

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

Issue 58—May 2022



THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



@thewomensfootiemag



@womensfootiemag



@womensfootiemag

Welcome

*Hello and
welcome to
Issue XX!*

XXXXXX

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief

@helenrw11

CONTRIBUTORS

Editor

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Writers

Marissa Thomas

Simon O'Neill

Charlotte Stacey

Jamie Davies

Photography

Sports Press Photos

@GOTB

Stephen Flynn

Martin Rowe-Willcocks

Website designer

Will Ibbetson

Advertising assistant

Simon O'Neill

Business manager

Martin Rowe-Willcocks

For any enquiries email:

helen@thewomensfootballmagazine.com

*The views and comments
expressed in this magazine are
personal views and comments of
the individual writers and not
necessarily those of The
Women's Football Magazine.
Every effort has been made to
trace the source of information
and to ensure that copyright has
not been infringed.*

©TheWomensFootballMagazine

Company number: 12839197



CALLING ALL WOMEN'S AND GIRL'S FOOTBALL TEAMS

Do you want to promote your team and inspire your players?



Our new season ticket is for you!

You'll receive:

- ♣ 25 annual subscriptions for players and coaches
- ♣ A team article in The Women's Football Magazine
- ♣ The opportunity to promote your club through our website

All for an amazing price of £50

For more information go to:

www.thewomensfootballmagazine.com/seasonticket

#InspireWithTWFM

Contents



8 TWFM Awards

WSL

**11 Alessia Russo:
Superstar in the Making
By Charlotte Stacey**

13 WSL News 1

**14 Chelsea comeback secures WSL title
By Helen Rowe-Willcocks**

16 Karen Bardsley retires

**18 There is no other like Asante
By Charlotte Stacey**

20 WSL News 2

**24 Bend it like Beckham:
A film that inspired a generation of legends
By Sian Davies**

26 WSL News 3

27 WSL Table and top goalscorers

CHAMPIONSHIP

**29 Match of the Month:
Watford vs Coventry
By Paul Donegan**

32 Championship News 1

**34 Liverpool's back in the WSL –
but it's been far from easy
By Sian Davies**

36 Championship News 2

37 Championship Table

Women's National League

**39 Exclusive Interview:
Newcastle's Becky Langley
By Jonathan Cotterill-Bolsover**

**42 Exclusive Interview:
Sian Osmond
By Jonathan Cotterill-Bolsover**

**44 Simon Says
By Simon O'Neill**

47 National League Tables

GRASSROOTS

51 A Women's Game By Suzie Wrack

52 Ammo's Antics

54 Government to review women's football

CUPS

**57 Champions League:
Barcelona Femini break attendance record for Women's
Football... twice
By Rosie Hall**

59 Champions League results

**60 FA Cup final preview:
Manchester City vs Chelsea
By Paul Donegan**

HOME NATIONS

63 Swiss secured as final Euro warm-up game

64 SWPL structure set for overhaul
By Peter Quinn

**65 Round-up in Scotland:
Rangers face City showdown for title, while Dundee United,
Montrose, Gartcairn secure promotions**
By Peter Quinn

68 Wales to face New Zealand

69 WU17 squad prepare at training camp

70 Uefa U16 Girls Development tournament round-up

72 Finlay set to make history at U17 Euro finals

INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

**75 Portugal confirmed as Russia's
replacement for Euro 2022**

**76 Women's Euros 2022: England's group matches and
Wembley sold out**

76 Iceland star unimpressed by Euro 2022 stadium choice

78 U20 Women's World Cup draw made

AROUND THE WORLD

81 Solo asks to delay Hall of Fame induction

**82 50 Women in Sport:
the fascinating story of the female pioneers**

Contents

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE Awards

The winners have been announced for the 2022 TWFM Awards.

This is the third year of our awards with thousands of you voting and some of the categories finished with as little as two votes in it.

WSL Coach of the Season:



Winner: Emma Hayes, Chelsea

Runner's Up: Jonas Eidevall, Arsenal

Lydia Bedford, Leicester City
Rehanne Skinner, Tottenham Hotspur

WSL Player of the Season:



Winner: Ella Toone, Manchester United

Runner's Up: Hannah Hampton, Aston Villa

Jess Carter, Chelsea

Lia Wälti, Arsenal

Championship Coach of the Season:

Winner: Matt Beard, Liverpool



Runner's Up: Dean Davenport, Crystal Palace

Lee Sanders, Durham

Neil Redfearn, Sheffield United

Championship Player of the Season:



Winner: Leanne Kiernan, Liverpool **Runner's Up:** Chantelle Robinson, Lincoln City **Runner's Up:** Abdulai Kaima, Savannah FC

Runner's Up: Beth Imogen Riches, Hashtag Hepple, Durham **Erin Edwards, Mersey Royals U18s**

Fran Bentley, Bristol City **Tammi George, Wolverhampton Wanderers** **Jo Buttler-Williams, London Seaward**

National League Coach of the Season:



Fan of the Season:



Grassroots Coach of the Season:



Winner: Neil Harlow, Leatherhead

Winner: Marieanne Spacey-Cale, Southampton

Runner's Up: Liz Mackie and Katy Madley, Whitchurch Alport U13s

Winner: Erin Carroll, Altrincham

Runner's Up: Sam Griffiths, Derby County

Sammy Boothright, Gainsborough Trinity U12s

Runner's Up: Jo Goodhall, Liverpool

Daniel McNamara, Wolverhampton Wanderers

Tom Warren, Wolverhampton Wanderers Reserves

Jess Cully, London Seaward
Susanne Pilmer, Wakefield Trinity

Simon Noakes, Boldmere St. Michaels

National League Player of the Season:

Grassroots Player of the Season:

Thank you to everyone who took the time to nominate players, coaches and fans and to everyone for voting in our awards.



Winner: Chantelle Thompson, Liverpool Feds

Winner: Neve Renwick, Barnsley U18s

It is always one of our favourite parts of the year when we get to celebrate the talent across the UK.

WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



Alessia Russo:

Superstar in the Making



By Charlotte Stacey

As the women's super league season wraps up and is reflected upon, Manchester United forward Alessia Russo must be noted as having played an outstanding term of football.

Russo joined Manchester United in September 2020, asserting her mark by registering three goals and one assist in just three appearances. For her efforts, Russo was named as the WSL's Player of the Month a few weeks later in October. An unfortunate hamstring injury last November meant that Russo's promising first season in red was cruelly cut short, however since returning she has most certainly made up for lost time.

Prior to joining the Red Devils, Russo had top-flight experience with Chelsea and Brighton and Hove Albion. Charlton Athletic was where it all began for Russo as a youngster, before she moved to Chelsea's development squad making her senior debut in 2016. After a single game with the Blues, Russo joined a newly promoted Brighton where she made history scoring the Seagulls first goal in the top

division.

With a short but successful stint with Brighton under her belt, Russo moved across the pond to play college football joining Atlantic Conference Coast (ACC) side Carolina Tar Heels. Whilst in the States Russo further developed the skills that would attract the likes of United. In her first season abroad, Russo netted nine goals and earned two assists in 19 appearances before becoming the first Tar Heel to be awarded a United Soccer Coaches first-team All-America selection since 2013. To put Russo's credibility into perspective, she achieved this selection whilst suffering from a broken leg.

Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic Russo returned home, cutting her final year of college short signing with United just a few weeks later. Over the course of this season, Russo has stood out as one of the leagues most capable attackers. Having played in both a number nine role and as a winger, as part of Marc Skinners rotational preference, Russo has been able to hone qualities that will see her as an asset to any forward line.

In fact, Russo ends the campaign within the top ten for the number of goals scored, shots made, shots on target, goal creating actions, progressive passes and assists registered.

When note Russo's play, it becomes simpler to see how she has achieved such prolificity. Russo is progressive, aggressive and deceptively quick. She will put pedal to the metal when given an opening presents itself or to put a defender or goalkeeper under pressure. On top of this, Russo has a keen eye to pick out a pass or cross when playing wide, yet also ensures she is on the end of them when playing through the middle.

With a finish even the most experienced of players would be proud of, Russo is unmistakably difficult to stop in front of goal.

She has presence on the ball and uses her technical skill to place her strike. However, she is also adept at drawing in opponents, both on and off the ball, to open up passages for teammates causing her to be an important figure in United's creative play.

Internationally, Russo has played for England at all levels and has fixed herself as a regular feature for current manager Sarina Wiegman.

With her ability to poach and to station herself in correct areas in the box, it is likely that Russo will take up the central striker for her country going forward. As 'more senior' players begin phase out over the next few years, it is pleasing to have talents such as Russo gathering experience on the international stage.

Having surely asserted herself as one of the leagues, and indeed the countries, most exciting attacking prospects, Russo will undoubtedly continue to gather the attention of the masses.

However, the most encouraging part of Russo's future is that she has barely scratched the surface, and that, we are certainly looking forward to.

Rehanne Skinner sticks with Spurs

Tottenham head coach Rehanne Skinner has signed a new deal and will remain in North London until at least the summer of 2024.

Skinner first joined the club in November 2020, succeeding long term coaches Karen Hills and Juan Amoros, and is on course to lead Spurs to their highest table placing and highest number of league points in the competition this season.

Skinner was named on the shortlist for the TWFM Awards 2022.



Sports Press Photo

Eidevall signs new contract

Arsenal manager Jonas Eidevall has signed a new contract alongside men's manager Mikel Arteta.

Eidevall joined the London club last summer and his contract extension takes him to the end of the 2023-24 season.

Speaking to the official website, he said: "It's great. It allows me to continue to work for a club that I love so much and be around people that I really, really like, and to be able to achieve things together, so I'm really looking forward to that."

Josh Kroenke added: "Turning to Jonas, he has had a fantastic start to his career in England.

"He has done a terrific job with the team, and we are in contention for the title on the last weekend.

"We are confident that he will continue to take us forward in the years ahead."

The pair signed their deals together in the directors' box, overlooking the pitch at Emirates Stadium, in the presence of chief executive Vinai Venkatesham, technical director Edu Gaspar and head of women's football Clare Wheatley.

Fran Kirby out for the foreseeable

Chelsea forward Fran Kirby is set for an extended spell on the sidelines after suffering with undiagnosed bouts of fatigue.

The 28-year-old has previously suffered with pericarditis, an inflammation of the fibrous sac surrounding the heart, which saw her miss out on much of the 2019-20 season.

Boss Emma Hayes commented "all I know right now is that she's not available for club or country and she won't be for the foreseeable future."

Chelsea comeback secures WSL title



By Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Chelsea survived a scare on the last day of the Women's Super League season to take the trophy for the sixth time.

Emma Hayes' side trailed 2-1 at half-time, with Arsenal pecking at the heels of West Ham at the London Stadium.

Speaking after the game, Jess Cuthbert said, "the second half was a Chelsea performance, we don't need to talk about the first."

Arsenal finished just one point adrift of the Blues despite their 2-0 win at West Ham.

Jordan Nobbs, who is currently fighting to be back from injury in time for the Euro Championships this summer, was spotted in the crowd watching the Chelsea game on her phone and players were keeping in touch with the crowd to find out the score at the Kingsmeadow.

Sam Kerr, who was named the Football Writers Association Footballer of the Year scored two stunning volleys to help them lift the title.

Aston Villa 0-1 Birmingham City

Birmingham City's final game in the WSL finished

in a 1-0 victory over rivals Aston Villa.

The Blues relegation was confirmed when they were beaten by Manchester City in midweek but they finished with only their third win of the season.

Greece international Veatriki Sarri scored the winner in the first half at Villa Park when her cross looped in over home goalkeeper Hannah Hampton.

Rachel Corsie hit the crossbar for Villa, who finish the season in ninth.

That came after Hampton made a superb save to stop Jade Pennock doubling Birmingham's lead from

close range in the second half.

Brighton & Hove Albion 1-1 Everton

Brighton and Everton shared the points at The People's Pension Stadium.

Nathalie Bjorn gave Everton the lead just before the half time whistle.

Hope Powell's side looked much better in the second half and Aimee Whelan was brought on to make an impact.

And that she did, scoring to earn a point in her final game for the Seagulls.

Brighton finished seventh, and Everton 10th.

Chelsea 4-2 Manchester United

Manchester United gave the WSL champions a scare at Kingsmeadow, taking the lead twice.

Martha Thomas opened the scoring after just 13 minutes but it only took five minutes before Erin Cuthbert had equalled the scoreline.

United led 2-1 at half time after Ella Toone got the visitors back in front.

Chelsea scored two goals in five minutes—Kerr's first of the afternoon and then Guro Reiten put them in the lead for the first time.

Kerr secured the important victory with a sensational volley from 30 yards which dipped over Mary Earps.

Reading 0-4 Manchester City

Manchester City put on a dominant performance against Reading to secure the final Champions League spot.

Lauren Hemp broke the deadlock before Khadija Shaw put them in full control before half-time.

Ellen White and an Alex Greenwood penalty made sure late on.

Reading finished the season eighth in the table.

Tottenham Hotspur 1-0 Leicester City

Ashleigh Neville scored the game's only goal as Tottenham beat Leicester at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

The 29-year-old defender leaped highest in the box to nod past Demi Lambourne in the second half.

The result means Tottenham finish the Women's Super League season in fifth place, though 10 points adrift of the top four.

Leicester finish their first season in the top flight two points clear of relegation.

West Ham United 0-2 Arsenal

Arsenal narrowly missed out on the WSL title despite beating London rivals West Ham on the final day.

Jonas Eidevall said he felt "empty" following the result as they finished just one point behind Chelsea.

Goals from Stina Blackstenius and Steph Catley secured the Gunners' last-day win, but the destiny of the title was out of their hands.

The defeat left West Ham sixth in the table and shortly after the result, it was announced that Oli Harder had left as manager.

Harder, informed the club before the game that he would "move on to pursue new opportunities".

Former West Ham player Paul Konchesky has agreed a new two-year deal to become the new manager.

He had been assistant at the Women's Super League club since May 2021.

"This is a very proud moment for me," Konchesky said in a statement. "I'm really honoured to have been appointed."

Karen Bardsley hangs up her gloves

Manchester City and England goalkeeper Karen Bardsley has called time on her 20-year spell between the sticks and will retire from professional football at the end of the season.

