ahead of the Women Euro I have joined as a Legacy Ambassador as part of a partnership between Miss Kick and Middlesex FA to inspire the next generation of girls and women looking to play and work in Sport.

As a British Asian woman working in football, I would love to inspire the next generation of underrepresented groups that would like to work in football or sport. There is still a lot of work to be done on breaking down those barriers to participation and having access to opportunities and a career path in football. Part of my work with the Amateur Football Alliance as an Inclusion Advisory Group Member is to assess the barriers/current opportunities and look at how we can create more opportunities for all to participate and be inclusive for all in which ever pathway they would like to take up. I have also been working with Indian Gymkhana FC sharing my journey with the children and parents from the South Asian community as part of the Seeing Is Believing events, which have been fantastic to be involved in as the next generation and parents can see all the different roles/pathways in Football that they may one day want to pursue and being able to offer advice and support.

Also watching Gazetta Football Italia every Saturday growing up, was the beginning of my love for Football and travel, the places that James Richardson travelled to around Italy, the cafes, piazzas, newspaper stories and interviews were iconic.

Harminder is building on her Data Analysis and Project Management skills through courses to further my development as a Scout and Talent ID pathway.

CUPS



Top scorer awards presented for 2021-22 Emirates FA Cup & Vitality Women's FA Cup



Following this weekend's Emirates FA Cup and Vitality Women's FA Cup Finals, stars of non-league football Adam Boyes and Chloe Williams were presented with the inaugural Golden Ball Awards in partnership with Mitre as the top scorers in the respective competitions.

The awards were established to commemorate the top scorers in this season's competitions, from the Emirates FA Cup Extra Preliminary Round and Vitality Women FA Cup First Round Qualifying. Adam Boyes scored an incredible eleven goals for Northern Premier League Division One East side Marske United FC throughout the competition, with five coming in one match, and Chloe Williams had an equally impressive record, scoring 12 goals in four games for Liskeard Athletic and a remarkable seven in a single tie.

Boyes and Williams were invited to Wembley Stadium connected by EE as guests of The FA to carry out the match balls on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May, and watch the respective Finals.

Liverpool's legendary striker Ian Rush, who scored a record five goals across three Final

victories, presented Adam's award and Chloe received hers from Faye White who was a winner of the competition on nine occasions with Arsenal.

The FA's Director of Professional Game Relations, Andy Ambler, said: "The Emirates FA Cup and Vitality Women's FA Cup give clubs and players across the pyramid the chance to test themselves and take on the very best. I'm delighted that we were able to introduce a top scorer award across historic seasons for both competitions. In Chloe and Adam, we have two worthy winners and in beating off some of the biggest names in football to claim their prize they've showcased exactly what makes these competitions so special."

Baroness Sue Campbell, The FA's Director of Women's Football, added: "In what was an incredible weekend of football, featuring teams at the very pinnacle of our sport, we were thrilled that two top players from the lower leagues could have their thoroughly deserved moment in the spotlight. Hopefully this day will live long in their memories and inspire players at every level to believe that anything is possible."

FA Cup:

Looking back on a record-breaking day



By Paul Donegan

The FA Cup final took place on Sunday 15th May and I went to it. Here is a look back at my day.

Getting on the tube in London, there were already a few Chelsea shirts on display as the Metropolitan line train made its way to Wembley Park station. After getting off there, I took the almost customary photo (as lots of other people were also doing) from the top of the steps at the station

looking down towards Wembley Stadium.

There were a lot of people about on Wembley Way at 12:30pm (two hours before kick-off), as well as merchandise sellers with their half and half scarfs and other things. I bought a programme but nothing else!

Earlier in the week, the weather forecast had said it was going to be sunny and with the temperature in the low 20s, but it finished up

raining whilst I walked up to the stadium and I am pleased I wore a thin jacket and took an umbrella.

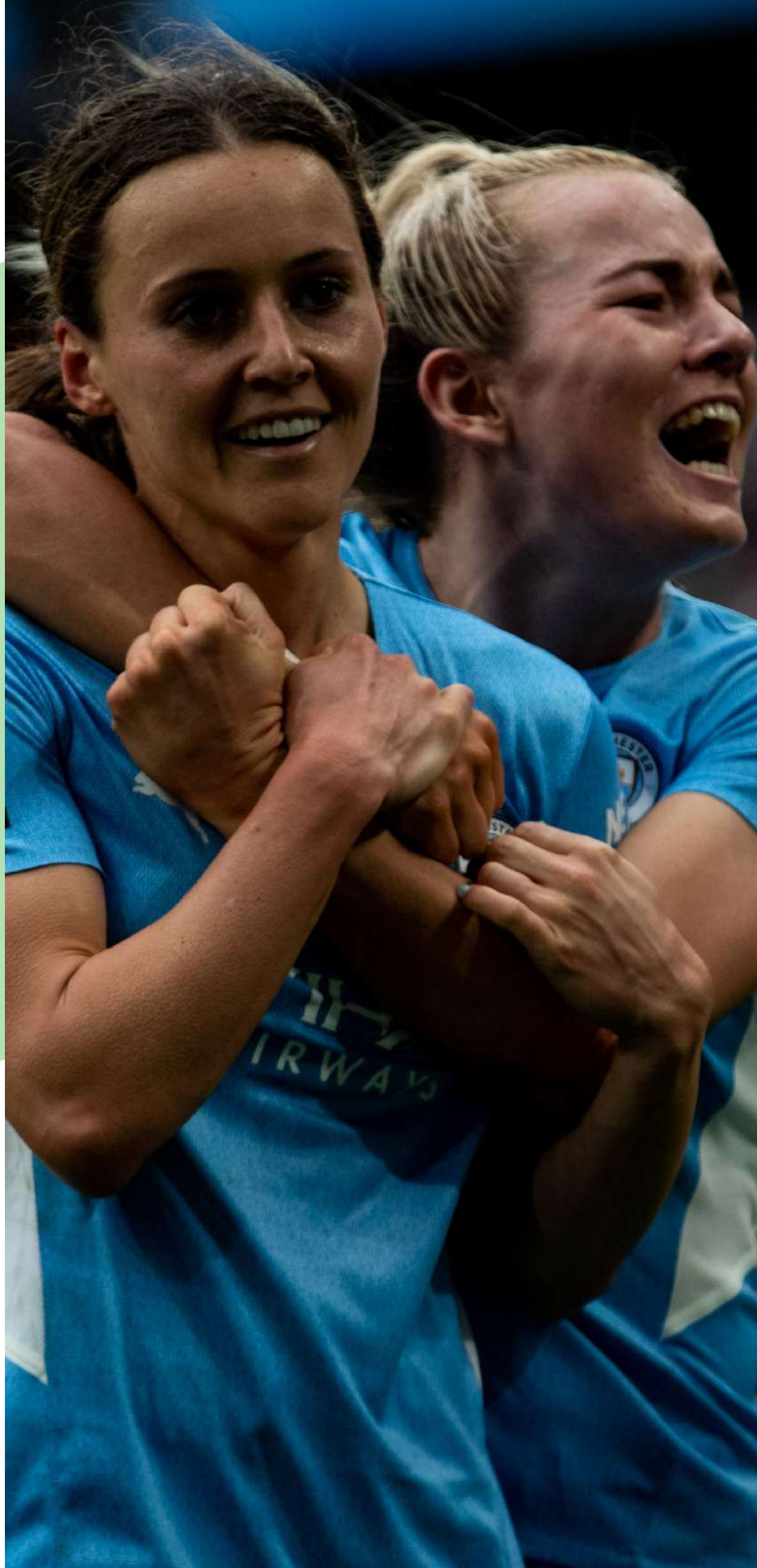
After walking around what seemed half the outside of the stadium, I found the entrances I had to go in. Having bought the tickets through the FA, all I knew is that I was sitting at the West end near one of the corners but I didn't know whose fans would be there. When I found my seat, the Man

City flag left on it was a big giveaway as to whose were to be at that end. I went back into the concourse area to have a drink and decide what to have to eat from the many food/drink kiosks (went for a pie).

