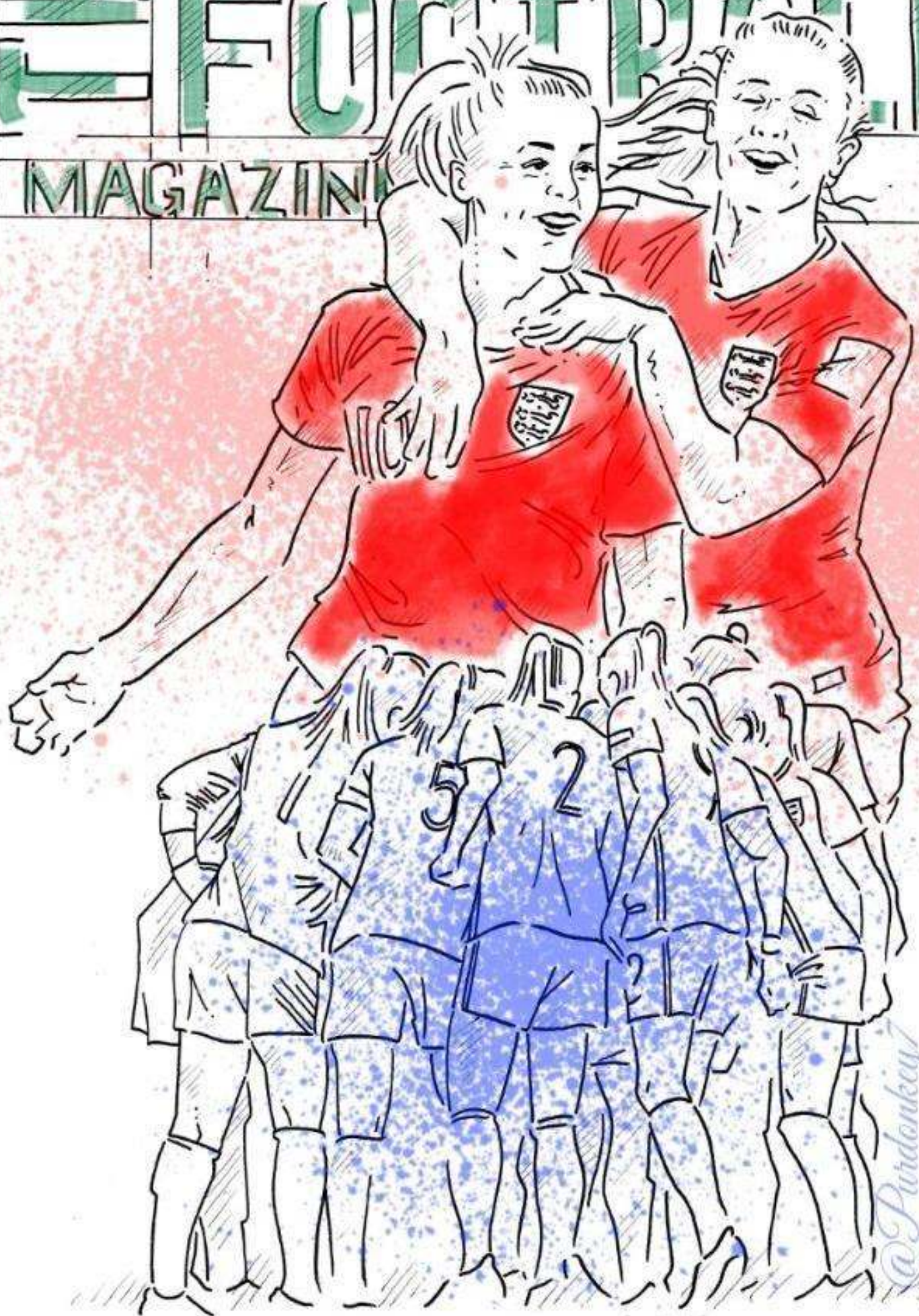


WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



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Welcome to the issue!

It's time for Issue 16!

SO many congratulations this month and we could not be more excited about it!

Firstly to the U20s Lionesses - what a fantastic set of performances in France. We are all really proud of the squad and cannot wait to see what the future holds for all the players involved. Hopefully it is a good sign for the future.

Dan Pentland was out in France for some of the matches so make sure you read his diary entries further in the issue.