Bardsley, who stands as the Lionesses most capped goalkeeper with 82 appearances, also represented Team GB in the Olympics in 2012 and has won eight domestic trophies with City since joining in 2013.

The 37-year-old will remain as one of the most important figures of women's football, not only for her career on the pitch, but for her dedication to the sport off of it.

Bardsley hopes to develop a goalkeeping mentoring programme in the future. "I'm really excited about the next steps and what's to come in the future.

"I'm just looking forward to giving back to the football community" the shot-stopper commented.

Former England manager Hope Powell said on Karen Bardsley: "She was one of the first players I remember - I really liked this - who would come into meetings with a notebook & make every note about every strategy we ever spoke about.

"That showed me her desire to be better. She has had a fantastic career."



Allen picks up injury

Aston Villa's Remi Allen has ruptured her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and misses the remainder of the season.

The 31-year-old midfielder is due to undergo surgery in the coming weeks.

Allen, who joined from Leicester City last summer, has scored five goals in 22 games in her first campaign with Villa.

Allen said "Football can bring you some unbelievable highs but also hit you with the lowest lows!

I will do my everything to get back & put the shirt on again and do what I love.

"I am sure I will be back playing with a smile on my face."



There is no other like Asante



Liam Asman/SPP

By Charlotte Stacey

The morning before her 37th birthday, Aston Villa defender Anita Asante announced her retirement from professional football.

Asante's announcement came as a surprise, but perhaps not a shock. Sewing up an immense twenty-year career was bound to come sooner or later, however Asante's presence is one as familiar as a pitch itself, a women's super league (WSL) season without the centre-back gracing the grass will certainly take some getting used to.

From childhood football in the cages of North London to representing Great Britain in the Olympics, Asante's career has taken her across the globe and win multiple accolades, always at the very pinnacle of the game.

Signing a senior contract at her beloved Arsenal in 2003 as a teenager, Asante was a part of the Gunners squad that made history winning becoming the first and only club to win the quadruple (Premier League, Premier League Cup, FA Cup and Champions League) in 2006-07. Asante is widely regarded to have played an exceptional game in the Champions League final against Swedish side Umeå.

Asante then moved across London to join Chelsea for a year before spending the next portion of her career overseas. In 2009 Asante joined New Jersey side Sky Blue FC in the inaugural season of the Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) and helped the side to win the season. She was then traded to the now obsolete Saint Louis Athletica and the briefly joined Chicago Red

Stars. Asante moved once again in 2010 to Washington Spirit before following then coach Jim Gabarra back to Sky Blue.

After the WPS folded in 2012, Asante took the opportunity to head back to Europe and settled into the Damallsvenskan, the top-flight of women's football in Sweden.

Asante joined Kopparbergs/Göteborg FC (now known as BK Häcken) and went on to make 41 appearances and score nine goals, as well as winning the Svenska Cupen (Swedish Cup) and the Svenska Supercupen (Swedish Super Cup).

The defender then moved across to Swedish champions LdB FC Malmö (now known as FC Rosengård) and continued her illustrious run abroad.

Asante picked up hordes of silverware in her four years with Rosengård, including the league in 2014 and 2015, the Swedish Cup in 2016 and the Swedish Super Cup 2016, 2017.

She also was part of the side that reached three Champions League quarter finals.

Swedish dominance achieved; Asante returned to England to join Chelsea in the WSL in 2018 before signing the final contract of her career with Aston Villa in 2020 for their first campaign in the top-flight.

Rather fittingly, Asante's final away match came against Arsenal, signing off the very same way she signed on.

With such noteworthy domestic form, it is unsurprising that Asante's international bearing is no less impressive. Asante played for England through the youth groups and captained the U19 Lionesses to victory in 2002 U19 World Cup. Asante went on to make her senior debut in 2004 and subsequently made 71 appearances and scored 2 goals for her country.

Asante was also part of the 2012 Olympic squad in which she featured prominently, playing in all four of Team GB's matches before their eventual defeat in the final eight.

Asante's style of play is simple; no nonsense,

fundamentally driven, quality defending, and it has been her complete mastery of the basics that have kept her at the top for so long.

In the final stretch of her pitch side endeavours Asante has played over 35 games for Aston Villa, still an essential part of the set-up as she was twenty years ago.

Timely blocks, clever interceptions, imposing body language to force an opponent onto the wrong foot, all make up the small details of Asante's game.

Yet, possibly where she is most deadly is in one-v-one situations. Governing that backline with a notable astuteness, Asante is incredibly calm when handling immediate pressure. She will stick with an attacker before knowingly using her physicality or smart footwork to dispossess.

In fact, in this final season alone, Asante leads as the player who has tackled the greatest number of dribblers throughout the campaign. Put simply, one sighs a certain amount of relief when Asante's name pops up in the starting eleven.

Asante's mark, however, has not just been stamped between the confines of the touchlines. Advocate and activist, for many years Asante has campaigned for the rights of the LGBTQAI+ community, as well as strongly supporting Show

Racism the Red Card and Amnesty International and Goals for Girls.

Looking ahead, it seems there will be plenty on the horizon. Asante already lends her experienced voice to the masses, sharing her expertise and educating the nuances of women's football as a pundit within the media industry.

Yet further than that, Asante has ambitions that will eventually see her back in the dugout, aspiring to come full circle and head back to where it all began.

Asante hopes to one day return to The Arsenal and manage the club that has sparked two decades of a remarkable life.

"My long-term ambition is to one day manage my childhood club – it would be amazing to go back to where it all began.

"I want to live again in that world that gave me so much." – Anita Asante.

It is clear there is a deep passion that runs through Asante for the causes and issues that are close to her, and whilst pitch may lose a great, the sport and its lending organisations gain someone truly special.

The floods of tributes from coaches, players and supporters alike only served to confirm the iconic status of the stalwart.

There is no other like Anita Asante.

Shelina Zadorsky extends contract

Tottenham Hotspur captain Shelina Zadorsky will be staying in North London for another year. The club confirmed that they exercised the option to extend Zadorksy's contract through to 2023.

The Canadian centre-back has played a crucial role in the Lilywhites' successful campaign this season and made her 50th appearance for the club in April. Zadorsky commented on her extension, "working with a club that wants to keep building a winning culture is so exciting to me."

Becky Spencer pens new deal

Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper Becky Spencer has signed a new deal that will see her remain with the North London club until 2024.

The 31-year-old has been a regular starter between the sticks for Spurs having made over 50 appearances across the last three seasons.

On her new contract, Spencer said, "the direction the Club is going in, the staff, players, and fans made the decision really easy for me.

"I feel comfortable here, it's like a home.

"Where we are now is incredible and I can't wait to see what is to come."

Chaplen announces retirement

Reading midfielder Brooke Chaplen is set to retire at the end of the season.

Rather aptly considered as Royals royalty, the 33-year-old has made 96 appearances for the club and scored 26 goals since joining in 2017.

Earlier this year, Chaplen announced that a bone tumour had been found in her leg which required treatment and rehabilitation.

Following the success of the operation, Chaplen has taken medical advice and will not return to professional football.

Speaking to the official club, she said: "I've been here a long time, I feel part of the furniture and I have some great memories."



Sports Press Photo

Lotte Wubben-Moy – a true Gooner

Arsenal centre-back Lotte Wubben-Moy has signed a new contract with the club for an undisclosed term.

The 23-year-old returned to North London in September 2020 after a spell playing in college football in the States and has since made 61 appearances and scored five goals for the Gunners.

Adding her own personal touch, Wubben-Moy's new contract also has a clause pertaining to the players commitment to working closely with Arsenal in the Community.

Wubben-Moy commented, "it's a commitment to the club and it's a commitment to Arsenal, the community that it's active in and to my life as a whole, because that's what Arsenal is – it's my life."

Tobin Heath leaves early

Arsenal confirmed that USA international Tobin Heath has left the club by mutual consent.

Heath's one-year contract was due to finish at the end of the season, yet after picking up a hamstring injury both parties have agreed to an early termination.

Heath made eighteen appearances and scored 3 goals for the Gunners including a crucial equaliser against Manchester City in January.

Kit Graham signs new deal

Tottenham Hotspur have announced that midfielder Kit Graham has signed a new contract that will run until June 2023, with the option to extend for a further year.

Graham, who joined in 2019, has made 52 appearances and scored eight goals for the North London Club.

The 26-year-old is currently out of action and focusing on recovery from an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury sustained earlier in the season.



Chelsea legend to leave after decade

Midfielder Drew Spence is set to leave Chelsea after a thirteen-year service at the club.

Spence made her debut in 2009 and has made 238 appearances, scored 50 goals and has also been ever-present in helping the Blues in winning eleven major trophies.

Choking back the tears Spence commented that her departure is “one of the hardest decisions she has ever made.”

Chelsea manager Emma Hayes said, “Drew has epitomised everything that we have been about in my tenure. She’s watched the club grow from amateur to one of the top teams in Europe and she’s been instrumental in that journey.”

Spence will see out the rest of the season in Chelsea Blue before moving on to pastures new.

Brighton unveil “pathway towards the top four” women’s football strategy

Containing six pillars – player, pathway, recruitment, performance and coaching, medical and marketing and communications, Brighton and Hove Albion’s strategy will work to strengthen links between women’s and girl’s sections, build an elite culture and strive to turn their “top four” vision into a reality.

Referee Mic’ed Up

In the first of its kind, referee Emily Heaslip was mic’d up during Chelsea’s home game against Reading on 3 April, giving inside access to the official’s conversations and instructions on the pitch.

Sky Sports aired the feature during their 'Inside the WSL' programme on 21 April, however the full clip can be caught up with on the Sky Sports web-

Brazil out for remainder of the season

Brighton and Hove Albion have confirmed that striker Ellie Brazil will remain on the sidelines for the rest of the season.

The 23-year-old suffered a meniscus tear in her right knee whilst on international duty with Lionesses U-23s.

The club have stated that Brazil is due to undergo surgery with an expected recovery period of 6-12 weeks.

Neville signs on the dotted line

Tottenham Hotspur fullback Ashleigh Neville has signed a three-year contract that will see her remain with the club until 2025.

Neville has made a total of 102 appearances for the Lilywhites and has been a key player in their rise to the top half of the table this season, registering two goals and two assists, as well as being named February’s Player of the Month.

On her extension, Neville commented, “I’m super happy here – the girls, the coaching staff, the way we play, how far we’ve come in the last five years - the journey we’re on is something I want to be part of.”

Ria Percival suffers ACL injury

Spurs have confirmed that midfielder Ria Percival sustained an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury whilst on international duty with New Zealand during their friendly against Australia on Friday 8 April.

The club have stated that Percival will now begin a period of rehabilitation.

She has not featured for the final games of the season in the Women’s Super League for Tottenham.

Tash Harding departs Reading

Reading captain Tash Harding has announced she will be leaving the Royals at the end of the season.

Harding has been a crucial figure at the club, playing in numerous roles across the pitch since joining in 2017.

The Welsh international has made 83 league appearances for the club and has scored four goals. Reading boss Kelly Chambers said, "I'd like to thank Tash for everything she has done in her time with the club.

"She's been an integral part of the team, and a huge part of our growth as a club."

Ji So-yun to leave London

Chelsea midfielder Ji So-yun will leave the club at the end of the season and return home to South Korea.

Longstanding member of the Blues, Ji will remain widely regarded as one of the WSL's most influential and creative players.

The 31-year-old has made 208 appearances for the Blues and netted 37 goals; she has also been a part of the squad that has won all eleven of Chelsea's major trophies.

Chelsea manager Emma Hayes commented, "what an honour and a privilege it's been to coach one of the most amazing players the WSL has ever seen. There's no question she's been the most successful player from outside our league."

Anna Patten's season comes to an early end

Defender Anna Patten is set to miss the remainder of the season after suffering with glandular fever.

Patten, who joined Aston Villa on loan from Arsenal in January, has made eight appearances for the Villans this season, however has not featured since mid-March.

Villa stated that "the decision has been taken in the best interest of Anna's long-term health."

Emma Harries sustains PCL injury

Reading's Emma Harries has announced that she has ruptured her posterior cruciate ligament (PCL) and will be out of action for the remainder of the season.

The 20-year-old forward picked up the injury whilst on international duty with Lionesses U-23s in their fixture against the Netherlands.

Harries has enjoyed a fruitful season and proven herself a crucial figure within Kelly Chambers' side having registered three goals and two assists this campaign.

Nobbs faces Euro's uncertainty

Arsenal midfielder Jordan Nobbs has an anxious period ahead of her coming into the summer after picking up a knee injury in the Gunners 7-0 win over Aston Villa.

The 29-year-old previously missed out on England's last major tournament, World Cup 2019, after suffering a knee injury six months prior to the competition.

Arsenal boss Jonas Eidevall has confirmed the Nobbs will miss the end of the season and has said the club will have a clearer understanding of the injury after Nobbs has been under more assessment.



Bend it like Beckham:

A film that inspired a generation of legends



By Sian Davies

British box office smash, *Bend it like Beckham*, turned 20 last month.

The cult classic tells the story of Jesminder 'Jess' Bhamra, a Manchester United and David Beckham enthusiast from a traditional Sikh family, and tomboy, Juliette 'Jules' Paxton who, despite their parent's wishes (for different reasons), dream to play football professionally.

Bend it like Beckham was groundbreaking in terms of the themes it explored during its 1 hour and 52 minute running time. These included but are not limited to, female empowerment, racism, sexuality and misogyny in sport, issues which today can still be seen across the sporting landscape as a whole.

Bend it like Beckham was one of the first to challenge society's archaic views towards sport - particularly football - on an unprecedented scale, and the film became legendary in its own right as an ally in the movement towards legitimising the women's game.

Not only did it thrust the careers of actors Parminder Nagra and Keira Knightley into the spotlight, the film inspired a generation of women to lace up their boots, strap on their shin pads and enjoy a kick-about.

The stats speak for itself. The shift in cultural and societal attitudes towards the women's game has been astounding (albeit only a starting point). The FA reported that 3.4 million women now play football in the 20 years after *Bend it like Beckham* was

premiered. And that's not all. The Women's Super League launched in 2011 and in 2017, the Football Association changed the leagues from a summer schedule to a winter schedule to coincide with the men's calendar. Now, matches in a variety of different leagues are selling out to record-breaking crowds in flagship stadiums.