The warm-ups were going on when I returned to my seat. It was still raining though and a few drops were still landing on me even though I was sat quite a way back. After the warm-ups had finished, Raye preformed a few songs then it was almost time for the teams to come out. The clubs banners were raised behind the goals whilst an FA Cup one was lifted up on the side, and the club badges were bought onto the pitch.

There were some spectacular pyrotechnics as the sides emerged from the tunnel, passing the trophy as they lined up.

The guest of honours met the players, managers and officials, and then the national anthem was sung.



Before kick-off, all the players and the officials stood together with a Ukraine flag as a show of solidarity.

Then it was time for the match to begin! Chelsea lined up in a 3-4-3 formation whilst Man City played in their normal 4-3-3. After a pretty even start, Chelsea thought they had taken the lead after 17 minutes but Sam Kerr's goal was ruled out for offside.

They did take the lead in the 32nd minute when Kerr just got her head on Millie Bright's cross before it crossed the line. Lauren Hemp equalised for Manchester City 10 minutes later when she received the ball then turned pass Bright and shot into the net.

Manchester City appealed for a penalty in first half additional time but these were waved away by referee Kirsty Dowle. The half time whistle went shortly after and the sides went in level at the break.

City had an early chance in the second half but Chloe Kelly shot over.

Lucy Bronze was booked in the 54th minute for a foul. Chelsea retook the lead in the 63rd minute when Erin Cuthbert's cracking shot from about 25-yards went in off the underside of the crossbar. Ji So-yun was bought on for her final appearance for Chelsea in the 69th minute, getting a massive ovation from the crowd as she came onto the pitch.

Chelsea's Jess Carter was shown a yellow card in the 81st minute. City equalised again in the 89th minute thanks to Hayley Raso. She had picked up a cross field ball from Alex Greenwood, held off Magda Eriksson and finished, sparking celebrations from the fans from Manchester who were mainly at that end of the stadium.

After four minutes additional time, the final whistle was blown and we were heading for extra-time.

Chelsea took the lead for the third time when in

the 9th minute of extra-time.

Sam Kerr found herself through with only Alex Greenwood back to defend and saw her shot take a deflection off Greenwood's foot and into the net past Ellie Roebuck. Caroline Weir had a chance to equalise for City again in the 26th minute of the extra 30 but sent her shot over.

Ji was taken off two minutes later to another big ovation. There were to be no more chances as Chelsea won 3-2 to complete the WSL and FA Cup double for the second season in a row.

As a neutral, this had been one of the most entertaining women's or men's FA Cup finals I can remember for a long time.

Chelsea were presented with the trophy in the Royal Box (back to tradition after the presentation being done on the pitch the last couple of years due to Covid). Confetti was let off in front of them as they lifted the cup.

After making their way back down to the pitch, there were more celebrations with pyrotechnics going off behind them but no streamers, a bit of a shame with Ji there!

After the final, I headed to the Boxpark that is near Wembley Stadium and met up with some friends. I was only planning to stay for one drink whilst the queues for the tube died down but finished up staying for three! There was a band playing some live music which was pretty good.

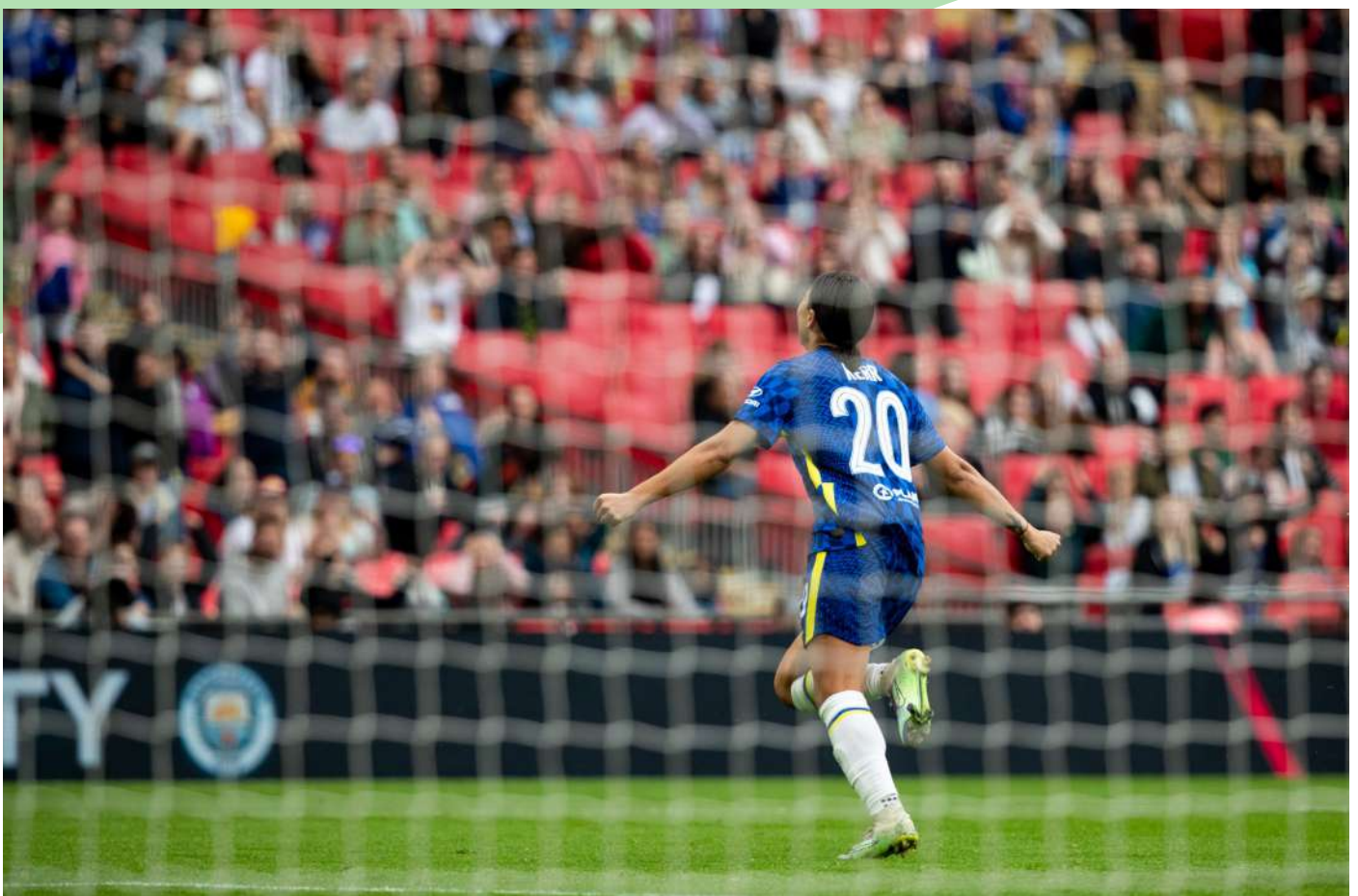
Whilst I was there, the

Chelsea team came in which led to loud cheers every time they moved anywhere! I finished up leaving just after 8pm at the end of a very enjoyable day!

Just want to finish by saying something about the attendance and TV viewing figures for the final. In the days before, the FA had said that 55,000 tickets had been sold which would mean the previous highest attendance of 45,423 would be absolutely smashed.

