

# THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

Issue 65—January 2022



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# THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



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# Welcome

Hello and welcome to Issue 65!

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Company number: 12839197



Happy New Year everyone and wishing you all a wonderful 2023.

It's hard to believe that the Women's World Cup is now just a few months away—how are we already talking about it?

Before we look ahead to 2023, we decided to look back on 2022: The Year that Changed Women's Football—with our January special. Have you got your copy yet?

Back to this issue we have lots of exciting content including a wonderfully insightful look into sports physcology in the women's game.

I just want to finish by saying that everyone at TWFM is thinking of Beth Mead and her family following the passing of her mum.

Sending you so much love Beth.

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks



Editor-in-Chief

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# Sport Psychology and the women's game



Natalie Mincher/SPP

By Peter Mann

In what we hope will be the first of two parts, the second during this summers' issues, we take a look at, with interviews, the increasing presence and use of sport psychology within the women's game.

There's plenty of professional, sport psychologist's out there as well, whether they be university lecturers, or as practising psychologists, but, overall, not many football clubs in the women's system have access to one, well, not yet anyway.

The truth is though, at present, it's more down to a lack of understanding with this particular area of sports science, which one of the

interviewees admits to; although it's not for a want of trying though because interest is, most certainly, present, after all, clubs such as Barnsley Women (FA Women's National League Division One), and AFC Sudbury Women (Eastern Region Women's Football League Premier Division), both have such because they showed an interest.

Clubs of the ilk of Barnsley and Sudbury are also, openly aware, of the benefits such an appointment has to the game, and to their players, on and off the field, moving forward.

Another of the clubs spoke to, to show an interest in the use of sport psychology, is Kettering Town (East Midlands Women's Regional Football League Division One South),

they also aware of the fact that, in order to progress on the field, then progression off the field is just as important.

At Kettering, and having spent a number of seasons coaching their junior sides, coach Dominic Whalley, a Physical Education lecturer, tennis coach, and one whom is working towards the UEFA B Coaching Licence, wasn't going to miss the opportunity to transfer his skillset into the clubs' women's set-up.

"After three seasons with our U14, U15 and U16s, I found myself wanting a new challenge," began Dominic.

"The opportunity then arose to work within our women's section, and it's something I've always wanted to do; it's also

an area which brings with it differences and challenges of its own as well.

"I've watched, previously, the way in which we coach the women's team and I could only see myself adding to that, making them stronger."

In possessing a long-standing interest in psychology, and sport sciences, Dominic's own, university dissertation, was based around the psychological effects on tennis players; granted, not football, but sport psychology-based all the same.

That personal interest has also filtered into his professional standings and is something which he, and his fellow coaches at Kettering, share interest in pursuing further.

"I regularly read texts on the subject matter, and here, at Kettering, we're trying to grow and this, it's a pathway we'd love to be able to pursue," continued Dominic.

"As a football club, we want to do things properly, and, the higher up you go, then it's the way things are which make a difference – those margins really do have a massive impact."

At clubs outside of say, the Women's Super League, and the Championship (women's game), and outside of the Football League itself – Premier League, Championship, Leagues One and Two (men's game), then access to specific areas aren't quite as accessible.

Connections to a local university however, is often beneficial for 'lower level' clubs, work experience, internships and the like, and it's something that, in the

south, at Suffolk club, AFC Sudbury, and their recently appointed (summer 2022) sport psychologist, and is someone who is already known to readers of 'the Women's Football Magazine.'

An undergraduate sport psychology lead lecturer (2nd and 3rd year) at Middlesex University, Dan Witzer, was actually 'scouted' by the Eastern Region Women's Football League Division One outfit, and the arrival of both he, and other, specialist coaches, has seen the club take on a whole new dimension.

"Sport psychology is the last of the sport sciences to be into the system, and, the women's scene, overall, is a great avenue in which to be going into," stated Dan.

"For me, this is my first, proper year in women's football.

"The struggle though, is the buy-ins for clubs, more at the regional levels; clubs themselves have to have a belief, and interest, in the subject, to progress.

"It (sport psychology) is still very much a growing industry (the majority of scientific research has been conducted in the past decade or so), but yes, it's been more accepted in the women's game."

At Barnsley, they on the FA Women's National League Division One, and, like many others, with aspirations of playing higher up the pyramid, their own, summer addition of a sport psychologist, was somewhat by accident.

Chairman, Stephen Maddock, and manager Lois Daniels, were initially in the market for a new goalkeeping coach, they

got much more than that with the vastly experienced, Jimmy Petrucci.

"Yes, we were actually interviewing for 'keepers coach when we saw Jimmy's application," explained Stephen.

"He's always wanted to try his hand in women's football and is a really good guy to have on board, and the girls here, they really relate to him.

"I've been here myself about five years now and it's a cut-throat, difficult, tough old league, to both play in, and get out of, and it has been for a while now.

"Our manager, Lois (Daniels), has a strong interest in sport psychology, so we were always going to jump at a chance like this.

"With Lois, and Jimmy, we're lucky to have them both here as we take things seriously, and professionally.

"Being involved in the women's game, it's opened my eyes and given me a fresh look at things, how players are treated, day-to-day running, and the like."

Jimmy Petrucci's experience is vast to say the least, with over two decades, in some form or another, within the sports industry.

A lecturer at Coventry's Arden University, Petrucci's educational qualifications include a PG Certificate in Mental Health Psychology, and a Masters in Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health whilst also actually having been involved in goalkeeper coaching, hence his application to Barnsley.

"It's been an interesting



experience here at Barnsley, and I'm really enjoying my time here," continued Jimmy.

"The background I have though, it gives a different dimension, that and I was looking for a new challenge anyway.

"I've a daughter, in her twenties, and her experience in the game hasn't been great, the opportunities just weren't there for her although she did have trials with some big clubs.

"I felt as though, overall, I could contribute, and have been in and the football scene since the nineties.

"In applying to Barnsley, yes, I've worked with keepers in the past, but the club, they came back to me and asked if I'd be interested in working with the team as a whole.

"Lois (Daniels) has been a massive help to me, she's a young lady with an old soul, and does her job really well – the players, they play for her and she's been given me free reign, which is something I've never had before."

With Jimmy's much-diverse background, not just utilising sport psychology, but also incorporating mental health and neuroscience, among others.

A general consensus of psychology shows that it's not just about your goal-setting, it's about signposting situations, looking at performance levels, and ensuring that athletes' mental health is checked on regularly.

Sport psychology has taken some time to incorporate itself into the men's game and, for Jimmy, his presence in the game dating back many years,

but, in his helping of athletes, mentally, has opened doors – other sports however, they've perhaps taken somewhat longer.

"It's the filtering through, prioritisation," adds Jimmy.

"Technical, tactical, physical, psychological, but that last element, it's really just as important as the others.

"The first thing I did, when accepting the position at Barnsley, was to look at the literature around the subject, but found that there was very little to go off, so, people like Lois, and the playing staff, have been great.

"The club, on the whole, they've been professional, open-minded, and very receptive – professional clubs could learn a lot from clubs like this.

"I'm just trying to integrate as much as I can, cover the variables to the best of my abilities, and hopefully everything slots into place."

Understandably, one of the main reasons clubs further down the footballing pyramid, Barnsley Women included, don't look to towards areas such as sport psychology, is down to finances, among other factors.

Formerly at Manchester City, where she experienced the presence of a sport psychologist, Barnsley boss, Lois Daniels, is delighted to have one, especially as experienced as Jimmy Petruzzi, at the Yorkshire club.

"As a manager, having someone like Jimmy on-board, is huge," admits Lois.

"I love seeing the girls' reactions, whilst also finding a

cycle in which to do both, classroom, and on the football pitch, with which we've seen the guys really buy into.

"Any help I get though is a bonus and I reach out to him often, because, with my job as manager, I have a strong relationship with the players, the whole squad, so, his input, overall, has been both brilliant, and worthwhile.

"For us, at Barnsley, having a psychologist is just as important as having a physiotherapist, or a strength and conditioning coach.

"I feel it's essential for any team and, in all honesty, is a good 50% of a match-day.

"With Jimmy though, the squad we have here is a mixture of both youth and experience, with some of those having read his articles, his books, and, to be fair, his tailored sessions are really good."

Now, with research into the subject area within the women's game increasing, mental health and performance two of the key components of that, so, in another ten years say, there should easily be a plethora of scientific material, available to clubs and coaches alike.

"There's a domino effect, from one tier to the next, when more research is done at the top, it filters down," explains Kettering coach, Dominic Whalley.

"I think that, with us, and at our level (second tier of the EMWRF) it is a case of gaining access.

"As coaches, we can do things, but you tend to neglect the psychological aspect as that

focus is more on the training aspect, and tactics, so yes, you do need that psychological aspect included.

"I also feel that, at our level, there's so many male coaches about, so is it a gender factor, and the relationship between coach and player; is there any importance there? What's the psychological factors present?

"Moving forward though, it'll develop over time, as it takes time to implement also, but, what's been done at the very top, with England Women (Dr Kate Hays – Head of Women's Performance Psychology) can filter down.

"There's just a need for, as mentioned already, an understanding, and an ongoing investment, in other areas of the game."

Situated at the forefront of lecturing, and research, due to his teaching role at Middlesex University, Sudbury's Dan Witzer knows himself that key to the future is that word again – understanding!

"There's a distinct lack of and you really do need a good understanding, especially of people," he adds.

"You need understanding of people, as well as the sciences themselves, and, with sport psychology, you need to be able to talk to and interact with everyone, in differing ways.

"You can certainly see the value of it when you look at my area (Southern England) and see that there's only, really, a handful of us around.

"But yes, it's growing more, and, in popularity as well, and is up there with biomechanics, and nutrition.

"Research-wise, I'd say that there's quite a bit on coaching, communication, and the demands of the game itself."

A little more detailed, and, in all honesty, Jimmy Petrucci does have a point when comparing sporting educational systems, between the UK and the USA.

Also, the Barnsley psychologist said that: "The women's game is really growing now, and has come a long way in recent years.

"In America say, they have a really strong, college system/programs, and have had for some time now.

"The UK meanwhile, it's getting better, but, there is also room for improvement.

"It's just a matter of time though before a filtering effect takes hold, but there does need to be more support, from within the educational system.

"The more we progress, the more we are seen to help others, and I'm always looking at ways for further enhancement, a clear pathway, opportunities, and balance, things which are key."