So, as the 2021/22 WSL season draws to a close, we have looked at five standout stars from this season who have helped inspire and transform women's football this year.

Sam Kerr, forward at Chelsea FC

Rightfully crowned English football's woman player of the year for 2021/22 after gaining 40% of the vote in the Football Writers' Associations' poll,

Sam Kerr has had a phenomenal season.

A key driver in pushing Chelsea up the league rankings, Kerr is almost certain to win the 2022 Golden Boot as the WSL top scorer for the consecutive year having scored 18 goals in 18 matches, six goals better than second-place Arsenal striker Vivianne Miedema.

What makes it more impressive that all of these goals were scored in open play, not as penalties.

Furthermore, she is the only player to have more goal involvement (22) than games played, has had the most shots on target (37), has had the most goals from headers (7) and has scored the most chances (11).

In a season in which Chelsea has been plagued by injuries, Kerr's been instrumental in the club's successful WSL campaign push so far.

Beth Mead, forward at Arsenal

Beth Mead has levelled up this season after last year's disappointment at being left out of the England squad.

Having become one of Arsenal's most consistent players, Mead plays a masterful aggressive defensive style of football which has resulted in nine goals and six assists this season, in addition to 12 goals and 10 assists for England.

During the Gunner's 3-0 victory against Everton earlier in April, Mead broke the all-time WSL assist record, notching up her 36th assist in top flight football.

A joy to watch on the pitch, it's evident Mead is thriving under manager, Jonas Eidevall, and is enjoying playing football again.

Alex Greenwood, defender at Manchester City

Man City's top appearance maker for the season so far, Alex Greenwood has featured in every game in the club's 2021/22 campaign.

According to the data-driven publication, The Analyst, Greenwood is the only WSL player to record over 100 unique open play build-up sequence involvements (1023) and leads the league for starting these sequences (244). 67 of these ended in a shot for her team.

Greenwood's successful passes - which averaged 20.4 yards in length - led to Man City making the highest number of direct attacks in the season with 29 in total.

A nod must also be given to Lauren Hemp who has been excellent. At only 21 years old, if Hemp continues to play in her current, excellent form, she undoubtedly will become one of Man City's most dangerous players and one to watch next season.

Ella Toone, midfielder at Manchester United

Having 14 goal involvements in 20 WSL appearances this season, Toone has flourished and cemented herself as an instrumental component in Man United's squad.

Many are keen to suggest Toone's new maturity on the pitch is largely down to a gap in play formation following the departure of five forwards last summer. However, Toone's versatility on the pitch proves

she can comfortably occupy both a solid number 10 and a false 9. This makes her especially dangerous as she drives the ball into deeper positions finding space.

At only 22, Toone has already recorded 100 appearances for Man United and is well on her way to being one of England's very best.

Vivianne Miedema, forward at Arsenal

This list wouldn't be complete without an ode to Vivianne Miedema. Miedema is already prolific and regarded as one of the best footballers in the world.

She is WSL's all-time top scorer and this season she became the first player in the league's history to record 100 goals involvements back in March.

Her form this season has been excellent, albeit a bit quieter than her usual exceedingly high standards.

Unsurprisingly, Miedema continues to show great character on the pitch, creating opportunities for other players such as new striker Stina Blackstenius.

However, with a contract up for renewal in the summer, the rumour mill is hot with top clubs outside the WSL allegedly looking to poach the player.

If the forward decides to move on, it will be a huge loss for not only Arsenal, but the WSL as a whole.

Birmingham City relegated

Birmingham City were officially relegated to the Women's Championship after a 6-0 defeat to Manchester City on Wednesday, May 4.

The loss brought to an end Birmingham City's 11-year stint in the Women's Super League to an end.

Birmingham were one of the founding members of the WSL but after several seasons battling the drop, a lack of investment and three changes of manager in the last 12 months, their limited resources and poor results have finally caught up with them.

They have won just two games this season - a shock victory over Arsenal and a 3-1 win over Brighton - losing 17 games.

Libby Smith wrote: "Absolutely gutted, as players and staff we gave it everything right until the end.

"Couldn't of wished for a better group of people. Thank you to the fans for sticking by us. Keep Right On."

Louise Quinn wrote: It's a sad day. But couldn't have picked a better group of players and staff to fight this fight with. We stuck together right to the end.

"Thank you to the fans who stuck by us."

Kerr wins FWA Footballer of the Year

Sam Kerr was voted the 2022 Women's Footballer of the Year award from England's Football Writer's Association.

Kerr has continued to shine on the pitch for Chelsea this season, helping the club to the brink of its third straight WSL title. In December, she scored twice to seal the 2021 FA Cup title, and she has 18 goals through 19 matches in WSL play this season.

She has been just as good internationally, becoming Australia's all-time international goal scorer in January.

Speaking to Sky Sports about the win, she said: "Every year I strive to be the best player I can be and I think as I get older I appreciate it more."

She is the current top scorer in the Women's Super League with 18 goals—none of which are penalties.

- Goals scored 18 (1st)
- Goals scored from open play 18 (1st)
- Goals scored from headers 7 (1st)
- Shots on target 37 (1st)
- Assists 4 (8th)

Women's Super League

2021/22 Table

WSL

		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Chelsea	22	18	2	2	56	56
2	Arsenal	22	17	4	1	55	55
3	Manchester City	22	15	2	5	47	47
4	Manchester United	22	12	6	4	42	42
5	Tottenham Hotspur	22	9	5	8	32	32
6	West Ham United	22	7	6	9	27	27
7	Brighton & Hove Albion	22	8	2	12	26	26
8	Reading	22	7	4	11	25	25
9	Aston Villa	22	6	3	13	21	21
10	Everton	22	5	5	12	20	20
11	Leicester City	22	4	1	17	13	13
12	Birmingham City	22	3	2	17	11	11

Top Goalscorers

1. **Sam Kerr** (Chelsea) - 20
2. **Viv Miedema** (Arsenal) - 14
3. **Beth Mead** (Arsenal) - 11
4. **Lauren Hemp** (Manchester City) - 10
5. **Alessia Russo** (Manchester United) - 9
6. **Kadija Shaw** (Manchester City) - 9
7. **Beth England** (Chelsea) - 8
8. **Leah Galton** (Manchester United) - 8
9. **Georgia Stanway** (Manchester City) - 8
10. **Ella Toone** (Manchester United) - 7

CHAMPIONSHIP



Match of the Month:

Watford vs Coventry



By Paul Donegan

Coventry United pulled off the great escape with a 1-0 win thanks to Mollie Green's stunning long range free kick in the seventh minute of injury time.

The result sees Watford relegated with one of the last kicks of the season.

Watford knew that a win for them or a draw would be enough to stay up, but it was Coventry, knowing they had to win, who started the more brightly of the two.

They had the first effort at goal in the 6th minute but Green's shot from distance went over.

Coventry came close to taking the lead in the 11th minute but Natalie Haigh saw her header blocked on the line. Another Haigh header in the 18th minute was comfortably caught by the Watford goalkeeper Georgia Ferguson.

Watford's first real attack came in the 26th

minute which saw a Gemma Davison cross headed clear by the Coventry defence.

It was back down the other end two minutes later when a cross was met by Olivia Fergusson but she didn't seem to get clean contact on her shot and it was easily saved by Ferguson. In the 31st minute, Green sent a free kick wide of goal.

Watford had their first attempt at goal in the 37th minute when Davison run forward but her shot was saved by Lucy Thomas.

Coventry had the last couple of chances of the half when in the 41st minute Natalie Johnson's cross was missed by everyone and just went wide then two minutes later Katy Morris headed over.

Watford started the second half well and in the first minute of it, Corinne Henson saw her low cross claimed by Thomas.

In the 54th minute, it was Coventry on the attack again when Fergusson saw her low cross saved, and four minutes later Katie Wilkinson's low free kick was again saved by Fergusson.

Watford's Anne Meiwald met a free kick with her head but it went over in the 63rd minute.

Wilkinson had Coventry's next attempt but her long-range shot was easily saved in the 71st minute and then Green saw her free kick blocked by the Watford wall four minutes later.

There was a scramble and Watford appealing for a penalty which the referee waved away in the 78th minute with Emma Beckett, who had just come on as a substitute, then seeing her shot saved.

A dangerous Coventry United cross was headed clear in the 82nd minute. Five minutes later they again came close to scoring when Wilkinson saw her header cleared from off the line.

Seven minutes of added time were signalled, and two minutes into that Coventry came so close to getting that vital goal but Grace Riglar saw her header hit the post.

Watford had a chance to take the lead themselves but Flo Fyfe sent her shot into the side netting.

Into the seventh minute of additional time and Coventry were awarded a free kick about 35 yards out.

Up stepped Mollie Green and she hit it right footed into the top corner of the net to give Coventry the lead and spark mad celebrations on the pitch with some of the coaching staff

and substitutes running on to join in.

There was still time for a long-range Watford free kick to bounce through everyone in the penalty area and hit the top of the crossbar before going behind.

The final whistle went seconds after that and Coventry could celebrate staying up after their 1-0 win whilst it was heartbreak for Watford who finished bottom of the league by a point and will be relegated back to the FA Women's National League after one season in the Championship.

This really was a great escape for Coventry United who were minutes away from going out of business in January before being saved by Lewis Taylor, then after having 10 points deducted they caught Watford up and to stay up by scoring such a spectacular goal with seconds of the season remaining is really fairy tale stuff!

Line ups

Watford:

Ferguson, Henson, Stobbs, Chandler (Humes 87'), Meiwald, Kmita, Legg (Beckett 78'), Georgiou, Ali, Davison (Fyfe 78'), Ward (Fatuga-Dada 57')

Unused substitutes: Smith, Vyso, Hector, Rogers, Adebowale-Arimoro

Booked: Ali, Georgiou, Beckett

Coventry United:

L. Thomas, N'Dow, Haigh, Hartley, Johnson (Toussaint 74'), Green, Morris, Estcourt, F. Thomas (Riglar 83'), Wilkinson, Fergusson (Orthodoxou 90'+9)

Unused substitutes: Clark, Whiteman, McGrother, Colville, Mann

Goal: Green 90'+7

Referee: Georgia Ball

Attendance: 1.451

Other results from the last game of the season

Lewes 2-1 Liverpool

London City 3-1 Blackburn Rovers

Sheffield 2-2 Crystal United Palace

Charlton 2-1 Durham

Sunderland 2-2 Bristol City

Championship Season Stats

- 2.67 goals per match
- 48% home win, 19% draw, 33% away
- Most frequent score-line: 2-1 (14 times)
- Most goals scored between 81-90 minutes (16%)
- 312 players participated
- Top goal-scorer Abigail Harrison 17
- Most assists Melissa Lawley 8
- Most clean sheets Rachael Laws 13
- Most penalties Beth Hepple 3



Lipka announces retirement

Sheffield United's Kasia Lipka has announced her retirement.

Lipka came through the youth teams at the Blades before joining Doncaster Rovers Belles for eight years where she helped them to promotion to the WSL in 2015.

In 2017, she joined Sunderland for a year before re-joining United a year later.

She represented England at all youth levels up to the under 23s.

Paying tribute to the midfielder, Redfearn said: "I would like to thank Kasia has been an outstanding performer who has Sheffield United within her.

"A shining light for all the young players in our RTC to what can be achieved at the highest level of the women's game. Good luck Kasia and we wish you well."

Palace vote for player of the season

Emily Orman has been voted the Crystal Palace fans player of the season.

The goalkeeper, who is on loan from Chelsea, got 60% of the vote.

The 19-year-old has made 19 appearances for the club and kept two clean sheets during the season.

Congratulations to Emily.

Record crowd for Liverpool

Liverpool got a record crowd for a women's match at Prenton Park when 2,138 attended their last home game of the season against Sheffield United and to see them pick up the Championship trophy.

Matt Beard's side won the match 6-1.

Charlton announce expanded partnership

Charlton Athletic have announced an expanded partnership with the University of Greenwich.

The deal will see the university's name on the front of the home and third shirts.

They will also feature on the back of the away one.

Allen announces retirement

Flo Allen has announced she is retiring from professional football at the end of the season.

The Bristol City player joined the club in 2015 from Norwich City and has made 87 appearances for the Robins.

She was part of the City squads that won promotion to the WSL in 2016 and that reached the Conti Cup final in 2021.

Allen has also represented England up to under 19 level.

She was presented with gifts from club captain & long-time friend Aimee Palmer at their last home game.

Durham break attendance record

Durham broke their league attendance record for the recent North-East derby against Sunderland.

1,468 attended the match at Maiden Castle which saw the home side win 3-0.

This was the second time this season that Durham had sold-out Maiden Castle having previously done it for a Conti Cup game against Manchester United.

Sunderland launch U23 team

Sunderland have announced that they are launching an under-23 team ahead of the 2022/23 season.

The team is being set up to allow Regional Talent Centre players to continue with the club and a chance to progress to the first team.

They will train at the Academy of Light alongside the first team and play in a local league.

Roche ruptures ACL

Charlton Athletic's Lois Roche has sustained a rupture of her right anterior cruciate ligament.

It means she will miss the rest of the season.

The injury was confirmed after an MRI scan and the club are now awaiting a date for the operation.

Wish Lois and quick and full recovery.

Walton announces retirement

Sophie Walton has announced her retirement.

The midfielder has been at Sheffield United since 2020 having previously played for Leeds United, Notts County, Doncaster Rovers Belles, Guiseley Vixens and Nottingham Forest.

She played for Notts County in the first FA Cup final at Wembley and won promotion from the WSL 2 with the Belles.

Sophie also represented England from under 15s to under 23s.

Lionesses announce new coach

Nikita Runnacles has been appointed first team coach at London City Lionesses.

Since joining the club in the 2020/21 season, Nikita has been the first team goalkeeping coach.

Her new role will see her providing assistance to head coach Melissa Phillips and the rest of the team as well as continuing to work with the goalkeepers.

Cummings named player of the season

Eartha Cumings has been named Charlton Athletic's player of the season.

The 22-year-old goalkeeper kept nine league clean sheets during the season.

She became the first female Charlton player to sign a professional contract before the start of this season.

He also received her first international call-up for Scotland and made her debut for them in February.

Bristol City announce season awards

After Bristol City's last home games of the season against London City Lionesses, they made their end of season presentations.