Also a massive congrats to the England women senior squad on a fantastic World Cup qualifying campaign. Unbeaten in Group A and finished it off with two superb performances against Wales and Kazakhstan. Just a shame that we could not watch the last game on the red button!!

We have started planning our France trip. Have you? Let us know on Twitter @womensfootiemag

Helen Summers
Editor-in-chief



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About my month

What a busy busy month!!

I have had lots of fun this month travelling around for meetings, matches and so much more.

I spent three days in Newport ahead of the Wales vs England game and got to go to the press conferences and watch the team warm up. Getting out and about is definitely the most fun and I do not get to go to games as often as I would like.

How good was that match?! It was a fantastic effort by the England squad and I loved getting to chat to fans of both sides before and after the game. Now we just have to get planning for France!!

I would like to take this time to thank Dan Pentland for all his hard work for the magazine over the past year. Due to other work commitments, he has had to step down from his work with the magazine but we are so thankful for everything he has done! I wish him all the luck and success for the future.

Thank you for your continued support.

Enjoy the issue,
Helen xx



FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup: A Reporter's Diary

Reporter Dan Pentland tells the story of his two-day trip to this summer's FIFA Under-20 World Cup in Brittany

The FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup is a tournament which has gone from strength-to-strength since it first started in 2002. The competition now sees 16 of the strongest nations in women's football go into battle with some of the world's best young players on display. I made the decision to fly out to France to watch some of the participating countries first hand and I was delighted to see the high level of football being played. On my first day in Brittany, I planned to see the group deciders between England and Mexico and The Netherlands and France while day two would bring Japan v Paraguay and Germany v Haiti. Here is how both my journey and the action panned out.

Day 1 - Saint-Malo

The port of Saint-Malo was the destination for my first day of tournament matches. Having experienced difficulties in buying train tickets in France in the past, this was no different and a mad dash around a Rennes train station under significant redevelopment resulted in my mission

to find a working ticket machine aborted as I made a successful plea to pay my admission on the train.

On to the Stade Marville, a stadium which was constructed less than 20 years ago on the site of something of a sports campus. The football stadium looked tidy and credit must go to both FIFA and there volunteers as everything in the stadium was well signposted and people were always willing to help.

The media areas in the stadium were very spacious and well-organised with desks in prime viewing positions while a special mention must go to the sausage and chips for which I exchanged my media token, they were a reminder of home.

On to the action and England needed to avoid defeat against Mexico to reach the quarter-finals of the competition for the first time in a decade. There was equally as much pressure on the Mexicans' heads with



the North Americans well aware of the fact that they would have to get a positive result and possibly ride their luck with the result of the game between Brazil and North Korea.

The first half hour produced little in the way of quality in front of goal, although England did seem to have more to offer with Manchester City's Lauren Hemp looking particularly lively in attack.

Disaster struck for Mo Marley's side eight minutes before the half time whistle when Jacqueline Ovalle, one of the stars of the tournament, took aim on goal from 20 yards and lifted the ball into the far corner of the net.

There was little panic shown by the Lionesses and when Alessia Russo beat Mexico keeper Emily Alvarado to the ball and tapped in the leveller four minutes after the break, England began to run riot.

Chloe Kelly's clinical strike from 10 yards found the back of the net via the post before striker Hemp was given far too much space on the edge of the box and she made no mistake in curling in a third.

Georgia Stanway's superb strike from distance made it 4-1 before a Kelly shot was spilt into the path of Hemp by Alvarado and the former Bristol City player notched herself a brace. Hemp completed a 19-minute hat-trick nine minutes from time with a scrappy goal which she will have known little about while substitute Niamh Charles was unlucky not to bag England a seventh when she rattled the woodwork in stoppage time.



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England qualified for the quarter-finals for the first time since 2008 and boss Marley told *The Women's Football Magazine* that her players are developing at a rapid rate.

"This year, I am dealing with women whereas last year, I was dealing with young girls" Marley said after the match.

"The maturity of these girls is outstanding, they analyse their own performances and that is refreshing as a coach. You wouldn't identify where this group were 12 months ago compared to the level where they are at now."

Mexico coach Christopher Cuellar was not too downhearted after the defeat, he told us that his side have a lot to

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look forward to in the future.

