

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 51 - July 2021

Team GB

We take an in depth look at the Team GB squad ahead of the Olympics

MARCO

FLOREALE

On the Game of Two Halves

Jordan

Wimpenny

TWFM Awards winner chats about Huddersfield ambitions

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DANIËLLE

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Welcome

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Hello and welcome to Issue 51!

The countdown is on to the Tokyo Olympics and it seems like the men are getting us in the mood, good luck to the England men tomorrow night!

Anybody else fully invested in the “it’s coming home party?”

Hard not to be when it’s the fifth semi-final England (men and women!).

Anyway back to the issue!

We have some brilliant articles to read.

Jamie Davies takes a look at 365 days to go until the Women’s Euros, Charlotte Stacey talks us through the Team GB squad and Ammo is back with her latest antics.

Marissa Thomas discusses the new Arsenal boss and we are back with the second instalment with Marco Floreale.

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief

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WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



WSL and Championship season dates announced



The FA have confirmed the start dates of the 2021/22 Women's Super League and the Women's Championship.

The new WSL season will begin over the weekend of September 3-5.

Chelsea will be defending the title which they won for the fourth time last season.

Leicester City are preparing for their first season in the top flight.

They were promoted after they clinched the second-tier Championship title by an eight-point margin.

They replace Bristol City, who were relegated after only winning two league games.

The new Championship campaign will begin a week earlier on 28-29 August.

Sunderland and Watford will be competing in the Championship for the first time after being promoted.

The National League 2020/21 season was classed as null and void during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Teams applied for promotion to the second tier with Sunderland and Watford being chosen.

Speaking about their promotion Watford head coach said: "The initial feeling is ecstatic, I'm just over the moon and delighted.

"It's been a long time coming and the players and staff have had to be patient.

"We're absolutely thrilled to have our application accepted, especially after everyone's hard work over the last few years."

Club captain Helen Ward added: "A lot of hard work has gone into this.

"Not only is it the players on the field trying to achieve promotion, but it's off the pitch.

"We've put ourselves forward in a really good way to achieve this, so it's a really nice feeling to know that everybody's hard work has paid off."

Pitch improvements begin for West Ham United

Work has begun on a new hybrid pitch at Victoria Road.

The stadium is home to both West Ham United Women and Dagenham & Redbridge.

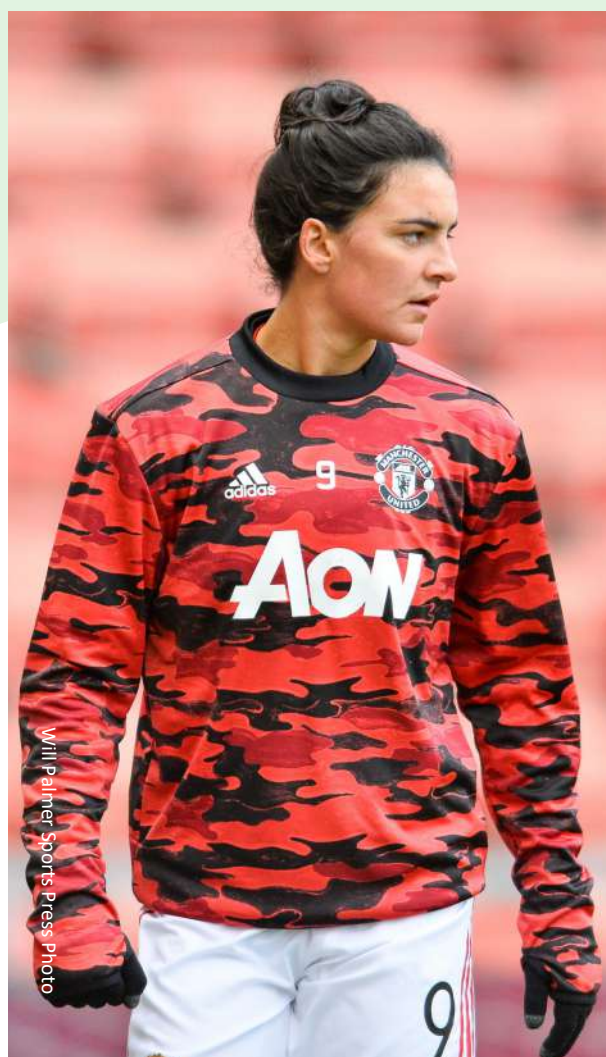
The new hybrid pitch means that both West Ham United Women and Dagenham & Redbridge FC will have one of the best surfaces in their respective leagues.

Added to this, a new broadcast gantry, performance analysis system and press seating will be installed to further improve the facilities at the stadium.

The work has been made possible thanks to a Football Stadia Improvement Fund grant, which supports improvements at grounds where FA Women's Super League clubs play.

West Ham United Women's General Manager Aidan Boxall told West Ham TV: "We are absolutely delighted that work has begun on the pitch and we are grateful for the support of the Football Stadia Improvement Fund.

"Our season tickets prices remain among the cheapest in the WSL as we continue to promote affordable family football. We want to be a huge part of the community and see our home at Dagenham as a great hub for the community to engage with one another."



Will Palmer Sports Press Photo

Sigsworth becomes another Manchester United departure

Manchester United have confirmed Jess Sigsworth has departed the Women's Super League club.

Sigsworth joined United in 2018 and claimed the league's Golden Boot award at the end of our Championship-winning season.

She made 66 appearances, scored 26 goals and made 13 assists.

Taking to Twitter, Sigsworth wrote: "Enjoyed every pass, tackle and goal. What an honour, it's been to play and fight for United."

She becomes the latest in a number of names leaving the club including manager Casey Stoney.

Leicester City build academy pathway

Leicester City have announced they are launching a new comprehensive academy system for girls from the age of nine.

The LCFC Women Academy Pathway aims to promote both participation and elite talent development in Leicestershire, uniting connected stakeholders in the region under one programme for the long-term improvement of the women's game.

The programme will see the Leicester City Girls' Regional Talent Club (RTC) merge with the LCFC Women's Academy to comprise a complete player pathway – from schoolgirl age groups (U9s to U16s), through to the Club's three post-16 pathways and into the professional ranks.

The integrated pathway will continue to progressively build an accessible route for outstanding talent into full-time football in Leicester.

Alongside the Academy Pathway with teams competing across all age groups, the FA Weetabix Wildcats Girls' Football Programme will continue to be the entry route into the programme, as well as providing a safe and welcoming introduction to football for players of all abilities.

All LCFC Women football operations will be based at the Club's elite training facility at Belvoir Drive in the heart of the city. Graded Category One by the Premier League's Elite Player Performance Plan, the facility became home to LCFC Women in 2021.

Leicester City Chief Executive Susan Whelan said: "Increased participation, the development of outstanding talent and sustainable success at senior level are cornerstones of our vision for women's football in Leicestershire. Establishing a comprehensive pathway for young players in one facility is crucial to us delivering on those objectives.

"There's a wonderful symmetry to bringing those elements together at Belvoir Drive which, for more than 60 years, fostered such a remarkable bond between generations of players throughout our men's age groups, right through to the first team. Aligning our women's operations in a similar way is a fitting legacy for the facility, as young girls taking their first steps in game can be directly inspired by the stars of today's women's team.

"The continuity will help develop a culture inclusion, of aspiration and of excellence that can inspire girls and young women for generations to come."

Carter extends contract with Chelsea

Chelsea defender Jess Carter has signed a contract extension with the Women's Super League club which will keep her at the club until the summer of 2022, with an option of a 12 month extension.

The 23-year-old joined the club from Birmingham City in 2018 and made 19 appearances for the Blues.

Carter commented on her extension: "I've grown so much here at this club, both on and off the pitch. I've hit a point now where I know what is expected of me, I know what I need to bring to the table, and I feel like I'm in a position now where I'm finally starting to compete with some of the girls.

"There is more that I can do here at Chelsea to help the team and I'm really excited to see what we can go on and achieve after this successful year."

van de Donk



Jacques Feeney SSP



Daniela Pochelli SSP

By Charlotte Stacey

After six successful seasons with the Arsenal, Daniëlle van de Donk has confirmed her move to French giants Olympique Lyonnais.

The Dutch midfielder lifted one WSL trophy, an FA Cup and two Conti Cups during her time in England, establishing herself a key figure in the gunner's intricate midfield. Van de Donk scored a fair 45 goals in 142 appearances, the largest number of appearances of any overseas player in Arsenal's history.

Crafty. This is the word that immediately springs to mind when one pores over van de Donk's guileful game. She is crafty, in every sense. A wrecker of havoc with all the

tricks and flicks to assure she is so without hesitation. Weaving in and out of oppositions with the intent to cause some damage, van de Donk reinforces her clever movement with a surprise or two up her sleeve.

Brazen in her approach, van de Donk teases games of cat and mouse, riling the calmest of feathers on her wily warpath. There is a feistiness, an almost scrappy determination to stamp her impression and an antagonistic audacity to leave in the poison after she has stung. Yet this fiery nature can sometimes result in trouble and van de Donk has been known to argue the toss when she deems decisions unfair. Perhaps it

is a red mist, perhaps not, but there is certainly a fire within that keeps all those around her on their toes.

Yet, in a twist as unpredictable as those perilous feet, when another suffers a dangerous challenge, it is van de Donk that so firmly stands beside them.

Teammate, opposition, even an official, it does not matter, van de Donk personally ensures the wellbeing of those around her. Perhaps that red mist is not so red after all.

Despite her gutsy nature van de Donk is not a troublesome player. Although the blindingly obvious passion she radiates may get her hot under the collar every now and again, van de Donk offers far more

Dangerous



than the ability to bring it both barrels each and every time. Her attacking skillset lends her nicely to build-up play with her movements often key to the creation of chances.

Excelling when located high in the middle third, van de Donk is able to unlock defences with her astute positioning. Whether she is on the ball or not, van de Donk works to draw to in opponents which in turn opens up space for her teammates. Tirelessly putting in the ground work to swoop in on loose balls and dispossess high up the pitch, van de Donk uses her pace to quickly break lines and take oppositions off balance.

Van de Donk is also notable for her visionary intelligence. With just a quick glance she is able to sweep the blueprint of the pitch and pick out the most valuable pass or progressive carry. She is slick with her dribbling and is able to cover significant distances with the ball at her feet before releasing it with accuracy. Her contribution to shot and goal creation cannot be downplayed.

With an obvious attacking flair, it has perhaps been slightly disappointing that in her final season with the Arsenal van de Donk has not been able to fully practice this, having been stationed in a deeper role. It has also been quite apparent she has not received the game time

she likely sought and plausibly deserved. When accumulating these factors alongside a contract termination and an offer from one of the world's most prolific clubs, Lyon, it is not wholly unexpected that van de Donk took the decision to leave North London.

What van de Donk leaves behind at the Arsenal is more than just a number on a team sheet. She leaves a never-ending appetite, a lust for success, as well as some hypothetically big shoes to fill. Lyon have landed themselves an excellent recruit and one can bet in their bid to retake France.

With van de Donk on side, their midfield just became a little more dangerous.

An Open Letter from Danielle van de Donk



Danielle van de Donk took to www.arsenal.com to write a letter about her time at Arsenal:

Honestly, I never thought I would stay at Arsenal for six years.

It's so rare that footballers stay in one place for so long - and I know that all too well. When I arrived at Arsenal in 2015, I'd just come from Sweden and I'd only actually played there for four or five months.

Gothenburg was a great city but it was my first adventure abroad, outside of the Netherlands, and I found it a lot harder than I expected it to be, being away from home. But then Arsenal came in and I knew I wasn't ready to go back to the Netherlands just yet.

Pedro brought me over here and wanted to ease me in to a

new style of football. I remember being quite annoyed that he put me on the bench at the beginning but then one game I looked to my left and saw Casey Stoney, Kelly Smith and Fara Williams.

"Oh my God, is this the bench?" I thought to myself. "The standards are ridiculous here!"

And, let me tell you, they are! I was known as a bit of a rebel when I first arrived here but everyone at the club helped me to grow up, to be more professional and become more of an all-round player.

I was challenged on a daily basis by the great team-mates I had around me. The level was high, the standards were high and I think all of those factors helped me to develop my football intelligence. I had to learn to be clever, I had to

learn to be more physical, I had to make loads of steps to become the player I am today. And without those steps that Arsenal gave me, there's no way I would have been able to achieve everything I've done since I arrived here. Winning the Euros with the Netherlands, the Women's Super League title, the FA Cup... I've done a lot.

I've had such a great time with everyone, too, and that's the big thing I'll remember from my time at Arsenal. I spent my first year with the oldies, the legends of the game, and had so much fun. They made me feel so welcome and at home here in north London. Arsenal is a special place and I'm so happy to have stayed here for so long.

That's why this whole process has been quite hard for me. Of course, I'm so proud to be

moving to Lyon and it's an amazing step for me too, but all the messages I've had in the past 24 hours have made the reality sink in.

I'm going to leave Arsenal, London, Borehamwood, everything. It's made me emotional. I'm going to miss everyone and everything. Of course I am. Arsenal is my family, it's my home now and it's hard to leave that behind.

I feel so appreciated by my team-mates but especially by you, the fans. Reading through all of their replies to yesterday's announcement, it kind of feels like I've retired from playing football because it feels like a proper goodbye from them. It's just so nice that people think of me in that way and although I've never been one to read everything on social media, I wanted to read every single message because all the fans have been so nice.

That's why this letter is so important to me. It's a chance for me to say thank you. Thank you for your support, thank you for your messages, thank you for being there for the last six years. I've put my heart into everything I've done here and I hope you've seen that.

I also hope I'm leaving something behind, too. I saw that I was the first overseas player to reach 100 appearances for Arsenal Women, and that I've made more appearances than any other foreign player in the club's history. That is so sick!

You know when you're younger and you're made to stand in

front of the class and have to say what you want to be when you're older? Well I said that I wanted to be a professional footballer.

My mum took me to Barcelona on a stadium tour, where we looked at all the things on the walls, all the achievements, the trophies and things like that. I'm kind of realising that it's going to be me. I know I'm not going to have as many as a Barcelona but I have left something behind at Arsenal with my name on it - literally, because it's been engraved at the 100 Club wall at the training ground!

That's all I wanted to do when I was younger, and I'm so proud of it. I'm so happy to know that I'm leaving Arsenal in a better place than when I arrived.

I'm leaving with memories to last a lifetime, too. The one that will always bring a smile to my face, though, is that double nutmeg! I keep seeing Natasha Harding and Remi Allen replying to tweets about it saying, 'Not again, not again' every time it's posted, which makes me laugh. It's so good, though, the best skill I've ever done on the pitch.

In terms of regrets, I'd say the biggest is that we weren't able to finish the 2019/20 season due to the pandemic. I was 28 and it like a year of my career had gone because the season stopped. We were playing well, too, so I think we could have created even more history.

The other one is that I haven't been able to say goodbye to you all in person. It would have

been great to have had you back at our games last season. I've missed you all so much.

I played with the national team in front of fans again recently and even though it wasn't anywhere near full capacity, it put such a big smile on my face to see them there. It gave me such a big boost of energy.

That was always the case whenever I would walk out at Meadow Park in front of you all. The Arsenal fans have been so amazing with me and I think they've created such a good atmosphere at games, too.

There's no booing, there's no racism or any negative things like that. They're just lovely, they're there for the football, to enjoy it, to have a good time and sing through the game. They cheer everyone on and it's just the best. I'm going to miss them so much.

So I just want to tell you all that you made my experience, all six years, so much better. I've seen the club grow, I've seen our fanbase grow and I hope it's just going to continue.

And although I'm saying goodbye to you as an Arsenal player, I'll always be one of you: an Arsenal fan.

DVD



Hampton set to leave Birmingham

Birmingham City goalkeeper Hannah Hampton has announced she has left the Women's Super League club.

"The 20-year-old has represented England up to under-21 level and was called into the senior squad in February.

Posting on Twitter, she wrote: "After five years of being a blue, I have made the decision to leave to continue my development and career elsewhere.

"I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the club and all the staff involved, for having the belief in me since the age of sixteen when not many others did and I hope I have done the club and you bluenoses proud.

"It has been five years full of ups and downs with many challenges along the way where I have grown as a player and person and have known that you have all been there to support me.

"I have grown as a player and person and I've known that you have all been there to support me.

"I have had the opportunity to work with some great and supportive teammates along my journey at Blues and can't thank them enough.

"To the bluenoses, I will always be thankful for the support you gave me at sixteen from my debut at St. Andrews to my last game at Solihull Moors, even when you couldn't be there in person, I still felt your presence and really appreciated it."



Orlagh Gardner/Sports Press Photo

Symonds signs first professional contract with Brighton & Hove Albion

Brighton and Hove Albion have given midfielder Maisie Symonds her first professional contract.

The 18-year-old made her Women's Super League debut in May against Bristol City and made her start for Albion in their 6-0 win over Huddersfield in the FA Cup.

Symonds has recently been called up for England's under-19 training camp at St. George's Park.

Speaking to the official website, head coach Hope Powell said: "Maisie made real progress last season and deserves this opportunity. She trained regularly with the squad and did well when she played at the end of the season.