Finally, whilst looking at a point made by Kettering's Dominic Whalley, mentioning the success of England Women, an article produced by Dr Jennifer Meggs, Associate Professor in Sport Psychology at Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University, (extracted with permission) discussed the advantage of playing a tournament at home.

This, just one of many areas in which psychologists can, and do, look at, and to which we'll detail more in the summer, actually states common

knowledge, more when you're differentiating between the two sexes.

In the 2021 publication 'The Home Advantage Effect in Women's Sport: Werlayne Leite, Richard Pollard, Miguel A. Gómez-Ruano' say, research was shown in that "home advantage has been a topic of great interest in men's sport for some decades.

"The effects of playing on home soil in women's sport performance has been less widely explored and is therefore less well understood.

"There have been a growing number of calls for a greater understanding in female sport and exercise science research and increased visibility and accessibility of women's team sports including football.

"This has led to more research in recent years in women's sports including football, basketball, handball and water polo.

"It appears that the factors most central to explaining the effect of the home advantage may be different or at least operate differently in female athletes."

Meanwhile, an earlier study, but still within the past decade (2012), by Richard Pollard &

Miguel Gomez, 'Comparison of home advantage in men's and women's football leagues in Europe,' provided great detail on comparing the two sexes.

Said to be one of the earlier pioneers of research into the phenomenon of home advantage in European women's football, Meggs adding: "It was suggested that there might be different perceptions on territorialism between women and men; i.e., men tend to perceive territory as a primary driver of their performance and this could be due to evolutionary impacts.

"However, the authors also found that as the Gender Gap Index (a measure of the status difference between men and women in a given geographical area) decreased, the difference between men's and women's performance in football also reduced.

"This suggests that home advantage has a stronger impact on performance outcomes in countries where women have relatively equal status to men.

"The effects of the home crowd on players and referees is a primary factor that can lift and motivate and benefit a home team."

They are certainly factors which played a massive part in

Sarina Wiegman's England lifting the Women's European Championship in the summer of 2022, a 2-1 win over Germany at Wembley Stadium.

These alone show what a psychological advantage can bring to the game be that goal-setting, mental health, home advantage, neuroscience, and more, it all not only matters, but does prove to be advantageous.

Moving forward, and as mentioned at the beginning, we'll look, in more detail, are research on the topic of sport psychology in the women's game, when summer comes around – and, who knows, there may have been more research published between now and that.

(I have an idea for one emanating from putting this piece together).

Utmost thanks are afforded to Dr Jennifer Meggs (Heriot-Watt University) ongoing advice and research; Stephen Maddock, Lois Daniels & Jimmy Petrucci (Barnsley Women), Dan Witzer (AFC Sudbury Women), Dominic Whalley (Kettering Town Women), and Kate Stanley (Capelli Sport).



# SPECIAL PRINTED EDITION

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THAT CHANGED  
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# BARCLAYS WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

# The exciting life of a superfan

By Lydia Charles, age 9

## For the love of playing

The past week has been incredible for me as a PNE player, the previous match I played my coach gave me the best compliments I have ever received while playing for PNE.

It has definitely given me a boost for when I play my next match, unfortunately this week's match and training was cancelled because of the treacherous weather, which I found very frustrating as I love to play football.

## The Manchester derby



Sunday, December 11, was amazing.

The girls played (in what I would call a tough match) brilliant, we were against Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium.

As usual I was in the same block as the Barmy Army and the atmosphere was unbelievable, there was singing every minute. I also got filmed by the BBC three times! The score was 1-1, our goal was scored by Leah Galton in the 27th minute assisted by Ella Toone.

Leah was awarded player of the match, which I totally agree with, not only for scoring her goal, but for her passion and effort. She did some outstanding skills and was always giving her best.



There were some missed opportunities by the team, but none the less a great game to watch.

City's goal was scored by Laura Coombs in the 58th minute and assisted by Chloe Kelly. There were no bookings this week. The players for Man Utd were: Mary Earps, Millie Turner, Hannah Blundell, Maya la Tissier, Ona Battle, Nikita Parris who was substituted for Martha Thomas, Leah Galton, Ella Toone, Katie Zelem and Alessia Russo who was substituted for Lucia Garcia.

The result kept Utd in 2nd position in the WSL league. I couldn't be happier with the girls at the moment because every match they play they always put 1000% effort in. This was the first time for me in the ETIHAD Stadium and what an attendance as it was 44, 259 fans!



# **Chelsea dethrone Manchester United after 8-0 victory over Leicester City**



**By Abbie Smith**

On Saturday 3 December 2022, Chelsea travelled to the King Power Stadium to play against Leicester City. Going into the game, the blues knew that a win would send them back to the top of the Women's Super League table so decided to line up in a strong 3-4-3. Super stopper Ann-Katrin Berger led from the back, with Sam Kerr, Jessie Fleming and Guro Reiten acting as a triple threat up top.

After only 4 minutes, Chelsea took the lead. Fran Kirby received the ball on the edge of the box, swiftly turning past a Leicester defender and passing to Reiten, who took a touch and slotted the ball home.

The Blues' second goal came less than 10 minutes later with Reiten collecting Kirby's mistimed shot from the byline and sliding it into the path of Fleming, who edged the ball into the net from inside the six-yard box.

Kirby's first of the game came after Johanna Rytting Kaneryd controlled a well-timed pass from Fleming and, with silky footwork, beat two Leicester defenders before laying the ball to Reiten just outside the box. Reiten sent a delicious cross over the heads of the Leicester defence, falling into the path of Kirby who cushioned the ball with her chest and struck it

past Leicester keeper Demi Lambourne. 3-0 Chelsea.

Emma Hayes' squad scored two goals in rapid succession towards the end of the first 45 minutes. Midfielder Niamh Charles made it 4-0, meeting Reiten's cross with a looping near-post header minutes before Kerr's wonder-goal. Reiten across-pitch through ball was precise, whipped away from the Leicester back 4 and into Kerr's perfectly timed stride. Lambourne had no chance of stopping such a powerful shot from one of the world's best attackers!

Not even Leicester's half-time substitutions could put a stop

to Chelsea's domineering performance as they scored 5 minutes into the second half. Leicester defender Jemma Purfield's poor attempt at clearing the ball fell to Fleming, stood beside the penalty spot, who took her time and curled the ball into the corner.

5 tactical changes were made for Chelsea, with Jelena Čanković replacing Fleming, Bethany England replacing Kerr, Aniek Nouwen replacing Magdalena Eriksson, Jess Carter replacing Ève Périsset, and Alsu Abdullina replacing assist machine Reiten.

These changes served to enhance Chelsea's game as, almost instantly Abdullina's cross found the head of England inside the Leicester box to make it 7-0.

Another mistake from Lambourne gave Chelsea their 8th and Kirby her 2nd of the game. The keeper fumbled the ball straight into the feet of Kirby who, as cool as you like, walked the ball into the net.

Substitute Natasha Flint had Leicester's best chance of the game, an outside the box strike. Despite the filled power and accuracy behind the ball, experienced keeper Berger was able to parry it out for a corner.

An astonishing 90 minutes from Chelsea led to them winning the three points and sailing back to the summit of the WSL table. Leicester remain in 12th place on zero points, having only scored two goals so far this season, conceding 25 and racking up a goal difference of -23.

The statistics don't lie Chelsea's 23 shots compared to Leicester's 5 show just how capable the Blues are. They occupied 70% of possession, leaving Leicester with only 30%. Their ability to burst past defenders on the break, win back the ball straight after conceding, and build up from the back on the counter are three vital skills Chelsea showed during this game that give them the confidence needed to clinch the three points and push for a record-breaking 6th WSL title.

4 of Reiten's 9 assists thus far came from this game, bringing her to the top of the WSL assists leader board, 4 ahead of second place Caitlin Foord (Arsenal, 5 assists)!

Reiten's consistency so far places her as one of the best attackers in the league this season. Whenever she is on the ball, she looks to make the efficient passes,

running into pockets of space and using her dizzying footwork to round opposition players with ease.

Throughout November and December, Chelsea were unbeaten. They started November with a 3-1 win against Manchester United, with goals from Kerr, Lauren James and Erin Cuthbert bringing them the three points.

Dynamic duo Kerr and Cuthbert struck gold in their next game, leading the Blues to a 3-0 against London rivals Tottenham Hotspur, along with a Reiten penalty.

Following on from their 8-0 thrashing of Leicester, the Blues scored 3 goals in under 20 minutes in their 3-2 win against Reading, with Čanković scoring 2 in 4 minutes. Reading fought back, scoring 2 goals in 2 minutes, yet it wasn't enough to push for a point.

Chelsea's next WSL game, Sunday, January 15, 2023 versus Arsenal, is sure to be an ostentatious game of football. Arsenal, currently sitting three points behind the league leaders, will be gearing up to steal all three points and dethrone the Blues.



## **Manchester City host a record crowd in the derby**

The Etihad Stadium saw a near-full capacity crowd for the Manchester derby fixture between City and United in the WSL.

A huge attendance of 44,259 cheered on their sides in the 1-1 draw as Leah Galton opened the scoring for United after 27 minutes. Laura Coombs grabbing the equaliser shortly into the second half.

## **Rising interest in WSL means more funding could become available**

The WSL could potentially gain up to 100 million pounds in outside financing to fund its development.

Many news outlets are reporting that the rise in attendances and TV audiences is driving investors to inject more money into promoting the game.

The WSL board are said to be in talks with bankers at Rothschild to gauge interest in investing towards the league's commercial rights.

## **Everton end losing streak**

The Toffees ended a three-game losing streak with a 3-0 away win to Tottenham in the final round of WSL games of 2022.

Katja Snoeijs netted her first WSL goal in the fixture with Jess Park and Giovana adding to the score sheet.

The result sees Spurs end 2022 with four straight defeats.

## **WSL crowds up 200 percent**

Director of the women's professional game, Kelly Simmons, has revealed that WSL crowds have soared dramatically since the success of the Lionesses during the summer, with attendance records continuing to be broken.

The new average attendance is almost 6,000 fans a week with higher figures for games in bigger stadia.

## **Ellen White announces pregnancy**

Former Manchester City forward Ellen White has announced she is pregnant with her first child.

White retired in August after securing 113 caps for England and had netted 98 goals in her club career since 2005.

## **Icy weather disrupts some WSL fixtures**

The majority of teams were lucky during the recent cold snap, but a couple of WSL fixtures had to be postponed due to frozen pitches.

Brighton's home clash with Everton at the Broadfield Stadium was one such fixture, with Liverpool's meeting with Leicester also falling victim to the frost.