Cuellar said “It was a tale of two halves, we played well in the first half but the manner in which we conceded the first two goals in the second half deflated us. There are players which will feel that they can make an impact with the full national team in the next World Cup cycle in 2023. The full national team coach is here and will feel that there are players which could be called upon for the qualifiers later this year.”

The second game of the day saw host nation France face The Netherlands in a fixture which they needed to at least draw to ensure qualification.

Gilles Eyquem’s side got off to the perfect start when Carla Polito kept the ball in play on the byline and teed up Amelie Delabre to score after just 10 minutes.

Melvine Malard then saw a dangerous effort whistle just wide for France

before Delabre added to her side’s lead from the penalty spot after winger Emelyne Laurent had been caught by Dutch defender Eva van Duersen.

Two minutes later, Delabre completed a first half hat-trick when she headed in a Laurent cross, 3-0 to the hosts at the break and qualification very much already in the bag.

The Dutch were poor throughout and they didn’t really improve after the interval. Ashleigh Weerden did have one effort on goal but French keeper Mylene Chavas was equal to it. Laurent got her name on the scoresheet when she slalomed her way through the Dutch backline to beat keeper Lizzy Kop with ease before Chavas pulled off a good save from an Aniek Nouwen free-kick late on to keep the scoreline at 4-0.

Speaking to The Women’s Football Magazine after the match, French coach Eyquem hinted that his side were ready to kick on in the tournament.

“Before the game, we talked about togetherness and doing things as a group” Eyquem said.

“Today is a great success for us, we made some good choices and moved the ball forward. I feel like the dressing room is so happy, they feel like this is a new start. It was a bad day at the office for The Netherlands and coach Michel Kreek said We started the match pretty well but after going one or two goals down it was mentally tough for us. We started the second half in a good way but unfortunately we couldn’t get a goal to get us back in the game. We should still be very proud to qualify in our first World Cup.”



All-in-all a fantastic day in Saint-Malo. England showed great courage to come from behind to qualify while France very much kept tournament interest alive with an easy win to also reach the quarter-finals.

Day 2 - Vannes

The second day of my trip saw me make the short journey to Vannes, a town which is well-known for its beautiful wooden-structured buildings and for battles and tournaments dating back almost 300 years.

I arrived in Vannes early morning and had a walk around the town, taking in the culture and character with every step. Vannes is a place of beauty and somewhere which any tourist can only love.

My walk took me down to the harbour where the Stade de la Rabine stands

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alongside a plethora of boats. The stadium has a spectacular entrance which almost resembles a castle, a real collectors item for any experienced football groundhopper like myself. Inside the ground, I found four decent sized seated stands along with some excellent facilities for fans and media alike. The interior certainly retained the charm and tradition found on the exterior of the venue.

On to the first game and Japan knew that they would need to win big to have the best chance of qualifying for the knockouts while Paraguay's hopes of qualification were all but over after conceding 10 goals in their first two tournament matches.

Japan smelt blood after just two minutes when Jun Endo's header was

pushed onto the post by Paraguayan goalkeeper Isabel Ortiz.

Two minutes later it was 1-0 to Futoshi Ikeda's side when Saori Takarada swept the ball into the net from point blank range before Riko Ueki's headed effort was ruled out for offside. Japan were to get their second goal with Takarada lobbing Ortiz before the striker turned provider for Ueki to get her name on the scoresheet just before the break.

It was to be 4-0 to Japan at the interval with Ueki doubling her personal tally in time added on after popping up unmarked in the six-yard box.

The talking point early in the second half was a debatable penalty kick



awarded to Japan following an alleged handball by Deisy Ojeda. Fuka Nagano took the spot kick but saw her effort saved by Ortiz.

Japan did soon add to their lead when Ueki tapped in a fifth goal to complete her hat-trick before teammate Takarada did the same after bursting clear.

There was to be another harsh penalty decision when Paraguay's Celeste Aguilera was said to have been fouled in the box but the goalkeeper again came out on top with Hannah Stambuagh saving Fabiola Sandoval's penalty.

Ueki was unlucky not to net her fourth goal of the game two minutes from time when her shot bounced into the net off Endo who was in an offside position but it didn't make any difference with Japan advancing as group runners-up following a 6-0 win.