"She is now on the next step in her journey. She still has a lot to learn but she's also got a lot to offer and we're looking forward to seeing her develop."

Birmingham City and Tonic Surgery join forces

Birmingham City will be starting their first-ever campaign at St. Andrews with the support of new partner Tonic Weight Loss Surgery.

The brand, who is based in Birmingham but has locations across the country, will be the back of the shorts sponsor.

The partnership will work to educate football fans about the health benefits through social media collaborations across the season as part of their powerful campaign #GivingBackLives, which is at the heart of all the clinics' work.

Following on from the Women's partnership with health and wellbeing brand SmartMeds, the Club is once more aligning with partners who focus their work around improving health.

James Corrigan, Commercial Manager at Blues, said: "As a sports Club, promoting health and lifestyle brands and educating our fans about the wider benefits they can offer makes perfect sense.

"The work Tonic Weight Loss Surgery does is life-changing and life-saving, and we hope to get that message across to Blues fans who might not be aware of the work they do."

Kay Franklin, CEO at Tonic Weight Loss Surgery, said: "I was born and bred in Birmingham and have always followed Blues so, to me, this is the best way I can show my loyalty to the Club.

"Being a woman in business, I feel that we have to be both soft and powerful and we need to inspire all women to follow their dreams. The team at Tonic Weight Loss Surgery have a simple but powerful saying and that is #GivingBackLives. If you believe, you can be anything you want to be, but you have to believe."

Larsen leaves Villa

Aston Villa have confirmed that Stine Larsen left the Women's Super League club when her contract expired at the end of June.

The 25-year-old joined the club from French side Fleury 91 after they were promoted from the FA Women's Championship.

She made 20 appearances across all competitions.

A statement said: "Aston Villa Women sincerely thanks Stine for her time at the Club and wishes her the very best for the future."

Eidevall appointed new Arsenal



Peter Sander SSP



By Marissa Thomas

Arsenal Women's long search for their new manager concluded in the final week of June as Jonas Eidevall was appointed Joe Montemurro's successor.

Eidevall joins the Gunners from Swedish side Rosengard, who he led to the quarter-finals of the Champions League last season.

The 38-year-old is a highly regarded coach who appears to understand and want to continue Arsenal's famed style of play.

On joining Arsenal, Eidevall said: "I feel

honoured to be taking this role.

"Arsenal have a rich history, more successful than any other women's team in England.

"I want to add to these honours.

"It is super important that we win, and we will be very ambitious about that, but it is even more important that we live the values and defend the club badge on a day-to-day basis.

"I cannot wait to do that at Arsenal."

Arsenal finished third last season behind champions Chelsea and runners-up Manchester City without

ever really looking like they could challenge for the Women's Super League title.

This should be at the forefront of Eidevall's plans as head coach.

Arsenal will be expected to finish in the Champions League places at the very least but beating Chelsea and Man City will also be targets if they are to make things uncomfortable for the current top two teams in the division.

Furthermore, Arsenal need a stronger depth of squad if they are to compete at the highest level.

Arsenal Women head coach



Ruby Mace has joined Manchester City and Jill Roord and Danielle van de Donk have departed overseas to VFL Wolfsburg and Olympique Lyonnais.

While Arsenal have brought in Mana Iwabuchi from Aston Villa and Lyon's Nikita Parris who previously played in the WSL for Everton and Man City, there is still work to be done.

Defensive stalwart Leah Williamson has signed a new contract, great news given her love for Arsenal, but the fact that it is only for one year shows that Williamson is waiting to be convinced as to whether Arsenal are still capable of challenging for honours.

Vivianne Miedema's contract runs out at the end of next season and if Arsenal want to keep her, she is another key player who has to believe that she can fulfil her potential with the Gunners.

If Jonas Eidevall can recapture the form of the first full season under Joe Montemurro, there is no reason why Arsenal cannot reach previous heights and win more trophies to cement their status as the most decorated team in women's football history.

In his own words (via the Arsenal website):

"My passion for football is very, very intense, and I'm a very hardworking coach.

"I have high demands of the people and the players working with me, because I want us to achieve success together and that's the only way we'll be able to do it.

"But above all else, I love football, and one of the most important things for me is that we enjoy every day together and don't take it for granted.

"You see, we've been practicing, fighting and developing ourselves all our lives to reach this point of playing at the top, so let's enjoy it - especially at a club like this."

TGI Fridays becomes new sponsor for Birmingham City

Birmingham City have announced a new partnership with TGI Fridays.

The restaurant brand will become the club's official shirt sleeve sponsor for the next three seasons.

The first TGI Fridays opened in Britain, in Birmingham in 1986 on the Hagley Road.

Fridays now have 86 locations in England, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands and serve over 12 million guests each year.

Ian Dutton, Chief Commercial Officer at Blues, told the official website: "TGI Fridays is a globally recognised brand, so it's fantastic to be able to announce a partnership of this length with the Women's team.

"With the history the brand has in the city and the exciting plans for Blues Women in the coming season, the partnership makes perfect sense and we're looking forward to a long and fruitful collaboration."

Dan Staples, Chief Marketing Officer at Fridays, said: "We're thrilled to be partnering with Blues Women. We see this as a strategic investment in the women's game at a time where interest levels and viewership in the UK are rightfully reaching record highs.

"The City of Birmingham has a very special place in the history of Fridays as our restaurant at Hagley Road was our very first to open in the UK.

"We believe in the power of sport to engage audiences and wish Blues Women all the best for the new season.

"We look forward to working with them to raise the profile of women's football within the local community."



Tatiana Herzberg Sports Press Photo

Williams signs contract extension

Lydia Williams has signed a contract extension with Arsenal.

The club has triggered a one-year extension clause in her contract, as preparations for the 2021/22 season begin.

The Australia international joined the Women's Super League club from Melbourne City last summer and has played 11 times across all competitions.

She told Arsenal.com, "I'm really happy.

"I just can't wait to get back and see the fans now.

"I want that fan experience on the pitch and during games because that's the one thing that I've missed the most."

Everton announces players leaving the club

Everton have announced that a number of players will be leaving the club at the end of their contracts.

Chantelle Boye-Hlorkah leaves after 16 years with the Women's Super League side.

Taking to Twitter, she wrote: "To my Everton family, 16 years but my time here comes to an end.

"I've been trying to find the perfect words to express my feelings for this club and I can't seem to find a way to say what this club truly means to me.

"To the fans: It breaks my heart knowing I couldn't say goodbye to you all in person. The support, the togetherness you have not only given to me throughout my time but also to every single player and member that enters this blue family is unbelievable.

"Everton, you will forever hold a special place in my heart."

Manager Willie Kirk added: "Everton manager Willie Kirk paid tribute to the departing forward.

"Chantelle has been an important part of my time here so far, and I want to thank her and wish her all the best for the future," he told evertonfc.com.

"I really enjoyed working with her and getting to know her as a person.

"She is a Blue through and through and it was evident every day in training how much the Club means to her.

"I know that she will want to return to the Club one day and complete some unfinished business."

Jill Scott and Alisha Lehmann have returned to their parents clubs after completing their loan spells with the Blues.

The club have also confirmed that Georgia Brougham, Maéva Clemaron, Tinja-Riikka Korpela, Molly Pike and Hannah Coan have left following the end of their contracts.

A statement on the official website said: "The Club would like to thank all the departing players for their service and wishes them well for the future."



Ashleigh Davies/Sports Press Photo



Karl Newton Sports Press Photo

Kick it out launch new player advisory board



Kick it Out have launched a new player Advisory Board.

The Board is made up current and former players in both the men's and women's games.

Kick it Out said: "It will be an important asset to the campaign to drive positive and inclusive change at all levels of the game."

Head of Player Engagement Troy Townsend will co-chair the board alongside Kick It Out Ambassador and former professional Clarke Carlisle.

On the launch of the Board, Troy Townsend said: "The board is a fantastic opportunity for us to hear from players with experiences at all levels of the game.

"The players involved will help shape our visions and goals, and challenge us to be the best we can be.

"I'm really excited about the future and seeing what the players can bring to the organisation."

Anita Asante of Aston Villa women said: "I

decided to join Kick It Out's Player Advisory Board because it's a great opportunity to share both my own personal insights and the insights of my peers in the game to help progress development and bring in significant positive change."

At launch, the board is composed of the following current and former players:

Anita Asante – Aston Villa Women

Rhian Brewster – Sheffield United

Holly Morgan – Leicester City Women

Yan Dhanda – Swansea City

Gilly Flaherty – West Ham United Women

Joe Jacobson – Wycombe Wanderers

Renee Hector – Watford Women

Mal Benning – Professional Player

Danny Mills – Dulwich Hamlet

Anwar Uddin – Aldershot Town

Marcus Gayle – Brentford Ambassador

Williamson signs new contract

Leah Williamson has signed a new contract with Arsenal.

The 24-year-old joined the club at the age of nine and progressed through the academy.

She made her first-team debut in 2014, coming off the bench to replace Rachel Yankey in their Women's Champions League quarter-final defeat to Birmingham City.

Speaking to www.arsenal.com, she said: "I've signed because I've always said that this is my club.

"I say it's a fairytale that I'm still here, I have won trophies and we've continued to compete for trophies, that's really important to me and I think that I owe the club as well for everything they've given to me, and it's time for me to give back to them."

Clare Wheatley, head of women's football, added: "It's clear to everyone how much Leah loves the club and she embodies everything that we stand for on and off the pitch. We are delighted that she's signed another contract with us, she believes in our ambitions and she's obviously a very important part of the team and It's a big boost for everyone – fans, team-mates and staff."

Amy Turner joins Orlando Pride

Manchester United have confirmed that Amy Turner has left the club to join National Women's Soccer League side Orlando Pride.

Turner joined United in 2018 and made 67 appearances, scoring four goals.

The statement read: "Everyone at the club would like to thank Amy for her service, and wish her the best of luck for the future."

American duo Heath and Press leave United

Christen Press and Tobin Heath have left Manchester United following the end of their one-year deals.

The duo helped the club achieve fourth place in the 2020/21 Women's Super League.

Press scored four goals in 17 games and Heath made 11 appearances also scoring four times.

Chelsea sign academy goalkeeper

Chelsea have signed academy goalkeeper Emily Orman.

The 18-year-old goalkeeper has signed with the club until 2023 with the option to extend by a further year.

The No.32 has also represented England at national performance camps from the age of 14 years old, competing at every international age grade through to the Under-19s.

The up-and-coming goalkeeper also played in the UEFA Under-17s Euros tournament.

On signing for Chelsea, Orman told the official website: "It's a genuine dream come true and it's an honour to sign my first professional contract at this club.

"It's something that me, my family and coaches around me have been working to achieve since I was about six years old. It's an indescribable feeling but really, the hard work starts now."

Soccer Aid 2021: All



Wayne Rooney and Fara Williams are coming out of retirement to play for England again.

Rooney managed the England side in Soccer Aid for UNICEF 2020 but is once again taking to the pitch as a player.

Rooney and Williams will be joined by Micah Richards, Gary Neville and Paul Scholes. Sprint king Usain Bolt is also back for what will be his third appearance in the game.

The England vs. Soccer Aid World XI FC clash is the tenth-ever. This year, for the very first time, the match takes place on a Saturday (4th September) and will be played at Manchester City's Etihad Stadium – also a first.

Rooney, who scored 53 goals for England, said: "Pulling on an England shirt is always special, so I'm absolutely delighted to be doing that again in Soccer Aid for UNICEF this September.

"Managing the England team last year was great but being around

the players made me want to lace up the boots again – now I've got that chance, one last time. Soccer Aid for UNICEF has been a massive force for good since it started back in 2006 and I know the public will support us again this year by purchasing tickets, which are now on sale."

Dermot O'Leary returns to host the live show on ITV, with England legend Alex Scott charged with getting all the gossip from the touch-line.

Scott said: "I'm so excited for this! I've wanted to be involved in Soccer Aid for UNICEF for many years, so I am delighted to be part of it now as pitch-side reporter.

"For years I've watched the games and it's something that I know loads of people look forward to. It'll be great to be back in a stadium with fans again – and all for such a great cause."

The line-up is further strengthened by a number of other football stars including: Kelly Smith, Roberto Carlos, Patrice Evra, David James, Ashley

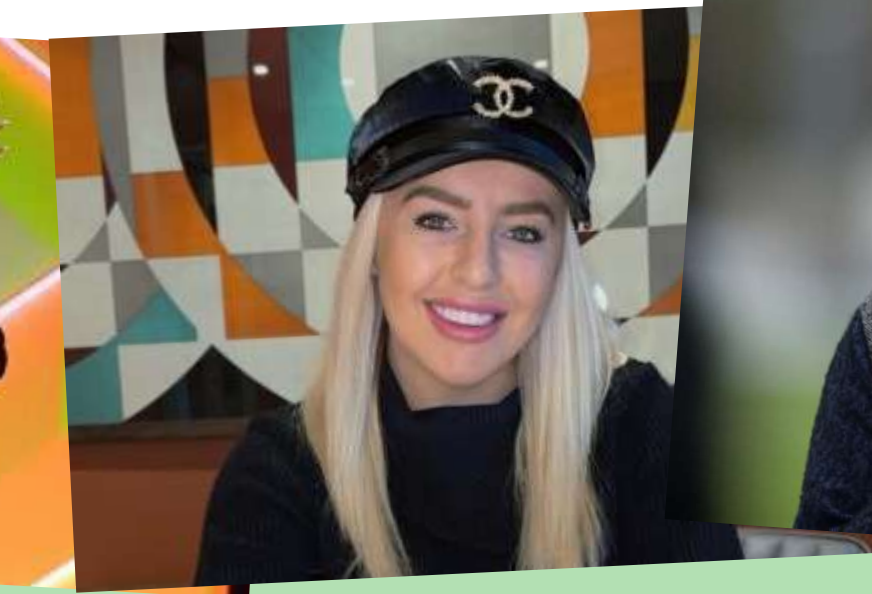
Cole, Emile Heskey and Jamie Redknapp. Harry Redknapp returns as Manager of the Soccer Aid World XI FC, while Micah Richards joins the England coaching team with David Seaman as goalkeeping coach.

Neville said: "Just when I thought my days of being booed by City fans had passed! I'm hoping that my hamstrings hold out for more than five minutes, to be honest. Also, I need to get through the next few months without Micah Richards sounding-off in my ear too much! All joking aside, we're all playing for a hugely important cause – UNICEF. Their work is as important now as it has ever been, so please buy a ticket and come along – it will be great fun."

Micah Richards said: "Usain Bolt running at Gary Neville? Rooney out of retirement? Me making my coaching debut. What more do you want?!"

Other star names announced include: James Arthur, Tom Grennan, Olly Murs, Mark Wright, Paddy McGuinness, Ore Oduba, Kem Cetinay, Liv Cooke,

What you need to know



Roman Kemp, Chunkz and Maya Jama as a pundit.

Katie Rawcliffe, Head of Entertainment Commissioning at ITV, said: “We at ITV are proud to be broadcasting the world’s biggest charity football match to help raise money and awareness for UNICEF to do their vital work for children around the globe, especially at this difficult time.

“To kick it all off, and to celebrate the 10th Soccer Aid for UNICEF, this year there will also be some brilliant new programming for our viewers that we are really excited about in the lead up to the big match.”

Danny Wilson, Managing Director of Operations at Manchester City, said: “We are delighted to be hosting Soccer Aid for UNICEF at the Etihad Stadium for the very first time.

“Soccer Aid is recognised as the world’s biggest charity football match and has made a significant contribution to UNICEF’s charitable programmes since it was founded. We are proud to be

playing our part to support an event with such a good cause and we look forward to an exciting matchday with a fantastic line-up of players on each team.”

Since 2006 – when UNICEF UK Ambassador Robbie Williams co-founded the concept – Soccer Aid for UNICEF has raised over £47m to help give children all over the world a childhood full of play. As many countries celebrate coming out of lockdown, the Covid-19 crisis is still making life for many vulnerable children even tougher. Soccer Aid for UNICEF 2020, at Old Trafford, raised a record breaking £9.3m.

This year, Soccer Aid for UNICEF is bringing play back. The money raised from this year’s game could help UNICEF deliver 2 billion Covid-19 vaccines to frontline healthcare workers, social workers and teachers around the world – the people children rely on – and help children get back to school, beat malnutrition, and get the healthcare they need today and long after the crisis is over.

It’s us against Covid for every child, everywhere.

The Soccer Aid for UNICEF excitement does not stop with the football. This year there will be a full Soccer Aid for UNICEF week across ITV and STV in the lead up to the match, featuring new shows, special takeovers and great prizes to be won. With its biggest-ever goal of going up against Covid for children, everywhere, Soccer Aid for UNICEF has never been bigger. Further announcements will be made across ITV, STV and Soccer Aid for UNICEF social media channels.

Soccer Aid for UNICEF is delighted to welcome back our returning principal partners Primark, JD and PUMA with more details on these exciting partnerships to follow.

Tickets for the game are on sale now via www.socceraid.org.uk/ tickets with a family of four able to attend for £60 – two adults and two children.