## **Vivianne Miedema suffers horror injury in Champions League**

Arsenal's prominent goalscorer Miedema fell awkwardly in their European tie with Lyon, forcing the Dutch forward to be stretchered off in a worrying time for the Gooners.

The extent of the damage is not yet known but she will join teammate Beth Mead on the side-lines who is recovering from an ACL injury.

## **Leicester unlucky as they search for first point**

The Foxes are still on the hunt for their first result of the campaign as they sit bottom of the league with zero points.

Their most recent fixture saw Chelsea claim an 8-0 victory as they continue to cope with a long list of injuries.

The January transfer window will need to be an active one for the club if they hope to stay in the top tier.

## **Everton boss Brian Sorensen predicts a quiet January**

There will be plenty of transfer action in the month ahead, but Everton insist their squad are stable and do not plan to invest at this point in time.

The Toffees made ten new signings in the summer and, despite recent results, are happy to continue without making changes to the current squad.

Sorensen said: "If something happens that is out of our control, we will react on that and see where we are but in terms of bringing a lot in, it's not the case."

## **Reading give Chelsea a late scare at Kingsmeadow**

Chelsea finish 2022 top of the league after six straight WSL victories however their most recent opponents Reading made them fight for the three points.

The Blues were cruising to victory with a 3-0 advantage before Reading pulled back two goals in the second-half.

Chelsea clung onto their lead in a snowy southwest London and remain three points clear of rivals Arsenal.

## **More awards for the heroic Lionesses**

Beth Mead picked up another accolade in December as the Sports Journalist's Association honoured her with the Sportswoman of the Year award.

The Lionesses also won an award for Team of the Year with Baroness Sue Campbell present at the ceremony to take home the Spirit of Sport Award.

## **Emma Hayes wins Manager of the Month**

Chelsea's head coach claimed the honour after returning to the dugout in November following emergency surgery.

The Blues have been outstanding and recently enjoyed playing in front of 38,000 fans at Stamford Bridge.

The trophy will be shared with Chelsea's assistant coach Denise Reddy.

## **Aston Villa's Rachel Daly picks up Player of the Month**

It's her second award this season, and a very well-deserved honour for Rachel Daly who recently scored four goals in two appearances for Villa. Daly has scored 75 per cent of Villa's WSL goals this season.

# Match of the Month: Tottenham vs Everton



By Paul Donegan

Everton had a comfortable 3-0 win over Tottenham Hotspur on Wednesday evening in the final Women's Super League game of 2022. Katja Snoeijs, Jess Park and Gio scored the goals for the Toffees. Spurs had Ashleigh Neville sent off near the end of the match.

There was a 50th WSL appearance for Tottenham's captain Shelina Zadorsky, and Nicoline Sorensen made her first league start for Everton since September 2021. Both sides went into the match in not great form with neither getting any points in the league since October, though Everton's loses had been against three of the top four.

Rehanne Skinner's Tottenham had lost 2-0 at home to West Ham at the weekend whilst Everton's game at Brighton had been called off. It was a very cold night and there was snow around the pitch.

Everton took the lead in the 8th minute when a low cross from Sorensen was finished from close range by Snoeijs.

The visitors had another chance in the 18th minute but Aurora Galli's header was easily caught by Tottenham goalkeeper Rebecca Spencer. Another dangerous low cross from Sorensen was put behind for a corner in the 24th minute as Everton continued to look the more threatening of the sides.

Tottenham's first chance came in the 26th minute when Neville's cross was headed by Drew Spence straight into Emily Ramsey's hands. Everton had another opportunity in the 34th minute when Lucy Graham's shot from 25 yards went wide.

In the 36th minute, Park dispossessed Spencer of the ball ran the ball into the empty net to give the visitors a deserved 2-0 lead.

Neville's shot from about 20-yards went straight at Ramsey in the 39th minute as Spurs looked to get back into the game. At the other end a minute later, Gabrielle George's shot from a similar distance was saved by a diving Spencer.

Tottenham's Nikola Karczewska had two efforts just before half time. In the 42nd minute her poked shot from 12-yards went just over, then she saw a volley from an angle tipped wide three minutes later. Spurs had another chance in stoppage time but Spence's low shot was easily claimed by Ramsey.

The first opportunity of the second half came in the 56th minute when Snoeijs' effort was deflected wide. From corner, George headed over.

A couple of minutes later, Tottenham's Evelina Summanen's cross went straight into Ramsey's hands.

Half time substitute Jessica Naz saw an effort from the edge of penalty area go well over. There was some nice build play from Spurs but Naz's cross was put behind for a corner.

Everton did have the ball in the net again in the 64th minute but the offside flag was up to rule out Aggie Beever-Jones' lob. Beever-Jones then saw a header saved in the 76th minute.

Neville saw a curling effort go wide for Spurs, but it was Everton who were having more of the chances and in the 83rd minute substitute Gio played in Park whose low shot was saved. George put a long-range shot wide, then in the final minute Galli's powerful long-range shot was pushed away by Spencer.

Seconds later, Neville committed a foul just outside

the area and was shown a straight red card by referee Gavin Ward for the challenge. The resulting free kick from Izzy Christiansen was saved.

The visitors made it 3-0 deep into injury time when George's cross found Gio who controlled on her chest then smashed a shot into the net past Spencer.

The final whistle went as the match restarted and Brian Sorensen's Everton ended their three-game losing run in the league with this win. Tottenham have now lost their last four games in the WSL without scoring a goal.

## Line ups

## **Tottenham (4-2-3-1)**

Spencer, Turner, Bartrip, Zadorsky (c), Ale (Ubogagu 82'), Summanen, Cho (James 46'), Neville, Spence, Ayane,

Karczewska (Naz 46' (Bizet 75'))

## Substitutes

Korpela, Harrop, Pearse

Booked – Naz, Summanen

Sent-off – Neville 90'

**Everton**  
**(4-3-3)**

Ramsey, Graham, Bjorn,  
Sevecke, George (c), Bennison  
(Christiansen 84'), K.  
Holmgaard, Galli, Sorensen  
(Gio 77'), Soneijs (Beever-  
Jones 59'), Park

## **Substitutes**

Brosnan, Wheeler, Maier, Weir

**Goals** – Soneijs 8', Park 36',  
Gio 90'+5

## **Booked** – Beever-Jones

**Referee** – Gavin Ward



# Fifa: The Best nominees announced



FIFA has revealed the candidates shortlisted for The Best FIFA Football Awards™ 2022.

The nominees are listed below in alphabetical order:

## The Best FIFA Women's Player:

Aitana Bonmatí (Spain / FC Barcelona)

Debinha (Brazil / North Carolina Courage)

Jessie Fleming (Canada / Chelsea FC Women)

Ada Hegerberg (Norway / Olympique Lyonnais)

Sam Kerr (Australia / Chelsea FC Women)

Beth Mead (England / Arsenal WFC)

Vivianne Miedema (Netherlands / Arsenal WFC)

Alex Morgan (USA / Orlando Pride / San Diego Wave)

Lena Oberdorf (Germany / VfL Wolfsburg)

Alexandra Popp (Germany / VfL Wolfsburg)

Alexia Putellas (Spain / FC Barcelona)

Wendie Renard (France / Olympique Lyonnais)

Keira Walsh (England / Manchester City WFC / FC Barcelona)

Leah Williamson (England / Arsenal WFC)

## The Best FIFA Women's Coach:

Sonia Bompastor (France / Olympique Lyonnais)

Emma Hayes (England / Chelsea FC Women)

Bev

Priestman (England / Canadian National Team)

Pia Sundhage (Sweden / Brazilian National Team)

Martina Voss-Tecklenburg (Germany / German National Team)

Sarina Wiegman (Netherlands / English National Team)

## The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper:

Ann-Katrin Berger (Germany / Chelsea FC Women)

Mary Earps (England / Manchester United WFC)

Christiane Endler (Chile / Olympique Lyonnais)

Merle Frohms (Germany / Eintracht Frankfurt / VfL Wolfsburg)

Alyssa Naeher (USA / Chicago Red Stars)

Sandra Paños García-Villamil (Spain / FC Barcelona)

### The FIFA Puskás Award:

Mario Balotelli (Italy): Adana Demirspor v. Göztepe Spor Kulübü [Süper Lig] (22 May 2022)

Amandine Henry (France): FC Barcelona v. Olympique Lyonnais [UEFA Women's Champions League] (21 May 2022)

Théo Hernández (France): AC Milan v. Atalanta Bergamasca Calcio, [Serie A] (15 May 2022)

Alou Kuol (Australia): Iraq U23 v. Australia U23 [AFC U23 Asian Cup] (4 June 2022)

Kylian Mbappé (France): Argentina v. France [FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™] (18 December 2022)

Francisco González Metilli (Argentina): Club Atlético Central Córdoba v. Club Atlético Rosario Central [Primera División] (1 August 2022)

Marcin Oleksy (Poland): Warta Poznań v. Stal Rzeszów [PZU Amp Futbol Ekstraklasa] (6 November 2022)

Salma Paralluelo (Spain): FC Barcelona v. Villarreal CF [Liga F] (2 April 2022)

Dimitri Payet (France): Olympique de Marseille v. PAOK Thessaloniki FC [UEFA Europa Conference League] (7 April 2022)

Richarlison (Brazil): Brazil v. Serbia [FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022] (24 November 2022)

Alessia Russo (England): England v. Sweden [UEFA Women's EURO 2022] (26 July 2022)