Japan coach Ikeda spoke to The Women's Football Magazine after the game and admitted that he was relieved to see his side advance at the United States' expense.

"First of all the group is a very competitive group" Ikeda admitted.

"We are pleased to get to the next stage and we will prepare well for the next match. We did not prepare especially for this game, we approached this game like the others. We now have time to recover and train. We are going to prepare step-by-step for the next game and not look beyond the quarter-final at this stage."

The second game of the day saw group leaders Germany take on tournament



debutants Haiti and it was not an easy afternoon for Marin Meinert's side who were made to work for their 3-2 win.

The Germans should have taken the lead just two minutes into the game but Dina Orschmann fired wide when clear through on goal.

An uneventful start eventually produced some excitement when Germany took the lead through a Laura Freigang tap-in. That proved to be one of just two major talking points in the first half, the other coming on the stroke of half time when German keeper Janina Leitzig pushed a Melchie Dumonay free-kick around the post.

The second half saw Germany quickly establish a 3-0 lead. First Kristin Koegel got on the end of a low cross from the right to place a shot into the corner of the net before Klara Buehl broke away and fired in a third, although Haiti goalkeeper Kerly Theus

will have been disappointed with her positioning.

Germany looked home and dry as group winners but then came the unlikely fightback. Nerilia Mondesir scrambled in a Dumonay free-kick delivery to make it 3-1 before the same player doubled her tally with an emphatic finish on the turn.

Haiti pushed bodies forward in search of a famous comeback but it wasn't to be as Germany ended the group stages with maximum points.

Despite letting their healthy advantage reduce, German boss Meinart remained positive in the post-match press conference.

She said "I am very pleased. We managed to perform well particularly for the first hour and i am pleased with the players who played. We will play a strong opponent in the quarter-finals and we need to improve in defence and get more balls into the box. We do not look too far ahead in the tournament."

Haiti coach Marc Collat admitted that the nation had learnt harsh lessons in the tournament but leave France with their heads held high.

"As far as I am concerned there is a difference between our level and the higher level" Collat said.

"Our performances bode well for the future. We had ambitions of the quarter-finals and after the second match against Nigeria we were disappointed. We now realise how tough it is to qualify after playing our three games, we need more tournament experience. In Haiti, football is not a tradition for women.



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We have just 150 women playing football available for international selection. "It will open new doors for the current players and for younger players also in the future."

My trip to the Stade de la Rabine was both the expected and unexpected. Japan did beat Paraguay easily, a side who looked way behind in terms of both physical fitness and quality while the Germans were unexpectedly made to battle for the full 90 minutes for their reward. As for the town of Vannes, it is well worth a visit. Both Saint-Malo and Vannes were superb hosts for FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup fixtures and they've set high standards for next summer's senior tournament.



Conti Cup matches get domestic season underway



By Jess Pratt

The group stages of the FA Continental Tyres League Cup kicked off the domestic season for all 22 teams from the FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship in August as clubs from both tiers contest the competition. Keeping with the round robin group stage format introduced last season, teams were randomly placed into one of four groups (two North and two South), depending on their geographical location. Eyebrows were raised when the details of the groups were released as both Reading and Bristol City were somehow placed in the Northern groups.

Arguably the most intriguing of the opening round of fixtures was Liverpool's home tie against

Manchester United in Group North 2; with several of Liverpool's players having left the Merseysiders in the summer to play for former Red Casey Stoney's newly formed United side. It was a tough test for the visitors, who faced a team in the league above them in their first competitive game only six weeks after being formed.

United weren't the only team to be fielding debutants though, with Liverpool also giving eight new players their first starts after a summer shake-up which saw Neil Redfearn take over as head coach and 12 player departures – including seven to United. Five of those players lined up for United on their return to Liverpool, with the two most noticeable recruits being experienced goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain and fellow England



international Alex Greenwood – who will captain Stoney's team in their maiden season. In a fairly even match with chances for both sides, it was Greenwood's United who made the breakthrough in the 83rd minute as the left-back's superb cross was swept in from close range by Lizzie Arnot to secure a historic first win for the club at Prenton Park.