Kirby and Hemp take home PFA awards



Chelsea star Fran Kirby pipped her teammates Sam Kerr and Ann-Katrin Berger to the Women's PFA Player's Player of the Year award.

This is the second time the England and Chelsea forward has won the award.

She joins Kevin De Bruyne, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lucy Bronze, Gareth Bale, Thierry Henry, Alan Shearer and Mark Hughes on the elite list of two-time winners.

Kirby told the PFA: "First and foremost, my teammates are amazing, and I would never have won any of the awards or trophies that I have without them, but to win this is really special.

"I think what we've achieved has been incredible, so I'm really proud to be a part of this team.

"Hopefully, I will be able to come back into the same kind of position I came into last year, because I've been playing like I love the game again and like I enjoy it, and that's when you get the best out of me."

Manchester City's Lauren Hemp became the first woman to win three PFA Awards, taking home a record third trophy for Women's PFA Young Player of the Year Award.

An incredible season also saw Hemp receive a double nomination from her fellow players, who also put her in the running for Women's PFA Player of the Year.

Hemp told the PFA: "It feels pretty special to be picked amongst fellow professionals who I play against each week.

"It's really nice, and to me, it's one of the best accolades I can win - it's a real honour.

"I'm really proud of the team and hopefully, next season, we can win the league and push further in the Champions League, because I'm here to win trophies and I know all my teammates would love to do the same.

"I've been fortunate enough to have many excellent coaches throughout my journey, and I just hope to keep on improving because I know I'm not the finished product and I know I can only just keep getting better."

Birmingham City have announced retained and released list

Birmingham City have announced their retained and released list following the conclusion of the 2020/21 season.

Blues Women have offered new contracts to multiple First Team players. These are Abbi Grant, Rebecca Holloway, Gemma Lawley, Ruesha Littlejohn, Sarah Mayling, Connie Scofield, Harriet Scott, Claudia Walker, Lucy Whipp and Sophie Whitehouse.

Georgia Brougham, who was on loan from Everton, has also been offered a permanent contract at Blues. Meanwhile, Lily Simkin has been offered a professional deal in preparation for her 18th birthday.

Christie Murray and Veatriki Sarri remain under contract and talks are ongoing with both Mollie Green and Emma Kelly.

Ruby Mace, now of Manchester City, and Emily Murphy previously returned to their parent Clubs, whilst loanee Jamie-Lee Napier becomes a free agent.

Heidi Logan will be released following the expiration of her contract.

A statement from the Women's Super League side said: "The Club would like to thank the departing players for their efforts during their time with us and wish them all the best for the future.

"Going forward, the Club intends to recruit additional players during the close season, with this process taking place following the appointment of a new Head Coach.

"The recruitment process for this position is ongoing and the Club will be making no further comment on the matter at this stage."

Ross departs United

Manchester United have confirmed that Jane Ross departed the Women's Super League at the end of June.

Ross, who joined in 2019, made 34 appearances in total for the Reds, scoring seven goals.

Taking to Twitter, Ross wrote: "Thanks to Manchester United for the past two years. A fantastic group of people to work with and a privilege to pull on the jersey.

"Thanks also to the fans for your continued support during my time at the club.

"I'm now looking forward to the next chapter of my career and what lies ahead."

Wyne joins West Ham United

West Ham United have announced the signing of Zaneta Wyne.

The 30-year-old midfielder moves to the Women's Super League from Scottish Women's Premier League side Glasgow City.

She has previously worked with manager Oli Harder at Klepp IL and will wear the No 2 shirt.

Speaking to the official website, she said: "I'm super excited to be joining West Ham United.

"I'm really pleased to be back in the Women's Super League again and can't wait to get started.

"I respect Olli a lot as a coach, he's a good guy and works incredibly hard. I just want to play for him, so I'm looking forward to creating some new memories and hopefully bringing some success to the club."

Harder added: "Zaneta is somebody that will bring a lot of experience and technical quality to the team," he added. "She's played in a number of countries across the world and somebody who I've worked with before. I know that she will bring a lot of positive energy to the team.

"She is somebody that we believe will represent the football club in the best possible manner."

Chelsea sell out of season tickets

Chelsea Women have announced they have sold out of season tickets for the upcoming 2021/22 Women's Super League season for the first time in the club's history.

Fans lucky enough to secure tickets will be able to see all of the action at WSL home games as well as FA Cup and League Cup home fixtures.

Regular tickets will still be available for fans to support Emma Hayes and the team at Kingsmeadow on a match-by-match basis.

Guy Laurence, Chelsea Chief Executive, told the official website: "The Women's team have had a hugely successful and historic season, and it's great to see that the achievements on the pitch mean more fans want to come down to Kingsmeadow to enjoy the games in person.

Manager Emma Hayes added: "I'm delighted to hear we've sold more season tickets than ever before.

"We've missed our loyal fans tremendously, but we felt their support throughout the last season.

"I really can't wait to see everyone back at Kingsmeadow later this summer, we've got plenty to celebrate!"

Mace leaves Arsenal for Man City

Manchester City have signed England youth international Ruby Mace on a three-year contract.

The midfielder signs her first professional deal, joining from Arsenal.

Mace, 17, had already made a breakthrough into the senior team with the Gunners, and also spent time on dual-registration with Birmingham City.

The midfielder has represented England at age-group level up to under-19s.

Speaking to [mancity.com](https://www.mancity.com), she said: "I'm so happy and excited to join Manchester City.

"As a 17-year-old, it's the biggest moment in my short career so far. I've got so much to learn and develop in my game and I feel this is the best environment for me to achieve my dreams.

"Amazing players, an amazing Club and amazing coaches! I'd also like to thank Arsenal for all they have done for me to get me to this point."

Head Coach Gareth Taylor added: "We're thrilled to have added Ruby to our squad here at Manchester City - she's a talented player who we feel has a very bright future ahead of her.

"She's already proven that she can make her mark in the Barclays FA Women's Super League and we're really looking forward to working with her in the coming seasons."



Richard Callis/Sports Press Photo

White surprises community volunteer ahead of National Thank You Day



So, I just want to say thank you, as well.

England star Ellen White has surprised a London based grassroots coaching volunteer with a video call to say ‘thank you’ ahead of National Thank You Day on Sunday, July 4.

Eriona Meheti is a coach at Pro Touch Academy, a London-based community sports organisation that provides help, support, and encouragement to potential young, gifted and talented football players.

White showed her thanks to Eriona on behalf of England Senior Women’s team, with the video—which fans can watch on England Football Twitter page.

The activity was organised by The Football Association as part of their support for the national day of thanks which has been organised by The Together Coalition.

The day aims to bring communities together to thank each other and celebrate the community spirit that so many felt during lock down.

As part of the campaign, four football loving volunteers were recognised after all playing a

pivotal role in their communities over a challenging 18 months, dedicating their time to help others.

Other volunteers were surprised by Harry Kane, Jordan Henderson and Raheem Sterling.

Mark Bullingham, The FA CEO and member of the Together Initiative steering group, said, “It’s been an extremely challenging 18 months, made more manageable by volunteers throughout the country who have gone and beyond in so many ways.

“Football has endless examples of players, coaches, staff and fans performing heroics for their community’s wellbeing.

“We are proud to be a supporter of National Thank You Day and recognise the importance of taking time to pause, reflect and join together on Sunday July, 4.”

To find out more information on National Thank You Day, go to:

www.thankyouday.org.uk

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"She is somebody that we believe will represent the football club in the best possible manner."



Reading sign Milan star Dowie

Striker Natasha Dowie has joined Women's Super League club Reading.

The 32-year-old has spent the last year at AC Milan, scoring 14 goals in 24 matches for the Italian side.

Reading FC Women manager Kelly Chambers told the official website: "I am delighted to bring Tash to Reading. Tash is someone that I have been watching for the last 18 months.

"I wanted to bring Tash in last season but she had different aspirations at the time but I am delighted to now call her a Reading player. Tash is going to be a great addition for us, firstly because she is a proven goal scorer where ever she has played but also she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the side.

"Looking over the last couple of seasons there is no hiding from the fact that we haven't been ruthless enough in front of goal with the amount of chances we have created in games so bringing Tash in will bring a player who is more comfortable in those areas and will definitely add to the quality I ready have.

"Tash has very high standards and is a player that wants to keep improving but also wants to help the team push forward. I am extremely excited to work with Tash and keep pushing this team in the right direction."

Manchester City sign Shaw

Manchester City have announced the signing of Jamaica striker Khadija Shaw on a three-year deal.

The 24-year-old, who is known as 'Bunny' will move to the Women's Super League side in July following the conclusion of her current contract with Division 1 Feminine side Bordeaux.

The contract will see her at the side until 2024 and she will wear the number 21 shirt.

Speaking to [mancity.com](https://www.mancity.com), she said: "It feels amazing to be a Manchester City player. I chose this Club because I want to be a part of the environment, the culture and to play for this amazing team.

"I want to be tested and there is so much experience in the team here, so I know I will learn a lot from everybody around me.

"I grew up as a City fan, and I even have some family members who live in Manchester – when I told them about my move, they were so happy and excited.

"I've always watched the English game and it's something that I've always wanted to be a part of – the Barclays FA WSL is growing and developing tremendously, and I

West Ham United's Joel signs contract extension

Lois Joel has extended her contract with Women's Super League side West Ham United.

The 22-year-old defender has signed for another year with the Hammers after only making five league appearances due to sustaining a foot injury in February.

Joel told West Ham TV: "I'm really excited to be here for another year.

"Last year I really enjoyed being with the club, it was my first taste of professional football and I'm looking forward to building on that in the upcoming season.

"I want to build on what I achieved last season. Under Olli, I started to get more consistent game-time and I'd love to build on that in the upcoming campaign.

"I think being versatile helps me and I want to continue that this season and see where I can impact games.

"I think the team are in really good spirits. Obviously, we're going to have new faces in the team, but I think that everyone will be able to gel really well.

"It's exciting to have a full pre-season under Olli, something we haven't had yet because he came in half-way through the season, so starting from scratch and building on the foundations that we set last year, it's exciting."

CHAMPIONSHIP



Nicol bravely shares her story following online horror



Warning this piece contains sensitive issues that some readers may find upsetting.

Crystal Palace Star Leigh Nicol has bravely opened up after she was subject to phone hacking which saw her private life spread on the internet.

In 2019, an iCloud hack resulted in long-forgotten private content dating back to 2014 being discovered.

The hack caused her to contemplate taking her own life but now after help from friends and family she is bravely talking to help others who might be in that situation.

Nicol told Sky Sports: "I was seen as the one person people knew who had no problems.

"I was just Leigh, the happiest person they knew. Even if you met me now you would say I was a happy soul.

"You would not know that I was broken."

To this day, Nicol still receives abusive messages online daily but she knows she can help people.

She added: "It is just about educating people.

"I did not even know this was a thing.

"The damage is done for me so this is about the

next generation. I feel like prevention is better than someone having to react to this.

"I cannot change it alone but if I can raise awareness to stop it happening to others then that is what I want to do."

On June 18, Nicol published a statement confirming that she was suing one of the sites which her private information turned up on.

It said: "Yesterday a complaint was filed in the US courts on behalf of multiple victims who suffered the posting of content stolen and shared without consent.

It'll be an ongoing battle for the foreseeable future for myself and other survivors.

"I have learnt that with a strong network of people around me, it is possible to survive an ordeal like this.

"I want to be a part of the fight that means others don't have to go through this.

"Although today my focus has been on this hugely significant matter in my life, I do also have to focus on the other commitments."

If anyone needs help or advice go to b5consultancy.com

Durham's football academy crowned champions

Durham Women FC and Bede Sixth Form are celebrating after the duo's Women's Football Academy lifted the league title.

The Wildcats and Bede Sixth Form work in partnership to deliver a dual-career academy to players in the Tees Valley region, allowing aspiring footballers to combine their playing ambitions with studying for a range of qualifications.

And having been launched in September 2019, the academy has continued to go from strength-to-strength – culminating in this title success.

The Women's Football Academy side have been crowned as winners of the North East College's League for the first time after winning nine of their ten games this season.

Coach Graeme Clark told durhamwfc.co.uk: "It's a great achievement.

"It's obviously been a tough year for everybody and to have some sort of normality of kicking a football, it just breaks up the monotony of what's happening.

"One of the girls from the squad has got a triple distinction and has got a place at Durham University – and to play the football and commit to their studies, while everything else is going on, they all deserve praise as it's unbelievable."

Bede Sixth Form principal Ben Robinson added: "It's great to see girls of all levels being supported in their own progress and development.

"Student experience and wellbeing are the highest priorities and we have seen the programme contribute in multiple ways to the girls success and progression, including gaining places at competitive higher education institutions and International scholarships."

Bristol City announce new home ground

Bristol City will have a new stadium as they prepare for live in the Women's Championship.

The Robins will play their home fixtures for the 2020/21 season at the Robins High Performance Centre (Robins HPC).

Located just a couple of miles from Ashton Gate Stadium the Robins HPC will be the women's home with Ashton Gate also supporting a number of key women's games during the 21/22 campaign.

City Women will also train at the Robins HPC on select days throughout the week, whilst also continuing their long-standing partnership with SGS College and utilising the on-site facilities formally occupied by the Academy.

Bristol City Chairman Jon Lansdown told bcfc.co.uk: "As we embark on a rebuilding phase for Bristol City Women in the Championship it's important that we begin the integration of the women's programme into our world-class facility at the High Performance Centre.

"The 2021/22 season will see City Women have a Bristol-based home venue for their fixtures, which is vital as we look to reconnect with our fanbase after 18 months of playing behind closed doors.

"Having the men's, women's and Academy programmes under one roof is our vision for the club and this is the first step towards sharing best practice from a coaching, medical and athletic performance standpoint.

MTK Football appoints Linnett as head of women's football



MTK Football has appointed Kirsty Linnett as their new head of women's football.

Linnett recently spoke out about her treatment at Liverpool after they withdrew her contract.

She took to Twitter saying: "After three years at Liverpool my time has sadly come to an end.

"It would have been nice if someone from the club had the decency to tell me that they were retracting the contract offer they'd previously sent my agent.

"I feel that after three years at the club the least I deserved was a face to face meeting the moment they knew they wanted to let me go.

"Instead of calling my agent, telling him and then asking him to decide whether to tell me or the club call me.

"It's also sad that this situation was only brought to light after my agent emailed to further discuss negotiations.

"What upsets me is the club support campaigns for mental health yet treat their own players with such little regard and respect."

As well as Liverpool, Linnett also played for Reading Birmingham City and represented England at youth level.

The position also sees her announce her retirement but speaking to MTK, she is looking forward to the new challenge.

Linnett said: "After a lot of consideration I feel

like it's a good time for me to put the football boots away.

"I'm grateful to all the clubs in the UK and abroad who have offered me the opportunity to continue playing football but I believe the time is right for me to stop.

"Since my last statement I have had a number of agencies reach out and approach me about joining them in some capacity from client to recruiter but I believe MTK Football are the right agency and brand for me to start my consulting career with and the opportunity to become Head of Women's Football is one I couldn't turn down."

Head of MTK Football Danny Vincent added: "I'm delighted to welcome Kirsty to the team as our Head of Women's Football.

"Kirsty comes with a plethora of different experiences as well as a worldwide network of contacts.

"She is a fantastic role model for any aspiring footballer out there and living proof that if you work hard and stay focused you can achieve what you set out to.

"I know how important it is for Kirsty to change the narrative towards women in football and at MTK we're extremely passionate about women in sport so for us this is the perfect match and we're looking forward to supporting Kirsty in making her vision a reality."

London City Lionesses strengthen Football Operations Department

London City Lionesses are strengthening and re-structuring ahead of the 2021/22 Women's Championship season.

Edward Gallagher, who joined the Lionesses as general manager before last season as been made the sporting director and will oversee the long-term football strategy at first team, academy and educational level.

Gallagher told their official website: “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my first year at the Club and I’m looking forward to our continued growth at a first team level, but also through our academy and grassroots partnerships.

“Diane and the Board have been very supportive and the vision that London City has to not only be a top professional women’s football team, but also grow our own talent from a grassroots and academy level is something that massively appeals to me.”

Francesco Bomono has been appointed as operations manager and Maisie Williams has been named operations co-ordinator.

The Club has also launched a new recruitment department and partnership model to ensure strength across the football operations department.



Orlagh Gardner / SSP

Burrell becomes general manager of Lewes

Lewes have announced that Lynne Burrell has become the new general manager of Lewes.

Burrell has been the assistant general manager for the last two years as well as leading the club's focus on safeguarding.

Lewes FC Chair Stuart Fuller said, “It is with great pride that Lynne has accepted this role.

“Lynne combines the utmost professionalism with a genuine and deep interest in the wellbeing and development of those around her.

“She’s tough as nails in negotiations - nobody represents the club’s interests more fiercely –but is also unerringly compassionate and considerate in her dealings with staff and players.

“It’s a rare combination and we recognise how lucky we are to have Lynne at Lewes FC.”

Redfearn makes three signings at Sheffield United

Sheffield United have made three signings so far with Sophie Bradley-Auckland, Jess Clarke and Georgia Roberts joining the Women's Championship side.