### The Best FIFA Fan Award:

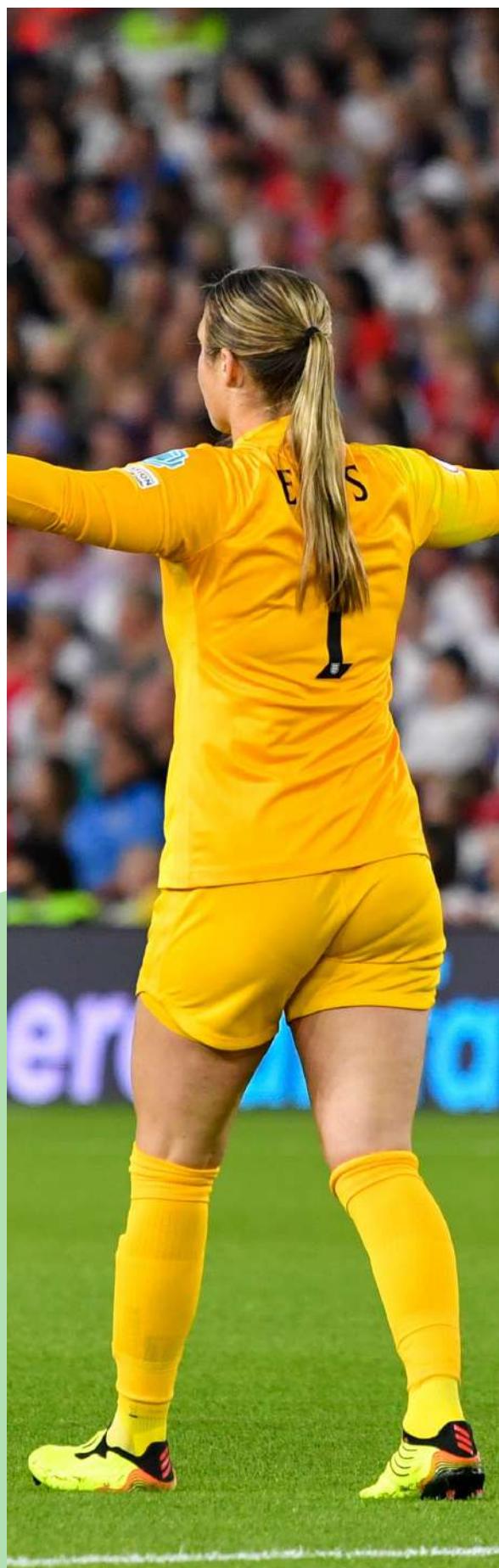
Abdullah Al Salmi (Saudi Arabia): Abdullah journeyed by foot from his hometown of Jeddah to Qatar, hiking across the Saudi Arabian desert, to support his national team at the FIFA World Cup.

Argentinian National Team fans (Argentina): Argentina fans travelled to Qatar in impressive numbers to provide incredible support for their team's ultimately victorious FIFA World Cup campaign, and millions of fans then welcomed their heroes home to Buenos Aires and across the country.

Japanese National Team fans (Japan): Japan fans earned worldwide recognition for their tradition of staying behind to help clean the stadium after World Cup games.

Two expert panels – one for women's football and one for men's football – selected the candidates for the players', goalkeepers' and coaches' categories.

The Best FIFA Football Awards 2022 will be held on 27 February 2023 in Paris, France.



# Flaherty announces retirement



Gilly Flaherty has announced her decision to retire from football.

The 31-year-old defender - who is the Barclays Women's Super League's all-time record appearance holder - joined Liverpool FC Women last July after a storied career, which had seen her collect a major haul of medals with Arsenal and Chelsea.

She then enjoyed a successful spell as captain of West Ham United Women, against whom she would play her last WSL game - number 177 - in December, keeping a clean sheet as LFC Women collected a vital 2-0 win.

Flaherty's final game as a professional came as a second-half substitute in the Continental League Cup against Manchester City Women at Prenton Park three days later.

She had broken Lioness Jill Scott's WSL appearance record the previous month, when she tallied run-out number 176 against Brighton & Hove Albion Women.

The former England international centre-back steps away from her playing career for family reasons, a decision which is fully supported by everyone at Liverpool FC.

Gilly explained in a statement: "I've taken the

decision to retire from professional football.

"It isn't a decision I've taken lightly but one I've reached after speaking with those closest to me.

"Losing my dad just before Christmas has left me heartbroken – for 22 years we shared our love of football and playing-wise I don't want to carry on without him by my side.

"Playing-wise, I know the right decision is for me to call it a day. The time is right for me to be around my family and to be nearest to those closest to me.

"I want to thank Liverpool, especially Beardy and Russ [Fraser] for bringing me to

the club.

"I'd also like to thank the Liverpool fans for supporting me and taking me in.

"Even though it has not been a finished journey I'd like to think the fans saw commitment and dedication to the badge from me and I gave 110 per cent in every game.

"I also wish to thank the players for being there for me throughout my time at the club and I wish them nothing but success for the rest of the season."

A proud Londoner, Flaherty spent a period in the youth set-up at Millwall before joining Arsenal, beginning her senior career in 2006.

In 2011 she scored the first goal in WSL history against Chelsea Women, a club she would later join in 2014, before four years at West Ham, where she served

with distinction as captain.

She has collected four WSL titles, seven Women's FA Cup wins and a UEFA Cup win during her career.

Gilly added: "I'd like to thank all the managers I've played under, from beginning at Millwall, through Arsenal, Chelsea, West Ham and now Liverpool.

"And to all the former teammates I've ever had the pleasure to share a field with and the professionals I've played against on a weekly basis.

"I'm grateful to have been part of an era before we turned pro, where we had to work as well as play football.

"It's been an honour to have been there from the very beginning, to have committed my whole career to English football and to the WSL for the past 11 or

12 years.

"To have witnessed the growth and be a part of that has been truly special.

"Hopefully I've had a positive effect on many of those I've met in the dressing rooms, training pitches and stadiums along this wonderful journey.

"Thank you."

LFC Women manager Matt Beard worked with Flaherty at West Ham before bringing her experience to the Reds as they came back into the WSL at the start of the season.

He said: "I'd just like to offer huge congratulations to Gilly on a wonderful career. She's achieved everything there is to achieve in the domestic game.

"We just wish her every success in all her future endeavours."



# **Games picked for February television schedule**



The Football Association is pleased to confirm that Sky Sports and BBC Sport have made their broadcast selections for February, with five games selected across the month.

The King Power Stadium will host the first match when Leicester City welcome Manchester City, live on Sky Sports and NOW TV on Saturday 4 February at 11.30am.

Two matches will be broadcast the following day, starting with a London derby when Tottenham Hotspur welcome Chelsea to their new home at Breyer Group Stadium. The match will kick-off at 12.30pm on BBC Two and BBC iPlayer.

Later in the day, West Ham United will host Arsenal in East London for another derby at the Chigwell Construction Stadium, live on Sky Sports and NOW TV at 6.45pm.

The following weekend, there are two bumper matches rearranged from the opening day of the season following their postponement.

First, on Saturday 11 February, Arsenal will travel north to face Manchester City at the Academy Stadium, live on Sky Sports and NOW TV at 12.30pm.

The following day, Sky Sports and NOW TV will show Manchester United's match at Tottenham, hosted at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. The match will kick-off at 12pm.

Remaining Barclays Women's Super League matches will be streamed on The FA Player.

Fans overseas should check their local listings for broadcast details. Countries without a broadcast deal will see all matches available on The FA Player.

The Barclays Women's Championship has also seen two games selected for live broadcast on The FA Player in February. Durham will host Sheffield United at Maiden Castle on Sunday 5 February at 12pm, while a week later Coventry United will welcome Blackburn Rovers at Butts Park Arena on Sunday 12 February at 2pm.

## **Barclays Women's Super League**

Saturday, February 4: Leicester City vs Manchester City, 11.30am—Sky Sports

Sunday, February 5: Tottenham Hotspur vs Chelsea, 12.30pm—BBC Two

Sunday, February 5: West Ham vs Arsenal, 6.45pm—Sky Sports

Saturday, February 11: Manchester City vs Arsenal, 12.30pm—Sky Sports

Sunday, February 12: Tottenham Hotspur vs Manchester United, 12pm—Sky Sports

## **Barclays Women's Championship**

Sunday, February 5: Durham vs Sheffield United, 12pm—FA Player

Sunday, February 12: Coventry United vs Blackburn Rovers, 2pm—FA Player



# BARCLAYS WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

	Club	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	Chelsea	10	9	0	1	31	8	23	27
2	Arsenal	9	8	0	1	25	5	20	24
3	Manchester United	9	7	1	1	24	6	18	22
4	Manchester City	9	6	1	2	21	10	11	19
5	West Ham	10	5	0	5	15	18	-3	15
6	Everton	9	4	0	5	10	10	0	12
7	Aston Villa	9	4	0	5	13	19	-6	12
8	Tottenham	9	3	0	6	11	17	-6	9
9	Liverpool	9	2	2	5	11	16	-5	8
10	Reading	10	2	1	7	12	23	-11	7
11	Brighton &	8	2	1	5	11	29	-18	7
12	Leicester City	9	0	0	9	2	25	-23	0

*Table correct as of January 11, 2022*



# BARCLAYS

# CHAMPIONSHIP

# Top club executives in FA summit to thrash out women's football funding



Some of English football's top executives will hold talks on Wednesday to thrash out a new ownership structure for the Barclays Women's Super League (WSL).

Sky News has learnt that bosses including Tottenham Hotspur's Daniel Levy, Baroness Brady, the West Ham United vice-chair, and FA chief executive Mark Bellingham will be among those attending the summit at a London hotel.

The meeting will examine proposals for the WSL and the second-tier Championship to raise external financing and transition to a so-called 'newco' that would own the sport's commercial rights.

Some club executives expect the Premier League to table a formal proposal in the coming months that would see it underwrite a funding package for the WSL in exchange for some degree of control over it.

Richard Masters, the Premier League's chief executives, has said publicly that it is interested in taking control of the WSL.

The WSL board recently proposed re-engaging

investment bankers at Rothschild to evaluate other sources of capital to support the sport's growth.

The WSL is said to be keen to secure as much as £100m to fund the development of the competition and the broader women's game.

Rothschild's prospective reappointment - more than 18 months after it was asked by the WSL and Football Association to explore funding options for the league - comes as attendances at WSL matches reach unprecedented heights.

England's victory in the European Championships last summer has sparked a wave of new interest in the game.

Bridgepoint, a private equity firm which recently approached the England and Wales Cricket Board with a proposal to buy a stake in The Hundred, approached the FA about investing in the WSL in 2020.

Last July, Baroness Sue Campbell, the FA director of women's football, was quoted by The Guardian as saying that it was "working with the [WSL] clubs to create a company

which will be an FA subsidiary and the FA will still be there as a shareholder".

The WSL league table is currently led by Chelsea, ahead of Arsenal and Manchester United, the last of which will be represented at Wednesday's meeting in London by Patrick Stewart, its general counsel.

The FA has been determined to establish greater financial independence for the elite women's league, and in 2021 secured what was described as a "game-changing" multimillion pound broadcast deal with Sky Sports - which shares an owner with Sky News - and the BBC.

A deal to commercialise and promote the WSL more effectively would provide the FA with a

welcome boost to its coffers given the impact of the pandemic.

Barclays has become title sponsor of the WSL and has pledged to inject substantial sums into helping grow the sport at grassroots levels.

The FA also brought in Dawn Airey, a heavy-weight media executive, as chair of the WSL and the Women's Championship.

