

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

ISSUE 46 MAGAZINE FEBRUARY 2021



SCOTT ON THE HEELS

This month we have all the latest on the transfer window including a look at Jill Scott's career so far. We have interviews with Ocean Rolandsen, Rio Hardy and Ella Powell as well as all the latest across the leagues and tournaments.

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



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Hello and welcome to Issue 46!

Hello everyone, welcome to our latest BUMPER issue.

It's been a great month of matches in the WSL and Championship, with some results that have thrown the title races wide open.

We have a bumper issue this month with some really exciting interviews after we sat down to chat with Rio Hardy, Ocean Rolandsen and Ella Powell.

Charlotte Stacey discusses all the latest managerial changes for the home nations, Simon O'Neill chats to Nadia Marielle, Ali Rampling talks about Jill Scott's amazing career so far and Hannah Clarke looks back on Phil Neville's time in charge of the Lionesses.

All this alongside the news from all the leagues, home nations and across the world.

Keep safe and enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief

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WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



Scott on the Heels



Karl Newton / Sports Press Photo

By Ali Rampling

In May 2010, Jill Scott was an integral part of the Everton side responsible for one of the biggest upsets in the history of the Women's FA Cup. The Toffees recorded a famous 3-2 extra time win over Arsenal, ending the Gunners' run of four consecutive FA Cup triumphs and loosening their grip of dominance on the English game.

Everton's FA Cup victory could have been the catalyst for years of success, but in the decade since, the club and Scott have gone in opposite directions.

The midfielder was one of numerous high profile exits in the space of a couple of years when she moved to Manchester City in 2013 alongside Toffees teammate Toni Duggan. The following season Everton were relegated from

the top flight for the first time in 21 years. They

would stay in the second tier for three seasons, while Scott would go on to win seven major trophies with City.

But Everton have gradually rebuilt and - off the back of reaching the FA Cup final again for the first time in six years - they have been reunited with Scott. The 33-year-old has agreed to join her former club on loan until the end of the 2020/21 season in a bid to make the Team GB squad for the Tokyo Olympics and as Everton attempt to upset the narrative among English football's elite once more.

Scott comes from the north east - a melting pot for female footballing talent in the UK - and is one of a number of England internationals who

started her senior career at Sunderland. She broke into the Black Cats first team as a 17-year-old and helped her side earn promotion to the Women's Premier Division. Following Sunderland's relegation in 2006, Scott moved to Mo Marley's Everton.

The dynamic midfielder was part of the Everton side who consistently went toe to toe with Arsenal at the summit of the Premier Division, finishing as runners up to the Gunners four years on the trot. They ended Arsenal's remarkable 108-game unbeaten league run in March 2009 with a 3-0 victory at Boreham Wood - the Gunners' first league defeat in five-and-a-half years. However, the Toffees would ultimately miss out on the league title on the final day of the season, losing 1-0 to Arsenal and finishing second on goal difference.

Scott collected two winners medals during her time at Everton with underdog triumphs over Arsenal in the 2007/08 League Cup final and 2009/10 FA Cup final.

More silverware would come when Scott switched Merseyside for Manchester in 2013, joining upstarts Manchester City ahead of their inaugural season in the WSL.

It proved a shrewd move, Scott continuing to establish herself as one of the most consistent midfielders in the top flight as City established themselves as one the top teams in the country. City won the Continental Cup in their maiden WSL season, and two years later they were champions of England. Nick Cushing's side went the entire league season unbeaten, Scott missing just two games and pitching in with three goals.

Scott also lifted the FA Cup on three occasions with City, netting her side's fourth against Birmingham in the 2016/17 final.

Her domestic success has been matched with recognition at international level. Scott has been an absolute stalwart for the Lionesses since making her international debut in 2006. Only Fara Williams has more than the Everton midfielder's 149 England caps.



Karl Newton / Sports Press Photo

She starred for England at the 2007 World Cup, netting her first international goal during the Lionesses' 6-1 victory over Argentina in the group stages. One of Scott's finest moments in an England shirt came during the 2009 European Championships where, on as a substitute in extra time in the semi final against the Netherlands, she found the net five minutes from time with a bullet header to send the Lionesses into the final of a major tournament.

She has consistently been the woman for the big occasions for England; there were two crucial goals in the 2011 World Cup and a game changing impact from the bench during the last 16 clash against Norway at the 2015 tournament, Scott setting up Lucy Bronze for her famous long distance screamer to send England through. Four years later, the Sunderland native was one of the standout

performers as England reached the semi finals for a second successive World Cup. She was on the scoresheet inside three minutes during the Lionesses' last eight victory over Norway, and only missed 12 minutes of football across the entire tournament.

It is this endurance that sums Scott up; she is from the generation of players that paid to play, that juggled football with full-time jobs. Yet she has the athleticism and the professionalism to compete with those who have only ever known football as a full-time career. Scott turns 34 in February, but she will be bringing so much more than just her experience to Everton.



The Galton Effect



By Charlotte Stacey

With the Red Devils very much in contention for the title, a personal season to revel in and the accolade of Player of the Month in December 2020, you could say that things are going pretty well for Manchester United forward Leah Galton.

Fast cementing herself as one of the league's most proficient left sided players, Leah Galton is what one could jovially describe as a real zinger of a winger. Motoring up and down the left-hand side with the intent to cause some damage, she navigates the wing with a stout obstinacy. Moxie that more often than not places her right at the forefront of the action.

Galton is no stranger to finding the back of the net. With a ball carrying capability that enables her to breach defensive lines, Galton closes down space in the box and typically takes advantage of the tight angle. Yet she does not need to be anywhere near the eighteen-yard box to write her name on the scoresheet. When

the time calls, from seemingly any distance in the final third and with a boundless force, Galton puts them away with that weapon of a left foot.

But further than this finishing aptitude is Galton's ability to assist, which is crucial to United's success. An eye for an opening to create, Galton's developing communication with those around her often allows the vision to become a reality. A quick one-two, slip behind the defender, send in the cross, easy.

With a flexibility that has seen her play in more central or defensive roles and with an evident shoulder of responsibility, Galton throws herself into every position she is charged with. She is more than capable defensively, unafraid to make a challenge or to track back when needed and her stint as a fullback should certainly not be overlooked. Yet, that ache to attack bubbles away beneath the surface and Galton is at her best when she is able to unleash this. Scoring, assisting, defending;

quite simply, Galton is one of Manchester United's greatest threats.

One might contemplate that a player of such skill has had it easy, yet Galton's career has not been plain sailing. Her professional career took flight during a four-year scholarship with American college side, Hofstra Pride, in which time Galton made history as the team's second highest goal scorer. She was then drafted by NWSL side Sky Blue FC before signing with Bundesliga team, Bayern Munich. However, things were not to be, and after just three months with the German side, Galton announced she would be taking a break from professional football.

Reflective of her hardy attitude on the pitch, Galton ultimately weathered the storm. After signing for Manchester United for their inaugural season, the organic flair that sparked in America is now being seen once again. Speaking on the UTD podcast, Galton describes the meeting in which Casey Stoney reignited that simmering fire, "I came out of that meeting thinking 'wow, that's the team I want to play for and that's the coach I want to play under'".

"Casey said she thought she knew my potential and she wanted to invest". Of course, the United boss knew exactly what she was doing. What an investment Galton has turned out to be.

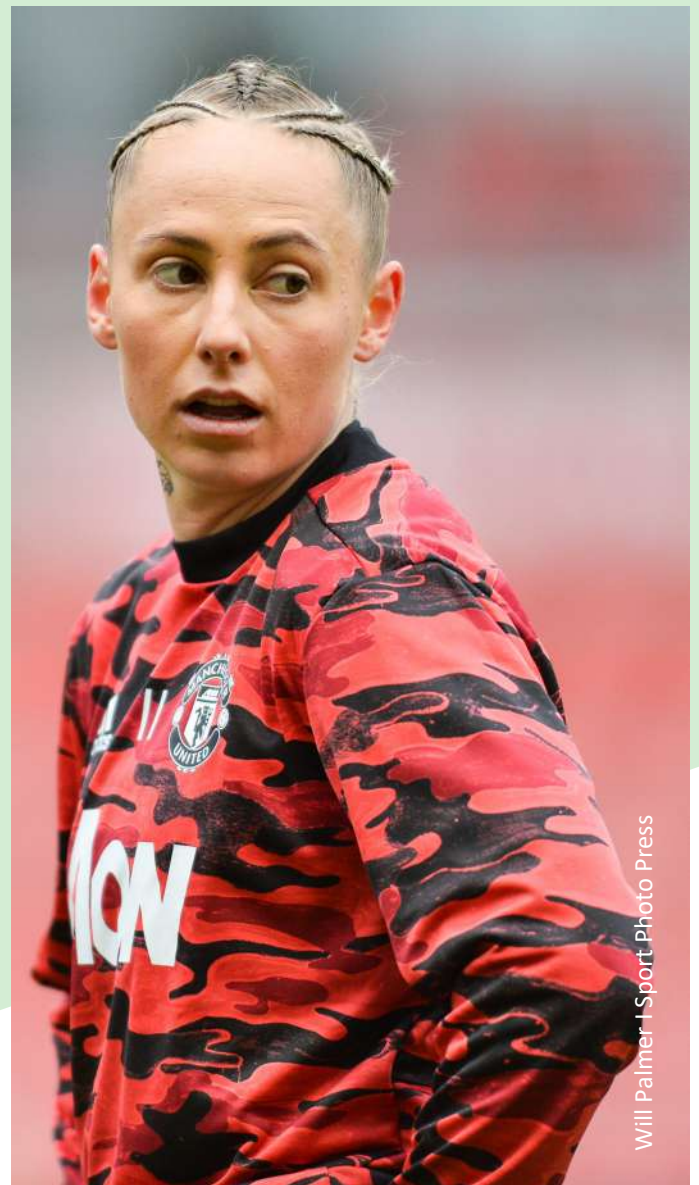
Delving deeper into her return to the game, Galton also mentions a sense of security, an indication that she "feels at home with United". Recalling her performances of late, it certainly feels that way. Overcoming niggles of self-doubt with the backing of those who will you to succeed can establish an entirely different outlook. One can certainly relate to the notion that half the battle is won when you feel comfortable, when you feel like yourself.

In an interview with The Guardian, reflecting on United's position in the table, Galton alludes to the impact of overseas signings and the resulting elevated mindset that is now coursing through the team. Yet with an earnest modesty, Galton has not noted the influence that she herself brings to that blossoming United play.

An influence that could justly be dubbed, The Galton Effect.

What has emerged in Galton is a growing confidence, an assurance in one's own abilities that teeters on the edge of something rather special. Given the outstanding statistics Galton is consistently churning out, one suspects is should not be long until her name appears on the national team squad list. But perhaps, for now, that is not the immediate goal. Perhaps, just for now, being on top, feeling like yourself and challenging for titles with a club that feels like home, is enough.

Sit back and relax, treat yourself with a front row seat to the Leah Galton show. The winger that is every bit worthy of her time in the spotlight.



Will Palmer | Sport Photo Press

The Football Podcast:

The one where we don't deserve equal pay



Pernille Harder, the world's most expensive female footballer, has joined our UEFA #WePlayStrong campaign to discuss the financial inequalities that exist within the sport by voicing her passionate views on the latest episode of UEFA #WePlayStrong's ground-breaking new podcast series.

In episode 4 of The Football Podcast, titled 'The one where we don't deserve equal pay', hosts Nadia Nadim and Rocky Hehakaija welcomed the Danish forward who took the opportunity to follow the most influential characters in women's football by challenging controversial topics and misconceptions which surround female players.