During the second half, the attendance was announced as 49,094,

not as big as the 55,000, but still a new record for the final and competition! It would be amazing if next year the 50,000 barrier could be broken! The BBC announced that 2 million people had been watching their coverage on TV and another 250,000 had been watching digital streams of the match. People watching on TV/online/streams along with those in the stadium meant that nearly 2.3 million people were watching the final. Not bad at all!



FA Cup final: Chelsea 3-2 Manchester City

All the statistics

Goalscorers	
Sam Kerr	33', 99'
Lauren Hemp	42'
Erin Cuthbert	63'
Hayley Raso	89'

Assists	
Millie Bright	33'
Kadija Shaw	42'
Beth England	63'
Alex Greenwood	89'

Chelsea				Substitutes			
38	Ann Katrin Berger			1	Zećira Mušović		
4	Millie Bright			10	Ji So-yun	On: 70'	
3	Aniek Nouwen	Off: 70'		14	Fran Kirby		
16	Magdalena Eriksson	C		17	Jessie Fleming	On: 80'	
7	Jess Carter	YC: 81'		18	Maren Mjelde	On: 119'	
5	Sophie Ingle			19	Lauren James		
22	Erin Cuthbert			21	Niamh Charles	On: 70'	
11	Guro Reiten	Off: 90'		24	Drew Spence		
23	Pernille Harder	Off: 80'		25	Joanna Andersson	On: 90'	
9	Beth England	Off: 70'					
20	Sam Kerr						

Manchester City				Substitutes			
26	Ellie Roebuck			7	Laura Coombs	On: 80'	
20	Lucy Bronze	YC: 54'		12	Filippa Angeldal		
33	Alanna Kennedy	YC: 31'		13	Hayley Raso	On: 76'	
5	Alex Greenwood	C		16	Jess Park		
3	Demi Stokes	Off: 83'		17	Vicky Losada	On: 119'	
10	Georgia Stanway	Off: 80'		18	Ellen White	On: 90'	
24	Keira Walsh	Off: 119'		30	Ruby Mace		
19	Caroline Weir			35	Khiara Keating		
9	Chloe Kelly	Off: 76'		41	Julie Blakstad	On: 83'	
21	Bunny Shaw	Off: 80'					
15	Lauren Hemp						

Possession	
39%	61%
Shots	
9	23
Shots on Target	
4	4
Corners	
1	10
Fouls	
17	8



Olympique Lyonnais reclaim their Champions League crown in thrilling final



By Rosie Hall

Lyon bagged an impressive 3-1 win against Barcelona Femeni in the Women's Champions League final on Saturday 21st May, reclaiming their place as the best in European football.

As the sun shone on a warm evening in Turin, the Juventus Stadium quickly filled with over 32,000 football fans ready to see the biggest game in European football unfold.

Barcelona came in as the clear favourites; arguably the best women's team in the world at the moment and fresh off an unbeaten season.

But Lyon had a point to prove. The Champions League is very much their trophy; before the game they had won it a record seven times and last year, Barcelona ended their 5 year winning streak.

Straight away, there was a definite sense that they

were here to get their trophy back.

There was a real hunger from Lyon right from the get go, and it took just 5 minutes for them to put a goal in the back of the net. Amandine Henry kicked things off with a truly stunning long-range effort, putting the French side ahead in the most stylish of fashions.

By 22 minutes, Lyon had already doubled their advantage thanks to a fantastic header by Ada

Hegerberg. But they showed no sense of letting up, as just 10 minutes later yet another hit the back of the net. At 3-0 down with 10 minutes still to go in the first half, Barcelona were looking uncomfortable, overwhelmed and very much in need of that half time whistle.

Lyon were ruthless, and there were moments that could have easily extended their lead. But at the 40 minute mark Barcelona found a moment of magic, as Alexia Putellas, Ballon d'Or winner who is widely regarded as the best female football player in the world, kept the Spanish side in the game with a goal.

Going into half time, Barcelona were in a position that they weren't used to this season; during their Primera División campaign they played 30 and won 30. And did it all while scoring a massive 159 goals. It was this achievement that had them widely regarded as the

favourites to win this game.

Barcelona needed something special in the second half, and they certainly started it off with plenty of fight: at 57 minutes, Patricia Guijarro's effort from just in front of the halfway line ricocheted off the crossbar - surely would have been the moment of the tournament if it had gone in. There was another fantastic chance for Barcelona at 74 minutes and plenty of opportunities for them in the final 15 - but they always looked like they needed something more.

At the very end, they were given a final glimmer of hope as the referee signaled for a massive 7 minutes of extra time - it would be difficult to claw two goals back in the space of 7 minutes, but surely for a team like Barcelona, it wouldn't be impossible.

By that last minute of extra time though, Lyon looked very comfortable in possession, passing confidently and playing

with assurance. In a final moment attempt by Barcelona, it looked like they might just get a chance to close the gap, but as it was called offside, the final whistle was blown. Lyon had done it.

There were emotional scenes from both sides as Lyon were crowned champions of Europe for a massive 8th time. And after that incredible performance, it would be hard to say they didn't deserve it.

As they reclaimed their status as the best in Europe and the most successful ever team in the Champions League, it brought the season of a lifetime for Barcelona to an end.

This incredible French side showed the world that while there might be some new competition in Barcelona, they have absolutely no intention of letting them take their status as the best team in the women's game away without a fight.

Champions League final: Barcelona 1-3 Lyon

All the statistics

Goalscorers	
Henry	6'
Hegerberg	23'
Macario	33'
Putellas	41'

Assists	
Bacha	23'
Hegerberg	33'
Hansen	41'

Barcelona			Substitutes		
1	Sandra Panos		24	Gemma Font	
8	Marta Torrejon	Off: 59'	30	Meritxell Munoz	
2	Irene Paredes	YC: 85'	5	Melanie Serrano	
4	Maria Pilar Leon	YC: 33'	15	Leila Ouahabi	
16	Fridolina Rolfo	Off: 75'	17	Andrea Pereina	
14	Aitana Bonmati		18	Ana-Maria Crnogorcevic	On: 59'
12	Patricia Guijarro		22	Lieke Martens	On: 59'
11	Alexia Putellas	C	23	Ingrid Syrstad Engen	
7	Caroline Hansen		6	Claudia Pina	On: 75'
10	Jennifer Hermoso	Off: 46'	20	Asisat Oshoala	On: 46'
9	Mariona Caldentey	Off: 59'			

Lyon			Substitutes		
1	Christiane Endler		16	Sarah Bouhaddi	
12	Ellie Carpenter	Off: 14'	40	Emma Holmgren	
3	Wendie Renard	C	5	Perle Morroni	On: 81'
29	Griedge Mbock Bathy	Off: 81'	18	Alice Sombath	
4	Selma Bacha		21	Kadeisha Buchanan	On: 14'
26	Lindsey Horan		23	Janice Cayman	On: 81'
6	Amandine Henry		8	Sara Bjork Gunnarsdottir	
13	Catarina Macario	YC: 64'	11	Damaris Egurrola	
20	Dephine Cascarino	Off: 81'	17	Danielle can de Donk	
14	Ada Hegerberg	YC: 45+3	9	Eugenie Le Sommer	On: 72'
28	Melvine Malard	Off: 72'	19	Emelyne Laurent	





HOME NATIONS



Wiegman missing from training following family bereavement



Sarina Wiegman will not attend England training camp at St George's Park during the week starting June 6 due to a 'close family bereavement'.

The Lionesses are currently preparing for the long-awaited 2022 UEFA European Women's Football Championship - which is due to get under way next month.

The FA released a statement to say that Wiegman's assistant coach, Arjan Veurink, would taking charge of England's training sessions over the coming days.

The statement said: "A close family bereavement means Sarina Wiegman will not be with the England squad for this week's camp at St. George's Park.