The interest of buyout firms in taking a stake in the WSL underlines the ongoing interest in elite sports series from private equity investors.

The FA and the clubs contacted by Sky News declined to comment.



# **London City Lionesses announce exciting partnership with Foudys.com**



London City Lionesses are thrilled to announce our partnership with Foudys.com, the world-leading retail space dedicated to women's football.

Increased demand for London City Lionesses merchandise from all corners of the globe has sparked our innovative agreement with the specialist website.

In partnership with Foudys.com, we are excited to reveal that shirt personalisation will soon be available to our supporters, featuring official detailing from the Barclays Women's Championship.

London City merchandise will be available on Foudys.com in the weeks ahead, with a formal availability date to be announced later this month.

"We are delighted to be working with one of the most iconic teams," said Helen Hardy,

the Founder of Foudys.com.

"The Lionesses are constantly breaking boundaries in the women's game and we can't wait to continue being their No. 1 fans!"

Lewis Timms, the Head of Business Compliance and Operations at London City, added: "We're thrilled to be partnering with another leader in women's football."

"Like Foudys.com, we want to create a dynamic identity that serves young women wherever they are in the world and this partnership means our supporters will be able to wear our kits with pride."

On Sunday [8 January], the Lionesses took to the field at Princes Park in salmon pink and grey kits to celebrate the collaboration.

## Pearse signs for City

Gracie Pearse has joined Bristol City on loan from Tottenham Hotspur for the remainder of the 2022-23 season.

The 20-year-old defender lands in the West Country to bolster Lauren Smith's defensive options.

Pearse added: "I'm really excited! I think it's going to be a great experience for me to come to a new club, meet new people and live in a different part of the country."

## Clifford departs Palace

Charley Clifford has left Crystal Palace, the club have confirmed.

Clifford, who joined Palace from Charlton Athletic in the summer of 2021, has joined Ebbsfleet United on a permanent basis.

On her time at Palace, Clifford said: "I'm grateful for the opportunity Palace gave me to play and develop as a player and person.

"The fans have been incredible. We heard them at every game, and they always felt like our extra player, so thank you to them.

"I'll continue to support the club as my new chapter begins."

## Coventry sign Newborough

Coventry United have completed the signing of Charlton Athletic defender Rachel Newborough on a free transfer.

The 26-year-old moves to the Butts Park Arena on a permanent deal with Newborough parting ways with former club Charlton Athletic by mutual consent.

Newborough represented The Addicks on 30 occasions in the Barclays Women's Championship, scoring one goal.

matchdays—following the birthday of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, the games will be dedicated to the young supporter's life and raising funds for NSPCC Birmingham.

At the Women's Barclays Women's Championship match against Sunderland, Sunday 22 January, kick-off 2pm, the players will wear home shirts with the Arthur 6 emblem printed on them, and a selection of these will be signed before being available for auction after the game.

## Southampton Women sign goalkeeper Beth Howard

Southampton have signed 27-year-old goalkeeper Beth Howard from FA Women's National League side Bridgwater United.

Howard kept 15 clean sheets for Bridgwater last season and previously played in the WSL for Yeovil, as well as four years in the US with Rider University where she was Conference Goalkeeper of the Year during her time there.

Howard told [southamptonfc.com](http://southamptonfc.com): "It's unbelievable, really. There aren't any words to explain it."

## Birmingham announce Arthur matchdays

Birmingham City will host its second annual Arthur

## Banaras makes history

Layla Banaras became the first South Asian heritage woman to represent the Club on Sunday afternoon.

The 16-year-old made her First Team debut as a 78th minute substitute in Blues Women's 4-0 victory against Huddersfield Town in the Vitality Women's FA Cup.

Banaras has been at the Club since the age of eight, stepping up to Darren Carter's side for the first time when she made the bench for the trip to Bristol City in November.

## Walker re-joins Birmingham

Birmingham City have announced that Claudia Walker has re-joined the club.

The striker re-joins the Club on a one-and-a-half-year deal, having spent the last 18 months at Barclays Women's Super League side West Ham United.

She made 37 appearances during her time with the Irons, scoring six goals in the process.

The 26-year-old spoke to BluesTV: "I'm delighted to be here. I know a lot of the girls and have seen a lot of the changes. I actually loved the Club when I was here, so to see it progress as well, I just knew I wanted to come in and help them get back to the WSL."

"I felt at home again. I can't wait to get working and improve even more as a player."

## Sibley undergoes successful surgery

Crystal Palace player Isabella Sibley has had surgery on her injured anterior-cruciate ligament. The club can confirm Isabella Sibley has had successful surgery on an injured anterior-cruciate ligament.

She responded well to the operation but is expected to spend the remainder of the season returning to fitness.

Palace Women manager Dean Davenport said: "Issy's doing well after surgery on her ACL and is managing to keep her head up. This type of injury is never easy for a player, but I know she has the right mindset to return stronger when she's ready to."

"She had a really positive start to the season and is a huge part of our squad, and I know every one of her teammates, the staff, and our fans are all behind her."

## Goal of the month winner announced

Birmingham City's Lucy Quinn stunning strike against Sheffield United has won the vote for the Women's Championship October Goal of the Month.

## Robson named 2022 NEFWA Player of the Year

Durham Women's Sarah Robson has been named as the North East Football Writers' Women's Player of the Year for 2022.

After becoming the first player to pen professional terms at Maiden Castle in the summer, Robson has had a fine start to the 2022/23 campaign – impressing at both ends of the field.

On the international stage, Robson – who plays under her maiden name McFadden for Northern Ireland – was part of the GAWA side who won many plaudits at this summer's European Championships.

Robson played all three games as her nation took on some of Europe's elite, including eventual winners England, and was hailed as the 'best centre back at the tournament' by manager Kenny Shields.

# Championship round-up



By Peter Mann

In returning from a brief, winters break, the Barclays Women's Championship sees its title race a tight one going into the second half of the season.

Just two points split the top four sides of London City Lionesses, Bristol City, Charlton Athletic and Southampton, whilst, although a couple of points further back, the next two of Birmingham City and Crystal Palace do have the advantage of a game in hand on those above them.

The race for the title could well get a little tighter before anything significant happens, but, who knows; the next six weeks, up to the end of February, could well prove pivotal in the destination of this seasons silverware.

Bristol City, although second in the table on the restart, have a slight advantage in that they have a game in hand on leaders, London City, who took over top spot when the former lost their unbeaten start to the season when facing Birmingham City.

That 1-0 defeat saw an eight-match, unbeaten start, come crashing to a frustrating end and London, who've enjoyed a nine-match unbeaten run themselves since their opening day defeat to Crystal Palace, lead the way by a solitary point.

As the footballing gods would have it however, the top two, upon the restart of the campaign, actually clash later this month, when Bristol welcome the leaders, a game in which the West Country sides' manager,

Lauren Smith, is looking forward to.

"We've had a really pleasing start to this season," began Lauren.

"Last season, that was all about building, putting down the foundations, so I wasn't really that surprised in the start that we have had.

"We knew that the loss was going to come, eventually, and, the game with Birmingham, it was a tight, frustrating one, and one which we could have also done much more in.

With the rearranged, Vitality Women's FA Cup matches, taking priority on the restart, Bristol don't return to the field until the following weekend when they face bottom of the table, Coventry United, before a midweek trip to Lewes in the

WSL Cup, then the game with London City, on 22 January.

January ends with an FA Cup Fourth Round clash with Oxford United (FA Women's National League South), reward for a 2-0, Third Round victory against Southampton in early December, as top scorer Shania Hayles, and a free-kick from Emily Syme, saw them through.

Continuing, the Bristol boss said: "We have to treat every game the same and we will focus on Coventry first, then Lewes, but yes, we also have an eye on London City, it is in the back of our minds.

"We do need to have two, good games (against Coventry and Lewes) to take into the clash with London; as for the FA Cup, there's a greater incentive this season, financially, and that's great for the clubs.

"I know Liam (Gilbert) and we're looking forward to playing Oxford.

"We do want to progress in the FA Cup as it also gives us games for rhythm, momentum, as we push forward.

"But, they'll also be looking for a win, a scalp, whilst pushing for promotion themselves."

Both Bristol, and leaders London City, have a player amongst the leading scorers thus far, Shania Hayles (Bristol) heading the chart with seven goals to her





to her name whilst Sarah Ewens (London), alongside Saffron Jordan (Blackburn) and Emily Scarr (Sunderland), have six goals each.

Shania, alongside the rest of Lauren Smith's squad, have been the shining lights this season, the 23-year-old having arrived from Aston Villa in the summer – fun fact about Hayles, her first goals in the top flight, for Villa, came in December 2020, against Bristol City.

"She's dangerous in front of goal, and has been a great addition to the squad," admits Lauren.

"But, we've got a really great squad here and pushed through some rather tough moments this season."

"We do hope that we get what we're trying to achieve this season though."

At leaders London City, Melissa Phillips' side have won six and drawn three of their last nine in the league, to sneak ahead in the title race.

Their return to action this month sees a rearranged, FA Cup Third Round match, when they hosted Portsmouth, before travelling to sixth place Palace, and ending the month with 'that,' mouth-watering clash with Bristol City.

Just a point behind second place Bristol is that of Charlton, and Southampton, both on nineteen from ten games, Karen Hills's Addicks un-

beaten in their last four (all wins) and will be hopeful of victory against the MK Dons in the FA Cup on 8 January, before a local derby against Palace in the WSL Cup, a trip to Blackburn, and hosting Lewes, in the league, in what is a rather busy month.

With the Addicks, 29-year-old midfielder Lois Roche, has signed a new contract at the club keeping her there until January 2024, she having signed from Italian side, CF Fiorentina, in the summer of 2021.

Roche told the Addicks website: "I am really happy and grateful to be signing a new deal with the club, obviously coming off the back of a long-term injury I am just really looking forward to getting back on the pitch with the girls and having a strong end to the season.

"There are a few of us at the club who have done their ACL... I kind of see it as a positive as well it was a good challenge.

"I feel like it has gone relatively quite smoothly and I feel better, stronger and fitter from it so I am just raring to go now."

Marianne Spacey-Cale's Saints meanwhile were erratic, and no doubt relieved, to take a breather, having not won since Ebbsfleet in the FA Cup back in mid-November, since then, they've drawn two and lost four.

Finding themselves just two points off the top shows how

tight proceedings are this campaign and they will host Lewes later this month, before finishing with a trip north, to Durham, the following week.