Bradley-Auckland returns to the game after taking a year out due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The former England international represented her country at the 2011 World Cup and was selected for the Team GB squad at the London 2012 Olympics.

Head coach Neil Redfearn told the official website: "Bradders is a massive signing for us. I had her at Doncaster Rovers Belles, I took her to Liverpool and she's more than capable of playing in the level above.

"You look at her CV, played international football for England, for Team GB, she's a really massive signing for us and a real statement of intent."

Redfearn's second signing came in the form of forward Clarke.

The former England international joins the Blades from Liverpool after four years at the club and has made over 52 appearances for the Lionesses.

She told sufc.co.uk: "I'm really excited, I'm really positive, but more importantly I'm feeling grateful too. I think initially from having the conversation with Redders I knew this is the right environment for me and I'm just really excited to join the journey."

Roberts became the third signing for the Championship side with the 26-year-old defender joining from London Bees.

She has experience playing for Leeds United as well as in the USA where she played and studied at Lynn University in Florida.

Head coach Neil Redfearn told the official website: "Georgia's got real Championship experience. What we will lose with Leandra, she gives us that height and that dominance at the back.

"She's a good footballer, she's comfortable in possession and she's an athlete."

Furness wins Women's International Personality of the Year

Rachel Furness has won the Women's International Personality of the Year prize at the Northern Ireland Football Writers' Association awards.

The Liverpool midfielder is the first recipient of the honour after her five goals helped Northern Ireland qualify for the 2022 European Championship.

Furness told the official website: "I'm shocked but ultimately delighted.

"It's a great honour for myself but it's the whole team behind me that have put me in this position. I'm just very grateful and happy.

"It's really hard to put into words how amazing this last year has been.

"We've created history, we've done something as a nation that everyone thought was impossible."

Wilson and Galloway staying at Durham

Durham have announced that Bridget Galloway and captain Sarah Wilson will remain Wildcats.

Galloway has signed for another year whilst Wilson has extended her contract until 2023.

Wilson told the official website: ““I’m so proud to be part of the club and really grateful to have the opportunity to play here. I can’t wait to get started.

“We keep on getting stronger every season and I’m fully confident that we can go all the way. We had an incredible season, our best to date.

“I know we have more to give as a group and it’s really exciting to see what we can achieve together.”

Briggs and Salicki staying at Durham

Durham have announced that Lauren Briggs and Becky Salicki will remain with the Women’s Championship club for the upcoming season.

Briggs returned to playing during the 2020/21 season following long term injury and made her 50th appearance for the Wildcats.

Speaking to durhamwfc.co.uk she said: ““It’s a lot easier to commit and make the sacrifices we all do to come and play in such a positive environment. It’s always a privilege to wear the shirt so I’m ready.

“I think it’s important to stay humble as we have done season upon season but we definitely want to improve on our last season.

“We know we have a lot more to each in each performance and we have recognised areas where we do need to improve and this season it’s about brining all those pieces together.”

Defender Salicki joined the club in 2016 and recently made her 100th appearance.

Speaking to the official website, she said: ““We’ve got an amazing group here and we are ready to push on.

“The Championship is going to be harder than ever this year, and I think there’s certainly going to be four or five teams up there competing at the top this season – and I’m pretty sure we will be one of them.”

Liverpool announce three new signings

Liverpool have completed the signings of Leanne Kiernan, Carla Humphrey and Megan Campbell.

Kieran, 22, has spent the last three seasons at West Ham United and joins back up with manager Matt Beard.

Beard told liverpoolfc.com: “Leanne’s a versatile forward, she’s very quick and can score goals inside and outside the box.

“She’s an infectious personality and one of the biggest aspects is her work-rate and how she conducts herself, as I think it’s something we need in this league.

“I signed her when she was 18, she’s grown up a lot over those three years and I think this is a good move for her and for us. I’m looking forward to seeing what she can produce this year.”

Midfielder Humphrey joins the Reds from Bristol City.

She told the official website: “I’m so excited to be here.

“Training’s been great and the girls have really helped me settle in. I knew a couple of them before and have played with some at other clubs, so I’m just excited to play with them.”

Finally Campbell has joined the Championship side after five years at Manchester City.

He 27-year-old defender has won a number of trophies with the Women’s Super League side including the 2017 FA Cup where she scored twice in the final at Wembley.

Smith returns to Bristol City as interim head coach

Bristol City have confirmed that Lauren Smith will join the side as Interim Head Coach ahead of the 2021/22 FA Championship season.

Smith, 33, returns to the club where she was previously First Team Assistant Coach and Technical Director for the Under-9 to Under-19 youth programmes.

Group Chief Financial Officer and City Director Gavin Marshall said: "Lauren was the stand-out candidate for the role as we aim to rebuild.

"Lauren previously spent seven years at the club in various coaching roles and has a fantastic understanding of the importance of the player pathway, which is vital as we aim to build a core of homegrown talent for the future of the club."

Smith added: "Bristol City Women is a club that I hold close to my heart and I'm delighted to return as Head Coach for the 2021/22 season.

"Having previously spent seven years at the club, coaching through the age groups and into the first team as an Assistant, it's a special moment to become Head Coach.

"It's going to be a busy summer ahead with a lot of work to be done as we aim to rebuild and prepare for one of the most competitive leagues in women's football."

Evans leaves Bristol City

Bristol City have confirmed that Gemma Evans will leave the club following the conclusion of her contract this summer.

The defender, who joined the club in 2018 from Yeovil Town, has made 70 appearances for the Robins.

The statement from Bristol City said: "Everyone connected with the club would like to thank Gemma for her service and contribution to the club."

Watford sign Fyfe and Smith

Watford have announced the signings of Flo Fyfe and Mia Smith ahead of the 2021/22 Women's Championship campaign.

Forward Fyfe, 22, started her career with Arsenal and represented England U15s before spending time with Oxford United and London City Lionesses.

Goalkeeper Smith, 17, joins the Hornets after leaving Bristol City following their relegation to the Championship at the end of the 2020/21 season.

Robins trio depart club

Bristol City have announced the departure of Jasmine Matthews, Yana Daniels and Jemma Purfield.

The trio all leave the Women's Championship club following the conclusion of their contracts.

Matthews has spent nine years with the club over two spells and has made just short of 100 appearances for the Robins.

Daniels, a Belgian international, joined in 2017 whilst Purfield departs after one season with the club.

Taking to Twitter, Purfield said: "My time at Bristol City has come to an end and I want to say a huge thank you to the club, all the staff and all the players. It's been a pleasure to work with you all.

"I also want to thank the fans, although I never got to meet you properly we felt your support every game from home.

"This season didn't end as planned but we fought until the end and I hope the club gets back where it belongs.

"With that said I've decided I'm ready for a new challenge and I am excited for my next opportunity."

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE



FANWL Constitution and Reserve Season teams

Constitution

Northern Premier

AFC Fylde
Brighouse Town
Burnley
Derby County
Huddersfield Town
Hull City
Loughborough Lightning
Middlesbrough
Nottingham Forest
Sheffield
Stoke City
West Bromwich Albion
Wolverhampton Wanderers

Southern Premier

Bridgewater United
Cardiff City
Chichester & Selsey
Crawley Wasps
Gillingham
Hounslow
Ipswich Town
Keynsham Town
London Bees
Milton Keynes Dons
Oxford United
Plymouth Argyle
Portsmouth
Southampton

Division One North

Alnwick Town
Barnsley
Bolton
Bradford City AFC
Chester-le-Street Town
Chorley
Durham Cestria
FC United of Manchester
Leeds United
Liverpool Feds
Newcastle United
Norton & Stockton
Stockport County

Division One Mids

Bedworth United
Boldmere St Michaels
Burton Albion
Doncaster Rovers Belles
Holwell Sports
Leafield Athletic
Leek Town
Lincoln City
Long Eaton United
Peterborough United
Solihull Moors
Sporting Khalsa
Wem Town

Division One SE

Actonians
AFC Wimbledon
Billericay Town
Cambridge City
Cambridge United
Enfield Town
Harlow Town
Hashtag United
Kent Football United
London Seaward
Norwich City
QPR
Stevenage

Division One SW

AFC Bournemouth
Buckland Athletic
Cheltenham Town
Chesham United
Exeter City
Larkhall Athletic
Maidenhead United
Poole Town
Portishead Town
Southampton Women
Swindon Town

Reserve Section

North Division

Barnsley
Bradford City
Brighouse Town
Chorley
Durham Cestria

Huddersfield Town
Hull City
Leeds United
Liverpool Feds
Middlesbrough
Sheffield
Stockport County

Midlands Division

Bedworth United
Doncaster Rovers Belles
Leicester City
Long Eaton United
Lincoln City
Loughborough Lightning
Nottingham Forest
Solihull Moors
Sporting Khalsa
Stoke City
West Bromwich Albion
Wolverhampton Wanderers

South East Division

Cambridge City
Cambridge United
Hashtag United
Ipswich Town
MK Dons
Norwich City
Stevenage
Watford
West Ham United

South Central Division

Actonians
AFC Wimbledon
Billericay Town
Charlton Athletic
Crawley Wasps
Crystal Palace
Enfield Town
London Bees
London Seaward

South West Division

Bridgewater United
Chichester & Selsey
Keynsham Town
Lewes
London City Lionesses
Oxford United
Portsmouth
Southampton

JORDAN WIMPENNY

National League Coach of the Season

By Helen Rowe-Willcocks

In the TWFM Awards 2021, Huddersfield Town manager Jordan Wimpenny was named National League Coach of the Season 2020/21.

The Town boss took up the post in March 2020 and is yet to have a full, normal season with his players but this has not stopped him having an impressive impact on the team.

On a lovely day in June, Helen Rowe-Willcocks sat down in a coffee shop to have a socially distanced chat and present him with his well-earned award.

Firstly, congratulations on winning the award, how did you feel when you found out you had won?

Fantastic and shocked too. I was up against some fantastic coaches. I told the girls and the rest of the staff at the club that even though my name is on the award, it is actually for all them too. They are the ones which put the work in I ask day in, day out.

You recently played Brighton in the FA Cup, how hard was it preparing knowing that you were going up against a team who had not had their league null and void?

What we had to do was adjust. They are full time. Playing day in, day out is just a normal thing for them. For us, we have players who work and have other commitments around their training.

What we had to do with the time we had was train as normal but arrange friendlies with AFC Fylde and Manchester United U21s so we could prepare as well as we could. We played a different system as we knew it would be a tough game.

“The players want to see that people care about the league”

They have very good individual players and we knew that if we played the way we do in the season, then they would hurt us even more.

We knew we had to soak up the pressure and hope we could counter-act that on the ball. We had to do what we could with what we had available. Brighton were looking at the players that they wanted to keep and release so we knew people were playing for their places.

What do you think of what the team has achieved in this difficult situation?

I think the team has achieved this season has gone above and beyond what we expected of them.

When you have the stresses of the week at work and then you come to play, it's their release. They want to enjoy the moment. When they win the game it makes it all worth it. The way the team has developed has shown such improvement.

When you talk to the players, you hear them talking about resilience and grinding out a

National League Coach of the Season

result, it's such a change in their attitude. It might not look pretty but it's three points on the board. We were aware that a lot of the games we played at home which is a big comfort for us. We need to be aware that next season, playing games away will be a lot different for us. Hopefully, we can do the same.

How hard was it keeping the players motivated when you didn't know what was happening with the league?

I think it was just a lot of frustration. It's a high level in the National League, a lot of players have played at the highest levels during their career. You have staff which have great knowledge. I think the fact that it got made null and void for two seasons is annoying for them because they don't feel valued and they feel separated from the other two divisions.

There are lots of logistics of what they can and can't do with the leagues but for them it's just that they want to see that people care about the league. They see it from their own perspective, they give up their time, they want to compete, they do what they can and ultimately they just get frustrated. I am fully with them on that because I am the one that works them every week.

I am the one that hears their stories and their points of view so I am fully with them on that. To keep them motivated is



difficult when you don't know. To keep them motivated when you are playing is the easier part because you can take from what you have done in the previous game. When you don't know when or if you will be playing or when the decision will be made, you are left in the dark for a really long time.

They couldn't make decisions on things going on in their personal lives because they didn't know what was going on and for them I think that was the hardest bit. You have to get them to believe in what you are saying and get them to keep going.

The way I have experience that it is most effective is when you are open and honest with them. Tell them any information you do know and any information you do get make sure they are the first to know. The moment they have that information and they are comfortable with what you are saying, it will help them. If you keep them in the dark that is when you start to lose them.

Do you have any key workers in the group?

We do have a few. We have some NHS workers, we have teachers, we have some in the police force. These are ultimately people who have been through the most stressful times of their careers due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They have had to follow protocol and try and keep themselves motivated whilst keeping up with their

“ We have a number of key workers who have been through the most stressful times ”

demanding jobs – lets face it they are demanding enough as it is.

Then on the other side of it, there are the players who were on furlough, who were not working. I think we started off the first lockdown where we were doing Zoom hit sessions five or six times a week. We were mixing them up to keep people engaged and focused.

We then started working with them all one-on-one and then in small groups whenever we could. We started some form of training five or six weeks before any other team came back. The moment the rules changed, we went and found anywhere we could train. Every few weeks we were having to change the rules, re-evaluate what we were doing and what players were allowed.

For the players, it's trying to keep themselves in a good place. With that there are a lot of players who have struggled in these weird times. There is so much more to manage than what is on the pitch. Our players are human beings first and foremost and it's important to check in with them. We don't have a massive group of players and staff and I feel like that has worked to our advantage as they are a close knit group.

A lot of them are close outside football as well and I think that has been a big help to them.

Have you been playing any fixtures recently?

We played the GB Police Force recently. One of our players actually plays for them so she played for them. It was a fixture that was given to us, they reached out and asked if we wanted to play them.

It's off-season but if you ask a player if they want a game, rarely do they turn it down, especially with the lack of matches we have been able to play recently. They have been missing it. We had a strong squad and it was a very pleasing performance. They stuck to their game, they wanted to build so their approach was different to ours. For us, it was an opportunity to play and with one of our players being involved in both sides, it was important for us to play it. It was a good game.

When will you go back for training?

Our pre-season starts on July 6 and our first fixture is July 11 – a friendly. My understanding is that the league will start around the third week in August. We have some strong pre-season friendlies lined up, our intention is to only play teams above us or teams who will challenge us.

We had a misleading pre-season last year as protocol in place because of Covid-19 meant we were only allowed to play teams in the leagues around us. We won all our pre-season games and then went and drew and lost our first three games. It soon became apparent that we needed to change some things. It's important to play games higher, if we want to go up then we have to be able to compete with those teams.

Do you have a high turnover of players?

When we took over officially, we inherited the group that was there and I brought in a couple of other players who have come in from a higher level. I brought in what I thought we needed and then worked with the players that we had as I felt on paper we had one of the strongest teams in the league.

We had experience, strength, speed and a great core. I just felt that if we changed the way we played, we could be really successful. So we worked them

really hard. I think they opened my eyes a little bit, and I opened their eyes. We have worked together to find a balance. Towards the end of the season we gained a new player and had an injury to one of our full-backs.

Going into the new season there will not be too much shuffling around. I will only bring in what we need and what will add to the group, they need to bring our group better.

Towards the end of the season we relied heavily on players and if one had got injured we could have been in trouble. We don't have what plan B in terms of personnel. We would have to ask players to do something that they are not used to but they enjoy the challenge. It's about keeping that core and trying to keep them unless it's going to better them career wise. We want players who will add to our game.

We have only lost players recently due to relocating. If you come to university, you go home or somewhere else once you have your degree or if you change jobs you may have to move away.

It's not like the leagues above us where you can demand more. In our league they are giving up their own time and they are playing because they want to be there and that is really important to manage right.

Read part two next month!



Hincks joins AFC Wimbledon

AFC Wimbledon have announced the signing of Ashlee Hincks for the 2021/22 season.

The former Crystal Palace player represented England at all youth levels and has played in two FA Cup finals.

Hincks has also played for Chelsea, Millwall and a number of other clubs including FH Hafnarfjordur in Iceland where she was named MVP.

Ashlee said: “This is a club with real ambition that is doing things the right way.

“I cannot wait to get started and continue to push the club in the right direction.

“I am over the moon to have signed.”

David Grouns, Ladies Chair, added: “Kevin Foster, our first team manager, has worked hard to get Ashlee here.

“She is a fantastic addition to the squad and I look forward to seeing her in action wearing a Wimbledon shirt.”

Ipswich Town announce first pro deal

Sophie Peskett has signed a contract to become the first professional women’s player in the history of Ipswich Town.

The 18-year-old winger has signed a two-year deal at Portman Road.

Peskett joined the Blues from the Essex RTC in the summer of 2019, she made her debut as a 16-year-old and scored 11 goals with 15 assists.

She won the club’s player of the year award in her first season in senior football.

“It was a no-brainer for me really to sign a contract here,” Sophie told iFollow Ipswich.

She added: “I was a bit shocked at first, being the first to be offered a pro contract, but it’s an amazing feeling to get it done.