"Sarina has put a full plan in place for the coming days, with the expectation she will be back with the squad from

Monday 13 June.

"Our thoughts are with you and your family, Sarina."

Wiegman has put a full plan in place for the coming days, with the expectation she will be back with the squad from Monday 13 June.

While she will stay connected on a daily basis, training and tournament preparations will be led by her assistant Arjan Veurink and the rest of her senior support team.

The FA added: "On behalf of Sarina and her family, we ask that their privacy be respected at this difficult time. Our thoughts are with them all."

Wiegman will also be afforded additional time to select her final squad for the tournament - having already announced England's provisional squad last month.

Wiegman announces provisional Euro 2022 squad

Sarina Wiegman has named a 28-player provisional England squad for the 2022 UEFA Women's EURO.

Leah Williamson will lead the Lionesses supported by Millie Bright and Ellen White as vice-captains while Sandy MacIver, Steph Houghton, Fran Kirby, Lucy Staniforth and Chloe Kelly make welcome returns to the fold.

Jill Scott is also named as she too works on her fitness, but Jordan Nobbs has been ruled out for the summer because of a knee injury.

The final 23-player selection is due to be confirmed in mid-June ahead of the EURO finals starting with England's fixture against Austria at Old Trafford, Manchester on Wednesday 6 July in exactly 50 days' time.

Sarina Wiegman said: "The EUROS are getting closer, and this is a big step towards the tournament.

"We have a settled squad and I know we have

players in our team that will give everything to make it a summer to remember.

"It is important the players have the chance to get some rest now after a very busy season before we get back to our work.

"We then have a series of prep camps coming up and it is important we use this time to build an even closer connection on and off the pitch.

"We also look forward to welcoming those who have been working individually and with their clubs on their fitness in the past few weeks.

"We are hoping to have them back on the pitch when the series of preamps start, so we can see where they are at."

The Lionesses will report to St. George's Park on Monday 30 May to Wednesday 1 June for an initial preparation period before picking up their work again at the national football centre from Monday 6 June to Friday 10 June.

The squad will then return to the home of England teams on Monday 13 June ahead of the first of three warm-up fixtures on Thursday 16 June when Belgium travel to Wolverhampton Wanderers' Molineux Stadium.

The second warm-up fixture will follow on Friday 24 June when the Lionesses face the Netherlands at Elland Road, the home of Leeds United.

The following week will see England spend five days training in Basel including a fixture against Switzerland at the Stadion Letzigrund in Zurich.

UEFA's deadline to submit a 23-player squad for this summer's tournament is at 10.59pm (BST) on Sunday 26 June, after which teams are able to make unlimited replacements before their first match in the event of serious injury or illness (including COVID-19 or 'close contact' to a positive case).



ENGLAND
WOMEN'S
SENIOR TEAM

PROVISIONAL SQUAD ANNOUNCEMENT



UEFA WOMEN'S
EURO 2022

POS.	NAME	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GOALS	DEBUT
GOALKEEPERS	MARY EARPS	MANCHESTER UNITED	07.03.93	16	0	V SWITZERLAND (10.06.17)
	HANNAH HAMPTON	ASTON VILLA	16.11.00	2	0	V SPAIN (20.02.2022)
	SANDY MACIVER	EVERTON	18.06.98	1	0	V NORTHERN IRELAND (23.02.21)
	ELLIE ROEBUCK	MANCHESTER CITY	23.09.99	8	0	V AUSTRIA (08.11.18)
DEFENDERS	MILLIE BRIGHT	CHELSEA	21.08.93	49	5	V BELGIUM (20.09.16)
	LUCY BRONZE	MANCHESTER CITY	28.10.91	88	9	V JAPAN (26.06.13)
	JESS CARTER	CHELSEA	27.10.97	8	1	V KAZAKHSTAN (28.11.17)
	NIAMH CHARLES	CHELSEA	21.06.99	2	0	V FRANCE (09.04.21)
	RACHEL DALY	HOUSTON DASH	06.12.91	48	7	V SERBIA (04.06.16)
	ALEX GREENWOOD	MANCHESTER CITY	07.09.93	58	5	V ITALY (05.03.14)
	STEPH HOUGHTON	MANCHESTER CITY	23.04.88	121	13	V RUSSIA (07.03.07)
	DEMI STOKES	MANCHESTER CITY	12.12.91	66	1	V NORWAY (17.01.14)
	LOTTE WUBBEN-MOY	ARSENAL	11.01.99	7	0	V NORTHERN IRELAND (23.02.21)
MIDFIELDERS	FRAN KIRBY	CHELSEA	29.06.93	54	15	V SWEDEN (03.08.14)
	JILL SCOTT	ASTON VILLA (ON LOAN FROM MANCHESTER CITY)	02.02.87	156	26	V NETHERLANDS (30.08.06)
	LUCY STANFORTH	MANCHESTER UNITED	02.10.92	17	2	V KAZAKHSTAN (03.09.18)
	GEORGIA STANWAY	MANCHESTER CITY	03.01.99	31	8	V AUSTRIA (08.11.18)
	ELLA TOONE	MANCHESTER UNITED	02.09.99	13	10	V NORTHERN IRELAND (23.02.21)
	KEIRA WALSH	MANCHESTER CITY	08.04.97	39	0	V KAZAKHSTAN (28.11.17)
	LEAH WILLIAMSON	ARSENAL	29.03.97	28	2	V RUSSIA (19.09.17)
	KATIE ZELEM	MANCHESTER UNITED	20.01.96	2	0	V LATVIA (30.11.21)
FORWARDS	BETHANY ENGLAND	CHELSEA	03.06.94	16	8	V BELGIUM (29.08.19)
	LAUREN HEMP	MANCHESTER CITY	07.08.00	19	6	V PORTUGAL (08.10.19)
	CHLOE KELLY	MANCHESTER CITY	15.01.98	7	0	V AUSTRIA (08/11/2018)
	BETH MEAD	ARSENAL	09.05.95	36	20	V WALES (06.04.18)
	NIKITA PARRIS	ARSENAL	10.03.94	62	15	V SERBIA (04.06.16)
	ALESSIA RUSSO	MANCHESTER UNITED	08.02.99	5	3	V SPAIN (11.03.20)
	ELLEN WHITE	MANCHESTER CITY	09.05.89	106	50	V AUSTRIA (25.03.10)



Your teammate in health and wellbeing:

Nuffield Health partners with FA to
build healthier nation



Nuffield Health has today announced a new five-year partnership with The Football Association to become the football governing body's official health and wellbeing partner.

With more than 65 years' experience and an industry-leading network of health and wellbeing facilities, Nuffield Health offers a full breadth of services, from physical and mental health, hospital treatments and clinical care through to rehabilitation and general wellbeing.

England teams rely on experts on and off the pitch to perform at their best, and Nuffield Health similarly understands that everyone's health and wellbeing needs the right support.

A new survey by Nuffield Health has highlighted the impact of the pandemic on health and wellbeing.

The Healthier Nation Index* revealed that 37% of UK adults are now more concerned about their mental health, with a further 40% worried about the impact on their physical health.

Through the partnership, Nuffield Health aspires to be the nation's teammate in health, building on the mental and physical benefits that football brings to improve the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The partnership will aim to build a healthier nation, raising awareness of the importance of positive mental and physical wellbeing and developing a series of initiatives which give people of all ages the tools and encouragement to live a healthier life.

Commenting on the partnership, Steve Gray,

Chief Executive Officer, Nuffield Health said: “We are incredibly excited to bring our purpose to life through this long-term partnership with The FA.

“Football is about teamwork and community, and similarly we believe in the power of working together and supporting one another to help everyone achieve their health and wellbeing ambitions.