Just five points separate the next five sides in the table upon the return with Birmingham (16) leading the way, followed by Palace (15), Lewes (13), Blackburn (12) and Durham (11); of those sides, Birmingham and Blackburn have north-east side, second-bottom Sunderland, causing bother either side of the festivities.

Although not necessarily party-poopers, per se, Melanie Reay's Black Cats did defeat Birmingham in the WSL Cup, and travel to Darren Carter's Birmingham at the end of the month, after their hosts have played Huddersfield (FA Cup) and Sheffield United that is.

As for eighth place Blackburn, their only win in their last six was at home to Sunderland, back in November and Gemma Donnelly's side sees them face the Black Cats again, twice in the FA Cup and the WSL Cup, alongside league matches with Charlton, and Sheffield United.

Palace are yet to draw a game in what has been a see-saw campaign thus far and Dean Davenport's Eagles will be hoping their cup matches, Watford (FA Cup) and Charlton (WSL Cup) affords positive returns that helps push them forward as they follow those with a local

derby, against current table-toppers, London, then a trip to bottom club Coventry to round off January.

Having recently suffered an anterior-cruciate ligament injury Palace's Isabella Sibley, who'll miss the remainder of the season, has undergone successful surgery, responding well, manager, Darren Carter, told the Palace website: "Issy's doing well after surgery on her ACL and is managing to keep her head up.

"This type of injury is never easy for a player, but I know she has the right mindset to return stronger when she's ready to.

"She had a really positive start to the season and is a huge part of our squad, and I know every one of her teammates, the staff, and our fans are all behind her."

Meanwhile, it has also been announced that Palace's Selhurst Park will be the venue for this year's League Cup final, to be held on Sunday 5 March; it'll be the fourth time they've hosted the final, and it will be screened live on the BBC.

Lewes on the other-hand, they finished 2022 with defeat, against Palace, it putting paid to a four-match winning streak, in all competitions, Scott Booth's side returning with the FA Cup match against London Bees, followed by games with Bristol, Southampton, and Charlton, all of whom are above them in the table.

Lee Sanders' Durham side although in the bottom four, currently have a four-point advantage on two of the three sides directly beneath them in the table and, although there's been highlights, league form has suffered because of WSL Cup nights.

A win away to Everton (WSL Cup) and a draw with high-flying Bristol however, affords the north-east side hope for the second half of the season, wins against Peterborough United, in the FA Cup, and against Sunderland in the River Wear derby, will go a long way to help with that, before finishing the month at home to fourth-place Southampton.

As for the bottom three, Sheffield United and Sunderland both on seven points apiece, they've picked up just four victories and two draws, in the league, between them, in twenty-nine outings, the Blades, Lee Turner now leading the way, are on an ten-match winless streak (two draws and eight defeats) dating back to mid-September, whilst Sunderland's win in their last match, a 5-0 success at Coventry, broke a five-match winless streak there.

With Turner at the helm of the lowly Blades, he, following the WSL Cup defeat to Manchester United, looked back at his spell in charge and told their website: "I feel like we needed the challenge of these games.

"We knew it was going to be tough, so we used it as an opportunity to learn and develop in certain areas and I think we've made some strides in that, but I think we need to make more and hopefully we'll do that in the new year.

"We've used the games well, learned a lot, the players are fighting for their shirts and they're making selection difficult because they're performing against some top, top sides."

Their focus is, first-and-foremost, on their rearranged FA Cup tie, with Nottingham Forest; whilst at Sunderland, they've been undergoing wholesale changes behind the scenes, and that's an understatement.

Some of the changes include assistant manager, Steph Libbey, being made full-time, Jack Kehoe becomes their physical performance coach, Cameron Lane becomes a contracted Women's and Academy Sports Therapist, Lorna Crawford is their new nutritionist intern and will be supported by club

psychologist, Tom Lishman, among others.

Lee Burch's Coventry meanwhile, they'll be hoping their second half to the season is even just slightly better than the first, although they do have an FA Cup Fourth Round match to look forward to following their mid-December, 4-2 win, at home to Stockport County.

Mary McAteer's brace helped the Championship's bottom club on their way to a rare victory, alongside goals from Simran Jhamat and Ebony Wiseman, put them through and they'll now host Hashtag United in the next round, at the end of the month.

Going into that, huge, FA Cup match, Burch's struggling side will hope, need, to get something from their two league outings, as they travel to high-flying Bristol, before hosting mid-table Palace knowing the need to pick up points, and not be cut-off completely at the foot of the table, is paramount.

And, alongside their FA Cup success, other,

heart-warming news, to emerge from the Championship's bottom club during the festive season was the announcement of a new, community awards scheme through the club.

Inaugural recipients of the new, community, 'Coventry Legend' awards, was esteemed journalist and icon of female empowerment, Trish Adudu, and the duo of Hattie and Alice Mogan, in recognition of their outstanding work in the city of Coventry.

With community support, and spirit, an integral part of the foundations of Coventry United Women, club chairman, Lewis Taylor, told the club website that: "During difficult times, we see many heroic people step up and make a difference.

"That is what Hattie and Alice did for us.

"Furthermore, Trish is a beacon of journalism and a symbol of women empowerment.

"Now it's our turn to honor them and we are delighted to announce them as the first recipients of our new Coventry Legend awards."





# BARCLAYS WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

	Club	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1	London City Lionesses	10	6	3	1	20	7	13	21
2	Bristol City	9	6	2	1	14	4	10	20
3	Charlton	10	6	1	3	19	14	5	19
4	Southampton	10	5	4	1	13	8	5	19
5	Birmingham City	9	5	1	3	14	10	4	16
6	Crystal Palace	9	5	0	4	11	10	1	15
7	Lewes	9	3	4	2	9	8	1	13
8	Blackburn Rovers	10	3	3	4	10	15	-5	12
9	Durham	9	3	2	4	13	13	0	11
10	Sheffield United	9	2	1	6	14	12	2	7
11	Sunderland	10	2	1	7	10	14	-4	7
12	Coventry United	10	0	0	10	5	37	-32	0

*Table correct as of January 12, 2022*



# THE FA NATIONAL LEAGUE

# **FA announce date and venue for Women's Championship play-off final**



The FA Women's National League (WNL) has announced the dates and venues for this season's competition cup finals and the Championship Play-Off final.

The play-off final is the biggest event in the league's calendar, with the WNL Northern and Southern Premier Division champions forced to battle it out for the overall National League title and a spot in the Barclays Women's Championship.

This season's clash will take place at Stadium: MK on Saturday, May 20.

The FA has also confirmed the WNL Plate Final will take place on Sunday, March 26 at ARMCO Arena, home of Solihull Moors Football Club, while The FA WNL Cup Final will take place on Sunday, April 23 at Pirelli Stadium,

home of Burton Albion Football Club.

Reflecting on the choice of venues for this season's finals, Carol West, Chair of The FA Women's National League, said: "The women's game has grown to new heights this year and we're truly seeing a new era for women's football.

"That's why we are delighted to have the backing of these clubs and their stadiums, providing our competition finals with the fitting setting they deserve for such big occasions.

"It's only with their support and the incredible football our clubs put on display that we can continue to ensure the advancements at the very top of the women's game are filtered down the pyramid too."

# Fulham vs Wimbledon



In an unprecedented period where football stadiums in England lay vacant as their usual occupants take a break for the FIFA World Cup, it was an obvious decision to welcome the women's teams into them. So obvious, in fact, that it should be done more often.

I ventured to Craven Cottage on a bitter Sunday afternoon in November to catch the Fulham women take on Wimbledon in an Amateur Football Alliance County Cups Capital Women's Cup (Capital Cup tie) A huge day for Fulham who have not graced the fields of Putney since their rebrand in 2014.

Their usual stomping ground of Motspur Park in New Malden lay silent for one weekend only, with 3181 supporters taking the leafy walk along the riverside to fill the Johnny Haynes Stand.

It was heart-warming to see so many young children watching on in excitement and feeling inspired to one day be out on that pitch themselves.

The atmosphere was captivating, and you would swear the ground was full to capacity.

Women's football continues to rise in the UK due to several factors. The European Championship win last July, for example, sparked a whole new outlook on the women's game.

Names like Beth Meade and Lucy Bronze are now staples in households across the country.

Former Manchester City midfielder Jill Scott has also played a huge part recently in acquiring a new audience for women's football. During her time on ITV's I'm A

Celebrity, which she eventually won, Jill spoke openly about women's football in England. Her honest reflection on her youth as a female footballer has ignited conversations about bringing more attention to the women's game.

Although this particular fixture wasn't as glamourous as a Super League tie at the Emirates, where attendance records continue to be broken, it was still joyous to see a large crowd gather to witness teams from tier four and five of the women's division.

On the pitch, it was Ellie Dorey who opened the scoring for Wimbledon inside four minutes and she doubled their advantage just before half-time with a second cool finish to secure a comfortable lead.

The Whites managed to grab a consolation goal when Georgia Heasman netted past Faye Baker between the posts, but it was Ashlee Hincks who grabbed the third and final goal for the visitors to end the day with a 3-1 win and ticket into the next round of the cup.

Despite this result, the Fulham women's team can take pride in their achievement of playing at Craven Cottage and will hope to return in the near future. Wimbledon play their home games at Plough Lane, sharing with the men's team, and with the growth in recognition for women's football – it should soon become a more standard process, where both men and women's teams alternate the use of one stadium.

The Whites will continue their admirable run in the league as they fight with the Millwall Lionesses for the top spot, while Wimbledon sit third in the tier above.

# Sweetman-Kirk revealed as cost of living ambassador



Star striker and football pundit, Courtney Sweetman-Kirk, is joining forces with England and Premier League legend, David James MBE, as Utilita's newest cost-of-living champion.

As an official Utilita ambassador, Courtney will catapult Utilita's Football Rebooted movement even further, which aims to get a million pairs of good quality football boots onto the feet of those who need them and away from landfill.

Courtney's first role as a representative will be attending the Girls Cup Area Final in Walsall on Monday 16 January. Schools from the Midlands and the South will be competing on behalf of their local EFL club, including Birmingham City and Watford, to progress to the next round - and one step closer to playing at Wembley.

Courtney will also play an integral role in delivering Utilita's Energy High 5 movement, which helps households to save hundreds on their energy bills.

Courtney Sweetman-Kirk said:

"I've worked with Utilita on a few occasions before and seen the difference they are making across football and the energy industry.

"It is an honour to be named as an ambassador and with the cost of living crisis continuing, there's no better time to promote and support the Football Rebooted initiative and the High 5 campaign.

"I'm eager to kick things off with the Utilita team, working alongside some incredible people, including goalkeeping legend David James.