In this thought-provoking episode, Pernille shared eye-opening insight into challenges she faced as a young girl who was made to travel across the country to simply participate in girls training sessions. The 2019/2020 UEFA Women's Player of the Year now hopes that her record-breaking transfer will help to remove barriers for young girls who are taking their first steps on to the pitch.

The episode is the fourth in a six-part series which has already seen a host of top female players unite to share their experiences and debate a wide range of issues; from confronting the stereotypes to taking a stance against derogatory, misogynistic and gender-biased comments.

Pernille expresses that financial imbalance is just one of the inequalities that exists within women's football, as she encourages females to campaign for change:

“Equality is having the same facilities and opportunities to succeed as the men’s team. It’s not equal pay that we’re asking for right now - we want equal opportunities and the respect for what we do every day.

“We want a salary that gives footballers savings when they have to retire – we’re not looking for millions a week.

“Everyone should have the same opportunities in life – it shouldn’t matter what sex you are, what religion you follow, or what skin colour you have.

“I want to fight for these things. I’m passionate about it and I want to speak up when I have the opportunity. To make the world a better place, we have to change the mindset of the decision makers – we have to speak up and let them see we aren’t satisfied.”

She hopes that her experiences will open academy doors for young girls who she claims must work harder than their male counterparts:

“I want to see equal opportunities for young boys and girls. It all starts with education.

“You see a lot of good football academies for boys – where are the ones for girls?

“There is a big opportunity there. Can you imagine if girls had the same opportunities as the boys?

“There was nothing like that when I was young. My parents had to drive hours to take us to training – girls have to work a lot harder for it.

“I hope my record-breaking signing for Chelsea is the start of something new for women’s football”

The fourth episode in the series, featuring Pernille Harder, is available to listen to on Spotify.



Martin Smith / Sports Press Photo

Concussion subs to be trialled across the leagues



The Football Association and the Premier League have successfully applied to the International Football Association Board [IFAB] to introduce additional permanent concussion substitutions trials across the Premier League, Barclays FA Women's Super League, FA Women's Championship and Emirates FA Cup.

The dates for the introduction of the trials include:

- Premier League: from 6th February 2021
- Barclays FA Women's Super League: from 6th February 2021
- FA Women's Championship: from 6th February 2021
- Emirates FA Cup: from the Fifth Round, 9th-11th February 2021

With player welfare the priority, the protocols will allow a maximum of two concussion substitutes to be used per team, with the opposition side able to use the equivalent number. The additional concussion substitutions may be made regardless of the number of substitutions a team has made already.

The trial is a result of the IFAB's consultation with stakeholders and recommendations from their concussion expert group to allow additional substitutions for players with actual or suspected concussion.



TheFA Women's Super League

Table after Feb 7		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Chelsea	13	10	2	1	31	32
2	Manchester United	14	10	2	2	19	32
3	Manchester City	13	9	3	1	32	30
4	Arsenal	12	7	2	3	29	23
5	Everton	12	5	3	4	4	18
6	Reading	14	4	6	4	-5	18
7	Tottenham Hotspur	12	3	3	6	-10	12
8	Brighton & Hove Albion	14	3	3	8	-20	12
9	Birmingham City	11	3	2	6	-6	11
10	Aston Villa	12	3	1	8	-19	10
11	West Ham United	12	2	2	8	-15	8
12	Bristol City	13	1	3	9	-40	6

February fixtures

Saturday, February 6

Aston Villa 1-0 Tottenham Hotspur

Sunday, February 7

Manchester United 0-2 Reading

Chelsea 1-2 Brighton & HA

Everton 1-1 Birmingham City

arsenal 1-2 Manchester City

West Ham United 1-1 Bristol City

Wednesday, February 10

Chelsea v Arsenal (19:00)

Birmingham City vs Aston Villa (19:30)

Brighton & HA vs West Ham United
(19:30)

Tottenham vs Bristol City (19:30)

Friday, February 12

Manchester City vs Manchester United

Sunday, February 14

Reading vs Everton (14:00)

Heath ruled out for up to 12 weeks



Manchester United and USA international Tobin Heath has been ruled out with an ankle injury.

Manager Casey Stoney has confirmed that she sustained the injury in training ahead of their WSL clash against Everton and is expected to be out for up to 12 weeks.

Stoney told theathletic: “We’re looking at 10-12 weeks from the injury, unfortunately sustained in training. It’s a longer one.

“She is a big player for us so it’s a big loss, and it’s disappointing for her. It’s part of the game but, as with all injuries, I always say, it’s a window of opportunity for somebody else,” added Stoney.

“But she’s still heavily influential in our environment. We will work hard to get her back as safe and as quickly as possible.”

As well as missing important games for United, Heath will also be unavailable for the USA in the SheBelieves Cup.

Aston Villa appoint Bignot as interim manager



Aston Villa have announced that Marcus Bignot has been named as interim manager until the end of the season.

The current coaching team, led by head coach Gemma Davies, will all remain in their existing positions.

Bignot spent seven years in charge of Birmingham City Women before taking on roles in the men's game at Solihull Moors, Grimsby Town and Chester.

The 46-year-old is currently a coach with the England U19s and also joint manager of National League North club Guiseley, positions he will retain while he is the interim manager at Villa until the end of the Women's Super League season.

The Villa statement said: "Birmingham-born Bignot has a huge depth of experience in women's football and was one of the pioneering coaches in the game in this country.

Bignot said: "I am delighted to be able to help at such a progressive club in women's football. It is also a great opportunity to mentor a talented young coaching group led by Gemma."

Aston Villa Women's sporting director Eniola Aluko added: "Marcus is a very welcome addition to our club and has an enormous amount of experience in the game which we want to tap into."

The changes to the managerial change means that according to Aluko "The buck now stops with Marcus Bignot who will lead on team selection, tactical selection, in game touch line decisions and training with assistance and mentoring of the technical team."

It is understood that he will remain interim manager until a time when Davies feels comfortable to replace him as manager, rather than remain as head coach.

Houghton breaks WSL record



Manchester City captain Steph Houghton has set a new Women's Super League record.

The Lionesses captain has become the first player to reach the milestone of 150 appearances in the league.

This comes just a few months after she became the first player to register 100 league wins—impressively in just 140 games.

Houghton has been playing in the league for 11 years, after initially signing from Leeds United in 2010.

If reaching the milestone was not enough, Houghton also scored in the 7-1 win over Brighton.

Speaking to the Telegraph, she said: “Remembering the first game in the WSL, compared to now, it's come such a long way.

“To have been a part of women's football and how much it's grown, but also to represent two amazing clubs in Arsenal and Man City, it is a real honour.

“To have played that many games and to be the first person, yes it's a special moment. But hopefully there's a lot more to come.”

Beard joins Bristol City



Former West Ham manager Matt Beard has joined Bristol City Women as head coach until the end of the season.

Beard will be taking over as maternity cover for Tanya Oxtoby, who is expecting her first child in March.

City chairman said: "It has been a challenging season so far and credit to Tanya, who despite contracting Covid-19, has remained focused and determined to drive the team forward.

"Allowing her to take a step back now will allow a significant handover period for Matt and we are delighted to have secured his services for the rest of the season during Tanya's maternity leave."

Oxtoby, who was appointed by the club in 2018, said: "Given the circumstances and where we are with the pandemic I think it makes sense for the transition to begin and I'm fully supportive.

"I know Matt well. At the forefront of my mind when I knew this process was going to start was the playing group and making sure the transition was as seamless as possible.

"The board have decided Matt is the right person to come in and I'll support him 100% however he needs."

“My goalkeeper coach was 75 and he couldn’t kick a ball off the ground”

Carly Telford and Siobhan Chamberlain reveal experiences of inadequate professional goalkeeper coaching



In the latest episode of *The Players*, host Bex Smith chatted to current and former England goalkeepers, Carly Telford and Siobhan Chamberlain.

In a fascinating interview, the two keepers discussed how far goalkeeper coaching has come in very recent years, with both players revealing examples of the inadequate coaching they received in the past.

While they believe the gap is closing, they still advocate for further recruitment of goalkeepers from a younger age, more investment into coaching, and more support for players in the position, which is often heavily criticized in the women's game.

The pair also spoke of their experiences working with different managers, with Chamberlain suggesting ex-England coach Phil Neville wasn't totally honest about why he left her out of the team. They also open up about the goalkeeper mentality and why they are a 'different breed.'

Chamberlain and Telford spoke together about their experience of inadequate goalkeeper coaching earlier in their careers, as well as how far it

has since come.

Chamberlain: “Goalkeepers haven’t had enough coaching to be at the level where they potentially needed to be.

“I didn’t have a full time goalkeeper coach probably until the last four or five years of my career.

“The girls that are coming through now – 18 or 19 – have probably had exactly the same amount of coaching as I have in my entire career.”

“It is going to take time to catch up. You can see the young players now, there are so many talented goalkeepers because they’ve had quality coaching since they were 6-7 years old. We never got that at all!”

Telford: “Before we went to a World Cup, my goalkeeper coach was 75 and he couldn’t kick a ball off the ground, he could only volley it – that was my club coach.

“That was my level of coaching, two days a week, before I played on a Sunday. That was my goalkeeper coaching for three seasons I think it was. That was (before) Canada (Women’s World Cup 2015) and the Euros

after that.”

“I haven’t had a full time goalkeeper coach until I came to Chelsea, when I was 29-30.”

“We are going to get judged, but give it some context. Not only are we 50 years behind – that’s everyone as a collective in women’s football – but we are 10-15 years behind outfielders as goalkeepers. But it is getting so much better. Clubs are taking it seriously. They’re hiring full time goalkeepers coach of a good level.”

“Even in the men’s game, you sit and watch Gary Neville tear into the men’s goalkeepers and you just think ‘you haven’t got a clue’.”

Siobhan Chamberlain revealed she was disappointed with how her England career finished under the management of Phil Neville.

“As long as you’ve got honesty from your manager as to why people are getting selected... for me personally, I was really frustrated from how my England career finished with Phil.

“I had conversations with him where he said, ‘as long as you’re playing regularly, week in week out, that’s my only demand for goalkeepers.’ Carly wasn’t really playing, Mary Erps wasn’t playing at the time, I was playing week in week out. Those keepers

aren’t playing, so how can you justify if you’ve told me you only want goalkeepers who are playing week in week out.”

“Ultimately, it’s the manager’s decision. He can pick whoever he wants to pick.