Abi Harrison won the player of the year and golden boot.

Fran Bentley won young player of the year.

Jasmine Bull won the PFA community champion on the year.

Congratulations to all.

Liverpool's back in the WSL - but it's been far from easy



By Sian Davies

After a near-perfect Championship season, Liverpool FC Women has been promoted to the Women's Super League (WSL), having not played in top flight football since their dramatic nose-dive from the league in 2019/20.

Losing just once in 20 matches, Matt Beard's team clinched this year's Championship title after a resounding 4 - 2 win over Bristol City in front of a record-breaking crowd of nearly 6,000 at Ashton Gate. The Reds spent the majority of the season at the top of the table, playing an aggressive, attacking style of football, becoming the highest scoring side in the league.

However, it wasn't until LFCW thrashed Sheffield United Women 6-1 on a sunny Sunday

afternoon that the team lifted the trophy at Prenton Park (with a nod to men's captain Jordan Henderson's famous 'Hendo shuffle') and celebrated their long-awaited return to the WSL.

In the midst of celebratory bubbles and a bellowed chorus of 'You'll Never Walk Alone', it's easy to forget the team's journey to this point hasn't been an easy one. In fact, recent years haven't been the kindest to Liverpool FC Women.

From heroes to zeroes: the fall of Liverpool FC Women

In September 2013, Beard led Liverpool FC Women - or Liverpool Ladies as they were then known - to victory having won the FA Women's Super League,

ending Arsenal's nine-year run before going on to clinch the title back-to-back the following year.

After shaping the side to be the best in class, Beard departed to the US in 2015 to head up Boston Breakers. Vicky Jepson was appointed as the team's new manager.

Fast forward to June 2020, while Jurgen Klopp's flourishing men's squad won the Premier League, Jepson's women's side languished. It wasn't long before LFCW was unceremoniously relegated from the WSL on a points-per-game basis following the Football Association's decision to end the league prematurely due to coronavirus. The team had eight fixtures to go.

Soon after, cracks in the women's side appeared and the start of a dramatic decline in Merseyside unfolded.

Unrest became apparent. To an outsider's eye, it seemed Liverpool FC was laser-focused on the men's game which had gained huge momentum under Klopp. LFCW, however, seemed to have become a secondary thought.

Reports of instability soon circulated followed by an exodus of both managers (including Club Chief Executive, Peter Moore) and top talent. One such player was Scotland International, Christie Murray who commented on social media: "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to be in an environment that challenges me and, most importantly, to be able to enjoy what I love again", fanning speculation of a spluttering internal culture during her time on Merseyside.

Other high profile players who took their leave included Courtney Sweetman-Kirk, Anke Preuss, Fran Kitching, Niamh Charles and Jemma Purfield.

A large proportion of blame seemed to rest on the shoulders of the club's owners, who received heavy criticism for poor financial investment and lacking strategic vision.

Complaints about unfit facilities and housing described as "student digs" circulated as the men's team enjoyed brand new, world-class facilities in the club's new £50m training centre in Kirkby. The women continued to train on the Wirral at Tranmere Rovers' training ground; the disparity

between the men's and women's teams felt vast.

Nevertheless, LFCW went into the 2020/21 season with the expectation to bounce back, only to finish third in the Championship, 11 points behind title winners Leicester.

The disappointment was palpable, but it was the wake-up call the club needed to finally get its house in order. Jepson departed before the season was over.

The start of a new beginning

Robust reinvestment and an improved recruitment process started to revive LFCW. There was an acknowledgement at the top that more resources needed to be plugged into the women's game. It was time for those holding the purse strings to learn from their mistakes and right their wrongs.

This included the return of Beard seven years after he took the team to WSL glory, bringing with him not only a renewed sense of togetherness but also six hot summer signings, including striker, Leanne Kiernan, who worked with Beard at West Ham United.

Immediately, the team felt whole again and a sense of balance seemed to be restored. But the club didn't stop there. Performance psychologist, Dr Francesa Champ, was brought in to work on player and staff mindset and Russ Fraser arrived from Leicester as the first managing director of the women's team.

Captain, Niamh Fahey, told the BBC the team had "restructured" and "different

things had come in" to help the team be competitive again.

The road to redemption

Which brings us to the here and now with the team's astonishing rise to the top in the Championship.

It's no secret Beard has high ambitions for his side who will likely replace struggling Birmingham City in the WSL. LFCW has undoubtedly been the best team in the Championship this season. Their performance has been slick, aggressive, and coordinated compared to their rivals.

Their promotion is well-deserved, however, with the likes of Chelsea and Arsenal pulling out stellar performances, it's not going to be easy for the Reds moving into next season.

With Beard back in the driving seat and the squad firmly settled into a new, harmonious rhythm, we might just see Liverpool's sweet redemption if the club - from top to bottom - can dig deep and push even harder to prove themselves, once again, competitive in top flight football.

As the current season comes to a close, now is the time to reflect on what needs to be done to ensure the team is ready to prosper and fight for WSL glory. And maybe - just maybe - European qualification could be on the cards.

Only time will tell.

Sunderland announce rebrand

Sunderland have announced that they plan to rebrand ahead of the 2022-23 season.

The team will change their name from Sunderland Ladies to Sunderland Women, with the club's twitter page already changing it's name to reflect the move.

In a statement the club said that the decision 'has been taken in line with maintaining a contemporary, inclusive outlook as the club further develops into its new era in the women's game'.

The statement added: "The rebrand also emphasises the 'one-club' mentality on Wearside, running parallel with the men's first team, and aligns with competitions in which the Ladies compete, including the FA Women's Championship and Women's FA Cup."

General Manager Alex Clark said: "Following consultation with players and staff, it was agreed to apply to the FA to change the name to Sunderland AFC Women from next season.

"We are grateful to the FA for their approval of our request."

Sunderland finished ninth in the Championship with a 2-2 draw with Bristol City.



Durham announce Academy Programme

Durham have been invited to take part in the FA WSL Academy Programme for the 2022/23 season.

The programme allows young footballers the chance to balance their football development with their educational aspirations. They will also play in the Barclays FA WSL Academy League for the first time.

Harrison wins golden boot

Bristol City's Abi Harrison has won the FA Women's Championship golden boot after finishing top goal scorer during the season with 17 goals.

Liverpool goalkeeper, Rachael Laws, won the golden glove after she kept 13 clean sheets for the champions throughout the season.

Lewes announce record attendance

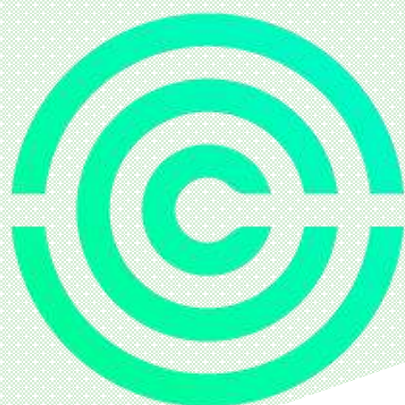
Lewes got a record crowd for a women's match of 2,347 for their final home game of the season against league champions Liverpool.

They saw Lewes win 2-1 and goalkeeper, Tatiana Saunders, score a goal from her own half.

Women's Championship

2021/22 Table

Championship		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
C	Liverpool	22	16	4	2	38	52
2	London City Lionesses	22	13	2	7	13	41
3	Bristol City	22	11	4	7	15	37
4	Crystal Palace	22	11	4	7	-4	37
5	Charlton Athletic	22	10	4	8	9	34
6	Durham	22	10	4	8	2	34
7	Sheffield United	22	9	6	7	3	33
8	Lewes	22	9	2	11	-1	29
9	Sunderland	22	6	6	10	-9	24
10	Blackburn Rovers	22	5	2	15	-24	17
11	Coventry United	22	5	7	10	-14	12
R	Watford	22	2	5	15	-28	11



TheFA Women's
Championship

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE



Exclusive Interview:

Newcastle's Becky Langley



By Jonathan Cotterill-Bolsover

End of season tensions are always high for our National League teams, but some teams are looking further to the future, as is the case at Newcastle United Women who have recently launched ambitions to hit the heights of not only the Super League, but Champions League success in the next five years.

We caught up with first team manager, Becky Langley, to speak all things Magpies Women shortly before her St James Park debut against Alnwick Town.

Newcastle United have seen major changes at the club over the last year and delightfully this attention has also turned to the women's squad who are very much part of the club's ambitions for the future, according to Langley, a young up and coming manager with her sights firmly set on success for the club.

The Magpies have had a tremendous season, but despite an incredibly exciting conclusion with rivals Liverpool Feds, it was the Feds who held on to the top spot and win the league title,

despite a tough challenge from Newcastle. When asked how the team dealt with the rollercoaster of emotions of such a season conclusion, Langley spoke to us saying 'we were realistic, but it is business as usual at the club, we never gave up no matter what whilst that dream was alive'.

'The players have done us proud', she adds, 'the stats speak for themselves, we have the youngest team in the club's recent history and we have scored the highest number of goals this season in the league'.

Exploring the manner in which this rapid change at the club has occurred, you do not have to look far to see how driven this exciting manager is and how much she has transformed the environment she works in. 'we have players and staff that not only stick to our values, but they live and breathe them in everything they do'.

Langley made history on the May 1 as she became the first female manager or coach to sit

Becky Langley

in the dugout at St James Park, the team took on Alnwick Town in what was a momentous occasion for the club.

“Our support has been fantastic, regularly getting 200-300 enthusiastic spectators to our games including 2700 that attended our game with Ipswich in the FA Cup,” said Langley.

“There is simply nothing like a great Geordie crowd to get us going as they have done many times before”.

Langley was not disappointed as over 22'000 filled the stands to witness a superb 4-0 victory over Alnwick and with that type of crowd, Langley will have been overwhelmed with the support for her team, a true testament to her commitment and dedication to the club.

With the new ambitions announced by the club in recent weeks, Langley has real optimism about the club and the intentions of the new owners, commenting on the ‘great people’ and the ‘progressive owners’ of Newcastle that she strongly believes are driving equality throughout the whole club.

One thing is for certain, this is a manager going places and at just 25 years old Langley is a real prospect for the future, if everything goes to plan, this could be a really exciting and winning combination for all involved.

Newcastle make history at St. James' Park

On May 1, Newcastle United played at St. James' Park for the first time.

The game in the fourth tier of women's football was played in front of a crowd of 22,134.

It was the largest crowd for a women's league match in England this season, despite the Lady Magpies playing in female football's fourth tier, three levels below the Women's Super League.

Becky Langley's side still harboured hopes of promotion from the FA Women's National League Division One North, but narrowly missed out on the title to Liverpool Feds.





Exclusive Interview: Sian Osmond



By Jonathan Cotterill-Bolsover

London Bees have had a turbulent couple of years, the former Women's Championship club are now taking on the challenges of the National League Southern Premier Division and after a season of recovery and rebuilding, we caught up with Manager, Sian Osmond, as she reflects on her time leading the club.

Sian Osmond had one of the toughest jobs in women's football, taking over a team coming down from the Women's Championship and rebuilding for life in the National League. But this is a task that has been relished by this tenacious and aspiring, yet modest manager. A manager that

not only lives and breathes football across her professional life, but has a real passion for inspiring the next generation of young players as well as a deep passion for her beloved London Bees. Her role is driven by a real love for a club that she has helped build over the years and the dedication to drive for success is apparent with the coaching team she has built around her. Her enthusiasm is infectious which also shows across the whole environment.

Sian started her football life as a player, working her way through the Centre of Excellence system before an ACL injury forced her into a new direction. Not to be deterred, Osmond started

her coaching career at just sixteen years old, working her way through the ranks and coaching players at almost every level before landing her dream role at London Bees, where she had been serving as a coach in the youth structure, before managing the development squad.

Assisting coaches and managers such as Rachel Yankey, Luke Swindlehurst and Lee Burch was a real experience for Osmond who holds the club interests dearly in her heart. Osmond took the reigns as interim manager in February 2021 when Burch moved on from the club, a position that was made permanent in July 2021 after overseeing the

club through their relegation from the FA Women's Championship.

Osmond began life in the FA Women's National League Southern Premier Division, life was tough, starting with just 4 players and having the task of rebuilding a new era. Osmond described the relegation as 'gutting, knowing what that meant for everybody at the club' but saw the new set of circumstances as 'an opportunity to rebuild', a task that Osmond would go on to relish, starting with a mainly blank canvas and the task of a new identity for the Bees.

The rebuilding job has been nothing short of outstanding, with Osmond setting the objective of creating an environment that was 'well rounded and as much as an experience of that the club was operating in the Championship', she has sought to bring in new players with a mix of experience and potential as well as a coaching team that not only offer a great level of expertise, but exhibit as much passion towards the club and the players within it as Osmond herself.

The season itself has produced a mix of results

which have resulted in Bees avoiding relegation, with the team sitting in 8th place with one game left to go. This gives the Bees a real platform to push off from in the new season. Osmond spoke about the season describing her pride for the players and staff and praising the 'journey they have been on from the start of the season to now' and feels that the club is 'now in a position to rebuild for next year with the solid foundation we have built'.

When asked where she can take the club next season and beyond, Osmond said 'we want to be more competitive in the league and add more depth to the squad', but added 'there are not many games that we have turned around and looked at in terms of results and been disappointed' with the second half of the season highlighted as a period where the results did not always reflect the performance on the pitch. Osmond added to her numbers over the season and took some big names to the club, perhaps most notably the remarkable return to football of Ashleigh Goddard who signed for the club after her remarkable recovery

from a stroke. Perhaps a more recent development, the appointment of Lauren Heria to team captain, after the departure of Flo Gamby, is a real sign of the culture that has been created. Heria herself is a dedicated professional, always looking to move forwards and always setting high standards for herself and those around her, just another example of the forward thinking environment at the club. When asked what drives her, Osmond describes an 'obsession' with progression, her way of expressing her commitment to high standards for the club and the players, an obsession that the club will no doubt benefit from for a long time to come.

Osmond will concentrate her efforts on achieving results having created a sound foundation for the club to move forwards, her biggest task will be turning the good performances into good results and attempting to break into the top half of the table. This will be no mean feat with a real visible split between the top and bottom, but London will take confidence that with a few tweaks and a few additions they can challenge with the best of the division.