"I have no doubt we can inspire even more youngsters to try out the Beautiful Game, as well as help families significantly slash their

energy bills.

"Roll on the Girls Cup Area Final on Monday – I can't wait to meet our future Lionesses!"

David James MBE has been a Utilita ambassador since 2019 when he launched the 'Switch Before Pitch' campaign, which has helped thousands of grassroots clubs cut their energy usage and buy kit instead – he comments:

"Utilita is making serious progress in helping football fans think and act differently.

"Instead of a big budget advertising campaign, Utilita is enlisting players to co-create campaigns and advice that are simple, relatable, practical, but most importantly, impactful.

"I'm really excited about Courtney joining Utilita's net zero journey – her involvement will really boost the impact we can have across the girls' and women's game."

Former Liverpool and Everton forward Courtney will also be recognised for her work as a pundit, reporter and co-commentator across networks

including ITV, Sky Sports, DAZN and Talksport.

Jem Maidment, Chief Marketing Officer at Utilita, said:

"We had our targets set on just one person to become our new ambassador – and thankfully she accepted.

"I've been blown away by Courtney's passion and genuine desire when we have worked together in the past, which is why I'm so delighted to have her on side.

"Here's to another year of making a difference in both the energy sector and the footballing world."

## **Bradford confirmed as Claret women's assistant**

Burnley FC Women are pleased to confirm the addition of Jay Bradford as Assistant Coach.

Bradford, who also takes on the role of Women's U23s lead, is highly experienced having previously spent over seven years with Coventry United Ladies, six of those as manager.

In charge for over 150 matches at Coventry, Bradford oversaw two county cup wins alongside a Premier Division Plate success, and a promotion into the Women's Championship.

Now, upon officially joining the Club, she said: "I'm super happy to be joining Burnley, a Club with a highly talented women's squad and one that has big ambitions both on & off the pitch.

"The girls have all been really welcoming in my time here so far, and have been really receptive of everything we've put across to them as staff.

"I'm now looking forward to continuing and contributing to the great work that's being done here, both at senior level and the U23s too which I'll be heading up."

## **Garrad departs Watford**

On-loan Watford defender Grace Garrad has moved to Norwegian side Stabæk Fotball.

The 19-year-old spent the first half of the 2022-23 campaign Grosvenor Vale with the Hornets, making 13 appearances and scoring three goals from the backline, including a Goal of the Month-winning strike against AFC Wimbledon in November.

## **Smith becomes first team player**

Jess Smith has become the second ever player to graduate from the development side into the first team at Portsmouth.

She follows in the footsteps of Freya Jones, who left the Blues in the summer to complete a scholarship in America.

The 16-year-old has been around the senior fold since December, but this move will mean that she will now train and be involved with the side on a consistent basis.

Smith said: "I'm extremely grateful to have this opportunity. This has always been the next goal, so to have made the step already is really pleasing.

"It's been really good to be around the girls, so to be able to do this on a consistent basis provides me with the opportunity to keep learning, on and off the pitch."

## **Owens joins Newcastle**

Bianca Owens has signed for Newcastle United.

Owens, formerly of fellow FA Women's National League Division One North side Norton & Stockton Ancients Ladies, has been in prolific goalscoring form so far this term, netting eight goals.

"It's very exciting," the former Middlesbrough Women player told nufc.co.uk. "Everybody can see the direction the club wants to go in and I'm just happy to have the chance to be a part of it.

"The ambition is what drew me to the club. After chatting with staff and understanding the direction the club is heading, I knew I wanted to be here.

"Promotion definitely is the target," she said. "It's a really tough league, but Newcastle have been consistently around the top of the table for two seasons now, and hopefully I can add to it."

# FANWNL

## 2022/23 Tables

### Northern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts	
1	Wolverhampton Wanderers	11	8	1	2	19	25
2	Nottingham Forest	9	7	1	1	20	22
3	Burnley	10	6	4	0	14	22
4	Huddersfield Town	9	5	2	2	6	17
5	Derby County	10	4	2	4	6	14
6	AFC Fylde	11	3	5	3	-1	14
7	Stoke City	10	3	3	4	-7	12
8	Liverpool Feds	10	2	2	3	-3	11
9	Boldmere St. Michaels	10	3	3	6	-9	10
10	West Bromwich Albion	10	2	2	5	-9	9
11	Brighouse Town	11	1	1	5	-5	8
12	Loughborough Lightning	11	0	0	9	-27	2

### Southern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts	
1	Oxford United	11	8	3	0	19	27
2	Watford	9	6	1	2	18	19
3	Portsmouth	10	6	1	3	13	19
4	Ipswich Town	9	6	1	2	12	19
5	Billericay Town	11	6	1	4	5	19
6	Cheltenham Town	9	4	1	4	-8	13
7	Bridgwater United	11	3	3	5	-3	12
8	Gillingham	10	3	2	5	-4	11
9	Milton Keynes Dons	8	3	1	4	-1	10
10	London Bees	9	3	1	5	-9	10
11	Plymouth Argyle	10	2	0	8	-16	6
12	Crawley Wasps	11	0	3	8	-26	3

Tables correct as of January 12, 2022



The FA Women's National League

# FANWNL

## 2022/23 Tables

### Division One North

		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Durham Cestria	11	8	2	1	16	26
2	Newcastle United	11	8	1	2	11	19
3	Barnsley	9	6	1	2	7	19
4	Stockport County	12	5	3	4	2	18
5	Middlesborough	12	6	0	6	-3	18
6	Leeds United	9	5	1	3	8	16
7	Hull City	10	4	2	4	5	14
8	Norton & Stockton Ancients	12	3	4	5	-3	13
9	York City	12	3	2	7	-7	11
10	Chorley	10	3	2	5	-10	11
11	Merseyrail	12	1	4	7	-24	7
12	Bradford City	10	2	0	8	-12	6

### Division One Midlands

		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Stourbridge	10	9	0	1	37	27
2	Lincoln City	12	6	1	5	11	19
3	Doncaster Rovers Belles	8	6	0	2	12	18
4	Sporting Khalsa	9	5	1	3	7	16
5	Leafield Athletic	12	4	4	4	3	16
6	Solihull Moors	7	4	2	1	13	14
7	Peterborough United	8	3	2	3	3	11
8	Wem Town	10	3	1	6	-8	10
9	Sheffield	7	3	0	4	-2	9
10	Leek Town	11	2	3	6	-12	9
11	Northampton Town	8	2	2	4	2	8
12	Long Eaton United	10	1	0	9	-66	3

Tables correct as of January 12, 2022



TheFA Women's  
National League

# FANWNL

## 2022/23 Tables

### Division One South East

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Hashtag United	9	8	1	0	55	25
2 Norwich City	7	5	1	1	13	16
3 AFC Wimbledon	7	5	1	1	12	16
4 Actonians	8	4	1	3	21	13
5 Ashford Town (Middlesex)	9	4	1	4	12	13
6 London Seaward	7	4	1	2	0	13
7 Cambridge United	9	3	2	4	11	11
8 Queens Park Rangers	8	3	2	3	6	11
9 Chesham United	8	3	0	5	-16	9
10 Cambridge City	9	1	0	8	-14	3
11 Hounslow	9	0	0	9	-100	0
X Wymondham Town	X	X	X	X	X	X

### Division One South West

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Cardiff City	9	9	0	0	43	27
2 Exeter City	10	8	1	1	22	25
3 AFC Bournemouth	11	7	1	3	23	22
4 Southampton Women	8	5	0	3	3	15
5 Moneyfields	8	4	2	2	6	14
6 Selsey	8	4	0	4	5	12
7 Swindon Town	6	4	0	2	3	12
8 Portishead Town	8	3	0	5	-7	9
9 Keynsham Town	9	3	0	6	-23	9
10 Larkhall Athletic	11	2	0	9	-18	6
11 Maidenhead United	8	1	0	7	-23	3
12 AFC St Austell	10	1	0	9	-34	3

Tables correct as of December 12, 2022



The FA Women's National League



# GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

# Frinton youngsters net World Cup funding boost from UK Power Networks



Youngsters at a Tendring football club have netted a timely funding boost during the World Cup from a supportive local power company.

Frinton & Walton Youth FC under-16s girls team will benefit from a £250 Team Sport award by UK Power Networks, who distribute electricity across the East of England.

The money will go towards supporting community sport by buying new training gear and equipment and takes to £1,250 the company has donated to this squad over the past five years. Such donations are becoming increasingly helpful to local sports club during the 'cost of living' crisis.

Employee Richard Procter, a project manager in Colchester, whose daughter Lauren plays for the team while he volunteers as an assistant referee during games, applied for the award.

Richard said: "I have been running the line for the team for a few years now and I really enjoy it. I get the best view of the games and it is also good exercise."

"Ours is one of around 20 boys' and girls' teams at the club ranging in age from U7s to U16s and a men's team. They also run 'Mini Kickers', 'Just Play' sessions for ladies and are a 'Weetabix Wildcats' centre for girls."

"The club has been awarded 'FA Charter Standard Club' status by the FA, for providing a high-quality football experience, for being well run and sustainable and for making child

protection, quality coaching and safety, paramount.

"This is the fifth consecutive year that UK Power Networks has supported the team with this award which is absolutely fantastic, and the money this time was used to purchase additional kits, training wear and training equipment for some new players that have joined.

"We have a very talented squad, with several players now also progressing well in development pathways at Ipswich Town, AFC Sudbury, and Colchester Utd. We finished second in both the league and the Cup last season.

The girls' under-16 team's manager Ben Pratt said: "The funding we have received from our sponsors over the seasons has been invaluable and has enabled us to maintain the right environment for the girls' development."

"Everyone at the club is extremely grateful for the continued support from UK Power Networks."

The Team Sport Award scheme encourages UK Power Networks staff to volunteer in the community and is aimed at promoting healthy living, teamwork and developing sporting opportunities.

Hundreds of community and sports groups have benefited from grants since the scheme was set up. During 2021, 77 teams benefitted to a combined sum of £19,250.

# **UK-wide funding confirmed to 2025 for the multi-sport grassroots facilities programme**



As part of its ongoing commitment to delivering the grassroots facilities every community needs and levelling up access to high quality pitches, up to a further £168 million will be invested into facilities in England by 2025 - on top of a continued £18m annual commitment. It will be delivered by the Football Foundation - a partnership between the Premier League, The FA, and DCMS - to improve and upgrade pitches and facilities across the country.