“The support I’ve had here, the opportunities I’ve had - it was easy to commit my future to Ipswich and it shows the intent of the Club that we are signing players now on pro contracts. I just can’t wait for the season to start.”

Merrick returns to Wolves

Beth Merrick has returned to Wolverhampton Wanderers after 18 years away from the club.

The former England U23 player returns to the club where she started her career in the Centre of Excellence at the age of seven.

Merrick has spent years with Aston Villa, Sheffield United Coventry United.

Manager Dan McNamara said: "Beth's an amazing signing for us.

"Her experience speaks for itself and she'll bring that to the team as well as her technical ability.

"We want to attract the best players to the club moving forward and Beth is the calibre we're aiming to bring in."

Merrick, who is a lifelong Wolves fan, told the official website: "After talking to Macca and seeing the fantastic facilities the women's team have, it was a no-brainer to sign.

"I'd been offered a full-time contract by Coventry, but I love my teaching job and didn't want to give that up.

"So joining Wolves was perfect for me, and I can't wait to help the club compete in a division where I've had some success in the past."

Embley joins Brighouse Town

Brighouse Town have announced the signing of Leah Embley.

Embley joins the FA Women's National League side from Women's Championship side Blackburn Rovers.

The news comes just days after she took to Twitter to announce her time with Rovers had come to an end.

She wrote: "My time at Blackburn Rovers Ladies has come to a disappointing end.

"I've met some great girls who have helped me through a rollercoaster of a season.

"I'm excited for what is next for me and can't wait to get back on the pitch again.

"I wish the girls the best of luck next season."

GRASSROOTS



MARCO FLOREALE

on The Game of Two Halves

It's safe to say that many people dream of being a professional footballer. Anyone who loves the beautiful game has at some point in their lives pretended to be walking out at Wembley or scoring the winner in a World Cup final but for those who make it into contract negotiations, the world of football can suddenly be a very different place.

In women's football, it is still unusual for many players to be represented by an agent or legal team and many players have family members in negotiations with them but as the women's football pyramid continues to expand, it is becoming much more important for players to know their rights and have the best people onside so they can let the football do the talking.

The Game of Two Halves co-founder Marco Floreale has set about building a business which gives footballers the best in life both on and off the pitch.

He said: "The likes of Mario Balotelli who are buying cars at six figures and having it wrapped in camouflage or players who walk 100 yards of the team bus dripping in designer are going wrong because I believe that the people who are representing them are not doing it for the right reasons. It should be to make sure

that player's money - and let's face it they make some fantastic money at the top end - is working for them when they have to stop work. Most footballers have to retire twice. Unless you are in the top 1%, what do you do at 35? You will need to do something until you have to retire like the rest of us from 60, 65.

It is not uncommon for players to have no idea what they want to do when retirement is coming round. Most players have been in the system from a young age and through academies and have never dreamed of doing anything else.

"The fact players do not know what to do when their career finishes, is usually what attracts players to us," Floreale added.

"They see that we are there to ask the questions they might not think about. You become a footballer because it's what you love

doing, it's all you can think about doing. You have worked hard to get there so the idea of thinking about what they might want to do after, doesn't cross their mind.

"You get players who are amazing at working hard but would they win Mastermind? No, probably not. And I don't mean that in a disrespectful way, it's just a completely different way of thinking.

"Our presentation to players who are interested in us representing shows players that they are not buying into me as a person but they are buying into the fact that when you start earning the sorts of money that we believe you should be earning, you need someone to help you and we have that.

When talking to new potential clients Floreale breaks down a footballers career into four stages which helps to explain what The Game of Two Halves has to offer.

Stage One: The Importance of You

"The first stage is between 17 and 21-years-old. It's when they will probably play their first years as a professional. It's all about making sure that we, as their representative, understand everything there is to know about

“ We want
to take stresses
and strains
away from
players ”

The Game of Two Halves

you as a player. Who they are, who they want to be, what their strengths are, what their weaknesses are, how high we think they can reach. We strive to understand what makes them tick, what it was that got them to where they are now, how can we get them to the next stage.”

Stage Two: The Game Plan

“Stage two comes between 22 and 26-years old. You have been a pro for three or four years, you pretty much know how your club and how your environment works.

“Most players will be playing in the lower leagues and whilst they are grateful of playing week in, week out, it is probably not where they always dreamed they would be. You might want to start your career there, you might be a romantic like Wayne Rooney and want to finish your career there but for the big bulk of your career it is probably not where you think you will be.

“We get players to look at the next stage of their game plan, it will be to get into the higher leagues, to be playing as many first team games as possible.

“Depending what level you are at and what pyramid you are in, we want to find you your ‘life partner’. When you have done this, you may want to buy yourself a property or properties, many buy family members houses to thank them. You then start to think if you have an opportunity to be on the radar of your national country selection.”

Stage Three: Parking the bus

“By age 27-30, it’s probably where you will be earning the most amount of money. You don’t want to be moving around all the time, you want to be settled.

“You are now at the highest peak of your career. It’s about realising you are who you are, you have been a professional footballer for a number of years, you are at the top of your tree. I will now be looking at their finances and how they are working for them.

“I will then ask them what they want to do post career. ‘What do you want to do in 10 years time?’

“We don’t want them to finish their career and have to start worrying about things. We ask them what they liked at school, what they enjoyed doing as hobbies. We get them to look into options of going back to school or doing a course and honing their skills in preparation.



Stage Four: Hanging up the boots

“30 to 35-years-old when you will now be looking at retirement. You might look at having a couple of years abroad in the final years of your career in the UAE, USA or China where you know the money is. It's the last hurrah and the biggest pay-check.

“You should be financially secure by the time you come to the end of your career. We aim for our players to be mortgage free if they stick to the process that we suggest for them. Being financially secure gives them that bit of leeway as they move onto the next stage of their careers.

“Many want to stay in football, whether it is joining the press, becoming a pundit, going into

management or coaching, there are so many options. Some decide to step away from the game altogether. They might be a sports therapist, they might become a teacher.”

Looking at the stages, it is clear to see that the format works for most footballers you can name, give or take a few injuries or hiccups. In the women's game more and more players are taking extended breaks to start a family during their career. Alex Morgan continued playing and training throughout her pregnancy and was back playing for the USA national team just months after giving birth.

The difference in this area of life is something which Floreale and The Game of Two Halves are really keen to build on as

they continue their move into women's football.

Floreale said: “The four stages work for every player, give or take a few years and any hiccups on the way such as injuries. It doesn't matter if you are a male or female player. The only difference in women's football is that some players chose to have a baby in the middle of their career and we want to make sure that they are in a place where they don't have any extra stresses or strains as they come back to the game following their pregnancy.”

Next month we discuss the importance the Game of Two Halves can provide to women's footballers in the UK and how their first women's footballer came to join them.



LEGAL

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**WE KEEP YOU ONSIDE,
ON AND OFF THE PITCH**

**OUR ONE GOAL
IS TO ENSURE
OUR PLAYERS
HAVE A LIFE
AFTER
FOOTBALL AND
DON'T BECOME
ONE OF THE 40%
THAT ARE
BANKRUPT
WITHIN 5 YEARS
OF RETIRING.**

Star-studded panel announced



The Football Association and Nationwide Building Society recently launched an exciting new initiative to promote mutual respect on and off the pitch, with a national competition to design the first ever 'Coin for Respect'.

The winning entry will go on to be used by over 20,000 referees across the nation.

Ex-England goalkeeper David James, England internationals Beth Mead and Jordan Nobbs, TV and radio personality Jeff Brazier, and professional referee Rebecca Welch have been announced as panellists for the competition.

They will team up with James Kendall, Director of Football Development at the Football Association, and Paul Hibbs, Director of Advertising at Nationwide Building Society to cast their eyes over the 100s of entries and help whittle it down to a shortlist of just 11 designs that will go to a public vote to crown the eventual winner.

The coin toss is a symbol of fair chance at the start of every game, but until now, no official coin has ever existed. Gone are the days of fumbling through pockets for spare change, now there will be a unified symbol.

The competition is still open for entries until June 20th and is calling on children aged 3-17yrs across the UK to show their artistic talents and interpretations of respect to design the official 'Coin for Respect'.

The winning design will be brought to life and distributed to more than 20,000 grassroots referees across the country in time for the new season, allowing them to start every game with respect.

The Coin for Respect campaign is part of Nationwide's pledge to ensure one-million players, parents and coaches get involved with the FA Respect campaign by 2023.

Speaking on the announcement, campaign am-

bassador and ex-England goalkeeper, David James said: "The Coin for Respect campaign is really important as it shines a light on respect in the game and connects with the younger generation of footballers, football fans and football followers, and highlights that respect is something that has to be adhered to.

"I had a go at my own design and it was a great challenge to think about how I could show respect in a drawing, so I am I'm really looking forward to seeing the other entries, it will be fantastic to see how kids interpret respect and the different designs."

James Kendall, FA's director of football development said: "By partnering with Nationwide Building Society we hope to promote respect on and off the pitch. The Coin for Respect campaign is a great way of putting that mission in to action and engaging with local communities across the UK.

Coin for Coin of Respect campaign



“It’s going to be fascinating to see what respect means to children as they interpret the brief and design their own coin, and it will be a symbolic moment when we can eventually put 20,000 coins into the hands of referees up and down the country.”

Paul Hibbs, Director of Advertising at Nationwide Building Society said: “Not only is it nice to see the different ways children are interpreting mutual respect and getting creative brains churning but it’s also creating opportunities for families to sit together and discuss what respect looks like for them and their family and why it’s so important, more than ever that we respect one another.

As part of our partnership with the FA Respect Programme we’re committed to ensuring 1 million players, parents and coaches are engaged with the programme and our respect values that go well beyond the grassroots pitch.

“I’m looking forward to selecting the shortlist and it will be wonderful to see every grassroots game start with mutual respect next season.”

Someone who also knows about the importance of respect both on and off the pitch and having to teach his two boys those same values, is Jeff Brazier who said: “I’m really excited to be on the panel of the Coin for Respect campaign with Nationwide Building Society and The FA, it’s been great to be part of this campaign so far and I am happy to help whittle down all the brilliant designs to a shortlist of 11.

“It’s such a fun and engaging competition and it will be great to see how different kids interpret the brief and what designs they come up with to show what respect means to them. I can’t wait to see some of the entries!”

Professional Football Referee, Rebecca Welch commented on her inclusion on the panel: “I

am proud to be asked to be part of the panel to help shortlist the designs for the Coin for Respect campaign.

“The coin toss starts every match up and down the country from grassroots right through to elite level so it will be great to take the winning coin and use it, helping to spread the message that respect is a massive part of football and we all need to be respectful.

Once the 11 shortlisted designs have been chosen, they will be put to a public vote which will be open from July 19 to August 1, 2021. All shortlisted children will win a tour of Wembley Stadium plus some amazing England prizes.

To get involved, hopeful entrants can visit: www.nationwide.co.uk/mutual-respect/coin-for-respect.

Submissions will close on the 20th of June at 23:59 and full T&Cs can be found on the website.



AMMO'S ANTICS

Hi Ammo here,

So this weeks Ammos antics starts with me rejoining my old grass roots team Ross Juniors.

We entered the Southampton Play on Pitch boys tournament. It gave us the unique opportunity to play on a premier league pitch.

It was a really hot day and being the only girls team it was always going to be difficult for us playing boys our same age. We did well, only conceding one goal all day and that was to the eventual winners of the tournament. Although we were disappointed not to go further I think it was definitely a great advert for female football. Following that I had my first game for Gloucestershire county. A quarter final against Staffordshire in the National cup.

Staffordshire started well, putting us under pressure for the first ten minutes. But when we got our first goal we didn't look back. I scored a volley from outside the area and got four assists

in a 10-0 win. I was also named player of the match.

It set up a semi final against the mighty Lancashire, a team who have been in all of the last nine National cup finals, winning six of them. Little old Gloucestershire had never reached the final. The odds didn't look good.

The game was played at the home of Cirencester FC and the Lancashire fans had turned up in force. They surrounded the pitch with their flags and blasted air horns at every opportunity. I've never played in such a hostile atmosphere, it was really intimidating.

The players were big and strong and were playing with an anger I've rarely seen since I started playing football.

They quickly went 1-0 up and the Lancashire fans went crazy, celebrating like they had already won.

But then we equalised. Shortly after that we went 2-1 up.

It wasn't supposed to happen. They pushed forward and put us under huge pressure and they scored to make it 2-2. The Lancashire crowd again erupted with screams and the blast of air horns. Some were even dancing in the stands.

The game looked destined for extra time and possibly penalties.

But then, fate decided it was going to be our day. We scored with only a few minutes left and held on to win 3-2. The crowd was silenced and little old Gloucestershire who were meant to just step aside and let the all conquering Lancashire team through. Well, we did it. We got ourselves into the National cup final.

Lancashire are a good team. I can see why they are successful. They are trained to win. From the moment they arrived at the ground they were mentally preparing themselves to get to the final.

But that's what is so amazing about football. You never know what's going to happen.

David beat Goliath.

The final is in September possibly at St George's park. It will be another tough game against strong opponents. We know that.

But we'll give everything we have and whether we win or lose we'll know we did our best.

Training at Birmingham City resumes for me at the end of July as I officially move up into the U16s. I'm really excited for this season personally and I think Blues women have made an excellent choice with the appointment of Scott Booth as head coach. So I'm looking forward to seeing what the first team can do this year. My three year plan to first team football is still on track.

Finally...

Football is a game best played with a smile on your face.

Never forget that.

Ammo





Grassroots Gossip



Salford City have promotion accepted

Salford City Lionesses will compete in the North West Women's Regional Football League Premier Division next season.

The accepted application means it will compete at the highest level in the club's history and will come up against teams including Tranmere Rovers, Crewe Alexandra, Morecambe, Wigan Athletic and West Didsbury & Chorlton.

The Lionesses was formed in 2018 going into the seventh tier and went the whole season unbeaten to lift the Greater Manchester Women's Football League title.

Lionesses secretary Zarah Connolly told the official website: "We're delighted with the news that Salford City Lionesses have gained

promotion into the Premier Division!

"The past two seasons have been the hardest yet, but they couldn't have happened without the hard work from all of our players and staff across that time.

"Thank you to the FA, North West Women's Regional committee and everyone at the Club that has helped us gain Upward Club Movement, and a huge congratulations to all the girls and staff from our previous two campaigns for their dedication and hard work on and off the pitch, without which this wouldn't have been possible.

"We can't wait to get underway with pre-season now and kick start our 2021-22 season!"

Amber Valley Ladies to form women's team

Amber Valley Ladies, founded in 2018 have announced they would be forming a women's team for the 2021/22 season.

The club statement read: "We are delighted to announce the formation of our new Amber Valley Ladies FC Women's Team.

"The new team will be competing from the beginning of the 2021/22 season, managed by Jack Doughty, an FA Level 2 coach who recently graduated from University of South Wales with a BSc (Hons) degree in Football Coaching, Development and Administration".

A spokesperson for the Club also said in a statement, "I'm delighted that from the 2021/22 season that we will have a ladies team at the club. This has been a long-term aim from the committee and one that fully underlines our commitment to offer football for all."

Huegett appointed Harrogate Ladies manager

Harrogate Ladies have announced the appointment of Carey Huegett as their Ladies First Team Manager.

A former Harrogate Town player and PDC coach, Huegett takes the position having been heavily involved in girls/women's football for the last 24 years.

Huegett's footballing journey started at age seven with Leeds United and spent 20 years there as a player, captain, coach, assistant manager and mentor.

As a player, as well as representing Harrogate Town and Leeds United, Huegett received national recognition at age 13, a journey that would continue up to the age of 21. As well as having had a successful playing career, Carey is a top coach who will complement the structure of women's football at Harrogate Town.

Speaking to Harrogate Ladies, Huegett said: "I would like to thank Harrogate Town for giving me the opportunity to work at such a fantastic club – I feel extremely proud and privileged to be appointed Ladies First Team Manager and I'm really excited for the challenge ahead.

"As my hometown club, it has been brilliant to witness the men's team enjoy so much success, something which I hope to see the Ladies teams experience in the near future. I am delighted that the club and I share the same ambition and vision for women's football at Harrogate Town, and I am really excited for what the future holds.

"My mission is to help Harrogate Town take the next step on the ladder of success by creating a pathway for players from a young age right through to the first team.

"This coaching role is not just a hobby for me, it is a passion to succeed and get the best out of others. I want to see women's football at Harrogate Town go from strength to strength - starting with promotion."

The Ladies team will be holding trials over the coming weeks ahead of the 2021/22 season.

Trials will take place at St John Fisher's High School 3G Pitch (HG2 8PT) for both the first team and development team on the following dates:

Thursday 1st July 8pm – 10pm

Sunday 4th July 1pm – 3pm

Tuesday 6th July 8pm – 10pm

Information about the trials can be found on the website.



CUPS



Women's Community Shield cancelled



The Women's Community Shield will not go ahead this year, The Women's Football Magazine understands.

Last year's event saw Chelsea and Manchester City go head-to-head at Wembley with Emma Hayes' side coming out 2-0 champions.