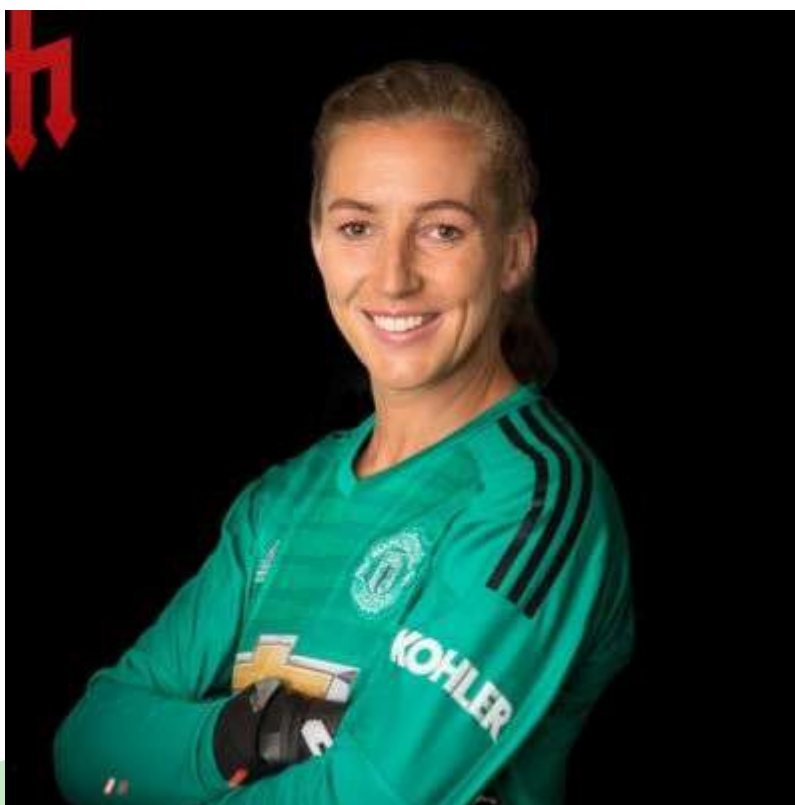
“If he wants to pick Carly because he thinks she’s a better goalkeeper... that’s completely his decision, but you’ve got to be honest with players and say, ‘I don’t want to pick players because they’re playing, I want to pick the players that I want to pick because I think they’re right for the journey and right for me.’”

Carly on the importance of speaking your mind to managers and being up-front.

“I think you should always go in and ask questions. I’ve had it when managers have said to me, ‘I didn’t think that you thought that because you never came and knocked on my door’.

“Sometimes you have to go and knock on the door and say, ‘what am I not doing enough’, and you have to make sure that they know you’re not happy.’

The Players is available now on BBC Sounds.



Transfer latest

Arsenal



In: Anna Patten
(University of South Carolina)

Aston Villa



In: Mana Iwabuchi
(INAC Kobe), Olivia McLoughlin

Birmingham City



In: Veatriki Sarri
(Sheffield United), Ruesha Littlejohn
(Leicester), Emily Murphy (Chelsea -

loan)

Out: Destiny Toussaint
(Coventry), Rachel Corsie
(Kansas City – end of loan)

Brighton & Hove Albion



Out: Denise O' Sullivan (end of loan – NC Courage), Kirsty Barton (loan – Crystal Palace)

Bristol City



In: Molly Pike
(Everton – loan), Kiera Skeels
(Reading – Loan)

Out: Chloe Logarzo (Kansas City)

Chelsea



In: Zecira Musovic
(FC Rosengard)

Out: Maria Thorisdottir (Man United), Charlotte Fleming
(Leicester – loan), Emily Murphy (Birmingham- loan)

Transfer latest

Everton



In: Claire Emslie (transfer – Orlando Pride), Jill Scott (Man City – loan)

Out: Damaris Egurrola (Olympique Lyonnais)

Manchester City



In: Abby Dhalkemper (NC Courage)

Out: Jill Scott (Everton -loan)

Manchester United



In: Maria Thorisdottir (Chelsea)

Out: Abbie McManus (Tottenham – loan), Lotta Oqvist (Goteborg FC)

Reading



Out: Sophie Quirk (London Bees-loan), Kiera Skeels (Bristol – loan)

Tottenham



In: Alanna Kennedy (transfer – Orlando Pride), Shelina Zadosky (transfer – Orlando Pride), Cho So-Yun (West Ham – loan), Abbie McManus (Man United – loan)

Out: Alex Morgan (end of loan – Orlando Pride), Elisha Sulola (Charlton -loan)

West Ham



In: Emily Van Egmond (transfer – Orlando Pride), Dagny Brynjarsdottir (Selfloss)

Out: Rachel Daly (end of loan Houston Dash), Cho So-Yun (Tottenham – loan), Alisha Lehmann (Everton - loan), Ruby Grant



CHAMPIONSHIP



ELLA POWELL

Charlton Athletic forward Ella Powell has had a turbulent 12 months in the game. After seeing her career put on hold due to Covid-19, the forward moved clubs and is now battling to get back from injury. This month she chatted to Helen Rowe-Willcocks about how this year has impacted her and looking at Charlton's season so far.

You were fortunate enough to grow up close to a high quality youth set up at Cardiff, how significant do you think it was to have those surroundings?

I was quite lucky with the timings. When I was hitting the age categories, the youth development was really building to a system which was becoming really professional and creating a very elite environment. A big part of that was the FAW getting involved, they had high quality coaches and facilities and I think if I did not have that system, I don't know how successful I would be in my career today.

That system from the age of 14 has made the player I am today. I have always said how lucky I was to grow up with that, I had a lot of help.

How much of a difference have you seen in women's football in the last five years?

When I first started playing football, there was probably one girls team I knew of and then returning to coaching at 18, suddenly there are girls teams all over South Wales. The way it's developing, there is so much more exposure, there is so many systems in place, its really developed.

Girls are showing off so much talent and each year we are seeing more and more girls

coming through the system and showing off their talent, the future is looking really bright in Wales.

Charlton have struggled a lot this season, is there still a belief that you can turn the season around?

100%. It has been a tough season for everyone and we have really struggled to get a rhythm going and we have had a lot of games called off. We have not had a lot of luck with weather, illness and everything else.

We have made a lot of new signings over the transfer window and we are excited about how it has strengthened the squad. It has re-ignited the desire to go out and get back up the table again.

The belief is 100% there and we are working really hard to turn things around. They have brought a competition to the squad which has been really good. The quality has risen in training. It's been really positive. It will be really good to see how that can impact us going forward.

“You have to be able to hold yourself accountable”

The Big Interview

How hard has it been with the uncertainty of not knowing whether the league would continue or be suspended?

The last major announcement that the government made, we were all texting each other trying to work out what it meant for us. Obviously, London is away from my family in Wales so it has been hard not being able to see my family and not knowing if I can go.

There is a lot of personal things you are juggling as well as thinking about how we are going to manage training and everything else. It's a mixture of feelings which go through your head. Luckily we have been able to carry on as normal with testing. It's always on your mind.

What do you think went wrong for Wales European Championship qualifying campaign?

When you are in a qualifying campaign, one result can tilt the whole campaign. We conceded a very late goal against Northern Ireland and I think it hurt us quite a lot. The girls never faulted with their belief and I think we just need to keep pushing. It is coming for us, unfortunately it just didn't quite work for us this time.

How disruptive has the uncertainty been for you on a personal level?

I have struggled with injuries this season. I have been out since November, so I have had a lot of time out so that has been frustrating for me. It really halts your momentum.

This season was meant to be the season to get back into things, we are trying to get back into the swing of things.

In terms of the games, what do you think the side have been missing in the first half of the season?

We talked about it as a squad and we really held ourselves accountable. There were really critical moments that we really let ourselves down on and we put that down to losing focus and switching off. We weren't able to deal with the pressure. We did a lot of work together as a group. It's important in a squad. If you have that closeness, hold each other accountable and still remain really close friends then you can win. We are feeling really positive about the second half of the season.

Has the time you have had out due to your injury made you even more motivated to get back?

Yeah 100%. Sometimes when you have had a few negative performances, it ways down on you. Having that time to step away from it, it has really given me the desire to get back. I have just been trying to get back as soon as possible. It's been quite a impatient process.

What is the injury and what do you think is the hardest thing about coming back from a big injury?

I damaged four ligaments in my ankle, it was one of those freak accidents. The biggest thing is to not forget your end goal. Everyday you are one step closer. It starts off with rest and it can get very tedious. You have to stay motivated and that will get you back to your ultimate goal.

What are your long-term goals as a player?

I want to get back to representing my national team as much as I can. The last two years have been a bit stop start.

How much do think playing football in America has impacted your career?

I think when I was playing in America, a big thing for me was the life experience that came with it as well. When you are young you want to take as many life experiences as you can. I was very lucky with the set up I had in Cardiff but I knew I wanted to expand my experiences and expand that learning as well.

When I went it was amazing and I learnt a lot about myself. The style of play in America is very different, it's very physical. I definitely improved. Since coming back there is more of a tactical aspect in the UK.

Jepson leaves Liverpool by mutual consent



Liverpool have announced that Vicky Jepson has left her role as manager.

The Reds were relegated from the Women's Super League last season and are currently third in the FA Women's Championship.

Assistant manager Amber Whiteley will take on the role of interim manager whilst the board look for a new boss.

"It's with a heavy heart that my time has come to an end with Liverpool Football Club; the place I love and have been lucky enough to call home for over a decade," said Jepson on the club's website.

"Over the years I have been fortunate to work across the entire pathway at this club.

"During this time, I've seen so many youth players go on to wear the first-team red shirt,

which fills me with immense pride. It's been a privilege to have contributed to their careers.

"I'm also grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside the talented people at the LFC Foundation. Seeing the increase of girls' participation in football has been truly inspiring.

"To the many senior players, both past and present, that I've worked with, I thank you.

"Thank you for empowering me with your relentless efforts, professional attitudes and sacrifices that you make daily as a professional footballer.

I will be forever grateful for our time together and will be supporting you all from afar this season."

She added: "To the fans, I've travelled around the globe wearing this badge and have witnessed the power of this club. You are incredible and the reason why LFC is so special. Thank you for your support, our women's team wear that badge with pride and work hard for this club. Please continue to get behind them, they need your support.

"Lastly, thank you for welcoming me into the LFC family all those years ago. I will carry this in my heart for the rest of my life.

"For now, I'll be taking some time out with family, but I'm excited and looking forward to my next challenge in the world of football. See you soon, You'll Never Walk Alone."

The Liverpool statement read: "Everyone at Liverpool FC would like to thank Vicky for her service to the club for over more than a decade.

"We will follow her future endeavours closely and wish her success in everything she does going forward.

"Vicky's legacy here will be the thousands of young girls - both around Liverpool and internationally - whose talent and love for the game flourished under her guidance.

"The football pathway for girls on Merseyside, through our Academy and Regional Training Club, is a hugely positive one and Vicky has played a massive part in that. Her contribution

to the Women's first-team set-up and leading the section through tough times is appreciated.

"Now is the time for a fresh direction for us both and we will offer Amber every support as interim manager as we start the search for a permanent replacement."

Who could be the next manager at Liverpool?

Matt Beard

Former West Ham manager Matt Beard is one of the favourites for the job.

He has already managed Liverpool between 2012 and 2015, leading them to back-to-back WSL titles.

Carla Ward

Carla Ward's name has crocked up for every available manager's position so far this season after impressing as Birmingham City's boss.

So far she has denied interest in any of the positions she has been offered.

Karen Hills & Juan Amoros

The former Tottenham head coaches Karen Hills and Juan Amoros are without jobs.

The pair left Spurs earlier in the season in a shock decision by the WSL club.



Will Matthews Sports Press Photo

Lewes sign six-figure deal with Lyle & Scott



Lewes Football Club has announced a new partnership with Lyles and Scott.

With the collaboration including an in-depth content series, buying new key players, shirt sponsorship of both the women's and men's teams, grassroots community outreach and development of club facilities, Lyle & Scott are making a six-figure investment in the club: The Rooks and The Golden Eagle .

Maggie Murphy, General Manager of the club's women's section said: "In a dark year where women's sport faced so many setbacks, this partnership with Lyle & Scott proves that women's football and ethical, community-oriented football is the future of the game.

"This investment allows us to grow, professionalize and strengthen our squad as well as share our story with others via a unique content partnership with Lyle & Scott"

Ben Gunn, Brand Director of Lyle & Scott said "Lewes FC is a beacon in the sporting world, a fan owned football club whose principles and values extend way beyond the football field. Something that genuinely excited us.