“Our Healthier Nation Index survey shone a light on some of the key health and wellbeing challenges affecting people today, so we’re looking forward to becoming the nation’s teammate in health and wellbeing and playing a key role in showing people how to live a healthier life and achieve better health outcomes using the power of football.”

Navin Singh, The FA’s Commercial Director, said: “We are very excited by this partnership with Nuffield Health.

“The FA aims to use football as a force for good, so it is a fantastic opportunity to be able to link up with an industry-leading health and wellbeing provider to work towards building a healthier nation.

“Nuffield Health’s purpose aligns perfectly with our assets across England teams, Wembley Stadium connected by EE and St. George’s Park and this partnership will help us to continue to unite the game and inspire the nation.”

As part of the agreement, Nuffield Health will receive several rights, including access to the England National Men’s and Women’s Senior Teams, Wembley Stadium Connected by EE, and St. George’s Park. Nuffield Health and The FA will also work together on grassroots initiatives to support the needs of local communities, giving more people the tools to live a healthier life.

***Nuffield Health Healthier Nation Index 2022**

Nuffield Health’s annual Healthier Nation Index 2022 survey results revealed a need to encourage and support how the nation looks after their health and wellbeing.

Key findings from the survey of 8000 adults included:

- 37% of UK adults are now more concerned about their mental health because of Covid-19 and 40% about their physical health

- 15% admit to having done no exercise at all in the last year, with Brits averaging just 40 minutes of vigorous exercise a week
- Over a quarter (27%) of UK adults are motivated to exercise as it helps their mental health, more than those who are motivated by the fact it helps their physical health (21%) or those that enjoy exercise and like to keep fit (19%).

To find out more and view the full results, visit <https://www.nuffieldhealth.com/article/healthier-nation-index>

To find out more about The FA and Nuffield Health partnership, visit www.nuffieldhealth.com/thefa.



SWF unveil new structure



Scottish Women's Football has unveiled the structure of its top leagues for the 2022/23 season.

With the SWPL 1&2 being administered by the Scottish Professional Football League from next season, SWF's top tier will become the Championship, a competitive national league made up of eight teams, the membership of which is determined by specific criteria, such as commitments to youth pathways and player wellbeing.

Under that, a national League One will be made up of 14 teams.

There will be no relegation from the Championship after the first season, with two teams who have met minimum requirements promoted from league one to create a Championship League of ten criteria-compliant teams.

The new criteria will require clubs to provide sanitary products at games and work to support the wellbeing of players.

A meeting of the new league structure will take place on the 4th July.

Commenting, Scottish Women's Football CEO Aileen Campbell said: "Women's football in Scotland is growing and reaching every part of the country.

"Our new Championship will represent an exciting and competitive contest among eight

teams from right across Scotland, culminating in a prestigious trophy in its own right. I'm delighted that participating clubs have shown a commitment to the wellbeing of their players – things like ensuring sanitary products are available at training facilities – and providing player pathways, to give girls opportunities to play at a grassroots level.

"League One will also be a fiercely competitive league, with the prize of two places in the Championship up for grabs. As professionalism grows at the top of the game we need to ensure a route is there for every woman in the country to have the opportunity to participate and reach the top, and I'm confident the new structure will showcase the best our clubs have to offer."

The new SWF Championship participating clubs: Ayr United, Dryburgh Athletic Women, Hutchison Vale WFC, Inverness Caledonian Thistle WFC, Livingston WFC, Morton FC Women, Rossvale FC Women and Renfrew Ladies FC

The new SWF League One participating clubs: Airdrie Ladies FC, Bishopton FC Ladies, BSC Glasgow Women, Buchan Ladies FC, Dundee City West WFC, Edinburgh Caledonia FC, Edinburgh City Women, Falkirk FC Women, Giffnock SC, Grampian Ladies FC, Gleniffer Thistle Ladies, St Mirren Women, Stenhousemuir Women FC and Westdyke Ladies FC.

Scottish Women's Football Awards

The inaugural MG Alba Scottish Women's Football Awards have been held at the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow.

Here are the full list of winners:

The Sunday Post Volunteer of the Year

WINNER: Mhari Lindsay, Cumnock Juniors

SHORTLIST: Scott Bland of Drumchapel Utd, Stephen Campbell of Bishopton Ladies, Craig Edwards of Glasgow City

SWPL 1 Player of the Year

WINNER: Priscila Chinchilla, Glasgow City

SHORTLIST: Lizzie Arnot of Rangers, Nicola Docherty of Rangers, Charlie Wellings of Celtic

SWPL 2 Player of the Year

WINNER: Danni McGinley, Dundee United

SHORTLIST: Robyn Smith of Dundee United, Cara Henderson of Glasgow Women, Sammy Duncan of Boroughmuir Thistle

SWPL Coach of the Year

WINNER: Malky Thomson, Rangers

SHORTLIST: Brian Graham of Partick Thistle, Fran Alonso of Celtic, Graeme Hart of Dundee United

SWPL Team of the Year

WINNER: Rangers

SHORTLIST: Glasgow City, Celtic, Partick Thistle, Dundee United

The Kat Lindner Award

WINNER: Leanne Crichton, Motherwell

SHORTLIST: Tessel Middag of Rangers, Clare Shine of Glasgow City,

Championship North Player of the Year

WINNER: Aimee Ridgeway, Montrose

SHORTLIST: Eilidh Reid and Georgia Carter of Montrose, Teri Skivington of East Fife, Stacey McFadyen of Dryburgh

Championship South Player of the Year

WINNER: Rachel Howie, Gartcairn

SHORTLIST: Jemma McQuillan of Rossvale, Nicole Cunningham of Gartcairn, Nicole McPhee of Stenhousemuir

Championship Coach of the Year

WINNER: Craig Feroz, Montrose

SHORTLIST: Robert McCallum of Gartcairn, Owen MacKenzie of Dryburgh, Gerry Cummings of Gartcairn

Championship Team of the Year

WINNER: Montrose

SHORTLIST: East Fife, Dryburgh, Gartcairn, Rossvale

SWF League Player of the Year

WINNER: Rachel Scott, Ayr United

SHORTLIST: Julie Melrose of Bishopton, Caron McIntyre of Kilwinning

SWF League Coach of the Year

WINNER: Nori Fian, Bishopton

SHORTLIST: Colin Fulton of Ayr United, Paul Hopwood of Linlithgow Rose

SWF League Team of the Year

WINNER: Bishopton

SHORTLIST: Ayr United, Annan Athletic, Motherwell Development

Youth Team of the Year

WINNER: Millennium Club of Stranraer U13s

SHORTLIST: Rangers U16s, Rangers U19s, Glasgow City U16s Development

Youth Player of the Year

WINNER: Mia McAulay, Rangers

SHORTLIST: Mia Scott of Glasgow City, Abbie Fearn of Celtic, Emma Watson of Rangers

Youth Coach of the Year

WINNER: Ross Stormonth, Rangers

SHORTLIST: Mhari Lindsay of Cumnock Juniors, Niamh Russell of Rangers, Michael Windram of Musselburgh Windsor

International Player of the Year

WINNER: Erin Cuthbert, Chelsea

INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS



The Lensbury Resort to be England's Euro 2022 home



England's summer base camp for their 2022 UEFA Women's EURO campaign will be the historic Lensbury Resort in south-west London.

After considering several options, head coach Sarina Wiegman felt The Lensbury provided the best possible location for England to prepare for the challenge of taking on Europe's top teams in July. Wiegman said: "We are looking forward to our stay at The Lensbury.

"We have received a warm welcome from the staff already and have been impressed by the facilities and accommodation.

"It is important that our tournament base is a home from home for the squad and support team, and I have no doubt we will find that here. Confirming our base is another step towards what we all hope will be a memorable summer."