Due to Covid-19, there has been a number of changes to the women's programme with the 2020/21 Women's FA Cup to be completed from September.

The current FA Cup schedule looks like this:

- Quarter-Finals: Wednesday, September 29
- Semi-Finals: Sunday, October 31
- Final: Sunday December 5

This comes on top of the Tokyo Olympics where Team GB are competing in the postponed tournament over the summer.

As well as the start of the new season in September, there will also be international breaks for the 2023 Women's World Cup qualifying, the start of the Continental Tyres Cup and the start of next season's

FA Cup.

Well renowned women's football writer Richard Laverty wrote: "FA confirm to me no Women's Community Shield this year."

He quoted the FA: "Player welfare was at the forefront of the decision to not hold the Women's FA Community Shield this year, with consideration of the Tokyo Olympics and a congested 21/22 season that culminates with the UEFA Women's EUROs."

Previous Community Shield Winners:

2000: Arsenal and Charlton Athletic

2001: Arsenal

2002: Fulham

2003: Fulham

2004: Charlton Athletic

2005: Arsenal

2006: Arsenal

2008: Arsenal

2020: Chelsea

Women's Champions Lead



DAZN, the leading global sports streaming platform, has acquired global rights to broadcast the UEFA Women's Champions League and has been awarded host broadcaster duties for the next four seasons, from 2021-25. As part of this landmark agreement, to further grow the sport, DAZN has also entered into a ground-breaking partnership with YouTube that will make the competition live and free for fans around the world for the first time. This trailblazing move marks the first time UEFA has centralized all Women's Champions League matches globally.

At a time when professional women's sport continues to fight for more exposure, this new partnership brings visibility like never before to players, Clubs, and the elite competition itself by making matches all season long available to fans all over the globe. For the first two seasons (2021-23), fans will be able to watch live and on demand all 61 matches from the group

stage onwards on DAZN and free on DAZN's YouTube channel. For the last two seasons (2023-25), all 61 matches will be live on DAZN while 19 matches will be made available for free on DAZN's YouTube channel.

The multi-year deal grants DAZN exclusive rights worldwide, with the exception of the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) – where rights do include clips and highlights – and China and its territories.

The agreement is one of the largest broadcast deals in women's club football history and signifies another game-changing move in DAZN's long-time global commitment to women's sport, centred on the mission of growing the UEFA Women's Champions League, turning more players and teams into household names, and inspiring the next generation of players – all of which starts with more people around the world watching the game.

James Rushton, Co-CEO, DAZN Group: "DAZN is thrilled to be the new global broadcaster for UEFA Women's Champions League and cannot wait to work with YouTube and Google to bring fans closer to the game and shine a brighter light on its stars than ever before. DAZN was founded with a vision of making premium sports more accessible, and what's more accessible than centralised rights for the first time and all matches free on YouTube? Overnight, this will make the best women's football easier to watch around the world than ever before. Along the way, we look forward to elevating live broadcast production, extending existing DAZN content franchises, and unveiling new shows that showcase the breadth and brilliance of women's football."

Cécile Frot-Coutaz, Head of EMEA, YouTube: "YouTube is the global go-to destination for premium, diverse and relevant content. The pandemic has

League to be broadcast free



created a lot of uncertainty for sport but particularly for women's sport. We are therefore honoured to be able to partner with DAZN and UEFA to bring the UWCL games to fans all over the world, live and for free on YouTube. We are excited to be able to bring the power of YT's platform to the UEFA Women's Champions League and help women's football connect with new and existing fans the world over."

Nadine Kessler, Chief of Women's Football, UEFA: "This deal is a first for women's football as this partnership between UEFA and DAZN and YouTube will make sure that the UEFA Women's Champions League can be seen by the fans, by all the people who love this game, wherever they are on the globe. Such visibility changes everything, as the best female players and best women's teams in the world can inspire more young girls and boys to fall in love with this sport. Together we are all bringing

women's football to the world and everyone who will tune in will truly make a difference to something bigger."

Guy-Laurent Epstein, Marketing Director, UEFA: "We are delighted to have found such innovative partners in DAZN and YouTube, who will give fans worldwide the opportunity to get consistently free-to-air access to the world's best women's club football competition. It's exactly what we wished for when we decided to centralise the media rights and revamp the competition format. Ultimately it was an easy decision for UEFA to make, as DAZN and YouTube had the most compelling bid, complemented by the vast promotional opportunities that this partnership can bring for the competition and women's football in general."

Ada Hegerberg, All-Time Highest Scorer in UEFA Women's Champions League and Olympique Lyonnais Star: "I am beyond excited for

this partnership. For years, people have struggled to have access to our games, wherever they were living. Now, they have the unique opportunity to watch all over the world if they'd like to. The game is opening up to millions, potentially billions, which is unprecedented. This is a game-changing partnership that is only right for the biggest club competition in women's football. We are finally being given something we've asked for a long time. It's about time women's football got this kind of exposure!"

To learn more, DAZN, YouTube, and UEFA invite all media and fans to become an early subscriber to DAZN's brand new, dedicated UEFA Women's Champions League YouTube channel – where all matches and content will live – and tune in to a special global announcement event featuring all the individuals listed above and more, discussing the deal and what it means for the competition and women's football overall.

2020/21 Vitality Women's FA Cup fixtures, key dates & information

Vitality Women's FA Cup third round proper

Manchester United	2-3	Leicester City
Brighton & Hove Albion	6-0	Huddersfield Town
Blackburn Rovers	0-1	Charlton
Birmingham City	3-2	Southampton
Tottenham Hotspur	2-1	Sheffield United
Manchester City	5-1	West Ham United
Arsenal	9-0	Crystal Palace
Chelsea	3-0	Everton



Quarter-Final draw

The draw took place live on talkSPORT 2.

Ties will be played on Wednesday 29 September 2021.

The draw is as follows:

- Manchester City v Leicester City
- Birmingham City v Chelsea
- Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur
- Brighton & Hove Albion v Charlton Athletic

2021/22 Women's and Men's FA Cup to culminate together



The FA can confirm that the 2021/22 Emirates FA Cup and Vitality Women's FA Cup campaigns will conclude over the same weekend at Wembley Stadium connected by EE for the very first time.

The Emirates FA Cup, which will be celebrating its 150th anniversary, is due to kick-off on Saturday 7 August 2021 with its Extra Preliminary Round.

The Final is planned to take place at the home of English football on Saturday 14 May 2022 and the Premier League has announced that its fixtures on this date have been re-scheduled to ensure a standalone kick-off time.

The Vitality Women's FA Cup is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary with the delayed 2020/21 competition set to be completed at Wembley Stadium on Sunday 5 December 2021.

The 2021/22 edition is scheduled to begin on Sunday 15 August 2021 with its own Extra Preliminary Round and the Final is arranged for Sunday 15 May 2022 at the national stadium.

Andy Ambler, The FA's Director of Pro Game Relations, said: "We're absolutely delighted that it has been possible to organise for both of our showpiece events to culminate at Wembley Stadium over the same weekend for the first time.

"We look forward to welcoming large numbers of fans to celebrate what will be very special occasions for both FA Cup

competitions and the national stadium."

Kelly Simmons, The FA's Director of the Women's Professional Game, added: "The Vitality Women's FA Cup Final is one of the biggest occasions in the women's football calendar and an opportunity to showcase the very best players at one of the most famous venues in world football.

"I am thrilled that we will have a whole weekend of world-class football at Wembley Stadium and I hope for a really big, vocal crowd to match the spectacle on the field."

Women's FA Cup round dates

Extra Preliminary Round Sun, Aug 2021

Preliminary Round Sun, Aug 29 2021

First Round Qualifying Sun, Sept 12 2021

Second Round Qualifying Sun, Oct 3 2021

Third Round Qualifying Sun, Oct 24 2021

First Round Proper Sun, Nov 14 2021

Second Round Proper Sun, Nov 28 2021

Third Round Proper Sun, Jan 9 2022

Fourth Round Proper Sun, Jan 30 2022

Fifth Round Proper Sun, Feb 27 2022

Quarter Final Sun, March 20 2022

Semi Final Sun, April 17 2022

Final Sun May, 15 2022

HOME NATIONS



Fifa announce new rankings:

What does that mean for the Home Nations?



Wales drop down two places to 34 as new world rankings as announced.

England, Scotland and Northern Ireland all remain unmoved in the latest Fifa rankings.

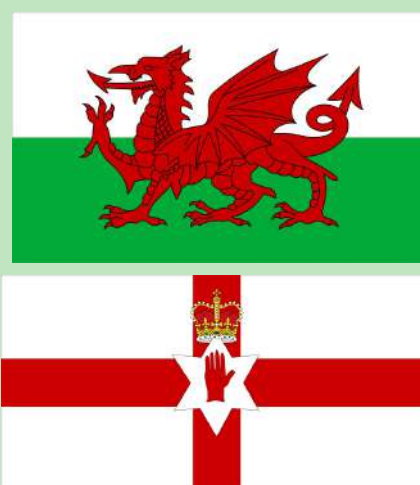
England are sixth, Scotland 23rd and Northern Ireland rank 48th.

In the two months since the last Fifa/Coca-Cola Women's World Ranking was published, only about a third of its teams (56 of 167) have been in action, and that just in friendlies.

In spite of this, there are still some notable changes in the June 2021 edition of the Ranking, including on the podium.

France (3rd) regain the third spot the Netherlands (4th) wrested from them a few weeks ago. The Leeuwinnen had mixed results in the period, losing 1-0 to Italy (14th) but also routing Norway (13th) 7-0, whereas France enjoyed a 1-0 win over Germany, who continue to occupy second place behind leaders USA.

Beaten by Les Bleues and then held scoreless by Chile (37th), Germany



nonetheless lost ground on the frontrunners.

Japan (10th) returned to the TOP 10 following wins over Ukraine (31st), and Mexico (28th) twice.

Korea DPR (11th) were the team making way as they slipped out of the TOP 10.

Georgia (123rd) ascended three places after a win (3-2) and a draw (0-0) against Azerbaijan (78th), who were 49 rungs above them before their meetings.

The next edition of the FIFA/Coca-Cola Women's World Ranking will be published on 20 August 2021.

Leader: USA (unchanged)

Matches played in total: 51

Most matches played: Japan, Nigeria, United States (3 each)

Biggest move by points: Tunisia (+19.09 points)

Biggest move by ranks: Georgia (+3 places)

Biggest drop by points: Jordan (-19.09 points)

Biggest drop by ranks: Jordan, Latvia (-4 places)

Wales 0-1



Scotland came out 1-0 winners in their home nations friendly against Wales on June 15.

The two sides met at Parc y Scarlets with Erin Cuthbert scoring the only goal of the game.

The visitors took the lead just before the hour mark as Cuthbert tapped into an empty net following a mistake from Wales goalkeeper Laura O'Sullivan.

Both sides had chances throughout the game with Jess Fishlock and Angharad James having the best attempts for the hosts.

Wales boss Gemma Grainger made just one change from the side that drew with Denmark last

time out, with 17-year old Manchester United midfielder Carrie Jones earning a first start.

By contrast, Scotland interim boss Stuart McLaren rang the changes with just three players retained from their 1-0 win over Northern Ireland at Seaview five days ago.

However, it was a strong Scotland side, with Team GB duo Caroline Weir and Kim Little both selected and Chelsea's Cuthbert recalled.

Both sides will now turn their attentions to the World Cup qualification which starts in September.

Both Scotland and Wales failed to reach the finals of the Euros 2022 which will

take place in England next year.

Scotland are aiming to reach their second consecutive Women's World Cup.

They reached the 2019 World Cup in France where they were drawn in the same group as England.

However, they were left disappointed after failing to get out of the group stages.

Wales: Sullivan (Clark, 77), Roberts, Green (Morgan, 66), Evans, Rowe, Harding, James, Ingle, Jones (Walters, 77), Green (Morgan, 90+1), Fishlock

Substitutes: Filbey, Williams, Clark, Hughes,

Scotland



Estcourt, Morgan, Francis Jones, Soper, Walters, Morgan

Scotland: Alexander, Brown (Arnotat, 75), Corsie, Westrup, Smith, Little, Graham, Cuthbert (Murray, 90+2), Grimshaw
McLauchlanat, 57), Weir, Emslie

Substitutes:
McLauchlan, Robertson, Cummings, Eddie, Arthur, Howard, Murray, Docherty, Clelland, Hanson, Fife, Arnot

Referee:
Louise Thompson (NIR)

Assistant Referees:
Victoria Finlay (NIR) & Michelle O'Neill (ROI)

Fourth Official:

Cheryl Foster (WAL)

Wales qualifying fixtures

Friday, September 17:
Wales vs Kazakhstan

Tuesday, September 21:
Estonia vs Wales

Friday, October 22:
Slovenia vs Wales

Tuesday, October 26:
Wales vs Estonia

Friday, November 26:
Wales vs Greece

Tuesday, November 30:
France vs Wales

Friday, April 8:
Wales vs France

Tuesday, April 12:
Kazakhstan vs Wales

Friday, September 2:
Greece vs Wales

Tuesday, September 6:
Wales vs Slovenia

Scotland qualifying fixtures

Friday, September 17:
Hungary vs Scotland

Tuesday, September 21:
Scotland vs Faroe Islands

Friday, October 22:
Scotland vs Hungary

Tuesday, October 26:
Scotland vs Ukraine

Tuesday, November 30:
Spain vs Scotland

Friday, April 8:
Ukraine vs Scotland

Tuesday, April 12:
Scotland vs Spain

Friday, September 6:
Faroe Islands vs Scotland

Hamill names U19 squad for training camp

Women's Under-19s head coach Pauline Hamill has named a 28 player squad for an upcoming training camp this month.

The three day camp will allow Hamill to work with the group ahead of competitive fixtures returning later in the year.

The youngsters are set to face Austria, Ukraine and Netherlands in European Qualifiers in October.

Women's Under-19s squad

Eilidh Adams (Hibernian), Amelie Birse (Hearts), Tegan Bowie (Celtic), Jessica Broadrick (Aberdeen), Tegan Browning (Boroughmuir Thistle), Shona Cowan (Hearts), Eilidh Davies (Hearts), Ciara Duff (Boroughmuir Thistle), Monica Forsyth (Celtic), Caley Gibb (Spartans), Gail Gilmour (Aberdeen), Addie Handley (Hibernian), Bayley Hutchison (Aberdeen), Rachel Johnstone (Celtic), Leila Lister (Reading), Rebecca McAllister (Celtic), Maria McAneny (Celtic), Robyn McCafferty (Spartans), Elvie McLean (Boroughmuir Thistle), Rosie McQuillan (Glasgow Girls & Women *on loan from Rangers*), Grace Mitchell (Bristol City), Sarah Mitchell (Bristol City), Niamh Murphy (Manchester United), London Pollard (Celtic), Rosie Slater (Motherwell *on loan from Rangers*), Eva Thomson (Aberdeen), Kenzie Weir (Everton), Alicia Yates (Spartans)



2021 Highlands and Islands League schedule and fixtures confirmed

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) have announced the 2021 SWF Highlands & Islands League will start on Sunday 20th June and conclude on Sunday 10th October.

The start of the season follows contact adult training having been permitted from 17th May.

A condensed League and League Cup schedule has been agreed, providing regular competition for the nine affiliated teams in the Highlands & Islands.

The first weekend of the season will see reigning 2019 champions, Clachnacuddin, travel away to Caithness who finished third that season.

Inverness Caledonian Thistle Development, who were runners-up, and Nairn, who finished bottom in 2019, are both at home to new sides in the form of Orkney and Sutherland respectively.

The final tie is Brora Rangers hosting Buckie, two sides who were separated by just one point last season.

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) Chair, Vivienne MacLaren said: "We are delighted to outline the plans for the Highlands and Islands League to return on Sunday 20th June.

"One of our key goals is to get more girls and women playing and this league epitomises this. Girls and women should have the opportunity to participate in structured football regardless of their geography – the creation and success of this league is one of our proudest achievements.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved for their patience and to the various stakeholders for their hard work during these complex times. I wish all these teams involved the very best for the season ahead."

A full list of fixtures can be found on
www.scotwomensfootball.com

Scottish Women's Football announce CEO update

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) can confirm that the process to appoint our new CEO has been concluded and that a successful candidate has been selected within the last fortnight.

This individual will be announced in the near future.

Chair of SWF, Vivienne MacLaren, said: "We had a number of suitable applications for the position and it was an extremely competitive selection process. On behalf of SWF, I'd like to thank everyone who applied.

"This is a very important role for the future of SWF and the game as a whole.

"We therefore invested significant time and effort into the process to ensure we found the right person to lead SWF into the future.

"We appreciate that there is excitement to know who our new CEO is but we cannot announce this at this time. We hope to be able to provide an update in the near future and proudly introduce our new CEO."

FAW Women's Cup to return



The JD Welsh Cup, FAW Women's Cup and the FAW Amateur Trophy all return following their hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Below you will find links to Qualifying Rounds of the JD Welsh Cup, FAW Women's Cup and Round 1 of the FAW Trophy.