Simon Says



By Simon O'Neill

This month I spoke to Harlow Town player and coach Darcie Salmon.

The Essex based side finished 12th in the Division One South East.

How old were you when first interested in football?

I was about 5 or 6 when I first got interested in football

Did you play football?

I did not play football for a team or do any proper at that age. I used to have kickabouts on our road with a few of the boys that lived on my street from the age of eight to about 11-years-old.

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

The first team I ever trialled for was

Billericay Town FC at 17 years old as soon as I started driving. My dad does not like football so I had to wait to start driving so that I could take myself.

Two weeks before the trial I started training over the park with my boyfriend at the time because I had never actually been coached how to play football. I was not expecting to get in at all but two days later I got an email to say that I had got in to be in the reserves team but also be dual signed for the first team.

When did you make the step from any playing activity to that of a more coaching?

When I got a move to Harlow town FC I started to train and play a lot more football which made me realise that I wanted to be more involved in football.

How did you make the first steps

into being a football coach?

At the time I got my coaching badges I was a Primary School PE teacher.

Once I got my badges I started to coach at Dagenham & Redbridge for the U14 girls team.

This was the first team I coached for and it's the team I am still coaching at. From then, I decided to start doing 1-2-1s for the players I coached mid January. I started off with one weekly client. I now have eleven weekly 1-2-1 clients.

Did you apply for an online coaching course to start your career as a coach?

Yes, I started off with the FA Level 1 course that was online at the time because of Covid.

Is it easy to combine playing and coaching? Was that an intended step?

I think playing definitely helps with my coaching because I can take some of the drills that have been used in my training sessions at Harlow and use them in my sessions for my teams I coach. I didn't intentionally start playing football to become a coach, it just happened.

How did you find the work as a coach differs from being a player?

As a coach, you can see a different perspective of the game because you can watch and analyse from the outside. As a player I am still learning and being coached so it is all information that I can transfer into my coaching.

What was a typical week like as a coach/player?

I train with Harlow twice a week and our games are on a Sunday. I also do more goalkeeper training during my free time with my boyfriend as he is the goalkeeper for the Harlow Mens First Team.

I have at least one 1-2-1 client per day, on some weekdays I have 2 clients if it is not one of my own team training days.

On Wednesday night I have a 1-2-1 client, then I go straight to Dagenham & Redbridge to coach the U14s then I go straight to my own team training at Harlow so that is a very busy day for me. On a Saturday I coach back to back with different 1-2-1 clients from 9-4. On a Sunday I have a client in the morning before my games.

Do you have any ambitions in football?

I am currently playing in the National league which is step 4. My goal is to be playing step 2 football within the next three seasons. I have to keep it realistic because I haven't been a goalkeeper for that long and I have only played two games this season because I have been out all season with broken ribs.





FANWNL

2021/22 Tables

Northern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
C Wolverhampton Wanderers	24	18	5	1	45	59
2 Derby County	24	16	3	5	29	51
3 AFC Fylde	24	14	5	5	19	47
4 Burnley	24	14	4	6	43	46
5 Nottingham Forest	24	13	5	6	23	44
6 Huddersfield Town	24	13	4	7	26	43
7 Brighouse Town	24	11	7	6	20	40
8 West Bromwich Albion	24	7	7	10	-15	28
9 Stoke City	24	8	1	15	-18	25
10 Loughborough Lightning	24	6	5	13	-28	23
11 Middlesbrough	24	5	3	16	-40	18
12 Hull City	24	2	3	19	-54	9
13 Sheffield	24	2	2	20	-50	8

Southern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
C Southampton	26	22	3	1	86	69
2 Oxford United	26	19	3	4	56	60
3 Ipswich Town	26	18	4	4	55	58
4 Bridgewater United	26	15	5	6	32	50
5 Crawley Wasps	26	15	0	11	17	45
6 Gillingham	26	13	6	7	4	45
7 Portsmouth	26	13	4	9	22	43
8 London Bees	26	9	3	14	-5	30
9 Milton Keynes Dons	26	8	5	13	-8	29
10 Plymouth Argle	26	9	2	15	-15	29
11 Cardiff City (-2)	26	8	2	16	-19	24
12 Chichester & Selsey	26	7	3	16	-29	24
13 Keynsham Town	26	6	0	20	-79	18
14 Hounslow	26	0	0	26	-117	0



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL

2021/22 Tables

Division One North

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Liverpool Feds	22	19	2	1	49	59
2 Newcastle United	22	18	2	2	69	56
3 Durham Cestria	22	13	2	7	30	41
4 Leeds United	22	12	4	6	17	40
5 Chorley	22	8	10	4	5	34
6 Stockport County	22	7	6	9	2	27
7 Bradford City	22	7	5	10	-9	26
8 Norton & Stockton Ancients	22	7	5	10	-10	26
9 Barnsley	22	8	2	12	-10	23
10 FC United of Manchester	22	6	3	13	-38	21
11 Chester-le-Street Town	22	3	5	14	-34	14
12 Alnwick Town	22	0	2	20	-71	2

Division One Midlands

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Boldmere St. Michaels	22	16	3	3	39	51
2 Doncaster Rovers Belles	22	15	4	3	34	49
3 Lincoln City	22	15	3	4	38	48
4 Long Eaton United	22	11	5	6	17	38
5 Leek Town	22	10	3	9	-1	33
6 Sporting Khalsa	22	9	5	8	0	32
7 Solihull Moors	22	9	3	10	8	30
8 Peterborough United	22	8	5	9	-5	29
9 Leafield Athletic	22	7	5	10	-10	26
10 Wem Town	22	3	6	13	-23	15
11 Burton Albion	22	4	3	15	-37	15
12 Bedworth United	22	2	1	19	-60	7



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL

2021/22 Tables

Division One South East

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Billericay Town	24	20	3	1	62	63
2 Hashtag United	24	20	2	2	69	62
3 AFC Wimbledon	24	16	5	3	47	53
4 Queens Park Rangers	24	12	7	7	6	41
5 Actonians	24	11	8	6	26	40
6 London Seaward	24	7	5	8	-12	29
7 Cambridge City	24	7	2	5	-12	26
8 Norwich City	24	8	2	2	-23	26
9 Cambridge United	24	8	6	2	-31	26
10 Enfield Town	24	6	6	6	-1	24
11 Stevenage	24	6	4	4	-42	22
12 Harlow Town	24	5	2	2	-46	17
13 Kent Football United	24	3	3	3	-43	12

Division One South West

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Cheltenham Town	18	14	3	1	32	45
2 AFC Bournemouth	18	12	4	2	38	40
3 Exeter City	18	12	2	4	33	38
4 Southampton	18	11	4	3	33	37
5 Chesham United	18	8	2	8	-1	26
6 Maidenhead United	18	6	4	8	-6	22
7 Swindon Town	18	5	4	9	-1	19
8 Portishead	18	4	4	10	-21	15
9 Larkhill Athletic	18	2	4	12	-32	10
10 Poole Town	18	0	1	17	-75	1



TheFA Women's
National League

GRASSROOTS



A Woman's Game

The Rise, Fall and Rise Again of Women's Football

Suzanne Wrack

16 June 2022, £14.99 Trade Paperback, £7.99 ebook

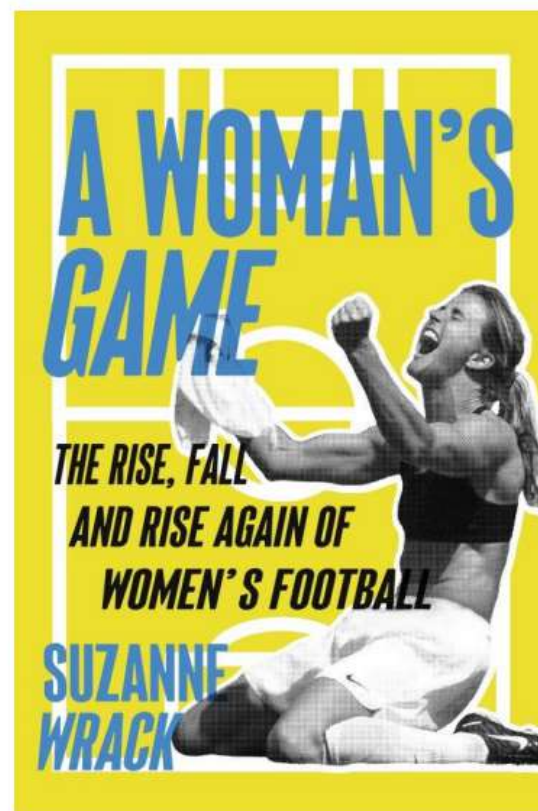
The astonishing history of the rise, fall, and rise again of women's football, from the late 19th century to the present day.

A Woman's Game explores the history of women's football from the Victorian era – with players in high-heeled boots – to the present day. It is the story of a rise, fall, and rise again: from the game's first appearance in England in the late nineteenth century; through the incredible teams which at their height in 1920 drew 53,000 spectators to Goodison Park; to its 50-year ban in the UK and the aftershocks when that ban was lifted.

Now, as the women's game is once again on an unstoppable upward trend, with internationally renowned players and a record 11.7m viewers for England's semi-final match against the USA in the 2019 World Cup, Suzanne Wrack considers what the next chapter of this incredible story might be. From its relationship to the worldwide fight against oppression, to its ability to inspire change in the wider world, this is both a history of football as played by women, and a manifesto for a better game.

Suzanne Wrack is the *Guardian* and *Observer's* women's football correspondent; the first person to hold this role at a national newspaper. Her work has also been published in *FourFourTwo*, and she is a regular contributor to the *Guardian's* Football Weekly podcast. A member of Women in Football, Women in Journalism, the Sports Journalist Association and the Football Writers Association, Suzanne was highly commended in the Media Initiative of the Year category at the 2018 Women's Sport Trust 'Be A Game Changer' awards and shortlisted for the Football Supporters Federation Writer of the Year.

For more information please contact Connor Hutchinson at connor.hutchinson@faber.co.uk



'An important book about the history, power and potential of the women's game.'

Ian Wright

'A truly important book; shines a brilliant light on the game we all love and its broader impact.'

Megan Rapinoe

'An honest exposé of the historic (and recent) challenges women's football has faced and how it is finally breaking through into the public conscience. A thoroughly entertaining and enlightening read.'

Clare Balding

'I loved being part of the growth of the women's game myself, Suzy has written a fantastic book on how the game has developed and what its future could hold.'

Phil Neville

faber

Faber & Faber Ltd, Bloomsbury House
74-77 Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3DA

T: 020 7927 3800
Registered Number: 944703

www.faber.co.uk
[@FaberBooks](https://twitter.com/FaberBooks)



AMMO'S ANTICS

Hey everyone,

Sorry! It's been a while since I wrote an Ammos Antics.

I've been busy balancing school work with football commitments with Birmingham City, Gloucestershire county, Wales & England U15.

The season comes to an end for me at Birmingham with an away game against MK Dons this Saturday. I've already been offered a contract to stay at Birmingham next season and it will be my final year as an U16.

I'm looking forward to pushing on again and hope to get the chance to train with the Blues Academy team at some point and once I'm 16 maybe even the first team.

I thought I'd end the football season by picking out some of my personal highlights.

We've had a decent season at Birmingham, finishing 2nd in the league and throughout the

year we've enjoyed good wins against Liverpool, Charlton, Spurs, Southampton, Leicester, Wolves, Derby, Stoke and Bristol City.

I managed to score 8 goals and provided 22 assists from central midfield.

As a younger U16 playing against older girls, I'm pretty pleased with my performances but I'm aiming to kick on again next season.

At County level I was proud to get to the National Final for the first time in Gloucestershire's history. We had some excellent performances along the way but ultimately lost in the final to Middlesex.

At International level I've attended a few England U15 camps, the standard is always very high and I've really enjoyed the experiences.

The one thing I would say about being chosen for England is, you shouldn't worry if you don't get picked for a camp.

There are thousands of girls playing football at a high standard and only a few opportunities to

attend England camps. Girls drop in and drop out throughout the age groups so I think it's important to just focus on working hard and getting better.

Trust the system and eventually I'm sure you'll be rewarded. I know it can be upsetting if you feel like you're overlooked or if you don't get picked for a camp.

I've also attended some Wales U15 training camps and I recently represented Wales in this years Bob Docherty tournament where we came 3rd, beating England along the way.

In a couple of weeks I'm attending a presentation evening where I will receive an International Cap for my performances for Wales. It will be another proud moment for me and my family.

The Bob Docherty experience was great, we were flown to Newcastle, stayed in a nice hotel for a week and even managed a trip to see Newcastle's stadium.

While there have been lots of high points for me, the year hasn't been without its low points.

I broke my thumb against Aston Villa which put me out for a couple of weeks.

I also hurt my knee at the Bob Docherty tournament and was taken for an MRI scan. I missed a couple of games but luckily the scan came back ok. So I was able to play a bit in the final game against England.

I'm not sure if I've ever written about this but when I was seven-years-old I was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome. It is a condition of the nervous system that causes people to have "tics".

Tics are sudden twitches, movements, or sounds that people do repeatedly. People who have tics can't stop their body from doing these things.

Having Tourette's has never really stopped me playing football. In fact, I've found playing football can sometimes help with it. It gives me something else to focus on.

But it can definitely be hard, especially at school. If I'm making noises, I sometimes have people ask me what I'm doing and I never really

know how to answer that.

Fortunately for me at school, being the girl who is good at football protects me from any sort of bullying or teasing.

I find it gets worse when I'm stressed or worried, the noises I make can get louder and that in turn makes me more conscious and stressed about it. I'm lucky it's on a milder end of the scale and is mostly limited to random noises or blinking. I know there are people out there who have it much worse than me.

The only reason I wanted to mention it was just to show that actually, there isn't anything that should stop you doing the thing you love.

So if you suffer from Tourette's, or any Illness or condition, I hope you can find the confidence to do the thing that you love to do, without fear of what others might say.

I'm going to be a top professional footballer when I'm older. I've always known it. Ever since I kicked a football for the first time and I won't let my condition get in the way of that.

I remember someone once telling me that "the journey to success isn't always a straight line"

For me it means there will probably be ups and downs along the way. But if you keep disciplined and focused you'll end up where you want to be.

I'll try and get into the habit of writing my column more regularly and I'll keep you updated with my games for Ross Juniors in the summer during the off season and all of next season as I continue my journey to become a professional footballer.