United's next fixture was a home tie against Reading, another WSL club, who had stormed to a 4-1 victory in their opening match against Durham thanks to an outstanding Fara Williams hat-trick. Despite a crowd of 4,835 turning out to watch United's first home match as a professional team at Leigh Sports Village, it was the visitors who took home the points in a 2-0 victory with second half goals from Brooke Chaplen and Gemma Davison either side of a red card for Royals defender Molly Bartrip. Despite the loss, United had undoubtedly entertained the record crowd and were unlucky not to get back into the game

at 1-0 after creating opportunities to equalise. Stoney's team can go into the international break proud of their achievements so far as they sit second in the group whilst group leaders Reading have proven themselves to be contenders for the domestic titles this season.

Elsewhere in Group Two North, Durham bounced back from defeat at Reading to beat top tier team Everton 1-0 as WSL 2 Players' Player of the Year Zoe Ness took advantage of a defensive mistake to strike the only goal in the first half.

In Group One North it is no surprise to see Manchester City leading the group after two games, although they required penalties to win their opener against Birmingham City after it ended goalless after 90 minutes. As per last season's new regulations, all group fixtures go straight to penalties if the game is tied at full-time, giving teams the chance to bag an extra point if they win the shootout. City went on to take home the bonus point after a thrilling 5-4 win on penalties. Nick Cushing's side followed up the tense victory with a more routine result in their second fixture; a 4-0 hammering of Leicester City as Tessa Wullaert marked her competitive home debut with a brace.

Leicester also required penalties in their first game, winning 4-2 on spot kicks after an entertaining 2-2 draw in normal time earned them an initial point against Bristol City. In the second round, the Robins came from behind to beat Sheffield United 3-1 in torrential rain at the SGS College Stoke Gifford Stadium.

Sheffield United won their other fixture in dramatic fashion as a late



goal downed hosts Aston Villa. Nadine Hanssen had equalised for Villa after the Blades had took the lead through Dan Cox in the first half, but the visitors retook the lead and the points through Tania Marsden's cool finish in the 85th minute.

Villa currently sit bottom of the group after a 2-0 defeat to Birmingham City gave the latter all three points in the Second City Derby. Despite a fantastic showing from the Championship side which saw 'keeper Sian Rogers make several vital saves; the WSL outfit came out on top with second half goals from Kerys Harrop and Charlie Wellings.

In Group One South, WSL champions Chelsea lead the way after victories over Brighton & Hove Albion (3-1) and London Bees (1-6) respectively. Promoted club Albion fared better in the second round, coming back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 away at Tottenham. Hope Powell's squad then went on to lose the ensuing penalty shootout 10-9 which leaves them bottom of the group as it stands.

It was the second time in as many games that Spurs had been taken to a shootout, having lost 5-4 to Crystal Palace on penalties in the first round after a 1-1 stalemate. Promoted Palace didn't need penalties in their following tie, beating WSL club Yeovil 1-0 in normal time thanks to a strong defensive display and a fine header from defender Jordan Butler.

Yeovil are yet to win in the competition so far having drawn their opener against London Bees 1-1 and then losing the resulting shootout 5-3.

Despite featuring the holders Arsenal, it is Lewes who are leading the final



group – Group Two South.

The Championship outfit won emphatically with a 5-0 victory in their opener against Charlton Athletic before losing 4-1 to West Ham in round two. Arsenal have played a game less at present but currently lie second as Katie McCabe's brace saw them secure a comfortable 3-1 win over West Ham as their defence of the trophy began at Meadow Park. Millwall Lionesses are the only team yet to score points in the group after suffering a 4-2 loss to Charlton in their opening fixture away at the Addicks' new home The Oakwood. The next round of group games will take place on September 16 with the top two teams from each group advancing to the quarter finals in January.





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Wales Women 0
England Women 3

England have booked their place in the 2019 Women's World Cup after a 3-0 win against Wales.

Goals from Toni Duggan, Jill Scott and Nikita Parris were enough to secure Phil Neville's side the victory at a loud Rodney Parade.

Tickets for the game sold out in less than 22 hours with only 270 gifted to travelling England fans and to start with Wales' plan to create an intimidating

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atmosphere seemed to be working.

The Lionesses had the majority of the possession early on and it looked as if they had got off to the perfect start when Nikita Parris scored, but after some exuberant celebrations in front of the Welsh crowd, referee Katalin Kulcsar called offside.