Ties are to be played:

10 July - JD Welsh Cup Qualifying Round 1

17 July - FAW Amateur Trophy Round 1

19 September - FAW Women's Cup Qualifying Round

FAW Women's Cup

Southern Draw

Coed Duon v Aberaman Cwmbran

Celtic FC v Newport City

Cardiff Bluebellies v Tredegar

Cardiff Bluebirds v Villa Dino
Christchurch

Llanyrafon Junior v Caldicot Town

Aberdare Town v Merthyr Town

Ammanford v Baglan BGC

Junior FC 's Pontarddulais Town v
Pontardawe Town

Penybont v Llanelli Town

Johnstown v Penclawdd

Afan Lido v Ystradgynlais

Tonyrefail Welfare v Swansea Uni

Dafen Welfare v Llangyfelach

Northern Draw

Corwen v Connah's Quay Nomads

Llanfair United v Wrexham

Welshpool Town v Airbus UK

Broughton NFA v Northop Hall Girls
& Ladies CPD

Llanberis v Bethel

Y Rhyl 1879 FC v Llanfairfechan
Town

Pwllheli v Amlwch Town

Denbigh Town FC v Llandudno FC

*Byes to Round 1 (awarded to 8 Tier 1
Clubs 2021/22 and the highest
ranked Tier 2 clubs 2020/21):*

*Aberystwyth Town FC, Barry Town
United AFC, Cardiff City FC, Cardiff
Met WFC, Pontypridd Town AFC,
Port Talbot Ladies FC, Swansea City
FC, The New Saints FC,
Abergavenny FC, Briton Ferry
Llansawel FC and Cascade YC FC*



Girls and Women's pathway given go-ahead



electric
Ireland

Players on the Irish FA's girls' and women's performance pathway will be continuing to work hard this summer as the pathway is given the go-ahead.

Coaching sessions are due to be staged at venues across Northern Ireland for players aged 10 up to 19.

The Irish FA's Girls' Regional Excellence Programme, sponsored by Electric Ireland, is continuing to run at four centres – Newforge in south Belfast (for counties Down and Armagh), Ulster University Jordanstown (Co Antrim), Mid-Ulster Sports Arena in Cookstown (Tyrone/Fermanagh) and Holy

Cross College in Strabane (Co Londonderry).

Alfie Wylie, the Irish FA's Head of Elite Performance for Girls' and Women's Football, told the official website: "These sessions are for all the girls in our Electric Ireland programmes, ranging from our 2010 players to our U19s."

He further revealed that he and his coaches will be assessing younger players this summer who can potentially join the pathway, which has produced 45 players for the senior women's squad over the past 14 years.

There will be three coaching sessions at Holy Cross in Strabane this month, 10 at both UUJ

and Newforge in July/August and six at MUSA and five in Fermanagh over the summer.

Shooting for the Stars competition winner revealed

Nine-year-old Sarah Dickson from Lurgan in Co Armagh has been crowned winner of the Electric Ireland Shooting for the Stars children's writing competition.

Sarah's story about a girl who danced her way to footballing success captivated the judging panel which was led by Derry Girls actor and playwright Tara-Lynne O'Neill.

The story will now be illustrated by a

en go ahead in Northern Ireland



professional illustrator, published in association with Blackstaff Press and then distributed through the Irish Football Association's Shooting Stars network as well as being made available to schools and libraries across Northern Ireland.

Sarah learned that she had won the competition when Northern Ireland senior women's team captain Marissa Callaghan and team-mates Toni-Leigh Finnegan and Abbie Magee made a surprise visit to her school, Carrick Primary in Lurgan.

Speaking to the Irish FA, she said: "I'm so excited and feel so happy.

"I thought we were taking part in a football festival

when Marissa called out my name and said I'd won! It's so exciting. I can't wait to see my story made into a book."

The competition, organised by Electric Ireland as part of its Game Changers NI campaign in partnership with the Irish FA that supports girls' and women's football at all levels, received a great response and the judges said they were faced with tough decisions.

Clare McAllister, Northern Ireland Residential Manager with Electric Ireland, said of judging the competition: "Myself and my fellow judges were really impressed by the quality and the creativity

shown by the entrants to the competition.

"Sarah's story stood out for the imagination it showed; she was able to take the theme of girls' football and weave a story that kept the reader interested from beginning to end."

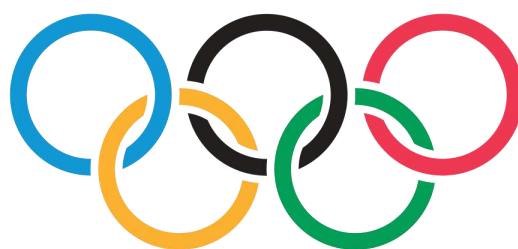
The competition invited children between the ages of 7 and 11 who are interested in football and stories to create their very own story about girls' football.

Joining Clare and Tara-Lynne on the judging panel were illustrator Rory Jeffers and Gail Redmond, Women's Football Development Manager at the Irish FA.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES: TOKYO



Team GB Friendly cancelled



TEAM GB

Team GB's friendly against Zambia was cancelled just days before the sides were meant to meet at the Bet365 Stadium in Stoke.

The friendly, which was Great Britain's only chance to play as a team before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, was cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions.

The FA statement read:

Due to circumstances beyond everyone's control Zambia have had to withdraw from the National Lottery-hosted GB Women's Football send-off game on 1 July.

The African nation – who will also be taking part in the Olympic Games in Tokyo next month – had to pull out because of complications linked to COVID-19 restrictions.

This is only the second time that Team GB have entered a women's football team since the introduction of the event to the Olympic schedule in 1996.

Team GB fielded a football squad for the first time in the London 2012 Olympic Games.

The team reached the quarter-finals, with the United States the eventual winners after beating this summer's hosts Japan 2-1 to win gold for a third consecutive time.

Olympic champion Hege Riise, who won gold with Norway at the 2000 Games, will lead the GB squad at this summer's Games.

Ticket refunds will be issued to all purchasers.

Anyone who has paid by credit/debit card online or over the phone will be automatically refunded back to the original card.

Those who have paid at the Ticket Office window (by any payment method) will need to e-mail tickets@stokecityfc.com or call 01782 3675999 to arrange the refund.

Great Britain finished training on Saturday, July 3 and will fly out to Tokyo from London Heathrow on Wednesday, July 7.

Team GB: Me



By Charlotte Stacey

Hege Riise has selected her eighteen strong side to represent Team GB at this year's Olympic games in Tokyo.

Riise was appointed to lead Team GB after heading up the Lionesses since Phil Neville's departure in January. The Norwegian coach had the option to choose players from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for her limited squad.

Due to the fast paced and unremitting nature of the Olympics, the FA insisted that Riise's selection of players must fulfil the following "crucial criteria":

- **Physical condition** - Team GB could potentially play six games in seventeen days in warm temperatures and humidity. Players must also cope with hectic travelling schedules.
- **Mental toughness** - dealing with the pressure

of a prestigious global competition and possible setbacks throughout.

- **Versatility** – with only eighteen places, players must be willing and able to adapt to positions that are not necessarily preferred.

Of Riise's cohort, perhaps predictably, the majority is made up of English players, with only Scotland's Kim Little and Caroline Weir and Wales captain Sophie Ingle chosen from other home nations.

OL Reign goalkeeper Karen Bardsley was originally chosen as part of the eighteen however had to withdraw due to injury. Chelsea's Carly Telford has been called up in her absence, skipping ahead of reserve goalkeeper Sandy MacIver.

Riise has prioritised experience in her selection with half of the squad being aged 28 or over. This decision has somewhat divided opinion with questions of endurance and consistent domestic form coming to the

forefront. Yet, being one of only three women to have won the Euro's, World Cup and the Olympics, Riise is certainly well aware ingredients needed to build a seriously contenting squad.

So let's take a look at Hege Riise's Team GB.

Goalkeeping

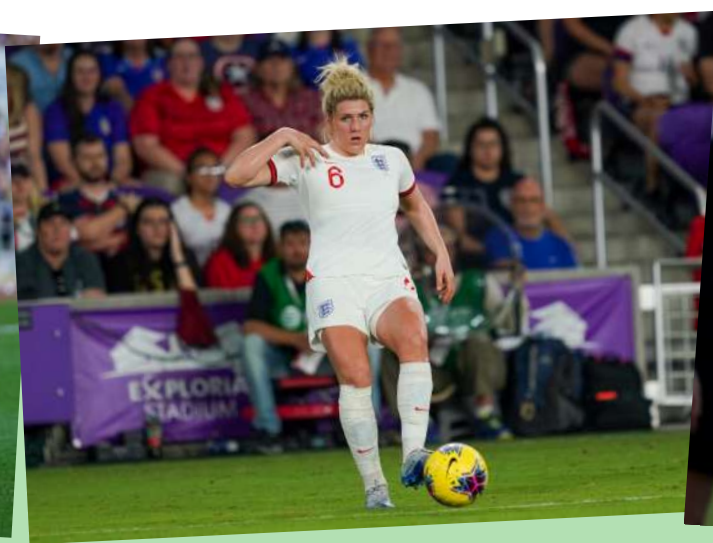
Ellie Roebuck

Roebuck is surely a show-in for the Olympics. At just 21, Roebuck is bold yet sensible in her decisions and clear with outward communication. Roebuck has kept thirteen clean sheets this season across all competitions alluding to her smart positioning between the posts. Simply, the Manchester City keeper remains as one of the finest in the domestic league, and with her growing international experience, Roebuck should be the number one pick.

Carly Telford

Following Karen Bardsley's withdrawal due to injury,

Meet the squad



Chelsea's Carly Telford has been called up to fill the experienced role between the posts. Although Telford has not seen an awful lot of game time this season her sharp reactions, vocalness and organisation, as well as a fair few game saving performances, have seen Telford withstand the test of time. Resilient and infectiously optimistic, Telford's calm presence means she brings much more than just a safe pair of hands.

Defence

Lucy Bronze

Bronze is recognised as being one of the most well-crafted players in the world in her position. The right back is high pressing, imposing and physical. Bronze likes to keep players on both sides on their toes and is known to be as lively in the attacking third as she is at the back. Evidently always striving for the very best, Bronze is responsible for every touch she takes and is quick to note and actively right

a mistake. An open mentality that will be essential under such unrelenting circumstances.

Millie Bright

Chelsea defender Bright is a steadfast figure at the back and encompasses every quality one would hope to find in a centre-back. Typically wise in her defensive actions, Bright is shrewd with a tackle and makes substantial interceptive movements. She is successful in applying pressure to divert attacking plays and forcing opponents onto the wrong foot. Bright also carries with her an exceptional ability to accurately play long balls that can spin a game on its head in seconds.

Leah Williamson

Williamson has played another successful season with The Arsenal. The centre-half boasts a first class first touch and excellent ball control, often developing on these with a keen passing eye. Williamson is organised yet progressive and

possesses a capability to carry the ball across considerable distances. Another benefit of having Williamson in the squad is that she is also able to comfortably operate in a deep-seated midfield role which allows the option of a working double pivot.

Steph Houghton

Manchester City and England captain Houghton has been a staple in the Lionesses defensive structure for a number of years and still has plenty to offer. Up until her recent injury Houghton's domestic season had been impressive, the centre back showing off her stout commitment to keeping a clean sheet with her timely challenges and goal line clearances. Houghton is also an indirect free kick specialist and can pot the ball from the most incomprehensible angles. With ample international experience, Houghton's leadership and calming presence should not be underestimated in a

tournament of such prestige.

Demi Stokes

Left back Demi Stokes has been a regular figure for both club and country for a number of years. Typically playing a more defensive fullback role, Stokes is quick and persistent in tracking back and retrieving. However, ever-developing, she also possesses the ability to press forward and overlap her winger in times of transition bringing the best of both to the left side.

Walsh remains one of the most skilled defensive midfielders the home nations have to offer. The 24-year-old is a gifted visionary and uses this foresight to execute well placed balls into the attacking third. Walsh is well used as a 'springboard' in propelling play out from a deeper position whilst standing protective of her backline. Approaching games with a patience, Walsh bides her time in picking out the most advantageous pass, a crucial cog in goal and shot

leadership will be paramount in keeping the core ticking.

Caroline Weir

Manchester City midfielder Weir has a wand of a left foot, there is simply no other way to describe it. Another player to bolster the left side, Weir is creative with her positioning and in her passing demonstrated by her ability to regularly assist toward scoring opportunities. However, Weir herself is no stranger to hitting the back of the net. Whether it



Rachel Daly

Daly is a player that could quite literally play in any position on the pitch. Typically used as a fullback when playing internationally, Daly is arguably more usefully located much higher up the pitch. She is forward thinking with a flair in sparking an independently charged play, yet possesses a defensive savvy. Her willingness to perform out of position and dexterity across the field makes her a favourable selection.

Midfield

Keira Walsh

creation.

Kim Little

Widely regarded as one of the most difficult opponents to come up against, Little navigates the midfield with an untouchable quality. Little's ball control is second to none and the Arsenal captain is able to dribble through oppositions effortlessly. Yet possibly one the most valuable aspect of Little's game is her acute awareness of all that goes on around her, an intellect in knowing her teammates whereabouts and an ability to play to them in to their strengths. Little's understated

is from a long-range set piece or a live attack, Weir is able to hit the target with the sauciest of strikes.

Jill Scott

Lionesses and Manchester City veteran Scott has been placed in just about every situation. Determined, persevering with a fine passing skillset and a stamina that rivals those ten years her junior, Scott has remained integral to any side she plays in. Scott's time loaned out to Everton this season certainly did the trick in keeping her fresh in the mind as the familiar midfielder heavily impressed once again.

Sophie Ingle

Wales captain Ingle acts as an added layer of protection in the defensive third. She is able to cover well and sweep away threats before they become a problem. However, Ingle's excellence lies firmly in her passing ability. Ingle is able to accurately spray long balls which travel between lines, passes that subsequently play a role in creation. On top of this Ingle has also successfully played as a centre-back for

from either side, Hemp is a proven headache for defenders.

Fran Kirby

The Chelsea forward has returned from her lengthy absence with a vengeance, providing a mammoth thirteen assists and twenty-two goals across all competitions. Kirby has played in a wider position this season but is just as deadly playing centrally in what one would suggest is her most favoured role as a number ten.

White's work rate is noteworthy, she is simply not one to sit tight or wait on the peripheral. White seeks the service she desires and runs tirelessly to receive this.

Nikita Parris

Instinctively attacking Parris is a player that is able to function well across the front line. The Lyon forward is arguably best placed in a wide area where she is able to decoy defenders by cutting on the inside with a



Chelsea this season, another useful string to add to her bow.

Attack

Lauren Hemp

Hemp has established herself a 'must have' in international

fixtures. The Manchester City winger dances along the wing, revelling in the pressure of beating out stiff competition as she goes. Hemp is an excellent transitional player and is able to find pockets of space to receive balls to counter an oppositional threat. Also known for her ungovernable pace and skill in placing a cross

She is quick, conscious, intelligent and significantly unselfish, drawing in defenders leaving others to dart into optimal positions whilst lines are stretched.

Ellen White

Manchester City forward White is an innate out and out number nine. An ability to put herself in the right place at the right time has seen White score thirteen goals across all competitions this season. White is cool, calm and collected, tidy and concise in tucking the ball away with a clinical finish. Ever the grafter,

quick shift of the ball. However, Parris can adapt her skillset to play centrally when needed and boasts a fine scoring ability. Parris is a workhorse and has no problem in chasing down a ball or tracking back to retrieve. Her positive energy drags a simmering momentum out of hiding.

Georgia Stanway

At just 22 Stanway has cemented herself as one of the most versatile players in contention. Stanway has played in a number of positions both domestically and

internationally and is a reliable source in rotation. Stanway displays an attacking mindset and is possibly best utilised as a high attacking midfielder, however she has demonstrated disciplined defensive positioning when tasked with holding further back. Naturally spirited, Stanway is not one to shy away from a challenge and will get herself stuck into any and all situations.

Reserves

Sandy MacIver

With a significant amount of game time behind her this season, MacIver is a keeper that should be carefully considered. MacIver presents a favourable outright shot stopping rate and a distributive passing ability that reflects her skill in being as well versed with her feet as she is with her hands. The Everton keeper

presents a confident solidarity at the back and would be a suitable addition to the squad.

Lotte Wubben-Moy

Wubben-Moy has returned to The Arsenal with a physicality and strength that has punished the efforts of opponents. The centre-back is alert in closing down space and strong in standing her ground. Her growing ball playing ability is evident and she has even managed to write her name on the scoresheet this season. It is also worth noting that Wubben-Moy typically plays on the left, a useful trait to have in a right-side heavy defensive pack.

Niamh Charles

Chelsea's Charles is a player that can seemingly slot into any formation that is presented. Her first season with the Blues has been

exceptional and she has shown a great amount of positional potential. Charles has played in both left sided and right sided positions and in both attacking and defensive roles demonstrating a clear and prepared adaptability.