"Our focus at Lyle & Scott is on building a community, supporting, and collaborating with those whose vision is a powerful conduit for change across fashion, sport and music.

"We didn't see this an opportunity to sponsor Lewes FC but rather an opportunity to help them tell their story, support their journey, whilst creating content opportunities that will allow a much wider audience to appreciate the outstanding work the club does."

The deal is initially set to run through until summer 2021.



The FA Women's Championship

Table after Jan 10		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Leicester City	13	10	2	1	21	32
2	Durham	14	9	5	0	13	32
3	Sheffield United	15	8	4	3	18	28
4	Liverpool	13	6	4	3	10	22
5	London City Lionesses	14	5	4	5	3	19
6	Lewes	13	5	3	5	-4	18
7	Blackburn	14	4	5	5	-3	17
8	Crystal Palace	13	3	4	6	-7	13
9	London Bees	14	2	2	10	-21	8
10	Charlton Athletic	12	1	4	7	-10	7
11	Coventry United	13	2	1	10	-20	7

January fixtures

Sunday, February 7

London City Lionesses P-P Durham

Blackburn 2-2 Crystal Palace

Charlton Athletic 2-2 Liverpool

Coventry United 0-1 Lewes

London Bees 2-4 Sheffield United

Sunday, February 14

Durham vs Leicester City (12:00)

Crystal Palace vs London Bees (14:00)

Lewes vs London City Lionesses (14:00)

Liverpool vs Coventry United (14:00)

Sheffield United vs Charlton Athletic (14:00)

Sunday, February 28

Coventry United vs Charlton Athletic (14:00)

Leicester City vs Crystal Palace (14:00)

Liverpool vs London Bees (14:00)



Crystal Palace midfielder Nicol opens up about phone hacking



Crystal Palace midfielder has opened up about the traumatic experience of having her phone hacked and private content exposed on the internet.

The incident, which occurred in 2019, led to Nicol suffering depression and she contemplated suicide.

The Eagles midfielder suffered abuse online after her iCloud was hacked and she has now spoken to Sky Sports about the incident.

“There is ignorance. I was ignorant. People watch these videos and do not realise the damage to people’s lives,” Nicol told Sky Sports.

“They are giving these websites a lot of money with their views, their sharing and their downloading but there are victims here.

“My role is just educating people. That is someone’s sister, someone’s daughter. The people in those videos are seen as just objects.

“I can understand why people kill themselves over it because I do not know how I managed to get through it. It took a change of perspective and a group of people around me but it took time.

“There was a rota of people to make sure I was never alone. Without those people around me, would it have been different? One hundred per cent.

“It was a vicious cycle. There was never a point where I was sitting there and feeling calm. There was always some form of emotion, whether it was sickness, anxiety, sadness or tears.

“It was absolutely atrocious. I still suffer with anxiety. I still have moments where I cannot get out of bed. It could be something so stupid that triggers me and puts me in a bad place again.”

Nicol took time out of the game due to battles with her mental health but is now back playing at Crystal Palace when she is not injured.

Nicol is currently out with a fractured ankle.

“Football has been the key to my recovery,” she said.

“I am so grateful that I have found a club like Palace that allow me to be myself.

“They have supported me as a human being. They didn’t really care about the past, they just offered me an opportunity to get fit and train by following their off-season programme.

“I loved it from the moment I came back in pre-season because I was so proud of the place I had gotten myself to physically.”



Rafferty joins Lewes board



Lewes FC have announced that Claire Rafferty has joined the board as a non-executive director.

Rafferty who has won the WSL twice and the FA Cup with Chelsea has recently been seen as a pundit since retiring.

Alongside football she also has a degree in economics and worked for a leading European investment bank.

Lewes FC Chair, Stuart Fuller, said, “Everyone at the club is thrilled that Claire has accepted our invitation to join the board. We rarely make such invitations, and only do so when we are convinced that the new director will make a material positive difference to what we can achieve as a club. With Claire, there’s no doubt of that. She is among the most driven people that I’ve ever met. We share her ambition and look forward to working together to take Lewes FC to the next level.”

Lewes FC General Manager, Maggie Murphy, said, “We are delighted that Claire will join Lewes FC in this key leadership role, and excited that she will be able to apply her football business acumen to a club on the rise. We’re looking forward to taking Lewes FC to the next level alongside Claire in this new role. It’s clear that she has a vision and an ambition that can strengthen our whole club’s future.”

Claire Rafferty said, “I’m incredibly honoured and excited to be joining the board of a team that is leading by example. Not only is Lewes the first club in the world to allocate resources equally by gender but it is also 100% owned by the community. I hope the experiences I have acquired on and off the pitch can add a diverse voice and help Lewes continue on their journey.”

Goalkeeper Wilson signs for London City Lionesses



London City Lionesses have today confirmed the signing of goalkeeper Nina Wilson in the January transfer window.

Wilson had most recently played professionally in the Icelandic League for Fjardabyggd/Höttur/Leiknir, with previous spells playing for Watford FC Women, Lewes FC and Brighton & Hove Albion FC.

She has also previously represented England with the College National Team in 2017/18 and will be available for selection for this weekend's match versus Durham.

The 21-year-old was first-choice goalkeeper for Watford FC in the 2019/20 season – starting 14 out of 19 games and keeping five clean sheets – with her side challenging for promotion to the FA Women's Championship before the season was delayed – delayed due to the covid-19 pandemic.

Nina Wilson said: “I am ready to make the next step in my career and I can think of nowhere better than with London City Lionesses.

“Everyone I talked to before joining the club had only good things to say and I was excited by meeting people from LCL. I can't wait to get going and hope to make an impact on the pitch as soon as possible.”

First Team Head Coach Melissa Phillips said: “I'm tremendously excited about the addition of Nina to our squad.

“She brings a tenacious work ethic coupled with a desire to improve her game daily.

“She has already added value to our culture and I'm excited to see her thrive within the environment now that she's on board.”



Sandgaard agrees to take over Charlton Women



Charlton Women owner Thomas Sandgaard has agreed to take over the Women's club.

The deal would bring the two clubs under the same ownership for the first time since 2007.

Danish-American businessman Sandgaard took over the men's side, who play in League One, in September last year.

Charlton Women were disbanded in 2007 but were kept afloat by the Community Trust and then by a local businessman Stephen King.

The deal is subject to the requirements of the FA Women's Super League and Championship competition rules.

Sangaard said: "I am looking forward to being able to complete the takeover of Charlton Athletic Women.

"My long-term aims for Charlton is to reach the highest levels with both the men's team and the women's team, so I'm looking forward to getting started.



WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE



OCEAN ROLANDSEN

Sheffield United's newest signing Ocean Rolandsen struggled in 2020 to remain motivated as continuing restrictions saw her, like so many National League players, without options to play. With the National League once again suspended, she made the difficult decision to make a move away from Watford for the remainder of the season.

With Watford's season still on hold, how grateful are you to Sheffield United that you have an opportunity to play?

I just find that with last season being cancelled, I am just grateful to have an opportunity to continue to play because I lost a year of my career due to Covid-19. It got to a point where even though at Watford our goal was to progress and get promotion to the Championship, it just got to the point where I didn't want to miss another year.

You cannot help those situations out because they are uncontrollable but I am

grateful for me that there was an opportunity to still play football.

Was it hard to make that decision?

Of course. I have always dedicated myself to football. To get a decent academy or to play for a decent team you have to travel. I have had to relocate this time. As much as it has been difficult in the transition of being South to North, it's still roughly the same travelling to training.

How hard did you find it to stay motivated and stay at the fitness levels required when there was so much

“ I lost a year of my career due to Covid-19 ”

uncertainty around the league continuation?

Not going to lie, I found it extremely hard. Especially when I am the only person in my family that does elite sport.

It was difficult because when my family, who are all key workers, were working through lockdowns, I would have to find motivation within myself. I still wanted to maintain my fitness and progress but the difficulty that I found was that because I did not have anyone around me who could come out to train with me or pass a ball with me, I had to go back to my youth time and passing a ball to a wall and doing basic skills in the street.

It was extremely tough but I am lucky that I have a mentality that I know I want to be an elite athlete. I am grateful that my mindset was like a tunnel vision.

How did you know you wanted to be a footballer?

When I was younger, I did not see myself as a footballer because I did not understand women's football and I did not

The Big Interview

understand women's football just so strong and everyone is and I did not see any women so determined to win. We are role models at the time so I just grateful to still be able to would always play with my play football. It's so refreshing mates in the streets but when I to be in a squad where got into secondary school that everyone wants to do well and was when I was introduced to wants everyone else to succeed. You can tell that by their recent school football team and that form and league position. We was when I found out there take each fixture as it comes were more resources available. but the confidence in the

How have the first few weeks been at Sheffield United?

I would probably say that settling in with the girls and staff have been amazing. The minute I turned up it was hard to show how happy I was when you have to wear a mask everyone.

All the girls were really welcoming. The difference between Sheffield United and other clubs I have been at is that everybody is set on working together and there is no sort of outsiders.

The mentality in the squad is

each other. We all believe we can get points.

What do you want to achieve at Sheffield United?

On an individual level, I want to get as much game time as possible. I want to become the player I see myself as. I want to continue to build on the form I had and as a team keep pushing ahead and aim for promotion.

You have had two successful seasons at Watford, was it mixed emotions leaving?

My time at Watford was amazing. I was probably at my lowest point in my career when I first joined Watford because I was in a negative mindset.

My self belief was quite low. To be given the support from players and staff was so important to me. The environment was so family orientated it was brilliant. I thought I would stay there as long as possible but because of the pandemic I knew I had to look ahead. I am super proud to be given the opportunity by Reddars [Neil Redfearn].

How have you settled into Neil Redfearn's style of management?

He is just a very lovely man. He is very down to earth and he knows what he wants from players and his squad. You can tell he knows what his philosophy is. I think I sit in well with what he wants and I feel I can improve even more under his style and leadership.





Looking optimistic and pushing for promotion

Sitting down with one of Durham Women's newest signings, Danielle Brown



By Emily Cassidy

In England, leagues from the Women's National League Premier and below have been suspended again due to COVID-19.

As I am sure you are all aware, the only female football leagues still being played in England is the Women's Championship and Women's Super League.

Today we focus on Women's Championship team Durham Women who have recently signed a young talent in Danielle Brown from Middlesbrough Women.

A great signing and she has previous experience of the Women's Super League playing for Sunderland, which will only strength Durham's squad.

Brown commented on how COVID-19 has affected the women's game:

"Luckily, we have not faced any COVID-19 challenges.

"We get tested weekly and strictly follow all COVID regulations, like wearing a mask round around training facilities, on the bus to away games, etc.

"I think it's important that we follow these guidelines properly, because the sooner we control COVID, the sooner fans can come back to support us and most of all, enjoy the games!"

The North East is renowned for producing wonderful female footballers, a few are Steph Houghton, Lucy Bronze and Jordan Nobbs

who all play at the top of their game. Durham show they have strength, depth and talent as they currently sit 2nd in the women's Championship, however, has the same points as Leicester who sit top of the table. With appearances for England at youth level, Brown is defiantly one to look out for.

I spoke to new signing Danielle Brown, who only had positives to say about Durham and her move there in mid-November. She has already made 6 appearances for the Wildcats and 2 assists to her name.

"I am really enjoying it at Durham. From my first session to now, each person – including the staff – has made me feel so welcome. It's a great environment, we know when we can have a laugh and have to be more serious so it's a good mixture of both.