Chances at both ends saw an open first half with Millie Bright and Alex Greenwood coming close on a number of occasions. But it was the home side in control of proceedings just before the break and had two penalties shouts late on when Karen Bardsley tackled Kayleigh Green in the area.

After the interval, England regained the initiative soon began to dominate and finally made the breakthrough, on

this time it counted.

On 57 minutes, the domination finally paid off when Wales goalkeeper Laura O'Sullivan spilt Jordan Nobbs' cross and Duggan got on the end of Fran Kirby's shot. The Barcelona star took her time under pressure and aimed her shot perfectly.

It was only a matter of minutes later, did England get their second of the night. Wales failed to clear the ball leaving Jill Scott free to put England's second in just three minutes after their first. Despite impressing early on, Jayne Ludlow's side began to tire with half an hour left on the clock.

O'Sullivan had a moment she would rather forget, dropping Greenwood's free-kick on 68 minutes. Jodie Taylor,



who had a quiet evening overall, was quick to pass the ball towards Parris who calmly headed it in the back of the net.

Not content with just the three goals England continued to press but a late injury to Fran Kirby put a slight dampener on the evening. It appeared she was taken off more as a precaution with the result already in the back but the Chelsea forward came back on the pitch at full time on crutches to celebrate with the small number of travelling fans.

Wales will have a nervous wait to see if they can get a play-off place. Ludlow's side have finished their qualifying campaign and will be relying on the results of others to be in contention.



Kazakhstan 0
England 6

England women finished their 2019 World Cup qualifying campaign on a high with a 6-0 win.

Phil Neville made a number of changes to the side which beat Wales 3-0 on Friday to guarantee their place in France next year with Gabby George, Lucy Staniforth and Lauren Bruton earning their maiden caps.

The Lionesses started the game strongly and Houston Dash star Rachel Daly soon

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found the back of the net but her goal was disallowed for offside.

Just nine minutes into the game and Beth Mead – who started for England for the first time – won a penalty after she was sent flying by Kazakhstan centre-back Yulia Myasnikova. The 23-year-old Arsenal forward quickly recovered and scored her first Lionesses goal from the spot. England continued to press and came close to a second through Bruton when she hit the bar but a defensive home side caused Neville's side a few problems.

The visitors had 11 shots in the first half and just after half-an-hour doubled their lead through Daly. Some impressive skill from Leah Williamson and Hannah Blundell saw the Daly in the right place to calmly slide the ball

into the back of the net. After half time, England carried on their strong form showing why they are ranked second in the world and they found the back of the net once again on 54 minutes. After Bruton's initial shot was saved by Oksana Zheleznya, Christensen, who moved to Lyon in the summer transfer window, was the first to get the rebound.

It was not long before England were adding more goals to their tally. Shortly after Bronze came on as a substitute on the hour mark, she assisted in debutant Staniforth's first goal in an England shirt. The 25-year-old Birmingham midfielder received the ball in the area after Bronze nutmegged one of the Kazakhstan defenders. With the result already in the bag, Beth Mead was awarded a



second penalty of the day after she was taken down by Kundyž Kozhakmet but her resulting shot hit the post and was cleared by the defenders.

Neville decided to make a few last changes for the final 15 minutes with Carly Telford replacing Mary Earps in goal and Toni Duggan coming on for goalscorer Daly. After a number of chances, Mead finally got her second of the afternoon and England's fifth and just three minutes later Bronze made it six for the travelling Lionesses. The result sees England top group A with 22 points as they remain unbeaten in their World Cup qualifying journey.

Neville's squad will not know who they will face in France until January but before then they have two friendlies to look forward to against Brazil and Australia in October.

Final Group A qualifying table:
P W D L GD Points

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|-----|----|
| ENG | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 28 | 22 |
| WAL | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 17 |
| RUS | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 13 |
| BOS | 8 | 1 | 0 | 7 | -16 | 3 |
| KAZ | 8 | 1 | 9 | 7 | -19 | 3 |



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Be a Flamingo in a flock of pigeons

Yassou from Cyprus!

Hello from our summer holiday.

Everyone knows that the pro footballers have and need a summer break and my 7-year-old is no exception.