Ella Toone

Manchester United midfielder Toone has finished her season in style, ending as the Red Devils' top goal scorer and leading assistant. Toone is a tenacious and hardworking player who excels just slightly setback from the forward line. As a developing provider Toone is agile and quick witted in finding the space to create through central pathways.

Women's football commences at the Olympics on Wednesday 21st July when Team GB will play their first match against Chile at 8:30am (BST).



Cristiano Mazzi/Sports Press Photo



Isaac Parkin/Sports Press Photo

Tokyo 2020: All you need to know



When are the Tokyo Olympics?

The delayed Olympic Games will start on Friday, July 23 and finish on Sunday, August 8.

Despite this, the football at the tournament starts on Wednesday, July 21.

Which group are Great Britain in?

Great Britain are in Group E alongside Japan, Canada and Chile.

When are Great Britain's matches?

Wednesday, July 21: Great Britain vs Chile

Saturday, July 24: Japan vs Great Britain

Tuesday, July 27: Canada vs Great Britain

What are the other groups?

There are 12 teams from six confederations competing for the gold medal.

The competing countries are divided into three groups of four teams.

The groups are named E, F and G to avoid confusion with the men's tournament.

Group F:

- China PR
- Brazil
- Zambia
- Netherlands

Group G:

- Sweden
- USA
- Australia
- New Zealand

Who are the defending champions?

Germany are the defending champions after winning the gold medal at the 2016 Olympics.

They beat Sweden 2-1 in the final.

They failed to qualify for the 2020 Games so will be unable to defend their medal.

At the Rio de Janeiro games, Canada took home the bronze medal.

They beat hosts Brazil 2-1 in the third place match.

When are the medal matches?

The quarter-finals will take place on Friday, July 30.

The semi-finals will take place on Monday, August 2.

The bronze medal match will be on Thursday, August 5.

The gold medal match will be on Friday, August 6.

USA ready for red



By Jamie Davies

The 2020 Olympic games in Tokyo is just around the corner and you have a sense that one women's team in particular have some unfinished business.

The US Women's National Team (USWNT) recently announced their Olympic squad for the football tournament which includes an army of world stars only to be known as winners in every field position.

The announcement in June felt as though USA are hungry for redemption after what had happened at the Rio Olympics in Brazil in 2016.

A shock defeat to Sweden in a penalty shootout saw Hope Solo and her team go out in the Quarter-Finals and failed their defensive bid to retain the Olympic gold medal.

It left many of the players in tears including Solo who took the defeat very badly and even called the Sweden players a 'bunch of cowards' in her post-match interview.

Ever since their fall at the last Olympics, the US team have continued to dominate the international women's game by winning a number of SheBelieves Cups but ultimately winning a 2nd FIFA Women's World Cup in a row in 2019.

There may have been squad changes since Rio 2016 including the retirement of Solo but they are stronger than ever and are expected to be favourites to take home the gold medal.

United States Squad for Tokyo 2020

Goalkeepers: Adrianna Franch, Alyssa Naeher

Defenders: Abby Dahlkemper, Tierna Davidson, Crystal Dunn, Kelley O'Hara, Becky Sauerbrunn, Emily Sonnett

Midfielders: Julie Ertz, Lindsey Horan, Rose Lavelle, Kristie Mewis, Samantha Mewis

Forwards: Tobin Heath, Carli Lloyd, Alex Morgan, Christen Press, Megan Rapinoe

Reserves: Jane Campbell (GK), Casey Krueger (DF), Catarina Macario (MF), Lynn Williams (FW)

Modern day media announcements are normally first seen on social media and when the USWNT account announced their squad for Tokyo 2020, it brought excitement to the table that we would once again see the likes of Alex Morgan up front, Rose Lavelle in behind and Becky Sauerbrunn controlling

emption in Tokyo



the defensive side at another international tournament.

You do feel that USA's golden generation will of course not last forever so it is a sense of make the most out of it when we see these players together winning a majority of their games.

Becoming Olympic champions once more would be the perfect send off for Carli Lloyd who will be 39 years old once the tournament kicks off on July 21st.

Lloyd has two gold medals to her name by helping the US win in Beijing 2008 followed by London 2012 along with a ridiculous load of winner's medals for club and country.

As we are talking about members of their front line, we haven't even mentioned the faces of Tobin Heath and

Christen Press, who had a decent spell at Manchester United last season in the Women's Super League, known for their ultimate goal drops for the US team.

Both Heath and Press have confirmed to have left Man Utd after just one season but Heath was the driving force of Casey Stoney's team before she picked up an injury that saw her miss the rest of the season. Her influence helped United go top of the WSL for a good period.

Press may not have scored many goals by finding the net 4 times in the WSL, but her experience for sure was praised by her team mates at United which may help the club going forward.

Last but not least is the great Megan Rapinoe who had an absolute blast for the US team at the last Women's World Cup in 2019.

The 36-year-old was the face of that tournament and was clearly the player of the tournament. Earlier this year, Rapinoe scored three goals in three games for the US at the SheBelieves Cup which just shows her magic for her country is still working.

USA's Olympic Fixtures in Group G

July 21: Sweden vs USA

July 24t New Zealand vs USA

July 27: USA v Australia

A big few weeks ahead for the USA but what an opportunity it is for them to earn redemption over Sweden by getting a win in their opening game of the campaign.

Can they let go of their demons of Rio 2016?



UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2022 ENGLAND



Euro 2022: One Year to go



By Jamie Davies

In exactly one year's time will see the 2022 UEFA Women's Euro kick-off in England as the beautiful game will be coming home for the women's version of the competition.

We've already had quite the summer of the men's Euro 2020 which has seen the competition played around the European continent including Wembley Stadium which has been the main host for England's matches, the semi-finals and the grand final on July 11.

Fingers and toes are crossed that Gareth Southgate's men can bring the trophy home as well as the tournament.

But next summer will see the entire women's version of the Euros take place across England.

Wembley Stadium yet again will be the venue for the women's final on July 31st but before all of that, there are 30 other matches to be played before we know our European finalists.

The opening game of the tournament kicks it all off on July 6th at Old Trafford as the Lionesses will start the party.

However, England or neither is any other team aware of who they play in the group stages next summer as the draw is still to take place.

The draw is pencilled in for October 28th later this year in Manchester as all 16 teams will be drawn into 4 groups of 4 teams with only 8 of them proceeding to the quarter finals.

Final Draw (Oct 28th, 2021)

Pot 1: England, Netherlands, Germany, France

Pot 2: Sweden, Spain, Norway, Italy

Pot 3: Denmark, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria.

Pot 4: Iceland, Russia, Finland, Northern Ireland.

Venues

Wembley Stadium (Capacity 90,000)

Brentford Community Stadium (Capacity 74,879)

Manchester City Academy Stadium (Capacity 7,000)

Bramall Lane (Capacity 32,702)

St Mary's Stadium (Capacity 32,505)

Falmer Stadium (Capacity 30,750)

Stadium MK (Capacity 30,500)

New York Stadium (Capacity 12,021)

Leigh Sports Village (Capacity 12,000)

Ticket Prices are Incredibly Affordable

One of the main reasons to get excited about the women's Euros coming to England is the irresistible ticket prices that were announced recently.

Back in May earlier this year, UEFA announced the expected price ranges for tickets to next summer's tournament and the news was very good for the fans.

The prices is ranging from £5 - £50 for the finals which is incredibly cheap compared to tickets to the Euro 2020 final at Wembley going as high as £2,000 as I write this.

Over 700,000 tickets are expected to go on sale in mid-February in 2022

with the highest category of tickets for the final on July 31st will be sold at £50 which is a very good price when you compare it to the men's game.

Next summer is the perfect opportunity for more people to get themselves following women's football even more, especially when you mention how cheap a ticket to a game near you will be.

Plus it is also a great chance for the Lionesses to win the tournament in front of a home crowd and to get the 12th member behind them.

England Women are still without a major trophy under their belt but their recent performances at the FIFA Women's World Cup and the Euros have them as a strong contender.

Since the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada, England have made the semi-finals of every major tournament from Euro 2017 to the Women's World Cup in 2019.

It is a golden opportunity for the fans to support their nation, at a low cost, and hopefully witness the Lionesses finally lift a trophy.

Last Time Out

In the last Euros in 2017 it was hosted in the

Netherlands which saw the Oranje Army win on home soil after the Dutch beat Denmark in the final. They also defeated Mark Sampson's Lionesses on route to the final in the semi-finals.

It was a tournament to remember for the likes of Lieke Martens, Vivianne Miedema and Sherida Spitse who have gone onto play across Europe for big clubs including Arsenal, Barcelona and Ajax.

The overall attendance for the finals four years ago was around 247,000 but the targets for next year's contest is expected to triple and could be a very exciting time for women's football.

12 months from now, could it be coming home for the Lionesses?

July 31st, 2022 – Save the date!





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Around the World





News from around the world

Montemurro named Juve manager

Joe Montemurro has been announced as the new head coach of Juventus.

The 51-year-old left Arsenal in May after four years in charge of the Women's Super League club.

Juventus won all 22 of their games in Serie A this season to retain their league title but were knocked out of the Champions League by Lyon in the last 32.



**Lloyd
scorer**

becomes

USA's

oldest



Carli Lloyd has become the oldest goal-scorer in US women's national team history.

She scored just 24 seconds into a 4-0 win over Jamaica as the team prepares to head to the Olympics at the end of the month.

Breaking a record that stood for 11 years, Lloyd notched her latest goal at 38 years and 332 days old, which is 68 days past when Kristine Lilly last set it in 2010.

NFT collection for Real Madrid sells out

Fantastec SWAP, the Official Digital Product of Real Madrid, has revealed its exclusive collection of NFTs for the Real Madrid's women's squad has sold out within 48 hours of release.

Fantastec SWAP is the only platform in the world where fans of women's football can capture historic moments via NFTs, and Real Madrid Women joined Arsenal W.F.C to become the only women's football teams to feature in NFT collections globally, through the SWAP app.

One fan even purchased enough packs to make them the first person to complete this historic collection, in less than 24h.



Simon Says

This month I sat down to chat to soccer player and coach Lauren Prott. With playing experience in Albania, USA, Australia, Sweden, Norway and Czech Republic, she has a depth knowledge of the game which led to a fascinating conversation.

At what age did you first start to play football?

I started playing when I was 4 years old.

How did you come to choose your preferred playing position?

I started off playing keeper because I had no fear of jumping on top of a ball as a player ran full speed at me, and forward because I just scored a lot.

I got moved back to defender around 10 after a game where I lost the ball in front of our attacking goal and chased it all the way back down to the other end of the field, won it, then got it up the other end of the field to score. From there until 20 or so I played outside back, mostly on the left.

I only got moved into center back as I began to finally grow in my body and put on muscle and have been there ever since. So I never really chose defender but it was just meant to be. I just got too angry when I lost the ball and always wanted it back.

How old were you when you joined your first team?

I joined my first team at 5, as part of a recreational soccer league. I didn't join a "competitive" league until I was 12 or so.

Did you have issues with your family when choosing to play football?

No, my family has always been really supportive with me and all of my siblings.

They just wanted us to have fun, and put us in a lot of different sports growing up but we were always allowed to say no. The only issue was that neither of my parents played football so they didn't fully understand all the rules... like offside.

Did you play mainly with girls or boys when you were younger?

My first few years of recreational soccer were coed. I played coed in school a lot as well growing up. I still play in coed 7 A-side leagues when I am back home in Chico. At Butte College, I would train with the men's team before my own team training.

What team did you first play for?

First team I remember playing with was Butte United when I was about 12, it was also my first competitive team. After that I switched to Chico CAL and stayed there for several years.

You have managed to combine studying and initially playing football and now coaching. How do you managed to juggle this?

I look back now and still wonder how I dealt with a full college schedule as well as soccer. I had a daily planner with sometimes minute by minute breakdown of what I had to do. My last semester of college, I was also working two jobs (one in person, and one online), I slept maybe 5 hours a night, and had a pre scheduled nap on Tuesday from 9am - 12pm. I just had to be really organized with my time, especially in college.

Most recently you have taken up coaching and gained coaching qualifications. Was this a conscious decision to take up coaching?

It wasn't, I originally took up coaching a team

Most recently you have taken up coaching and gained coaching qualifications. Was this a conscious decision to take up coaching?

It wasn't, I originally took up coaching a team for my club in Australia (Boroondara Eagles) as part of my playing contract. Previously I had only ever worked with players one on one or as a guest coach. And honestly if I hadn't had such a good experience with a Futsal that I coached my last few months in Australia then I probably would have stopped. My first year coaching a team was rough, the club had me working with 4 teams, u16 to u8, and I just felt as if it was a bit too much. The more I've gotten used to managing players the more enjoyable it has become. I have been leaning towards becoming a college coach when my playing career is over.

Your career has taken you from the USA, Norway and Australia. Did you notice any differences in the women's

game in each country?

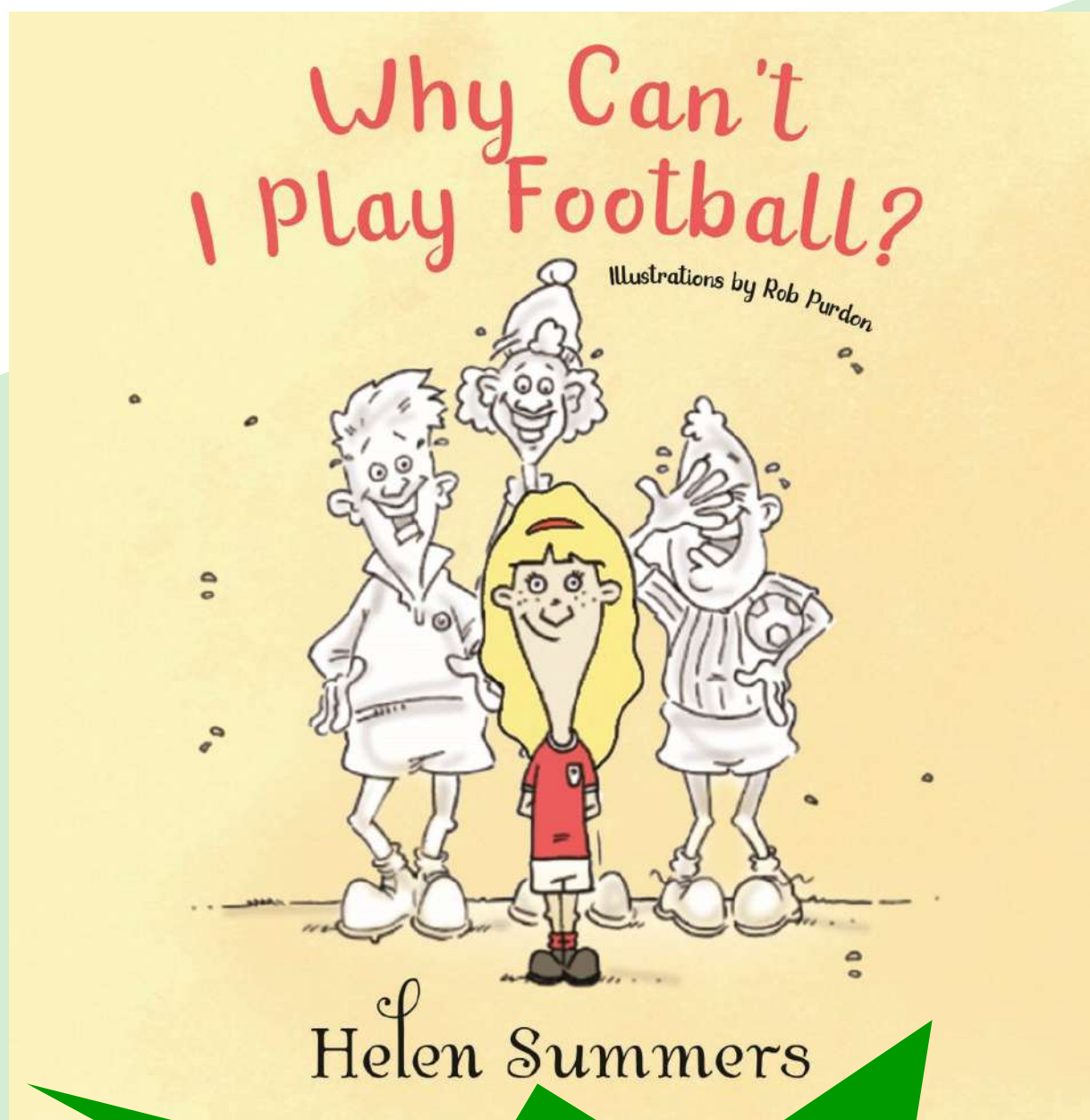
Yes, definitely! There is still nothing quite like the competitiveness of American women's soccer and that's usually what I miss most when I am abroad. Then European teams tend to be more technical, and I really love that aspect. Swedish players were very physical as well as technical. Players in Czech Republic were very hard tacklers on the defensive side, we would have players completely clear out each other in training and carry on as if nothing happened.

Do you have a dream in football?

Play in one of the top leagues in the world. Just to be surrounded by some of the best players in the world so we can feed off of our competitive spirit and get better everyday. I want a competitive environment where I'm pushed to my limits.



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**THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
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