The journey continues

Ammo



Government to review women's football



The Government is to launch an in-depth review of women's football at both elite and grassroots level.

The hope is to achieve a greater parity with the men's game.

Sports minister Nigel Huddleston has confirmed that an independently-chaired study, which was recommended in MP racey Crouch's fan-led review of football governance published last November, will look at the way forward with particular focus on commercialisation, spectator support and media interest.

Huddleston said: "Women's football is a growing force. The 2019 World Cup captured the hearts and minds of the nation, and with greater participation, employment and visibility in the media, I am confident that Euro 2022 will inspire

more women and girls to get into our national game as we work towards parity across all sport.

"Despite these positive signs for the game, it is clear that an assessment of the value of the women's and girl's game is needed, to ensure it is properly financed for the long term.

"The time is right for a thorough review of the women's game to ensure all is being done to support its further growth."

The government also confirmed that the Women's World Cup and European Women's Championship finals have been added to Group A of the listed events regime.

That means those tournaments, along with the men's equivalents and events such as the FA Cup and Scottish FA Cup finals, Grand Nation-

al and Wimbledon, are shown on free-to-air television.

The news comes just months after it was announced that the Women's FA Cup prizes would be increased from next season.

The increase helps is mainly to help the early rounds of the competition.

This season teams would receive as little as £75 for competing in the FA Cup—not even enough for the transport to get them to a game.

Many grassroots teams have stated in the past that they simply could not afford to enter the competition.

The figure will go up from around £400,000 to £3million.

The findings are expected by the end of the year.



CUPS



Champions League: Barcelona Femini break attendance record for Women's Football... twice



By Rosie Hall

It was an incredible moment for the women's game on March 30 when the almighty Barcelona Femini drew in a crowd of 91,553 people to Camp Nou, breaking a record that had been held for over 20 years.

If this wasn't impressive enough, just three weeks later on April 22nd, the Barcelona Women attracted an even larger crowd (91,648), breaking their own record.

Previously, the record for a women's game was 90,185 for the 1999 Women's World Cup final between the United States and China at the Rose Bowl.

Fans in attendance on March 30th

were treated to a 7 goal thriller, with current Ballon D'or holder Alexia Putellas being among the goal-scorers that put Barcelona Femini into the Champions League semi final against German side Wolfsburg, who currently sit at the top of the Frauen-Bundesliga.

The second record-breaking game on April 22nd was just as thrilling, with Barcelona beating Wolfsburg 5-1. Despite a 2-0 defeat in the second leg, Barcelona Femini still managed to progress to the final, winning 3-5 on aggregate.

"Seeing footage from Barcelona tonight is special," wrote BBC Football journalist Kelly Sommers on Twitter. "Forget those who tell you the women's

game isn't growing, forget those who tell you no one wants to watch. 91k in a top stadium witnessing a top game, with an atmosphere to match, is what we should talk about. This is a big moment.”

And it certainly was a big moment.

There is absolutely no denying that the women's game is growing; despite more work to be done, we are witnessing an incredible moment for the sport.

In the same week as Barcelona breaking these records, it was announced that England's three Women's Euro 2022 group matches (which are being played at Old Trafford, the Amex Stadium and St Mary's) have all sold out; something that would have been unfathomable a decade ago.

It's also thought that the attendance record for a women's football game in England will be broken during the tournament, with over 87,000 tickets being sold for the final at Wembley on Sunday July 31; the current record

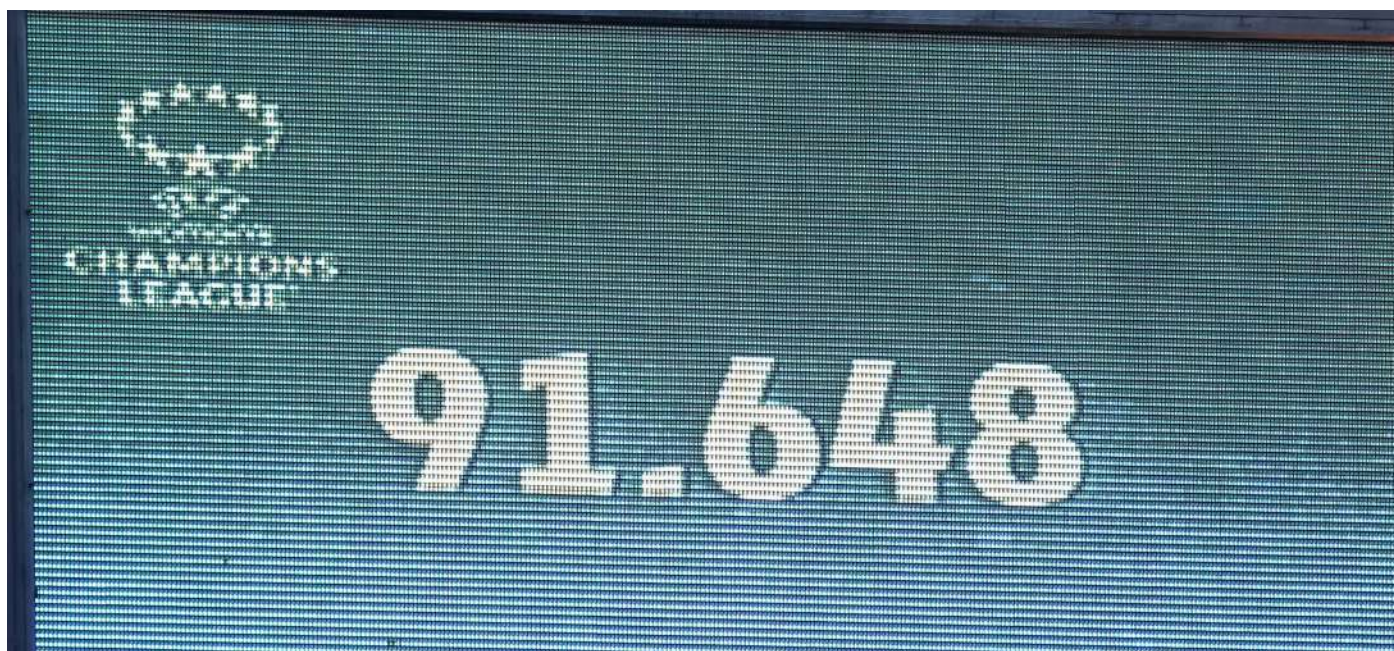
standing at just over 80,000, for the Olympics final between USA and Japan during the London 2012 Olympics.

All of this, coupled with more games shown on TV and continuous pushes for equal pay, feels like we're on the cusp of something very special happening in Women's football; something that Barcelona Femini are already leading the charge on.

What they've managed to achieve in women's football is nothing short of remarkable; they have a perfect record in the league this season, are on track to achieve a back-to-back treble, and largely considered as the most dominant women's football team on the planet.

Breaking these records within a week of each other reflects this, and it does feel like in many ways Barcelona are only just getting started; they are absolutely unstoppable in the women's game.

Barcelona take on Lyon in the Women's Champion League final on Saturday May, 21 at 6pm UK time.



Women's Champions League

Results

Barcelona vs Wolfsburg

Semi Final Leg 1 of 2 - Friday April 22nd 2022

Barcelona Femini	Wolfsburg
5	1
Bonmatí (3'), Hansen (10'), Hermoso (33'),	Roord (70')

Semi Final Leg 2 of 2 - Saturday 30th April 2022

Wolfsburg	Barcelona Femini
2	0
Waßmuth (47'), Roord (59')	
Barcelona win 3-5 on aggregate	

Lyon vs Paris St-Germain

Semi Final Leg 1 of 2 - Sunday April 24th 2022

Lyon Féminines	Paris St-Germain
3	2
Renard (23' pen), Macário (33', 50')	Katoto (6'), Dudek (58')

Semi Final Leg 2 of 2 - Saturday 30th April 2022

Paris St-Germain	Lyon Féminines
1	2
Katoto (62')	Hegerberg (14'), Renard (83')
Lyon win 3-5 on aggregate	



FA Cup final preview: Manchester City vs Chelsea



By Paul Donegan

The FA Cup final will be played between Manchester City and Chelsea on Sunday 15th May at Wembley Stadium. This will be a repeat of the Conti Cup final from earlier in the season which City won 3-1. Before having a look forward to the final, here is a look back at the semi-finals which took place over the Easter weekend.

The first semi-final was between West Ham United and Manchester City at the Chigwell Construction Stadium in what was a repeat of the 2019 final.

City took the lead in the 22nd minute when Keira Walsh's thunderous shot from distance hit the bar and bounced down

with Ellen White diving in to head in the rebound.

City had the ball in the net again when White headed in but the ball was judged to have gone out of play before Lucy Bronze crossed. City were really pushing for a second now with West Ham captain, Gilly Flaherty, making a great tackle to stop White before she could get a shot at goal.

It was 2-0 in the 37th minute when Flaherty's pass across her own penalty area found Chloe Kelly who finished with a low shot for her first goal since returning from an ACL injury that kept her out for 11 months.

West Ham got a goal back before half time when Adriana

Leon's nice through ball found Lisa Evans who went around Ellie Roebuck and finished low into the net in the 42nd minute.

White had the ball in the net for the third time in the 52nd minute but this time it was ruled out for offside.

Lauren Hemp made it 3-1 to City in the 66th minute when she beat a couple of West Ham players and finished with a shot that went in off the far post.

City went close to scoring a fourth in the 86th minute when Mackenzie Arnold tipped Filippa Angeldahl's powerful shot onto the crossbar. From the resulting corner, Alex

Greenwood's acrobatic overhead kick was saved by Arnold.

Hemp scored her second and City's fourth in injury time with a low finish into the corner of the net from inside the area after Stanway had broken forward.

Not long after that, the final whistle was blown to confirm that it will be Manchester City who be playing in the final after a 4-1 win.

At Meadow Park on Easter Sunday, Arsenal played Chelsea in a repeat of the 2021 final. It was played in front a sold-out attendance of 3,458.

Vivianne Miedema had the first real opportunity of the game for Arsenal in the 20th minute but her powerful shot from the edge of the area went over.

Chelsea did have a few chances of their own after that with Bethany England and Niamh Charles both seeing efforts saved by Manuela Zinsberger.

Beth Mead had a good chance to put Arsenal ahead when she controlled and turned but saw her shot go narrowly wide in the 49th minute.

Chelsea took the lead a minute later when Arsenal allowed Guro Reiten too much space to advance with the ball before she sent a cracking shot from outside the area into the net.

Chelsea went looking for a second goal and Zinsberger had to get down to tip Sam Kerr's low shot behind in the 58th minute.

They did make it 2-0 in the 61st minute when Ji So-Yun found a bit of space on the edge of the area and sent a shot into the top corner then going to celebrate in front of the visiting Chelsea fans.

Zinsberger was keeping Arsenal in it by this stage as she pushed Reiten's shot from the edge of the area behind and then saved Sophie Ingle's shot before Ji put the rebound wide.

England sent a shot from the edge of the area over towards the end of a half that Emma Hayes' Chelsea had been in control for the majority of.

Chelsea's second half performance saw them win 2-0 and reach the final where they have the chance to defend the cup.

After never playing in a major final, this will now be the second time in just over two months that Chelsea and Manchester City will meet in one.

As already mentioned, City won the Conti Cup earlier in the season with Caroline Weir scoring twice and Ellen White getting one during the second half after Sam Kerr had given Chelsea the lead in the first 45 minutes.

Chelsea won both league meetings during this season with a 4-0 win at the Academy Stadium in November and 1-0 at Kingsmeadow in February. Both sides have been on very good form in 2022 with both only having lost one game in all competitions (at time of writing).

Between them they have won six of the last seven FA Cups, and both sides have won three in total.

Chelsea won the cup in 2015 (1-0 against Notts County), 2018 (3-1 against Arsenal) and 2021 (3-0 against Arsenal).

Manchester City won it in 2017 (4-1 against Birmingham City), 2019 (3-0 against West Ham United) and 2020 (3-1 against Everton).

City have never lost in a FA Cup final so far.

Both sides have had fairly comfortable wins on their 'roads to Wembley'.

Chelsea reached the final with victories over Aston Villa (3-1), Leicester City (7-0), Birmingham City (5-0) and Arsenal (2-0) whilst Manchester City got there after beating Nottingham Forest (8-0), Manchester United (4-1), Everton (4-0) and West Ham United (4-1).

The final on Sunday 15th May kicks off at 2:30pm (BST) and will be shown live in the UK on BBC One and the BBC iPlayer and there will be radio coverage on BBC 5Live and talkSPORT.

At the time of writing, more than 30,000 tickets for the final have been sold. Tickets are still available to buy and there is more information about the final via this link - The Womens FA Cup Final (wembleystadium.com)

HOME NATIONS



Swiss secured as final Euro warm-up game



Sports Press Photo



England's trio of warm-up internationals before UEFA Women's EURO 2022 will conclude with a fixture against Switzerland in Zurich on Thursday 30 June. Sarina Wiegman's squad will take on the Swiss at the Letzigrund stadium as part of a five-day overseas training camp just before the summer finals, with kick-off TBC.

The EURO gets under way the following week against Austria at Old Trafford on Wednesday 6 July – with UEFA confirming that all available tickets have sold out for the opening game. Switzerland have also qualified for this summer's tournament meaning all three of England's preparation games in June will be against fellow EURO finalists.

The Lionesses meet Belgium at Wolverhampton Wanderers' Molineux Stadium on Thursday 16 June before welcoming the Netherlands to Leeds United's Elland Road on Friday 24 June. Both matches kick off at 8pm. Fans wanting to secure their tickets for the two home matches, should click [here](#). With all three EURO group matches against Austria (Manchester, 6 July), Norway (Brighton, 11 July) and Northern Ireland (Southampton, 15 July) all sold out, seats for both fixtures are already in high demand.

Wiegman said: "I am very happy to be

finishing our EURO build-up with another big game, this time away in Switzerland.

"Before the match, it will be helpful to spend some time abroad as we step up our work on the training ground.

"The change of environment will come at just the right time for the squad and help focus our minds on the challenges to come.

"We will then return to England refreshed and ready to go for the opening EURO match and I am delighted to see how excited everyone already is for the summer.

"Before Switzerland, we hope the fans will turn out to see us in Wolverhampton and Leeds, especially with our group games sold out.