Managing Director of The Lensbury Resort, Julie Hammond, said "The team and I are incredibly proud that The Lensbury Resort has been chosen as the dedicated training base for the England national football team during the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 tournament this July.

"I personally am truly excited to be a part of the long overdue rise in interest and associated participation in women's elite sports and look

forward to this excitement continuing to rise during the tournament this summer.

"We are very much looking forward to playing our small part and to cheering on the Lionesses throughout the tournament this summer."

The Lionesses will spend much of June at the national football centre in St. George's Park, Staffordshire in the lead-up to the opening game against Austria in Manchester on 6 July, before switching to their new home in the capital.

The world-renowned venue on the bank of the River Thames in Teddington has often played host to the England men's rugby team with its elite level sporting facilities including UEFA standard pitches, a state-of-the art gym and swimming pool. It will also be home to the team's Media Centre – welcoming journalists from across the world for news conferences, player interviews and training sessions.

The Lensbury is also particularly well-placed for travel to England's second and third group games with Norway at the Brighton Community Stadium on 11 July and Northern Ireland at St. Mary's, Southampton on 15 July.

The 16-nation tournament concludes at Wembley Stadium with the final on Sunday 31 July.

Women's Euro 2022 set to deliver £54 million in economic activity to the nine Host Cities



The FA and UEFA have today released the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 Pre-tournament Impact Report, confirming it's on track to be the biggest women's European sport event in history.

The report, produced by EY, indicates the tournament is expected to deliver £54 million in economic activity to the nine Host Cities of, Brighton & Hove, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Rotherham, Sheffield, Southampton, Trafford and Wigan & Leigh.

The Host Cities are expecting 96,000 international visitors from 95 territories and there will be engagement from fans from all over the world as the international broadcast audience could reach over 250 million across more than 195 territories. Host cities will also see a positive socio-economic impact thanks to over 5,500 people taking part in the volunteer programme.

The report reveals ticket sales for the

tournament are on track to double the attendance of the UEFA Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands that welcomed just over 240,000 fans. 51% of football fans plan to attend or watch the games that will take place up and down the country across nine English cities in 10 stadiums. Tickets are still available for matches at most venues. Prices start at £10 for adults and £5 for under 16s.

Providing a platform for greater participation in the game and community engagement, the tournament also represents a huge opportunity to drive a further step change in women's football in England.

It aims to leave a lasting legacy by inspiring the next generation of players and fans, providing opportunities for more than 500,000 women and girls to participate and engage with football through focused efforts of legacy groups within each of the Host Cities, with many more additional opportunities nationally.

GRASPING THE OPPORTUNITY

UEFA European Women's Championship 2022



PRE-TOURNAMENT IMPACT STUDY FINDINGS

OPERATIONAL SUCCESS

Deliver a safe and engaging event, exceeding a total attendance of 430,000, with a stretch target of **525,000**

THE PROFESSIONAL GAME

Promote positive perceptions of women's football in the UK, with **51%** of football fans planning to watch matches

INCLUSIVE GRASSROOTS PARTICIPATION

Provide more than **500,000** inclusive opportunities for women and girls to participate and engage with football through focused efforts of the Legacy Groups within each of the Host Cities

ECONOMY AND TOURISM

Deliver **£54 million** of economic activity to the Host Cities and support 96,000 international fans to visit

SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Promote positive social impacts across the Host Cities, and England more broadly, through growth in participation, the activities of over **5,500** volunteers, and the power of sport to bring communities closer together

INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTIONS

Promote positive perceptions of the Host Cities, England and the UK, as the Tournament ignites engagement with an expected live international broadcast audience of over **250 million** across 195 territories

Starling Bank signs up three Lionesses for its UEFA Women's EURO 2022 national sponsorship

Starling Bank has launched a campaign that celebrates women's football as part of its national sponsorship of the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 tournament.

The 'Our Time' campaign highlights the glass ceilings that continue to be broken for the women's game, while nodding to Starling's mission to level the playing field for women within banking and technology. It comes as UEFA expects the tournament to be the most popular women's sporting event in European history.

Three current and former England players are fronting the campaign including Jill Scott, midfielder for Aston Villa, on loan from Manchester City; Lauren Hemp, forward at Manchester City; and Rachel Yankey, Arsenal Women Legend turned TV presenter. The campaign spans multiple outputs and activations and focuses on three core pillars of 'Celebrating', 'Creating' and 'Championing' the women's game of today and tomorrow.

Celebrating the game

To celebrate the UEFA Women's EURO 2022, Starling is giving up to 500 matchday experiences to the local community at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, where Starling has a base. The bank will also be supporting a series of roadshows and fan parties in host cities across the UK where people can watch matches together.

Creating players

To help build the pipeline of football talent, Starling will be offering 25 grants of £1,000 to grassroots clubs across the tournament UK Host Cities that have girls, boys and co-ed teams. The bank is also partnering with SportsAid to invest in the development of up and coming female players.

Championing women

Starling's integrated ad campaign takes off in July across out of home (OOH), online and print channels and will feature ambassadors

Jill Scott and Lauren Hemp. The OOH campaign will be prominent in London and Manchester. A series of blogs and videos with Jill, Lauren and Rachel will explore their experiences of women's football and where they hope progress will be made.

Jill Scott, national player, business owner and Starling Bank business customer said: "There's so much anticipation surrounding the Women's EURO 2022 tournament and even more momentum being made for the women's sport. For women players like myself, it really is Our Time. Long may that continue so that the players' of tomorrow have many more female footballers to aspire to."

Starling is the official national banking partner of the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 tournament, the biggest sponsorship ever for the bank. Founded in 2014 by Anne Boden, the only woman in the UK to start a bank, Starling campaigns to Make Money Equal and women make up 46% of its senior leadership positions.

Helen Berton, Chief Banking Officer at Starling Bank and former Olympic athlete said: "I've witnessed first hand the glass ceiling that exists for women both in sport and in banking. I'd like it to disappear entirely one day, which requires collective effort. We hope our campaign unearths new football fans, inspires future players and gives women and girls across the UK the confidence to say 'It's Our Time' in whichever goals they pursue."

Rachel Kerrone, Brand & Marketing Director at Starling Bank, said: "Every single partnership and sponsorship we do at Starling must serve a purpose and align with our value of doing the right thing. In this case, it's championing brilliant women and uniting communities around the game. The brand awareness we'll gain from the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 is exciting, but what we're looking forward to most is playing our part in the development of women's football in the UK."

TikTok becomes Official Entertainment Platform of UEFA Women's EURO 2022



TikTok, the digital entertainment platform, has been announced as a global partner of UEFA Women's EURO 2022. Building on the successful partnership from last year's UEFA men's EURO, the partnership aims to champion this summer's most-anticipated football competition and make it even more visible to a global audience.

Over the last few years, TikTok has seen tremendous growth in the coverage and engagement of women's sports on the platform. The hashtag #womeninsports has garnered nearly a billion views, the England women's national team has brought fans behind-the-scenes during competitions and Burnley FC Women has broadcast all of this season's home matches live on TikTok.

Guy-Laurent Epstein, UEFA marketing director: "We are thrilled to once again partner with TikTok, this time for the biggest UEFA Women's EURO ever. With the TikTok football community ever-growing with teams, fans, creators and associations, we are looking forward to showcasing this summer's premiere sporting event featuring some of the greatest women's footballers in the world through unique, creative and engaging content. It's an exciting time to be a football fan."

As a Global Sponsor, TikTok will work with UEFA to launch exciting features such as computer-generated effects, hashtag challenges, TikTok LIVEs and Sounds, in order to promote its products and services to its community. UEFA will also give TikTok access to its extensive library of football programming assets to develop highly engaging and innovative content.