Since we arrived in Paphos last Wednesday Olivia has hung up her boots and shin pads and fully embraced pool life. She's spent days in the pool perfecting her 'bomb', pushing her little sister in and generally eating a bit of everything on the hotel buffet three times a day! Perfect and just what she needed, she works hard at her football and was definitely ready for it.

However.....

I think the lure of the beautiful game is pulling.

The hotel had a couple of UK matches on over the weekend and she was glued to them, she sat after breakfast reading a football programme from the last Birmingham City game she was at recently and I definitely saw her trying keepy ups and flicks with a pool volley ball yesterday!

So, whilst all this has been happening what have we been doing you might well ask, well, Steve has spent his time creating shade so he doesn't burn to a crisp and I've been getting as much sun as humanely possible in a day.

That aside there is something we have been doing whilst we've been lounging round the pool.....session planning.

Both Steve and I coach grassroots football. Steve as a newly formed U8's mixed team this year with lots of work to do, some of the team played last year but some are brand new and over half haven't seen played league football before.

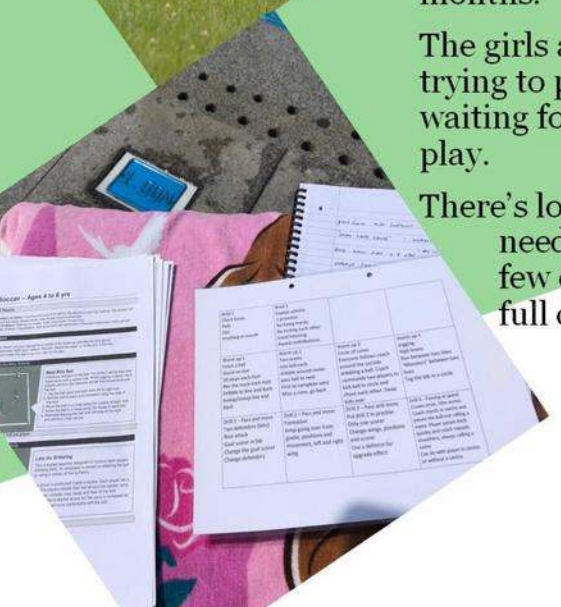
I've got my U8 mixed team going into their second year of league football and Albert Village's Girls Academy. That's a combined total of around 40 kids to plan for so the session plans are hugely important to us!

This week has given us ample time to plan our sessions for the coming months.


The girls academy is the most exciting group, of course, we are currently trying to put a league team together at U11 for this season and we are only waiting for the last few player registrations to come through before we can play.

There's lots of hard work for this team as there's a few new players so they need to get to know each other and work together as a team and a few of the girls are newish to football so need extra help to gain their full confidence, although they are all fab so they don't need to worry.

The plans for this group and the other older girls centre on passing, dribbling and shooting, just the basics, along with corners.




Be a Flamingo in a flock of pigeons




The flip side of this though is another important group.....my little tots. I have a group of 3,4 and 5 year olds who train with us and they are our future so it's really important to engage with these girls now to grow their love of football through a fun but learning environment. This group are all social butterflies so it takes careful planning and execution to keep them engaged throughout the session.

Hopefully the mix of fun games and drills, with a touch of penalties at the end will keep them interested. After all....when you're 4 who doesn't love scoring a penalty past mummy or daddy!!



I guess, the secret, to coach at any age is to keep the players interested. Steve and I coach separately and together and have found that the secret, if there is one, is small sided games.

Kids football is all about the individual loving the game, my age group can't wait to kick a ball, normally towards a net, it's simple and fun. Adult football is all about the team and results. It is physical, tactical, complicated and very serious. Whilst there may be a place for that I'm glad I operate at the fun end!



So as our week in Cyprus draws to a close and holiday style shorts and t-shirts are being replaced by Olivia with the latest PSG kit or her recently acquired 'Ronaldo' kit (No 7 is important to her as it's her squad no), we have more talk of football and questions around it.

"Chelsea are playing Newcastle on the TV," she cried last night as we were tucking into our 2nd helping of buffet.

Good things come to an end and let's hope 18/19 season is even more enjoyable than last season.

So, for now,

Antio from Cyprus! x



Ammo's Antics

Hi,

I'm really happy I'm back training with Birmingham City under 12's. We're working really hard on our fitness for the coming season against boys in the Junior Premier League.