"This great mix makes it enjoyable but also competitive."

"So far, I have had 2 starts and 2 assists which I am happy with. I am looking forward to the rest of the season with the girls, and to keep

up the unbeaten run in the league."

When discussing the differences of the Women's Championship and the Women's National League, Brown had this to say:

"I would say the main differences between the two leagues are huge due to various reasons' the pace of the play, the physicality of players, and even off the pitch – like how dedicated and focused the players are.

"That being said, there are definitely some good players in the Women's National League who, with hard work and dedication, would most definitely make a mark on the Championship."

With only 6 games remaining and all to play for in their push for promotion, Durham's next fixture is London City away on the 7th February.



Sutton United appoint new head of youth girls' football



Sutton United have announced the appointment of Madeleine Morrison as their new head of youth girls' football.

Morrison played football at youth and senior level and has been involved in girls' football since the age of seven.

She is also a qualified referee, coach and sports journalist with Sky Sports News.

Morrison said "I'm delighted to be appointed the Head of Girls' Youth Football at Sutton United FC.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to work alongside a team of great coaches, players and staff. With a strong passion for women's football, I'm very excited to get started"

Chairman of Women & Girls' Football

Duncan Muller added: "We had so many people apply for the position and I would like to thank them all. Maddy impressed me right from our first meeting.

"She is confident and driven. She has all the attributes to make this a successful appointment. Both Faye Butler (Head of Women's Football) and I are looking forward to working with her."

Sutton have also announced that player Daisy Warren has become the new head of football administration.

Warren will deal with all the clubs secretarial roles as well as being in charge of all stock and kit requirements.



FANWNL 2020/21 Tables

(up to date as leagues were suspended)

Northern Premier Division

		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Huddersfield Town	10	8	1	1	16	25
2	Fylde	8	6	1	1	18	19
3	West Bromwich Albion	9	5	1	3	10	16
4	Derby County	9	5	1	3	7	16
5	Sunderland	9	5	0	4	0	15
6	Nottingham Forest	9	4	2	3	10	14
7	Stoke City	8	3	2	3	-7	11
8	Burnley	7	3	1	3	0	10
9	Middlesbrough	9	2	1	6	-9	7
10	Sheffield FC	9	2	0	7	-18	6
11	Hull City	7	1	2	4	-8	5
12	Loughborough Foxes	8	0	2	6	-19	2

Southern Premier Division

		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Watford	8	6	1	1	22	19
2	Oxford United	7	6	0	1	16	18
3	Portsmouth	8	5	1	2	13	116
4	Milton Keynes Dons	8	5	0	3	12	15
5	Crawley Wasps	7	5	0	2	9	15
6	Cardiff City	4	3	0	1	11	9
7	Chichester & Selsey	6	3	0	3	4	9
8	Yeovil United	5	2	2	1	1	8
9	Keynsham Town	7	2	0	5	-2	6
10	Gillingham	7	2	0	5	-4	6
11	Plymouth Argyle	7	0	0	7	-40	0
12	Hounslow	8	0	0	8	-42	0



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL 2020/21 Tables

(up to date as leagues were suspended)

Division One North

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Chester le Street Town	6	4	2	0	8	14
2 Brighouse Town	5	3	1	1	6	10
3 Norton & Stockton Ancients	6	2	2	2	1	8
4 Leeds United	6	2	2	2	0	8
5 Durham Cestria	5	2	1	2	2	7
6 Liverpool Feds	3	2	0	1	2	6
7 Stockport County	4	2	0	2	1	6
8 Newcastle United	3	1	1	1	0	4
9 Barnsley	6	1	1	4	-2	4
10 Chorley	3	1	1	1	-3	4
11 Bradford City	4	0	3	1	-1	3
12 Bolton	3	0	0	3	-14	0

Division One Midlands

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Wolverhampton Wanderers	6	6	0	0	34	18
2 Doncaster Rovers Belles	8	4	3	1	8	15
3 Lincoln City	6	4	1	1	19	13
4 Solihull Moors	6	3	2	1	9	11
5 Long Eaton United	7	3	2	2	6	11
6 Boldmere St Michaels	4	3	1	0	12	10
7 Sporing Khalsa	6	2	2	2	-2	8
8 Bedworth United	7	2	0	5	-10	6
9 Wem Town	4	1	1	2	-6	4
10 Holwell Sports	6	1	1	4	-9	4
11 Burton Albion	7	1	0	6	-41	3
12 Leafield Athletic	7	0	1	6	-20	1



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL 2020/21 Tables

(up to date as leagues were suspended)

Division One South East

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Ipswich Town	4	4	0	0	18	12
2 Hashtag United	5	4	0	1	9	12
3 Enfield Town	6	3	2	1	7	11
4 Actonians	4	3	1	0	7	10
5 Norwich City	4	3	0	1	3	9
6 AFC Wimbledon	5	2	1	2	4	7
7 Cambridge United	6	2	1	3	-10	7
8 Kent Football United	6	1	3	2	-1	6
9 Leyton Orient	3	1	1	1	1	4
10 Cambridge City	7	1	1	5	-14	4
11 Billericay Town	3	1	0	2	0	3
12 Stevenage	7	0	0	7	-24	0

Division One South West

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Southampton FC	4	4	0	0	17	12
2 Chesham United	5	4	0	1	15	12
3 Swindon Town	4	3	0	1	5	9
4 Busckland Athletic	5	3	0	2	-1	9
5 Exeter City	6	2	2	2	-2	8
6 Cheltenham Town	5	2	1	2	4	7
7 Larkhall Athletic	5	1	3	1	0	6
8 Maidenhead United	3	1	1	1	0	4
9 Southampton Women's	4	1	1	2	-1	4
10 Brislington	3	0	0	3	-13	0
11 Poole Town	6	0	0	6	-24	0



TheFA Women's
National League

GRASSROOTS



Amnesty and FA launch guide for increasing refugee women's participation in football

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



Amnesty International UK, in partnership with the English Football Association, have launched a free guide and online training series which aims to increase refugee women's participation in grassroots football.

The guide will help coaches, clubs and their foundations, county FAs, and others to set up football sessions with and for refugee women and girls in their community.

A number of football clubs across the country currently run free weekly football sessions with refugees to support fitness, help people feel part of the local community and reduce social isolation. But these sessions are often targeted at men and boys.

Amnesty and the FA hope this new guide will tackle this disparity and offer refugee women and girls across the country the same opportunities as men and boys.

The 15-page PDF good practice guide and online webinar training series will be available to download from Amnesty's web-

site from January 21.

The guide includes information on:

1. How to get started
2. Building trust
3. Being inclusive
4. Promoting health and wellbeing
5. Providing role models and representation

This new resource – which features key case studies from clubs including Aston Villa Foundation, Club Doncaster, Leicester City in the Community, Middlesbrough FC Foundation and Liverpool County FA – has been developed as part of Amnesty UK's Football Welcomes programme, supported by players of the People's Postcode Lottery, which highlights the role football can play in creating communities more welcoming to refugees.

In 2019, more than 170 football clubs across the UK took part in the Football Welcomes weekend.

Tasneem Tawil, Women's Football Officer, Amnesty International UK, said: "We know the vital role football can play in helping refugees and people seeking asylum settle into their new community, make friends and connections, and learn English.

"Women and girls, just as much as men and boys, have the right to the potentially life-changing benefits that participation in recreational football can bring.

"We are proud to work with the FA to deliver this and help to ensure the beautiful game is open to all."

Baroness Sue Campbell, The FA's Director of Women's Football, said: "We know that football has the unique ability to unite people and break down barriers while improving wellbeing.

"As English football's governing body, our key priorities include increasing participation and ensuring the game is accessible for everybody, including all women and girls regardless of

their age, background, or circumstances.

"This guide will ensure coaches, clubs and organisations are better equipped to use the power of football to support female refugees and help them integrate into their local communities.

"We are now seeing more women and girls than ever enjoying the game at all levels and, through important partnerships such as the one between the FA and Amnesty International UK, we can ensure the game becomes truly inclusive and keep driving participation forward."

The official partnership between Amnesty UK and the FA began in 2019, with the FA funded Amnesty's Women's Football Officer post – an innovative new role which focused on helping to welcome refugee women and girls, and those seeking asylum into their communities using the power of football.



NEW PROUDCT LAUNCH: CALLING ALL FOOTBALL TEAMS!



Now in its fourth year, our monthly digital magazine has grown to 90 pages dedicated to women's football from grassroots to the home nations. With great writing and amazing pictures it's no wonder that our readership has been growing steadily from year to year.

We're really passionate about promoting women's football in this country and so this season we're introducing something new – designed especially for football teams. The Women's Football Magazine season ticket is here to help you promote your team and inspire your players.

- **25 annual subscriptions to share with your players & coaches.**

You can add up to 25 members to your season ticket with each receiving a copy of the monthly digital magazine direct to them. Season ticket owners can update their members continuously throughout the season to make sure your players and coaches are getting the best out of the magazine.

- **A team article in The Women's Football Magazine.**

Once signed up, we will arrange an interview with your team which will be published in a future issue of the magazine. The interview can be with the manager, players or maybe an unsung hero without whom your team simply couldn't exist? If you have other ideas, then let us know- we'd love to hear from you! It's all about helping you promote your team!

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CUPS



Vitality Women's FA Cup remains on hold



The Football Association (The FA) have confirmed that following the latest national lockdown enforced by the government, the 2020/2021 Vitality Women's FA Cup will not resume during this period and will remain on pause.

With all sport across the country outside of the elite level currently shut down, the competition is not in a position where the Second and Third Rounds can be played, with clubs currently in the competition not permitted to train or play due to

being at amateur level.

Whilst it would have been possible to play elite v non-elite fixtures under elite criteria with Government support, as seen in the Emirates FA Cup, fixtures involving all non-elite teams do not meet elite criteria and cannot currently go ahead.

Therefore, the competition will remain paused during the current lockdown, with a number of options currently being explored on how best to complete it.

The health and wellbeing of players and staff are of paramount importance and we are not prepared to put any individual at risk during this pandemic.

A statement from the FA said:

“It remains The FA’s preference to complete the 2020-21 competition with all clubs having the opportunity to play their fixtures, however, the developing situation will continue to be closely monitored and will be

reviewed before any further decisions are made.

“The FA will now enter a period of consultation with all clubs that remain in the competition, alongside those who are due to enter from the Fourth Round, to discuss the options available.

“We will look to make a further announcement in due course.”



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THE WOMEN'S FA CUP ROUND DATES 2020/21

**(*pre covid restriction
dates, subject to change)**

Extra Preliminary

Round: Sunday 6
September 2020

Preliminary Round:

Sunday 20 September 2020

First Round Qualifying:

Sunday 4 October 2020

Second Round

Qualifying:

Sunday 18 October 2020

Third Round Qualifying:

Sunday 1 November 2020

First Round Proper:

Sunday 15 November 2020

Second Round Proper:

Sunday 29 November 2020

Third Round Proper:

Sunday 10 January 2021

Fourth Round Proper:

Sunday 31 January 2021

Fifth Round Proper:

Sunday 28 February 2021

Quarter Final:

Sunday 21 March 2021

Semi Final:

Sunday 18 April 2021

Final:

Saturday 22 May 2021

TheFA Women's
Continental
League Cup

Chelsea 6-0 West Ham



Pedro Soares / Sports Press Photo

Chelsea are through to the Continental Tyres Cup final after beating West Ham 6-0 in the semi-final.

The game, played on February 3, saw Emma Hayes' side put on a dominant display against their London rivals.