Alongside the partnership, UEFA Women's EURO 2022 will launch an official TikTok account prior to the tournament with a mission to inspire and entertain millions of football fans worldwide with exclusive behind-the-scenes content as well as current and archival footage.

Rich Waterworth, TikTok general manager, Europe: "Since our partnership with UEFA for EURO 2020, we have seen TikTok become the home of football fandom; with creators, players and nations alike coming together to share their passion for the beautiful game, in a uniquely TikTok way. We are delighted to continue this partnership as the Official Entertainment Platform of UEFA Women's EURO 2022, and to build on our joint efforts to promote equality and inclusion in football through TikTok's #SwipeOutHate campaign and UEFA's #EqualGame. We cannot wait to see our community show their support for the women's game, as we make this year's championship even more accessible to our global community."

The partnership will provide TikTok with ticketing, hospitality and branding opportunities as well as digital fan activations and exclusive content in the run-up to and during the tournament.

TikTok is one of the most downloaded apps in the world. Available in more than 150 countries, the platform is committed to building a fun, positive and embracing community by encouraging users to share their passion and creative expression through short-form videos.

Girlguiding and Uefa Women's Euro 2022 team up to get more girls and young women playing football



Girlguiding, the UK's leading charity for girls and young women, and UEFA Women's EURO 2022 have teamed up to encourage more girls and young women to get involved in football.

The partnership is being announced ahead of the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 tournament, which kicks off across England this summer. It is hoped the collaboration will excite and encourage girls and young women's interest in football and reinforce the sport's inclusivity.

Girlguiding members will

also have the chance to commemorate the tournament with a brand-new badge, whether they watch a match or take part in the co-created football activities.

Through the partnership, more than 5,000 Girlguiding members are planning to attend EURO matches across England this summer. Tickets are still available for matches at most venues.

To launch the partnership, Girlguiding members from 21st North East Manchester Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and the Greater Manchester Rangers joined England's

Women's footballers, Katie Zelem and Ella Toone for a fun training session at Manchester United's Old Trafford Stadium, which will host the opening game of UEFA Women's EURO 2022 on 6 July.

The girls had the opportunity to try out new football related activities co-created by Girlguiding and UEFA, before trying their hand at being a sports journalist during a girl-led press conference.

England midfielder Katie Zelem said: "Getting to meet all the Girlguiding members was incredible. They picked up the activities so quickly and

we all had an amazing time on the pitch talking about the game. As a former Rainbow, myself, it's fantastic to be involved in such an important partnership, one which I have no doubt will help inspire and build girls' confidence in the game."

Teammate Ella Toone added: "I wish something similar had existed when I was younger, and I look forward to the tournament this summer knowing that Girlguiding members up and down the country will be cheering us on."

Recent research commissioned by CHILDWISE found almost one third (32%) of girls aged 7-17 would like more opportunities to play football and more than half of girls (52%) have

never watched football in a stadium, compared to 33% of boys.

The research also found 69% of girls would like to see women's football celebrated more in the media and 71% of all children (boys and girls) think female footballers should be paid the same as male footballers.

Girlguiding Advocate Caitlyn, 22, added: "Football is such a great sport, to play and to watch. I'm so excited Girlguiding and UEFA Women's EURO 2022 have teamed up to help more girls to get involved. The co-created activities are a great way to introduce girls to the game and get across the important message that football is for everyone,

not just for boys."

Chris Bryant, Tournament Director for UEFA Women's EURO 2022, added: "This summer's UEFA Women's EURO 2022 promises to be the biggest women's sporting event in European history.

"It will inspire long-term, sustainable positive change in women's and girls' football and we are delighted we have been able to team up with Girlguiding UK to support that change.

"Football is for all. We want to ensure whether its playing or watching, girls have the confidence to get involved and the opportunity to do so. We can't wait to see Girlguiding members across England cheering on the teams at UEFA Women's EURO 2022."



Referees and assistant referees for Fifa U20 Women's World Cup announced



The FIFA Referees Committee officially announced the lists of selected match officials who will officiate at the forthcoming FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022™.

13 women referees, 27 women assistant referees and 14 video match officials will take charge of the matches.

"The FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup™ is the next important milestone in the preparation of the potential candidates for the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™," said the chairman of FIFA's Referees Committee Pierluigi Collina.

"After two years of the pandemic and all the difficulties that have arisen with the preparation of match officials, we are looking forward to this important

competition in Costa Rica.

By working with clear objectives and standards, while always aiming for uniformity and consistency in decision-making, we are convinced that another significant step will be taken towards the FIFA Women's World Cup next year," he added.

History will be made in Costa Rica, given the fact that video technology will be used for the first time in a FIFA youth women's competition.

"We are delighted to write a new chapter in women's football history.

"The FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup will not be only the first FIFA youth women's tournament in which the VAR technology will be used, but it will be also the first competition in which the team of video

match officials will be all women.

"FIFA has been working tirelessly to encourage the development of women VARs globally, as most women's football does not yet use VAR.

"This event will be a great opportunity to showcase the skills of the selected women VARs and also an opportunity to continue the development our women VARs as part of the Road to Australia/New Zealand 2023 project," said FIFA's Head of Refereeing, Women, Kari Seitz.

The FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022™ will take place in Alajuela and San Jose.

The competition will be played between 10 and 28 August 2022, with the final scheduled for 28 August at the Estadio Nacional de Costa Rica in San Jose.

FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022

10 - 28 August 2022

Appointments of Match Officials



Confederation	Referees (13)	Member Association	Assistant Referees (26)	Member Association	Video Match Officials (VAR) (14)	Member Association
AFC	LEE Lara	AUS	TRUONG Thi Le Trinh	VIE	HO Sarah (AVAR)	AUS
			SAADIEH Heba	PLE	JACEWICZ Kate (VAR)	AUS
	KIM Yu Jeong	KOR	TSOI Ramina	KGZ		
			PARK Mi Suk	KOR		
CAF	AMEDOME Vincentia	TOG	ATEZAMBONG Carine	CMR	JERMOUMI Fatiha (AVAR)	MAR
			KONE Fanta	MLI	KARBOUBI Bouchra (VAR)	MAR
	MAKALIMA Akhona	RSA	CHIKOTESHA Diana	ZAM		
			IYORHE Mimisen	NGA		
CONCACAF	ARAYA CRUZ Marianela	CRC	RENSCH Mijensa	SUR	BORJAS Melissa (VAR)	HON
			SANTIAGO Ivette	CUB	GUZMAN Tatiana (VAR)	NCA
	GONZALEZ Francia	MEX	CAUDILLO Enedina	MEX		
			RAMIREZ Sandra	MEX		
	PENSO Tori	USA	BOUDREAU Chantal	CAN		
			MAYO Brooke	USA		
CONMEBOL	CALDERAS Emikar	VEN	RODRÍGUEZ Migdalia	VEN	CARVAJAL Maria Belén (VAR)	CHI
			BLANCO Mary	COL	DI IORIO Salomé (VAR)	ARG
					MUNIZ DOS SANTOS Daiane (VAR)	BRA
OFC	KEIGHLEY Anna-Marie	NZL	JONES Sarah	NZL		
			SALAMASINA Maria	SAM		
UEFA	HUERTA DE AZA Marta	ESP	PORRAS Guadalupe	ESP	DE VRIES Ella (AVAR)	BEL
			TOROK Katalin	HUN	FERNÁNDEZ Eliana (AVAR)	ESP
	FOSTER Cheryl	WAL	TELEK Sara	AUT	MASSEY Sian (AVAR)	ENG
			WOJS Katarzyna	POL	STAUBLI Esther (VAR)	SUI
	LEHTOVAARA Lina	FIN	KAIVOJA Karolin	EST	VANDERSTICHEL Maïka (VAR)	FRA
			KUENG Susanne	SUI		
	OLOFSSON Tess	SWE	SPAHIC Almira	SWE		
			IRODOTOU Polyxeni	CYP		

listed alphabetically by confederation

CONF	Support Referee (1)	MA
CONCACAF	TINTAYA Elizabeth	PER

Around the World



Henry misses out on place in Euro 2022 France team



France head coach Corinne Diacre has left Lyon forward Amandine Henry out of her 23-player squad for Euro 2022.