We played our first pre-season friendly against Man City at the Etihad complex in Manchester. It was a really amazing experience, they have brilliant facilities there. After a shaky start we managed a good win against a really talented team. I played in defence for the second half of the game and I managed to curl a left foot shot into the corner for my first goal of the season. Very happy with that.

Midweek we then played a team from the U.S.A who were on tour. They had excellent players, loads of skill on show from both sides. We were pretty evenly matched and it finished 2-2.

The following Saturday we were in Manchester again playing Manchester United U12 girls. They were a really strong team. One of the strongest I've played against. Unfortunately we didn't really get going and they beat us pretty convincingly.

But "You win or you learn". That's what our coaches tell us.

Our busy preseason continued the following week with a residential tournament in Oakham. When we arrived I was shocked to be asked to play up with the U14 team. So

rather than play with my usual u12 team mates I was playing with girls much bigger than me. We played against some really strong teams and made it to the final but we lost 1-0 to Arsenal.

It was a bit scary if I'm honest, I'm not used to playing 11 a side on such a big pitch but it was a really great experience, I learnt so much during the two days. The u14 girls were all really nice and helped me settle into the team.

All of the Birmingham age groups made their finals with the awesome U10's winning on penalties. We have a really talented group of girls across all ages at our RTC and I'm sure we will all just keep getting better.

I really can't wait to get started in the league and have set myself a target of scoring 15 goals this season. Don't worry, I'll keep you all updated and give you a full description of each one. Even the rubbish ones.

If there's one thought I want to leave you with it's this.

"We don't grow when things are easy, we grow when we face challenges."

Thanks for reading
Ammo

**THE WOMEN'S
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WSL: 5 of the most exciting signings to look out for in the 2018/19 season

By Marissa Thomas

The 2018/19 WSL campaign is approaching and it's set to be one of the best yet with new teams and plenty of new players. Chelsea and Man City have dominated the league in recent years but that could be set to change. Here, we take a look at five of the most exciting signings to look out for.

Lia Wälti - Arsenal

Competition for places is high at Arsenal as they aim to win their first league title since 2012. The most competitive area is midfield where Lia Wälti is expected to slot in. She has an excellent work-rate and is capable of controlling the tempo of the game from midfield.

Wälti is a Swiss international who has played in her home country for YB Frauen, where she won the Nationalliga A title as well as competing in the Champions League. The 25-year-old has also spent time in the Bundesliga with Turbine Potsdam which is where she joins Arsenal from.

Ali Riley - Chelsea

Players like Ali Riley who have played for various clubs all over the world have so much experience which cannot be underestimated. In 2012, Riley joined Rosengård where she won three league titles.

Riley is an excellent addition to an incredibly strong Chelsea side. The New Zealand international has been



signed to play as a wing-back and even though she is predominantly right-footed, can operate down either flank.

Leanne Kiernan - West Ham

Moving up two tiers will be a challenge for West Ham but they seem well prepared. One of their most exciting new signings is the prolific striker Leanne Kiernan.

Plenty of European clubs were interested in Kiernan so it will be a big boost for West Ham that she chose to join the new Women's Super League side.

The highly-rated Republic of Ireland international scored on her senior debut for her country and is considered the brightest prospect in Irish football.

Along with her West Ham team-mates, Kiernan will be an unknown quantity in the WSL which should work to her advantage.

Juliette Kemppi - Bristol City Finnish striker Juliette Kemppi has signed for Bristol City from Norwegian side Kolbotn Football.

Her pace and power will be much needed in the Vixens' front-line and will provide manager Tanya Oxtoby with plenty of attacking options. Kemppi has won 19 caps for her country.

Replacing top scorer Lauren Hemp, who joined Manchester City, was never going to be easy but Kemppi is one of three new forwards that Bristol City have signed ahead of the new season to score the all-important goals.

Janine Beckie - Manchester City

Man City are known for signing exciting young talents and they have done it again with Janine Beckie. The 23-year-old joins the club from Sky Blue FC.

She is an excellent goal scorer and has the accolade of scoring the fastest-ever goal in Olympics games history. Just 20 seconds in against Australia on 3 August 2016, Beckie scored and made history.

The Canadian forward already has plenty of experience at club and international level and she will be a brilliant addition to Man City as they fight to regain the WSL title.

ENGLAND