Pernille Harder grabbed a hat-trick whilst Sophie Ingle, Beth England Fran Kirby added in the rest.

It was Chelsea's 10th straight win in all competitions and the defending champions are aiming for their second trophy after a 2-1 win in the final against Arsenal last year.

Victory over the Hammers at Kingsmeadow was never in doubt as West Ham failed to cope with Chelsea's pace and power throughout the game.

Jo So-Yun's run and pass for Danish striker Harder set the tone for a one-sided match.

West Ham goalkeeper Mackenzie Arnold's fumbled attempt to keep out Ingle's long-range shot and a dreadful miscued clearance gifted the hosts their next two goals and England raced in to tap home a fourth to all but settle the outcome.

Arnold did have to make fine saves to keep out strikes from Kirby and England early on in the game but despite the Hammers improvements, they could not get back into the match.

Chelsea keeper Ann-Katrin Berger was forced to make a brilliant close-range save from Grace Fisk's shot.

The hosts quickly responded again however, prompted by the constant barking of instructions by Hayes, and Kirby followed up her own effort to score from close in and Harder's sweet low strike brought her a first Blues treble to complete the scoring.

TheFA Women's
Continental
League Cup

Bristol City

1-0

Leicester City



Ashleigh Davies / Sports Press Photo

Bristol City have made it through to their first Continental Tyres Cup final following a 1-0 win over Leicester City.

Kiera Skeels first goal for the Robins with 19 minutes to go was enough to see them through to the final.

In a cagey game, it took a long time to get going but it was Championship side Leicester who had the best of the early chances.

Lachante Paul's effort from the edge of the area forced keeper Sophie Baggaley into a save before Paige Bailey-Gayle also saw her shot blocked.

In the second half, despite a couple more

of chances for Leicester, it was Bristol City who found the breakthrough.

Ebony Salmon whipped the ball in from a short corner and was met by the head of Skeels to find the back of the net.

Leicester thought the game was going to extra time but Millie Farrow's point-black range shot was stopped by Baggaley.

The Robins are currently at the bottom of the Women's Super League table and will go into the League Cup final as underdogs when they face defending League Cup champions Chelsea.

Vicarage Road confirmed as League Cup final venue



The FA can today announce that Vicarage Road, home of Watford FC, will host The FA Women's Continental Tyres League Cup Final on Sunday 14 March.

The Final will be broadcast live on BT Sport 1 and will be the tenth in the competition's history, with the first taking place in 2011.

Kick-off time for this year's Final will be announced in due course.

Kelly Simmons, FA Director of The Women's Professional Game, said: "We are delighted to confirm Vicarage Road as the host of the FA Women's Continental Tyres League Cup Final.

"Watford are a club known for being at the heart of their community and we are really looking forward to working with their staff to put on a memorable match. The Final is one of

the showpiece fixtures in the women's football calendar and we hope fans across the country will tune in and help us mark the occasion."

Scott Duxbury, Watford FC Chairman & CEO, said: "It's a great privilege to accept The FA's invitation to host a significant women's cup Final at our ground.

"We're sure our well-appointed ground and award-winning playing surface will help add the finishing touches to a prestigious occasion and we look forward to welcoming the finalists to Vicarage Road Stadium."

He added: "We've made no secret of our ambitions for our women's team, so it'll be great for us to host a standard of match which, over time, we hope we might be able to compete in ourselves."

Meet the finalists:

Chelsea



Squad

Goalkeepers: Zećira Mušović, Carly Telford, Ann-Katrin Berger

Defenders: Hannah Blundell, Millie Bright, Jessica Carter, Magdalena Eriksson (captain), Jonna Andersson

Midfielders: Sophie Ingle, Melanie Leupolz, Ji So-Yun, Guro Reiten, Jessie Fleming, Maren Mjelde, Drew Spence

Forwards: Bethany England, Fran Kirby, Sam Kerr, Niamh Charles, Erin Cuthbert, Pernille Harder

Management team

Manager: Emma Hayes

Assistant manager: Paul Green

Head of technical/goalkeeping coach: Stuart Searle

Head of performance: Bart Caubergh

Assistant coach: Denise Reddy

Opposition analyst & coach: Leanne Champ

Honours

League titles

FA WSL (3): 2015, 2017–18, 2019–20

FA WSL Spring Series (1): 2017

Premier League Southern Division (1): 2004–05

Cups

Women's FA Cup (2): 2014–15, 2017–18

FA Women's League Cup (1): 2019–20

Women's FA Community Shield (1): 2020

Surrey County Cup (9): 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013

Doubles

2015: League and FA Cup

2018: League and FA Cup

2020: League and League Cup

Meet the finalists:

Bristol City



Squad

Goalkeepers: Sophie Baggaley, Benedicte Håland

Defenders: Faye Bryson, Gemma Evans, Jasmine Matthews (captain), Laura Rafferty (on loan from Brighton & Hove Albion), Florence Allen, Meaghan Sargeant, Jemma Purfield, Naomi Layzell, Kiera Skeels (on loan from Reading)

Midfielders: Molly Pike (on loan from Everton), Carla Humphrey, Aimee Palmer, Megan Wynne, Emma Bissell, Maisy Collis, Georgia Wilson, Ella Mastrantonio, Ellen Jones

Forwards: Ebony Salmon, Yana Daniëls, Charlie Wellings, Abi Harrison, Jessica Wooley

Management team

General manager: Lee Billiard

First team manager: Tanya Oxtoby (Matt Beard to take over for Maternity Leave)

Assistant manager: Marco Chiavetta

First Team coach: Loren Dykes

Goalkeeping coach: Dan Smith

Physiotherapists: Chris Underwood & Yaw Billy

Strength & Conditioning coach: Ellen Davies

Analysts: Ben Roberts & Luke Morgan

Honours

FA Women's Premier League Southern Division: 1

2002–03

South West Combination Women's Football League: 1

2000–01

Gloucestershire FA Women's Challenge Cup: 8

1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, 2004–05, 2005–06, 2006–07

Women's Champions League

round of 16 draw



The Women's Champions League round of 16 draw will take place on February 16.

The two-legged matches are scheduled for March 3-4 and March 10-11.

How the draw works

- The eight sides with the highest coefficients are seeded and will face the unseeded teams; the home team in each first leg will be decided by the draw.
- No club can meet a team from their own association.
- Any other restrictions or groupings will be announced when the draw procedure is confirmed ahead of the ceremony.

Contenders

- Lyon
- Wolfsburg
- Barcelona
- Paris Saint-Germain
- Bayern München
- Manchester City

- Chelsea
- Rosengård
- Atlético Madrid
- Fortuna Hjørring
- LSK Kvinner
- BIIK-Kazygurt
- Sparta Praha
- Fiorentina
- St. Pölten

Brøndby (DEN, 45.385) play Vålerenga (NOR, 9.075) for the remaining place on 11 February.

Road to Gothenburg

Round of 16: March 3-4 and 10-11

Quarter-final & semi-final draw: March 12

Quarter-finals: March 23-24 & March 31–April 1

Semi-finals: April 24-25 & May 1-2

Final: May 16 (Gamla Ullevi, Gothenburg)

HOME NATIONS



Neville steps down as England boss



By Charlotte Stacey

It has been confirmed that Phil Neville will step down as England head coach with immediate effect following his designation to head up Inter Miami.

Neville had planned to see out the full term of his contract, terminating in July, and was also appointed as the manager for Team GB in the upcoming Olympic Games.

The FA prioritised naming an interim coach for the Lionesses and former Norway midfielder, Hege Riise will now lead February's training camp. The FA have not yet named a replacement Team GB boss.

Since taking charge of the Lionesses in January 2018, Phil Neville has endured the good, the bad and the downright ugly.

In 2019 he led the English side to SheBelieves Cup victory, World Cup semi-finals and helped the Lionesses qualify for the Olympics.

Yet, after that fateful semi-final defeat the Lionesses have failed to find their form and have suffered seven losses in eleven games.

Most recently they placed third (out of four) in 2020's SheBelieves Cup and have dropped in the world rankings from third to sixth under Neville's leadership.

The Lionesses have not played a competitive match since March 2020 and currently have no upcoming fixtures. It has been rumoured that England had planned to host their own round-robin type tournament as they

will not be competing in the SheBelieves Cup in America this year. However, any arrangements for such a tournament have not been confirmed.

Upon his departure Neville has commented, "it has been an honour to manage England and I have enjoyed three of the best years of my career with The FA and the Lionesses. The players who wear the England shirt are some of the most talented and dedicated athletes I have ever had the privilege to work with. They have challenged me and improved me as a coach and I am very grateful to them for the fantastic memories we have shared."

Neville will now take charge of former England and Manchester United teammate, David Beckham's club, Inter Miami.

Beckham applauded Neville's appointment, stating, "we share a footballing DNA having been trained by some of the best leaders in the game, and it's those values that I have always wanted running through our club. Anyone who has played or worked with Phil knows he is a natural leader, and I believe now is the right time for him to join."

The Netherlands's head coach, Sarina Wiegman, has been named as Neville's eventual successor and will join the national side in August upon conclusion of the Olympics on a four-year contract.

Under Wiegman's management, the Dutch national side have won the 2017 Euro's and were runners up in World Cup in 2019. Wiegman was also named Best FIFA Women's coach in 2017.

The news of Neville's departure is not the only change to personnel that the home nations have incurred in recent



home nations have incurred in recent weeks. Jayne Ludlow and Shelley Kerr have also stepped down as the head coaches of Wales and Scotland respectively.

Ludlow, who has been with Wales since October 2014, commented, "my time as the national team manager has been an eventful and exciting journey. It has been an honour and an absolute pleasure to have worked with the staff and players across our age group and senior teams."

Ludlow is the first manager to take the Welsh side into the top 30 in the world rankings and the only manager to have taken the reins for more than 50 games.

Kerr left the Scottish national side in December, three years since taking the

helm, after they failed to qualify for the Euro's 2022. Having led Scotland to their first World Cup in 2019, Kerr commented on her departure, "I thank the Scottish FA and all who supported me in fulfilling my dream of leading our country to the World Cup finals for the first time. I am privileged to have played a part in such an historical moment in Scottish football. That is something that will live with me forever."

Scottish FA National youth team coach, Stuart McLaren has been named as Scotland's interim manager and will head up the national team in their upcoming fixtures against Cyprus and Portugal.



Was Neville a success?

Looking back at his time in charge of the Lionesses



By Hannah Clarke

Phil Neville has recently been appointed head coach of Inter Miami, leaving his role as England Women manager early after three years in charge.

Since Neville took over the Lionesses squad, women's football in England has gone from strength to strength, growing in momentum by the minute.

While the national side are at the forefront of the sport's success over the last few years, the team themselves only won the one trophy while Neville was in charge. This was the 2019 She Believes Cup where a crucial draw against the United States and wins over Brazil and Japan was enough for the Lionesses to come out on top in the points tally.

In this tournament the previous year, Neville made his managerial debut which ultimately stood him in good stead for the future as the team finished runners-up to the United States after a narrow loss. Yet it did not get much better than that.

The 2019 World Cup in France hit record audiences, but England reached their

third consecutive semi-final in the competition, but yet again failed to progress further. The game had much anticipation, but it wasn't in England's favour with a missed penalty late on and a tight VAR call gifting the United States a place in the final.

All of this overall contributed to the Lionesses slipping from a third-place world ranking to sixth. While Neville moves on to his next head coach role, new Lionesses boss Sarina Wiegman will be taking over the position in September 2021.