Henry's stunning strike opened the scoring in the Champions League final against Barcelona, which her side went on to win 3-1.

Eugenie le Sommer, France's all-time top goalscorer, and Sarah Bouhaddi are also notable absentees.

Everton's Kenza Dali and West Ham's Hawa Cissoko are included.

Les Bleues will play Cameroon and Vietnam in warm-up matches before their first Euro match against Italy on Sunday, 10 July.

They are also joined in Group D by Belgium and Iceland.

France squad

Goalkeepers: Mylene Chavas (Bordeaux), Justine Lerond (Metz), Pauline Peyraud-Magnin (Juventus)

Defenders: Selma Bacha (Lyon), Hawa Cissoko (West Ham), Sakina Karchaoui (Paris St-Germain), Griedge Mbock Bathy (Lyon), Eve Perisset (Bordeaux), Wendie Renard (Lyon), Marion Torrent (Montpellier), Aissatou Tounkara (Atletico Madrid)

Midfielders: Charlotte Bilbault (Bordeaux), Kenza Dali (Everton), Grace Geyoro (Paris St-Germain), Ella Palis (Bordeaux), Sandie Toletti (Levante)

Forwards: Sandy Baltimore (Paris St-Germain), Delphine Cascarino (Lyon), Kadidiatou Diani (Paris St-Germain), Marie Antoinette Katoto (Paris St-Germain), Melvine Malard (Lyon), Clara Mateo (Paris St-Germain), Ouleymata Sarr (Paris St-Germain)

USA women's and men's teams agree historic deal

The US men's and women's soccer teams will share prize money from their respective World Cups equally in a historic agreement.

US Soccer and the unions for the two teams reached the deal during negotiations for their new collective bargaining agreements, which have now been ratified.

"The accomplishments in this CBA are a testament to the incredible efforts of WNT players on and off the field," said USWNT player and USWNT players' association president Becky Sauerbrunn.

"The gains we have been able to achieve are both because of the strong foundation laid by the generations of WNT players that came before the current team and through our union's recent collaboration with our counterparts at the [men's players union] and leadership at US Soccer.

"We hope that this agreement and its historic achievements in not only providing for

equal pay but also in improving the training and playing environment for national team players will similarly serve as the foundation for continued growth of women's soccer both in the United States and abroad."

Fifa's prize money for the men's and women's World Cups is unequal. The bonus pool for this year's men's World Cup in Qatar is \$440m, while the prize money for the women's tournament in Australia in 2023 is \$60m.

Under the new agreement, the unions for the US men's and women's teams will share the prize money from the 2022 and 2023 World Cups.

The US men have already qualified for Qatar 2022, while the women's team are the reigning women's champions and are heavy favourites to book their place for Australia 2023 later this summer.

World Cup prize money was not the only area where equal deals were reached. Shares of ticket sales will now be equal,

as will win bonuses. Some aspects of income and benefits will differ between the teams.

The men will not share their \$2.5m bonus for qualifying for this year's World Cup as it was part of the their previous CBA.

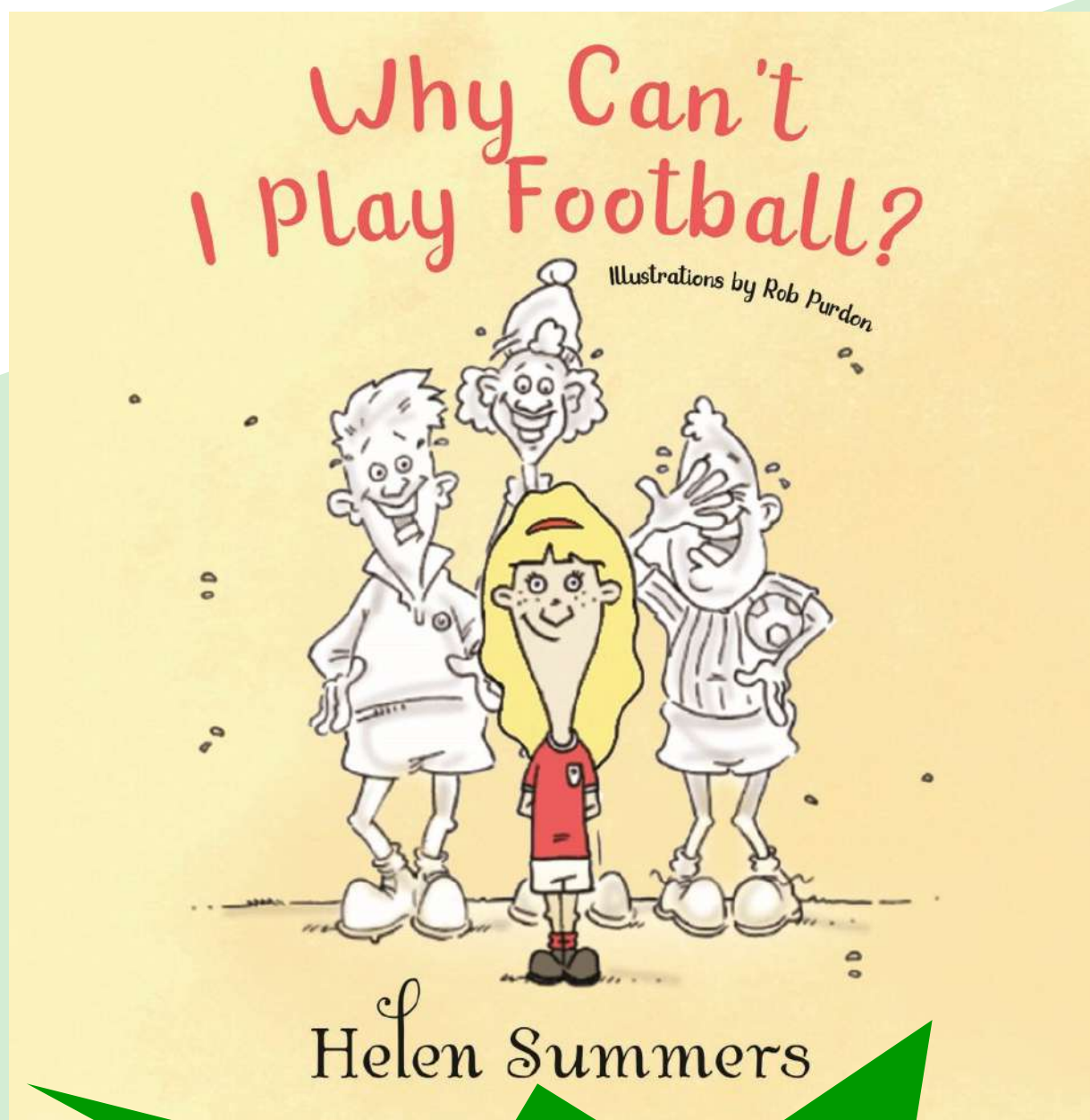
"This is a truly historic moment.

"These agreements have changed the game forever here in the United States and have the potential to change the game around the world," said US Soccer president Cindy Parlow Cone, who is also a former USWNT player.

"US Soccer and the USWNT and USMNT players have reset their relationship with these new agreements and are leading us forward to an incredibly exciting new phase of mutual growth and collaboration as we continue our mission to become the preeminent sport in the United States."



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