"We certainly can't wait to feel their support once again."

England last travelled to Switzerland on 10 June 2017, just before the previous UEFA Women's EURO played in the Netherlands, running out 4-0 winners in Bern.

The Swiss are 19th in the FIFA world rankings, meaning England's three EURO warm-ups are against teams in the global top 20 with Belgium 20th and the Netherlands, the defending champions, fifth.

SWPL structure set for overhaul



By Peter Quinn

The women's football league structure will feature some significant differences for the 2022-23 season in Scotland. The changes will include an expansion of the SWPL1 to a 12-team division, rather than the 10 that currently compete in the top flight, and the introduction of a league split, similar to that of the men's Premiership in Scotland.

As a result, there will be no relegation from the SWPL1 to the SWPL2 at the end of the current campaign, with bottom-of-the-table Hamilton Accies and one of Hearts or Partick Thistle likely representing the two sides who will benefit from the restructure. Both SWPL2 champions Dundee United and the eventual runners-up will be promoted to the new 12-team top division without the need for a play-off.

This in turn places an even greater emphasis on the titanic battle for the second spot in SWPL2 this season, with both Glasgow Girls & Women and Boroughmuir Thistle remaining very much neck and neck as the season moves into its final stretch.

Next season's SWPL1 campaign will feature two rounds of fixtures before the league will then split into two groups of six, with the top half of the table playing two more rounds of fixtures against one another while the bottom six sides do the same.

At the bottom of the SWPL2, there will be no relegation this season, while the league will

increase from seven to an eight-team format. With the top two from the SWPL2 this season achieving promotion and leaving five teams remaining in the division, Montrose and Gartcairn will join the SWPL2 next season as the respective winners of the SWFL Championship North and South. The final spot in the SWPL2 in 2022-23 will be decided via a playoff.

The system restructure comes soon after the decision to move the SWPL under the administration of the SPFL, the organisation responsible for the management of the men's professional league structure in Scotland. They will now work alongside Scottish Women's Football, the organisation which is responsible for the leagues below the SWPL1 and 2, and the SFA to govern the domestic game in Scotland.

It is hoped that both of these moves will have a major positive impact on the Scottish game and will allow the clubs to take advantage of the surge in popularity that women's football is currently experiencing. It has also been predicted that the change in league structure will provide a clear pathway for clubs in the lower leagues in Scotland to grow in stature and rise through the divisions.

As external investment in the Scottish game rises, the opportunities for the growth of the stature of the domestic game also rise. With both media coverage of the women's game and crowds in the stands continuing to grow, there is a real air of positivity about what the future will hold for women's football in Scotland.

Round-up in Scotland:

Rangers face City showdown for title, while Dundee United, Montrose, Gartcairn secure promotions



By Peter Quinn

With title races, battles for promotion spots and some back-and-forth scraps to climb higher up the league tables, it's proving to be an exciting finale to the Scottish domestic season. With exciting Scottish Women's Cup action also leaving an enticing final in store, it was a busy month in the Scottish game.

SWPL1

It is still all to play for at the top of the SWPL1 table as league leaders Rangers face nearest challengers Glasgow City and Celtic in their final league games of the year, needing only one point from the two matches to guarantee they end Glasgow City's long reign in Scottish football. Rangers had been in pole position last season to end City's consecutive titles streak at 13, but they fell away badly down the stretch and allowed their city rivals to claim yet another league trophy.

This season, however, Malky Thomson has kept his side ticking over and showing no

signs of slipping up this time around. They have been reinvigorated by the return of Kirsty Howat and Megan Bell to complement former WSL stars Lizzie Arnot and Jane Ross in attack, and now stand tantalisingly close to a first ever league title.

For Eileen Gleeson's Glasgow City, they are all but guaranteed second place this season and the Champions League qualifying spot that comes with it. It's been a solid yet unspectacular season for City, scoring lots of goals at times against weaker opposition but coming up short in the big matches as they seemed to miss the presence of injured captain Jo Love. They still have an outside chance at the title but would need a remarkable finish to overhaul Rangers' five-point advantage in the closing weeks of the season.

At the bottom of the table, Hamilton enjoyed a slightly better month in April, picking up only their second win of the season against Lanarkshire rivals Motherwell, while Hearts picked up a surprise win over Aberdeen.

With no relegation from the division this year, only pride is at stake in the bottom half as the season draws to its conclusion. As a result, many of the teams outside the top four have taken the opportunity to blood some young talent, with many Scottish age group internationals seeing significant playing time at Aberdeen and Hearts in particular.

SWPL 2

Dundee United's quest for an invincible title campaign came to an end as

promotion-chasing Boroughmuir Thistle handed them a shock 4-1 defeat last month. While the result will ultimately not affect the outcome of the SWPL2 title, with Graeme Hart's side having long since secured first place, they were a touch disappointed to have missed out on a chance at history. Nonetheless, it has been a hugely impressive campaign and they will already be preparing to compete in the restructured SWPL1 next season.

The battle for the second promotion spot in the SWPL2 is likely going down to the wire. Kilmarnock's 2-1 loss to St Johnstone saw them drop out of the promotion race in mid-April, while the Perthshire side themselves ultimately fell short despite a strong resurgence under former Hibs and interim Glasgow City boss Grant Scott.

The match on the final weekend at New Tinto Park is set to be a winner-takes-all affair between Glasgow Girls & Women and Boroughmuir Thistle. Boroughmuir currently sit one point clear of their promotion rivals, but Glasgow have a game in hand against Stirling University before the decider against Boroughmuir.

It has been quite the fightback from Thistle, as at one point they were as many as 10 points behind Glasgow in the table, but they now stand only one win away from a terrific promotion to the top flight. Their efforts have been all the more impressive after losing star midfielder Shannon Todd to a long-term knee injury at the beginning of March.

Scottish Women's Cup

It will be a repeat of December's SWPL Cup final in the final of the Biffa Scottish Women's Cup later this month, with Fran Alonso's Celtic attempting to win a cup double against Glasgow City.

The quarter finals took place at the start of April, with Celtic seeing off Aberdeen while City ended the cup run of SWPL2 Stirling University. In the other ties, Partick Thistle upset Hibs 4-2, while Hearts saw off Kilmarnock to reach the semis.

The semi-final ties took place at the Falkirk Stadium, with Celtic needing extra time to see off a determined young Hearts side 2-0.

Charlie Wellings was the match winner for Celtic, as she often has been this season, with a brace in the second half of extra time. In the other semi-final, City outlasted Partick Thistle, winning by three goals to one. A Cara McBrearty own goal and strikes from Lauren Davidson and Priscila Chinchilla sealed the win for the reigning league champions, while Cheryl McCulloch was the scorer for Thistle.

The final is taking place at Tynecastle on Sunday, May 29.

SWF Championship North/South

The SWF Championship seasons drew to a close, with extremely different title races in the North and the South. Montrose ran away with the North league, going the full season unbeaten and finishing 15 points clear of East Fife in second.

They scored 144 goals in their 21 matches while only conceding 12, and the only match they failed to win was a 1-1 draw with Inverness Caledonian Thistle.

Having bounced back from a defeat to Dryburgh Athletic in the SWF Championship Cup final to win the league title in such style, they will now be looking forward to competing in the SWPL2 next season.

Meanwhile in the South, there was a far more competitive challenge for the championship. In the end it was Gartcairn who finished on top of the pile, five points clear of Rossvale.

With a month to go in the season, it had been Rossvale who were three points clear at the top, with Gartcairn in second and Renfrew only a point behind in third. However, a strong finish saw Gartcairn seal the title and the automatic promotion spot, while Rossvale are taking on East Fife in the play off for the final place in SWPL2 next season.



Wales to face New Zealand



Wales will take on New Zealand in an international challenge match on Tuesday 28 June (KO 18:00 BST) in the Pinatar Arena in Spain.

The two sides last met in June 2019, when a Kayleigh Green goal secured the 1-0 win for Cymru in drizzly conditions at the Leckwith Stadium in Cardiff.

The match will see a return to south-east Spain for Grainger's side, after competing in the 2022 Pinatar Cup in February.

New Zealand, ranked 22nd in the world, will be hosting next year's FIFA Women's World Cup alongside Australia. Cymru are currently sitting in second place in their Qualifying Round group in the bid to reach the tournament down-under and will hope to secure a play-off spot with two matches remaining, away to Greece and home to Slovenia.

Head coach Gemma Grainger said: "This is a great opportunity for our preparation ahead of the final qualifying round group matches in September.

"This is the next step in the growth of the team.

"New Zealand are a higher ranked opposition, and we want to continue with that mentality of challenging ourselves in different ways."

Wales current 2022 fixtures

Tuesday, June 28: New Zealand vs Wales, Pinatar Arena, Spain (friendly)

Friday, September 2: Greece vs Wales, TBC (WWC qualifier)

Tuesday, September 6: Wales vs Slovenia, TBC (WWC qualifier)

Wales 2022 results

Wednesday, February 16: Wales 3-1 Scotland, Pinatar Arena (Pinatar Cup)

Saturday, February 19: Wales 0-0 Belgium, Pinatar Arena (Pinatar Cup)

Tuesday, February 22: Wales 0-1 Ireland, Pinatar Arena (Pinatar Cup)

Friday, April 8: Wales 1-2 France, Parc y Scarlets (WWC qualifier)

Tuesday, April 12: Kazakhstan 0-3 Wales, Astana Arena, Nur-Sultan (WWC qualifier)

WU17 squad prepare at training camp



Loren Dykes' Cymru WU17s are already looking ahead to the 2022/23 season, with a training camp taking place at Colliers Park next week.

The side were forced to withdraw from the recent Round 2 of the 2022 UEFA WU17 EURO qualifiers due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, but will meet up for the four day camp ahead of next season.

Nine of the players involved play their club football in Wales and in the Adran leagues, including Cardiff City Women's Lily Billingham.

Her goal scoring performance earned her the Player of the Match award as the bluebirds lifted this season's FAW Women's Cup.

The draws for next season's UEFA WU17 and WU19 competitions are scheduled to take place on Tuesday 31 May.

Cymru WU17: Ruby BURNELL (Chichester & Selsey), Elen VALENTINE (Birmingham City), Amelia FORKING

(Cardiff City Women), Bethan THOMAS (Liverpool), Lili JONES (Wrexham), Megan BOWEN (Barry Town United), Scarlett MCMAHON (Torquay United), Manon PEARCE (Barry Town United), Claudia JONES (Liverpool), Maisie MILLER (Brighton & Hove Albion), Faye KNOX (Liverpool), Amy HARE (Wolverhampton Wanderers), Niamh DUGGAN (Reading), Jessica COLLYER (Wrest Ham United), Lily BILLINGHAM (Cardiff City Women), Madison WILLIAMS (Llandudno), Tianna TEISAR (Bristol City), Tia LOCKLEY (The New Saints), Ellie JONES (Bristol City), Efa PREECE-JONES (Pontypridd Town), Olivia OWEN (West Bromwich Albion), Gwenan HORGAN (Swansea City).

Wales U17 results 2022

Tuesday, February 8: Wales 1-4 Scotland, Denbeigh Town (friendly)

Friday, February 11: Wales 2-1 Scotland, Colliers Park (friendly)

Uefa U16 Girls Development tournament round-up



Cymru took on Finland, Switzerland and Denmark in the 2022 UEFA U16 Girls Development Tournament, hosted in north Wales last week.

Airbus' ground in Broughton hosted the opening matches. as Sophie Rawling scored for Cymru against Finland, who won the match 3-1. In the second fixture, Switzerland started their tournament with a 2-0 win against Denmark.

Cymru took on the Swiss in the second match at Park Hall, Oswestry. The match was 2-0 to Switzerland after 78 minutes, but a flurry in the closing stages meant a 6-1 finish, with Evie Hughes scoring from the spot for Cymru's goal. Meanwhile, Denmark earned another three points with a 3-1 win over Finland.

With Switzerland and Denmark both competing for the top spot in the group, it was the Swiss that were declared the winners on the final day with a 4-0 win at Colliers Park against Finland. Cymru were involved in an end-to-end match against the Danes, finishing 6-2 to the

visitors with Maddison Perrott and Ruby Hamed-Jones scoring for Cymru.

Images from the tournament can be viewed [here](#).

Cymru WU16: Cerys PHILLIPS (Chelsea RTC), Grace DUNKERLEY (FAW Trust Academy North), Amy RICHARDSON (FAW Trust Academy North), Bethan MARRIOTT (Stoke City RTC), Evie HUGHES (Bristol City RTC), Annie SMALL (FAW Trust Academy North), Sophie RAWLING (FAW Trust Academy North), Ruby HAMED-JONES (FAW Trust Academy South), Olivia FRANCIS (FAW Trust Academy South), Chloe MCMAHON (Bristol City RTC), Lauren DAVIES (FAW Trust Academy South), Ameliah YARWOOD (FAW Trust Academy South), Grace PURNELL (Bristol City RTC), Emily LOUDON (Liverpool RTC), Katie WILLIAMS (FAW Trust Academy South), Maddison PERROTT (Bristol City RTC), Casi EVANS (Caernarfon Town), Elena COLE (FAW Trust Academy South), Mared GRIFFITHS (FAW Trust Academy North), Ania DENHAM (Caernarfon Town).



Finlay set to make history at U17 Euro finals



The senior women's team are not the only females from Northern Ireland who will be involved in a UEFA final tournament this year.

Before the girls in green and white head for England in July for their first major tournament (UEFA Women's Euro 2022) a referee from Co Tyrone will also be making history.

Vikki Finlay will actually be entering the history books tonight when she becomes the first female referee from Northern Ireland to take part in a UEFA final tournament.

Vikki, who comes from the village of Killen, near Castlederg, is among eight assistant referees who have been chosen to officiate at the Women's U17 Euro finals, which are being held in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 3-15 May.

After successfully passing a fitness assessment, the Tyrone woman will be running the line at the Norway WU17 v Spain WU17 match at the Gradski Stadion in Mostar tonight (7 o'clock start UK time).

The other officials for the game are Michele Schmolzer from Switzerland (referee), Romanian Daniela Constantinescu (assistant referee) and Bosnian Tanja Racic (fourth official).