Despite the lack of trophies over his time in charge, Neville has had a huge impact on young players that have now cemented their place in the squad. He gave debuts to the likes of Beth Mead, Leah Williamson, Ellie Roebuck, Georgia Stanway, Beth England and Lauren Hemp who now, you couldn't imagine the Lionesses without.

Developing and bringing through youth players is something that Neville was praised for throughout his time with the Lionesses and without a doubt he has helped create a platform that young players can look up to today.

Riise and Wilkinson join England Women



England Women have appointed former Norway midfielder Hege Riise and ex-Canadian international Rhian Wilkinson to their coaching staff.

Both have agreed short-term contracts having applied for the assistant coach role made vacant by Rehanne Skinner's move to Tottenham Hotspur last November.

With the news of Phil Neville's departure confirmed this week, Riise will now step up to lead the February camp supported by Wilkinson and Kay Cossington, The FA's head of women's technical.

The 1995 world player of the year, Riise was an Olympic, World Cup and European Championship winner during a playing career that saw her score 58 goals in 188 internationals.

Since hanging up her boots, she helped LSK Kvinner dominate the Norwegian league, with six consecutive titles for the Lillestrom-based club she served as head coach since 2017.

Previously she was assistant coach of the United States, helping guide the team to the

final of the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2011 and winning Olympic gold in 2012.

Last December Riise was nominated for the FIFA Best Coach of the Year award.

Wilkinson won 181 caps for Canada and helped them win back-to-back bronze medals at the 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games before turning to coaching. Her playing career as an attack-minded full-back also took her to Norway and the United States before she retired in 2017.

FA Director of Women's Football, Baroness Sue Campbell said: "I am delighted to welcome Hege Riise and Rhian Wilkinson to the England coaching team, having had positive discussions with them in recent weeks.

"They bring significant international experience and will help guide our players before the arrival of Sarina Wiegman as our new head coach to lead us into the home EURO in 2022.

"Once February is complete, we will sit down and assess the Lionesses situation and consider next steps for Team GB in

consultation with the home nations and the British Olympic Association.

“At the same time, we are committed to helping English coaching talent as underlined by the announcement made last month about a number of roles across development teams.

“The Lionesses pathway has already helped Casey Stoney, Bev Priestman and Rehanne Skinner to secure prominent roles in the game and we are confident more will follow.”

Speaking of her appointment, Riise said: “I’m excited about the opportunity I’ve been given to work with England Women.

“This is a proud and ambitious team that I look forward to working with and I am confident of making a positive impact when I meet up with the squad in February.”

Wilkinson said: “I am extremely thankful for the opportunity to work with such a talented group of players and staff, and it is a privilege to work alongside Hege Riise who I have already worked closely with as a player and coach.”

The news follows the announcement before Christmas that Rachel Yankey, Fara

Williams, Mary Phillip and Coreen Brown have begun season-long coaching placements with England women’s development teams at St. George’s Park, with former England head coach Hope Powell providing the opportunity to be mentored during their placements.

England and Arsenal great Yankey will join the U19 squad, working with head coach Emma Coates, while head coach Lydia Bedford will have her U18 squad strengthened by former England defender Phillip, who won 65 caps for her country and was the first women’s player to compete in two FIFA Women’s World Cups.

Williams, England’s most capped international, will be embedded with the U17 squad under head coach Gemma Grainger whilst continuing her playing career with Reading.

Meanwhile Arsenal Academy coach Brown will work alongside U16 head coach John Salomon.

Brown was first part of the programme two seasons ago and was appointed as assistant coach with the former U14 squad.



Veurink confirmed as Wiegman's assistant coach



Sarina Wiegman has confirmed she will bring Netherlands assistant coach Arjan Veurink with her when she joins the Lionesses after the Tokyo Olympics.

Wiegman's request to bring Veurink with her to lead the Lionesses was agreed in August last year as part of The FA's deal to secure the world-class coach.

The Royal Dutch FA have now approved the request to release Veurink in order to continue their partnership on the international stage with England. Wiegman and Veurink have worked together since 2017, leading the Oranje to the European title in the same year and reaching the final of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 in France.

Previously, Veurink was head coach of FC Twente women, winning the KNVB Cup, four championship titles and qualifying for the UEFA Women's Champions League under his leadership.



ENGLAND NORTHERN IRELAND

TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2021

ENGLAND CANADA

TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2021

Crichton announces retirement from Scotland



Leanne Crichton has announced her retirement from international football.

The midfielder, who currently plays domestically for Glasgow City, has been capped 72 times for Scotland.

She made her debut in 2006 before going on to represent Scotland at the European Championships in 2017 and the 2019 Women's World Cup.

Speaking to the Scottish FA, she said: "It's been something I've thought about for quite a while now, and processed it over a number of months.

"During this time when the women's game has stopped in Scotland it's given me an opportunity to think about what my future holds as well as prioritise the next steps.

"As much as it's a tough decision and one I haven't taken easily, I know in my heart I'm content with it.

"It's exciting to think how far the team can go but for me personally, I've probably given as much as I possibly can. I now want to focus on my club football.

"The friendships and bonds that we have had within the team over the last few years has been really special. I spoke to a few members of the team before making the decision.

"It's nice to know I was a valued member of the team and I look forward to supporting them going forward.

The friendships that I've created through my international career will last forever."

A full-page background image of a Scottish women's football player in a pink jersey with the number 9, celebrating on a football pitch. The player is in the center, with her arms outstretched and a joyful expression. She is wearing a pink Adidas jersey with the Scottish Football Federation crest and the Adidas logo. The background shows a blurred football goal and stadium seating.

Scotland's upcoming fixtures

Friday, February 19

Cyprus vs Scotland (13:00)

Group E—Women's European
Championship qualifying

Tuesday, February 23

Scotland vs Portugal (15:10)

Group E—Women's European
Championship qualifying

Filbey joins Celtic on loan



WELCOME

ANNA



Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Anna Filbey has joined Celtic on loan until the end of the season.

The 21-year-old, who can also play as a defender, has made 21 appearances for the WSL side since joining from Arsenal in 2018.

Celtic are currently third in the Scottish Women's Premier League One, two points off the top of the table and are aiming to fight Glasgow City for the title.

The decision to head out on loan is to help Filbey get more game time as she continues to recover from an injury which has kept her out for a number of games this season.

She wrote on Twitter: “Extremely excited to announce that I will be joining Celtic on loan for the remainder of the season.

“I can’t wait to get started.

“Good luck [Tottenham] for the rest of the season.”



Jayne Ludlow leaves position as Wales manager



The Football Association of Wales (FAW) have announced that Jayne Ludlow has left her position by mutual consent.

The FAW says there will now be a "thorough recruitment process" to select the 42-year-old's successor.

FAW Chief Executive Jonathan Ford said: "Jayne has played a huge part in the progress of the Women's game in Wales over the past six years, managing the side through three qualification campaigns."

"The 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying campaign enhanced the profile of the game throughout the country, inspiring young girls across Wales to play football for the first time.

"Off the field Jayne has been a role model for the women's game in Wales, regularly visiting schools across the country and attending the National Eisteddfod to inspire future generations."

"We thank Jayne for all her hard work, dedication and vast contribution to Welsh football both on and off the field. We wish her well in the future."

"My time as the national team manager has been an eventful and exciting journey," Ludlow said.

"It has been an honour and an absolute pleasure to have worked with the staff and players."

Ludlow, who is the only manager to have taken charge of more than 50 Wales women's matches, leaves having taken Wales close to major finals qualification in their last two campaigns.

However, Wales fell short chasing a World Cup and European Championship berth, despite their progress.

It has also been announced that goalkeeping coach Jon Horton has also left his position.

He took to Twitter to say: "It's been a roller coaster ride but one I am truly grateful for. Jayne Ludlow MBE you gave everything & more to the role, I am so privileged to have been a part of it. A true scholar of the game. Diolch Jayne."

Welsh international Jess Fishlock MBE wrote: "I am Sad. I was Sad when Jarmo left, I am sad now Jayne has left. So many memories .. tears, laughs, arguments, high fives. Some unbelievable moments. We are a better nation for you Jayne Ludlow. Thank you Diolch."

What has Jayne Ludlow achieved as Wales manager?

Managerial record:

Team	From	To	Record				
			Games	W	D	L	Win %
Wales	October 2, 2014	January 17, 2021	39	15	13	11	38.46



**Appointed MBE in
2019 birthday
honours for services
to football**



**Inducted into the
Welsh Sports Hall of
Fame Roll**



**She became the
first manager to
lead the side for
more than 50
games**



**She was
described as the
“most
successful
player Wales ever
had”**



**As a player she
captained Arsenal
and remains their
highest goalscorer
of all time**

Smith leaves Cymru role

The Football Association Wales have announced that Cymru Women's Team coach Lauren Smith has stepped down from her role.

Smith has now joined Women's Super League side Tottenham Hotspur as the assistant coach.

Since joining the FAW on a full-time basis in 2017, Smith has been assistant manager and has been heavily involved in the WU17 and WU19 environments.

During the last four years, the senior team reached the top 30 of the FIFA women's rankings for the first time, whilst the WU17 and WU19 sides have qualified for several UEFA European Championship Elite Rounds.

The FAW statement read: "The FAW would like to thank Lauren for her commitment to Welsh football over the past four years and wish her well in her future endeavours."

Tottenham added: "We are delighted to announce the appointment of Lauren Smith as Assistant Coach for Tottenham Hotspur Women.

"Lauren joins Head Coach Rehanne Skinner's coaching staff from the Wales Women's National Team."



FAW confirms large number of applicants for league restructure

With a major domestic restructure of the women's game in Wales currently underway for the 2021/22 season, a total of 37 clubs have applied for the 24 spaces available across the new Tier 1 and 2 leagues.

In May 2020, the FAW announced ambitious plans to reform the National League (Tier 1) and new regionalised northern and southern leagues at Tier 2.

Lowri Roberts, Head of Women's & Girls' Football, said: "It's exciting to see so many clubs engage with this process and share our vision for the domestic game.

"It's incredibly important for the growth of the game that this process is competitive in order to release the potential of our ambitious clubs to not only improve themselves on and off the pitch, but to also assist in driving forward the development of the female provision across Wales."

The confirmed applicants are as follows:

Tier 1 (15 applicants)

- Abergavenny
- Aberystwyth Town
- Barry Town United
- Briton Ferry Llansawel
- Caldicot Town
- Cardiff Bluebellies
- Cardiff City
- Cardiff Met
- Cascade YC
- Cyncoed
- Merthyr Town
- Port Talbot
- Swansea City

- Swansea University
- The New Saints

Tier 2 South (8 Applicants)

- Aberdare Town
- Aberaman
- Baglan BG Junior
- Coed Duon Welfare
- Cwmbran Celtic
- Dafen Welfare
- FC Talycopa
- Pontardawe Town

Tier 2 North (14 applicants)

- Airbus UK Broughton
- Amlwch Town
- Bangor 1876
- Bethel
- Colwyn Bay
- Connah's Quay Nomads
- Denbigh Town
- Llandudno
- Llanfair United
- Llanystumdwy
- North Football Association
- Northop Hall
- Pwllheli
- Wrexham

These 37 clubs will now enter the Phase 1 Licensing Process and must submit the relevant paperwork to the FAW by 26 March, which will then be reviewed by an independent First Instance Body in early April.



Northern Ireland set to Tplay England in friendly



Northern Ireland are set to play England in a friendly on February 23.

Manager Kenny Shiels said that the friendly will “sit very nicely” as part of their preparations for their Euro 2022 play-off in April.

Shiels insists his players will not be overawed going into the St George's Park game against the Euro 2022 hosts.

"Some people would think we're maybe out of our depth. That's not our feeling at all," Shiels told the BBC.

England finished fourth at the 2019 World Cup and are sixth in the Fifa rankings.

Northern Ireland are 49th in the latest Fifa ratings but have been on a steady upward curve over the last year, helped by four concluding wins in their Euro 2022 group which saw them pip Wales for the play-off spot.

Shiels added: "For us to play England is a great achievement and I don't know if that would have happened if we hadn't been so successful.

"It's testament to how the girls have done and the girls see it as a viable preparation game for them."

"We need to be looking at how we can get better and by playing England, I feel that will help us to do that.

"We will be without the ball for a considerable period against this opposition but the learning that goes on within that and how we improve from that will be quite significant."

Around the World



RIO HARDY

You often hear about siblings in sport but it's not often you hear about twins who have played for the same teams throughout their career. Rio Hardy and her sister Stephanie have done just that moving to America, Iceland and now Cyprus to play football. Helen Rowe-Willcocks talked to Rio about her career so far.

Do you think women's footballers get the recognition they deserve for the amount of time and effort needed to make it in the game?

If you are involved in women's football you understand the dedication required, we have all had the same story. We have all had to play for boys teams, travel unbelievable distances. If you are involved in that you understand the sacrifices you have to make and the support you need from family and friends. I think a lot of people are starting to see that.

You went over to America to play in college, how did

you find that experience and how did that experience differ to playing over here?

That experience was something I did not know a lot about until about a year before I went. One day I was training at college and a man came and told me he was a coach in America and told me all about it. It sounded amazing.

Back then the WSL was not really happening and it was an opportunity for me to be treated like a professional athlete and get a degree to fall back on. I had never been to America before so I did not know what to expect but it was

“The facilities at American college are some of the best I’ve had”

absolutely amazing experience, the facilities were unbelievable, some of the best I have experienced in my career.

To get my degree and go to class, you're away from your family and it grows you as a person. It differs from football over here slightly because they focus a lot on the physical side and being in the gym but it's such a good standard.

You have travelled a lot due to football, where has been your favourite place to play?

That's a hard question. I don't think I can pick just one, they are all unique in their own way. Iceland – the weather wasn't very good but the people were amazing and friendly. It was a strange country. You would be driving along and there was boiling water coming out of the floor, volcanoes, icebergs. I liked it for the scenery and the football was really good. In America the weather was great and I made a lot of memories there. Now living in Cyprus, I class them as my second family. Each one is special to me in a different way.

The Big Interview

How hard has it been not playing alongside your sister not just for you but and see family and friends due to travel restrictions?

It's been really difficult. It's been more than a year since I have been at home. I have my twin sister here with me and everyone at the club is so welcoming and have been trying that little bit extra to make sure we feel more at home. It's something you have to do though.

What has playing in Cyprus taught you as a player?

It has taught me some different experiences. We play in the Champions League and that is not something other players get to achieve and experience. The build-up, travel, we have learnt a lot. The first goal was to qualify for the Champions League by winning the league and we achieved that.

So far in your career you have moved clubs with your twin, do you ever see a point where you might separate?

It's lovely that we have been able to share our careers together but we have never ruled out playing for different teams. If one of us got the opportunity we would not hold the other back. It's my dream to play in England, to play in the top division in your own country is a dream.

What do you think is the biggest advantage of

We are always competitive with each other and I think the other girls feed off that. With me being a striker and Stephanie being a centre-back we play directly against each other in training and I think the girls like that as there is an energy between us.

Apollon have so far won all 16 games and scored over 90 goals, how do you keep the competitive edge going when you are so dominant?

We are very dominant but our coach gives us little goals like we will work on certain things in training which we then try to put in our games. It's up to us to make the games challenging and keep at the highest level we need to be to keep improving as players.

We train pretty much every day so we have that intensity to keep driving. We know it's okay to make mistakes, we can try anything we want to so it's really good to be able to express ourselves as players in the league.

What's the lifestyle like for you playing out in Cyprus?

It depends on what time of the year it is. In the summer we try not to stay out too long, it gets so hot in the sun. We try and stay inside and go somewhere inside when there is air conditioning.

In the time we are in now, it's really nice. We get to go out and do things—when we are not in lockdown. It's a very relaxed lifestyle.

How much support do the women's team get from the men's side?

We have the same name as the men's team but we are not really affiliated with the men's team. All of our support comes from the club president and vice-president and the board members. We are still very well supported.

What is the standard of football like in Cyprus?

I have seen an improvement since I have arrived. Not just in my team but in the league as a whole. The other teams see the standard we are setting and they want to emulate that, it's great to see.

Have you found there is a language barrier out in Cyprus? Do most of the players speak English?

Everybody on the island speaks English so it's been okay. In our team there are a lot of players from different countries. Last season I think there were nine different nationalities in the team. You learn a little bit of each language and admittedly it is usually the bad words you learn first! I know a few words in Greek, enough to get by but I am not fluent by any means.

Simon Says

This month I spent some time talking to licenced football intermediary Nadia Marielle.

Have you always been interested in football?

I was born into a football crazy culture (in Algeria). I've always watched football since I was a little girl, but my Dad never allowed me to play organized football in a club. I was married very early to a football player. I am also a mother of two professional football players, so I was born into football .

When did you decide to become a Football Intermediary?

I decided to become a licensed FIFA agent in 2011, I then took my exam by NFF (Norwegian Football Association) and passed the exam. Football agents are now intermediaries. Now you don't need any formal qualification to become an agent. FIFA does not impose licensing restriction on football agents, as the system of registration has now passed on national federations. This regulation is from 2015.

Did you have any previous experience in the football industry? As an agent?

No.

Because there are so few women in football intermediary work, have you found it difficult to make connections in the industry?

Oh yeah! That's for sure! It has not been easy. These challenges are magnified for women working in male-dominated fields. From "bro-culture" to assumptions you don't know how to do your job on the basis of your gender - a weight my male colleagues do not bear. I can really admit that I felt it really hard.

To make any connection for me has never been a problem, but to close deals have been even harder.

What can we do about this problem? Shine a light on it. Encourage women to speak out against these circumstances. We need more female agents!

Is there a typical week in the work of an intermediary?

Emails, SMS and calls are ticking my mobile all the time and at all hours of the day. I notice it's quieter when the season has started. but once it's done, my phone lives its own life .

Now you are working in the industry did you have any preconceived idea of the work involved?

Simon Says

I must admit to saying that I was a little shocked, and have felt #metoo close. But at the same time, one must not give up, but rather fight and prove them wrong.

Do you work as an independent intermediary or as part of a team?

I'm independent for now.

Was it difficult in attracting clients to act on behalf of?

It is not difficult to attract clients at all. But it becomes difficult to negotiate with players or sports directors who want a date with me first. Many who are not serious in this industry. It is

very frustrating.

How many players do you act for?

At this moment four (It's more than enough!).

If other women are thinking of getting involved in intermediary work what would your advice be?

I would like to tell them to be prepared mentally and have a team around you. Don't be anyone's coffee or lunch getter and don't be the "Yes" woman.





News from around the world

SheBelieves Cup to feature new teams

US Soccer are hosting the sixth annual SheBelieves Cup.

The defending champions will face Brazil, Canada and Japan, starting on February 18.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all six matches -- which will be played in three doubleheaders -- will be staged at Exploria Stadium in Orlando, Florida, home to the Orlando Pride of the NWSL and Orlando City SC of MLS.

SHEBELIEVES CUP

OL Reign announce partnership with Starbucks



OL Reign have announced that major coffee brand Starbucks have signed up to be their new presenting sponsor for the club's legends campaign.

The campaign recognises and honours the lasting contributions of female leaders from the community.

"We are proud to have Starbucks as OL Reign's newest partner, given the deep cultural alignment between our brands," said OL Reign President and CEO Bill Predmore in a team release .

Lazio announce new management team

Lazio Women have appointed Carolina Morace as their new manager.

In a special appointment, Morace's wife Nicola Jane Williams has also been named as assistant manager.

"I have returned to a club which is now of an international dimension," Morace said at her presentation. "The president's interest [in the women's team] is very important.

"When he gets something in his head, it usually comes to a positive conclusion. It's an honour to be here."





News from around the world



Swedish champions saved

Swedish champions Kopparberg-Gothenberg have been saved from folding.

Men's club BK Hacken have adopted the women's side and they will now change their name to BK Hacken FF.

The news came after it was announced in December they had been dissolved and all the senior players released.

Grand Slam winner Osaka becomes NC Courage owner

Tennis superstar Naomi Osaka has bought a share of North Carolina Courage.

The club has won the last two NWSL championships and finished second in 2017.

Osaka said about this new adventure: "I have been waiting to join the NWLS for a long time, with the aim of promoting women's football and also as an investment because I see it growing rapidly."



Wilkinson leaves Canadian international team



Rhian Wilkinson has announced she is leaving Canada Soccer.

The 38-year-old, who won 181 caps for Canada as a player will be leaving her roles as assistant coach for the senior women's team and head coach of the U17 and U20 sides.

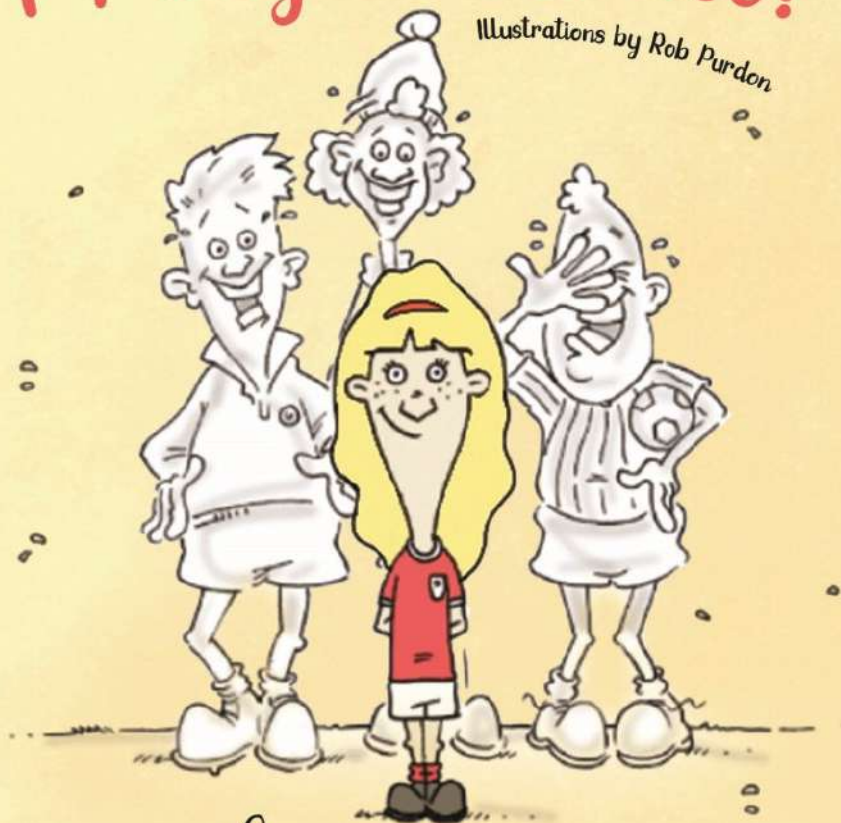
In a social media post announcing her decision, Wilkinson said she was leaving with a "heavy heart."

"This decision has been incredibly difficult as this team has been my family for the past 20 years," she added.

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