Trevor Moutray, Head of Refereeing at the Irish Football Association, said: "This is the first time that an Irish FA female match official has been appointed to a UEFA final tournament. It's something to be proud of and a great good news story for female match officials here."

The UEFA European Women's Under-17 Championship is back after being cancelled for the last two seasons due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The teams participating in this year's tournament are: Group A - hosts Bosnia and Herzegovina, holders Germany, Denmark, Netherlands; Group B - France, Spain, Norway, Finland.

Germany defeated Denmark 2-0 in the opening match of the tournament earlier today.



INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS



Portugal confirmed as Russia's replacement for Euro 2022



Portugal has been named as the replacement for Russia at this summer's Euro 2022.

Russia have been suspended from all Uefa competitions.

Portugal will play Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland in Group C of the final tournament which begins on July, 6.

Russia's qualifying games for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 are now null and void, with Group E consequently reduced to five teams; Denmark, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Malta and Azerbaijan.

Nor will Russia participate in the Women's U-17 and U-19 Championships, while one additional three-team mini-tournament will take place in each competition.

Russia will have no affiliated clubs participating in the UEFA Women's Champions League in the 2022/23 season.

Russia have also been removed from the Uefa Women's Futsal Euro 2022 finals.

Hungary will take their place.

The news seemed to be received with mixed reviews on social media.

One wrote: "This is absolutely uncalled for, why should you punish innocent citizens and players who love what they do because of one man."

Another said: "That's the right decision! No exceptions for country that cause so devastating consequences not only for Ukraine but for many countries that would be impacted by this war."

Women's Euro 2022: England's group matches and Wembley sold out

England's three group matches at this summer's home Euros tournament have sold out.

Manchester United's 73,200-capacity Old Trafford hosts England's opening game against Austria on July 6.

More than 30,000 fans will then watch England's matches against Norway at Brighton's Amex Stadium on July 11 and Northern Ireland at Southampton's St Mary's on July 15.

All 87,200 tickets have been sold for the final at Wembley on July 31, which will break the attendance record for a women's football game in England.

The current record is 80,203 spectators at the London 2012 Olympics final between the United States and Japan.

The biggest crowds England have played in front of also happened at Wembley in 2019.

77,768 watched England lose 2-1 to Germany on a rainy night in November.

Iceland star unimpressed by Euro 2022 stadium choice

Iceland and Lyon star Sara Gunnarsdottir has expressed her anger over the decision to host some Euro 2022 games at Manchester City's Academy Stadium.

The stadium is the smallest of the 10 chosen and the home of Manchester City Women, which accommodates 7,000 fans.

Iceland have already sold out their two group stage fixtures set to be played at the stadium.

The Lyon midfielder, Gunnarsdottir, believes the inclusion of such a small venue is "disrespectful" towards the women's game.

"I am disappointed with the arenas we have been given. It's shocking - we play a tournament in England with several large arenas, and we get to play at a training facility that takes around 5,000 spectators," she said on Fotbollskanalen's Their Pitch podcast.

"It's just embarrassing and it's not the respect we deserve. They haven't prepared for the fact that we can sell more than 4000, it is disrespectful to women's football.

"Women's football takes two steps in the right direction, but then things like this happen and then you take a step back."

EURO 2022 PRINTS



EXCLUSIVE, LIMITED EDITION

£10 EACH (PLUS P&P)

£25 SET OF THREE

**THE WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL
MAGAZINE**

*Leah
Taylor*

U20 Women's World Cup draw made



Draw

Group A



Group B



Group C



Group D



The draw for the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup 2022 has been made.

It was held at the Teatro Nacional in San Jose.

Some of the world's best young players and future superstars of the women's game will take to the field at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup™ in Costa Rica from 10 to 28 August 2022.

Hosts Costa Rica will kick off their campaign and the tournament

against FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 co-hosts, Australia, and will be joined by Brazil and Spain in Group A.

Reigning champions, Japan, were drawn in Group D together with Netherlands, Ghana and USA.

Athlete and TV presenter Johanna Solano, presented the draw and was joined by Costa Rican football icons Shirley Cruz and Paulo César Wanchope along with draw conductor Jaime Yarza, FIFA's

Director of Tournaments.

Speaking about the draw, Costa Rica coach Jose Catoya said: "It's a tough group, but then every World Cup group is.

"We want to give Costa Rica the best possible performances at this World Cup but we have to take it step by step. We've never won a Women's World Cup match, so we have to go out and get that first win and take it from there."

Germany coach Kathrin Peter added: ““We’ve got some very interesting opponents. Colombia are a solid side and Mexico are full of confidence.

“I don’t know too much about New Zealand but we’ll study them.”

France coach Sonia Haziraj said: “It’s a tough group but, then again, they all are.

“You’ve got 16 top teams and we know that if we want to go all the way in the competition, we need to beat the best.

“We’re prepared for that, though. We need to make sure the players are all pulling in the same direction and that they’re ready to go the distance at this World Cup.”

Cindy Tye, coach of Canada added: “The girls can’t wait to face their opponents.

“We’ll be coming up against different styles of play, which will be a real challenge for us.

“We can’t wait to take it on, though.”

Japan coach Futoshi Ikeda said: ““We won the trophy four years ago but we now have a completely different squad. It’s a whole new challenge for me.”

Netherlands coach Jessica Torny: “We’re in a very tough and exciting group. My players see this tournament as one of the best in the world.

“It’s a really important one for them in terms of picking up experience.”

“There are three different types of teams in our group and it will be great to come up against them in an idyllic place like Costa Rica.”

USA coach Tracey Kevins

Ghana coach Ben Fokuo said: ““We’ve got a very difficult group.

“Football keeps on changing, both in our country and everywhere else, and we know what our opponents are capable of.”

New Zealand coach Gemma Lewis said: “I hope that we can give more visibility to women’s football in Costa Rica and I hope the fans will turn out in numbers.

“As for our group, it’s a really interesting one with some very strong teams.

“It’s going to be tough for us. They’re three good sides, Germany especially.”



**U-20 WOMEN'S
WORLD CUP
COSTA RICA 2022**

Around the World



Solo asks to delay Hall of Fame induction while in rehab



NATIONAL SOCCER HALL OF FAME

Former United States women's national team goalkeeper Hope Solo has requested that her induction into the National Soccer Hall of Fame until 2023.

Solo said she will be entering an in-patient alcohol treatment program. "I have contacted the Hall of Fame and respectfully requested a postponement of my Hall of Fame induction ceremony to 2023," Solo said in a statement. "I will be voluntarily entering an in-patient alcohol treatment program to address my challenges with alcohol."

Solo, 40, was arrested last month after she was found passed out behind the wheel of a vehicle in North Carolina with her two-year-old twin sons inside.

Solo was arrested on 31 March in a shopping centre parking lot in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and charged with driving while impaired, resisting a public officer and misdemeanor child abuse, according to a police report. She was released from jail and has a court date of 28 June, the report indicated.

The Hall of Fame issued a statement on Friday saying: "Legendary USWNT goalkeeper and 2022 National Soccer Hall of Fame inductee Hope Solo has chosen to defer her induction until 2023."

"At this time, my energies and focus are totally directed to my health, healing and taking care of my family. I want to thank the Hall of Fame for their support and for understanding my decision."

"The NSHOF fully supports her decision and looks forward to honoring her and her historic achievements at next year's induction ceremony."

50 Women in Sport:

the fascinating story of the female pioneers



50 Women in Sport tells the fascinating story of the female pioneers who carved a place for women in sporting history and fought to succeed at the highest level in their chosen field. The book includes profiles of women who have smashed conventions to achieve their ambitions alongside 25 exclusive interviews with up-and-coming talent and established names.

2022 is set to be a watershed year for women's sport with World Cups in Rugby and Cricket, England hosting the FIFA Euro Football tournament, the Commonwealth Games in

Birmingham, and more attention and commercial investment than ever before. Yet for generations, women were discouraged from taking part in sporting activities and side-lined as the 'weaker sex'. 50 Women in Sport tells the story of the female trailblazers who demonstrated courage and inner strength to defy the conventions of their time, breaking records and challenging stereotypes.

The book includes full profiles of some of the icons of female sport including Serena Williams, Megan Rapinoe, Simone Biles, Nicola Adams,

Bethany Hamilton, Fu-Yuanhui, Aina Nehwal, Jessica Ennis-Hill, Billie Jean King, Lisa Leslie, Althea Gibson, Ellen McArthur, Saina Nehwal, Jacqueline Joyner-Kersey, Nawal El Moutawake and many more.

The book also contains 25 exclusive interviews that celebrate the diversity of some of the most promising sporting talent of today such as swimmer Alice Dearing, rugby players Celia Quansah and Meg Jones and women such as Katherine Grainger, and Barbara Slater who have been at the top of their sport and have since used their

experiences to follow careers in other sports-related fields.

Also included are many exclusive photographs taken at sporting events.

Some interviewees in the book, include:

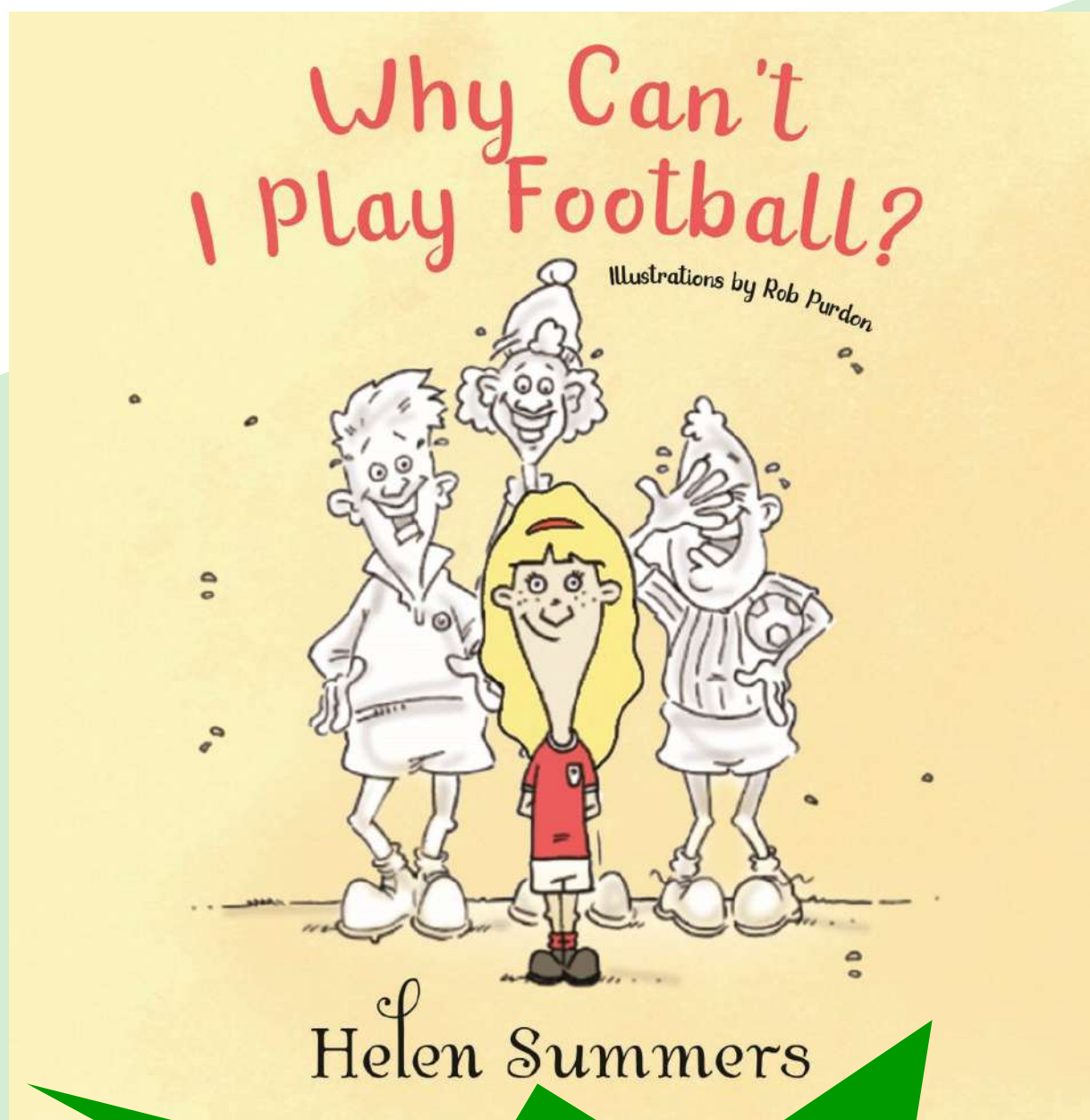
- **Cat Carr**
British Basketball Player of the Year
- **Emma Challis**
Para-swimmer who won bronze at the 2022 Olympics after losing her legs and part of her arm to meningitis
- **Alice Dearing**
Team GB's first female Black team-mate and co-founder of the Black Swimming Association
- **Tracy Edwards**
Sailing great and founder of sailing charity for women and girls
- **Menna Fitzpatrick**
Para-skier and most decorated British Winter Paralympian
- **Katherine Grainger**
Five-times Olympic medallist and current Chair of UK Sport
- **Julie Kitchen**
Muay Thai Marshall Arts
- **Celia Quansah and Meg Jones**
England/GB Rugby 7s player/Captain and LGTB couple
- **Eve Muirhead**
2022 Olympic curling gold medallist
- **Liz Nicholl**
Former Chief Executive of Sport England, current President of World Netball
- **Jawahir Roble**
Football Referee
- **Caster Semenya**
Two time world athletics champion and two-time Olympic champion in the 800m
- **Barbara Slater**
former gymnast and Director of BBC Sport

- **Maria Toopakai**
Defied the Taliban to become a weightlifter and play squash in her home country of Pakistan
- **Kate Shortman/Izzy Thorpe**
UK synchronised swimmers talk about how they dealt with social media trolling after the Olympics
- **Zoe Smith**
Parasurfer who lost her leg in 2015 and came fifth in the World Surfing Championship 2022

50 Women in Sport is published by Supernova Books (an imprint of Aurora Metro Books) on Thursday 21st July 2022 as a full colour hardback priced £24.99



CHILDREN'S BOOK OUT NOW



£5.99

Available at Amazon, Waterstones and
all good bookshops

**THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL
MAGAZINE**