In addition, a further £18.1 million will be invested in Scotland, £12.6 million in Wales and £6.29 million in Northern Ireland respectively by 2025. The UK Government's direct investment into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be delivered in partnership with the Scottish Football Association, the

Football Association of Wales and the Irish Football Association.

This funding will deliver improvements to hundreds of sites, with at least half of the investment going directly to the most deprived areas. It builds on the successful delivery of over £43 million across the UK last year.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each FA will invite and select projects across a range of facility types - from the creation or upgrade of changing rooms, grass pitches and 3G football turf pitches and pavilions, to floodlights, fencing and improved disabled access.

Grassroots football clubs, local authorities and schools with a relevant project that could benefit from this investment in the next two financial years are encouraged to contact their

relevant delivery partner: the Football Foundation in England; and the relevant Football Association in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Projects in all four home nations will continue to be selected for their ability to deliver improved facilities in deprived areas, support multi-sport use and increase participation among currently underrepresented groups, including women, girls and those with a disability. To ensure that as many people as possible from underrepresented groups are able to access quality sports facilities, 40 percent of the investment will fund sites that support regular use of a sport other than football.

Projects benefiting from investment in 2022/23 will be confirmed shortly.

# Ammo's Antics

Hi Ammo here,

As you may know, I recently moved from Birmingham City RTC to Bristol City RTC. I had been training with the U16s but now I've been permanently moved up into the U21 Academy squad. I've played two game so far. Away to West Ham and away to Arsenal.

Although the results weren't exactly what we hoped for I feel like the additional challenge of playing a team of girls 4 or 5 years older than me is great for my development. I've been the youngest player on the pitch both times and I'm pretty happy with my performances and that I was able to compete at that level.

I'm going to work hard so that I can continue to improve and become more confident in academy games. I've been playing in a deeper holding midfield role recently so I've been watching video clips of players like Roy Keane, Ngolo Kante and Sergio Busquets to get some tips.

So overall things are going really well for me at Bristol City, when I turn 16 in April I hope I will get the chance to train with the first team. Things can progress quickly from that point if you work hard enough.

I also represent Wales at U17 level and there are a couple of training camps coming up that I'm hoping to be picked for. A week long camp in Portugal with friendlies against Portugal, Serbia and Czech Republic and then another week

for the U17s Euros qualifiers with games against Netherlands, Finland and Sweden.

I'll let you know how we get on.

Soon I will go into my final mock GCSE exams so balancing my football commitments and revising for my school exams will soon become a real challenge. I think it's important to continue to focus on studies alongside playing football but sometimes it doesn't feel like there's enough days in the week.

But I'm happy to say, I'm still firmly on the road to becoming a professional footballer. The next two years will decide if I can make my dream a reality.

Hard work will beat talent if talent doesn't work hard.

The hard work continues

Ammo



## **Leighton Woodside FC form two new teams**

Leighton Woodside FC (LWFC) has started an U14s girls side as well as an adult ladies group, with "an incredible amount of interest" and appetite in the community. The club hopes to inspire positive change, and has pledged to create a sustainable future for women's and girls' football in the town.

Jamie Thorpe, vice chairman at LWFC, said: "We are thrilled with the interest and progression of our ladies football. The infrastructure in place and the commitment of the volunteers to running this community club is phenomenal. Females remain under-represented in sport – both on and off the field."

Raising awareness of the important roles females play in sport will help to change attitudes and beliefs across communities. Leighton Woodside is seeking to increase positive attitudes towards gender equality in our game, increase participation levels of women and girls, and communicate the benefits of gender equality for all."

Leighton Woodside FC is a "well-respected and well-established grassroots football club", founded in 1975, and has grown significantly in recent years with 18 teams now in place. The Leighton Woodside Ladies train on a Thursday evening from 9pm to 10pm on the 3G pitch at Cedars school.

## **Tributes pour in for Newark Town coach**

People have been paying their respect at matches and online following the sudden death of Newark Town Football Club coach, Mark Nesbitt.

Mark, 42, who was the club girl's section coach was a popular figure at Newark Town.

His under-14 girls' team won 16-1 against Gedling Southbank to honour and make their coach proud. Black armbands with '4Mark' written on them were worn by players.

Sarah Robinson, the club's vice-chairman said on behalf of the club: "The outpouring of love, admiration and thanks for everything Mark did for grassroots football had been staggering.

"We expected the news of Mark's passing to create shockwaves around the local area as well as the wider community, but the sheer amount of messages and comments received has surpassed anything we have seen before.

"He wasn't just a football coach, he was an ambassador for growth, progress and development of junior and youth football, latterly focusing on girls football and our players are richer for having had that exposure to his knowledge, experience, vision and drive."

[Newark Advertiser]

## **Redditch United awarded grant**



Redditch United have been awarded a grant from the Barclays Community Football Fund delivered in partnership with Sported.

The club currently engage with more than 500 children and young people aged six to 18-years-old every week.

The funding provided by the grant will allow the club enhance their work within all strands of their existing engagement pathways and can continue their work within the local community.

Redditch United's Community Officer, Balvinder Shekhon, said: "We are very pleased to be working in partnership with Barclays and Sported.

"This funding will support us to enhance and evolve our community provision for girls football. We are excited and looking forward to working alongside our key partners to ensure we increase awareness and engage all communities within Redditch."

## **Redditch United awarded grant**

A community football club in Dacorum has been named as one of the winners of England Football Grassroots Football Awards for 2022.

On December 30, Hertfordshire Football Association (FA) revealed that Berkhamsted Raiders Community Football Club was named as Hertfordshire FA Grassroots Club of the Year for 2022.

Chair of trustees at Berkhamsted Raiders, Chris Armond, said: "I'm absolutely delighted with this news, it's a genuine honour for the club to be recognised in this way. The club has grown its membership to over 1,300 and has continued to expand its girls' football section with more than 350 players this season."

[Hemel Today]



# CUP COMPETITIONS

# The 2022/23 Vitality FA Cup so far...



**By Paul Donegan**

The third round of the FA Cup took place over three weekends due to frozen pitches and snow. The round was due to take place on Sunday 11th December 2022 but ties were also played on the 18th December and 8th January 2023. The Women's Championship sides entered in this round, and there were 20 ties. The winners received £10,000 in prize money whilst the losing side got £2,500. Here are some of the stories from the round.

Ellie Dorey scored the only goal as tier 4 AFC Wimbledon beat Gillingham, who play in the level above, 1-0 at Plough Lane. They will play Charlton Athletic at home in the next round after the Addicks beat Milton Keynes Dons 3-1. Melissa Johnson gave Charlton the lead before Molly Coupar equalised for MK Dons. Charlton scored twice during the six minutes of stoppage time at the end of the second half with Elisha N'Dow and Johnson getting the goals that see the Championship side progress.

FA Women's National League Division One side Leeds United were another team who won against a higher level club. Their 3-1 win over tier 3 Stoke City sees them rewarded with a trip to Meadow Park in the fourth round to play 14 times winners Arsenal. Danielle Whitham got two and Amy Woodruff scored the third for Leeds.

Bournemouth Sports were the only tier 5 side left in the cup in the third round but they lost 5-0 away to tier 4 Cardiff City. The scorers for Cardiff were Kerry Bartlett and Cori Williams (who both scored two each) and Ruby Scahill got the other. Cardiff will face Burnley in the next round after they beat Norwich City 1-0. Millie Ravening scored the only goal of the game.

Ipswich Town were the biggest winners of the round as they beat Portishead Town 7-0. They will take on Lewes in the fourth round who also had a big win as they beat London Bees 5-0.

Harley Bennett scored the only goal as London City Lionesses beat Portsmouth 1-0 to set up a tie away to Tottenham Hotspur in the fourth round. Sheffield United's 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest also sees them rewarded with a trip to take on WSL opposition in the next round when they will play Manchester City. Courtney Sweetman-Kirk, Bex Rayner and Mia Enderby scored the goals for the Blades. Birmingham City's 4-0 victory over Huddersfield Town will see them travel to Everton. Amongst the scorers for Birmingham were Lucy Quinn, Jamie Finn and Jade Pennock.

Goals from Beth Merrick (2), Anna Morphet, Tammi George and Maz Gauntlett saw Wolverhampton Wanderers win 5-1 away at Newcastle United. They are rewarded with a home tie against WSL side West Ham United. Another West Midlands side that will face WSL opposition in the fourth round are West Bromwich Albion who overcame Liverpool Feds 3-2. They will now play Brighton & Hove Albion at home.

In an all-Championship tie, Bristol City beat Southampton 2-0. Shania Hayles and Emily Syme scored the goals. The Robins will play Oxford United at home in the next round after The U's beat Plymouth Argyle 3-0. A Neve Herron goal saw Sunderland beat Blackburn 1-0 in another all-Championship tie to set up a meeting with Manchester United in the fourth round.

After the original tie was called off 15 minutes before the kick-off time because of the falling snow, Crystal Palace beat Watford 5-1 in the rearranged game. Hollie Olding, Annabel Blanchard (2), Polly Doran and Elise Hughes scored the goals for the Eagles. They travel to fellow Championship side Durham in the fourth round. Durham beat Peterborough United 1-0 thanks to a goal from Rio Hardy.

FA Women's National League Premier side AFC Fylde will take on Aston Villa in the fourth round. AFC Fylde beat Solihull Moors 5-2 to set up this tie. Hashtag United progressed with a 3-0 win over fellow tier 4 side Actonians. Their reward is a trip to take on Championship side Coventry United who beat Stockport County 4-2.

<b>Third Round results</b>	Bromwich Albion	Actonians
Coventry United 4 v 2 Stockport County	Sheffield United 3 v 0 Nottingham Forest	Crystal Palace 5 v 1 Watford
Burnley 1 v 0 Norwich City	Newcastle United 1 v 5 Wolverhampton Wanderers	Lewes 5 v 0 London Bees
Peterborough United 0 v 1 Durham	Solihull Moors 2 v 5 AFC Fylde	Ipswich Town 7 v 0 Portishead Town
Leeds United 3 v 1 Stoke City	Cardiff City 5 v 0 Bournemouth Sports	London City Lionesses 1 v 0 Portsmouth
Birmingham City 4 v 0 Huddersfield Town	Bristol City 2 v 0 Southampton	Charlton Athletic 3 v 1 Milton Keynes Dons
Blackburn Rovers 0 v 1 Sunderland	AFC Wimbledon 1 v 0 Gillingham	Oxford United 3 v 0 Plymouth Argyle
Liverpool Feds 2 v 3 West	Hashtag United 3 v 0	

The WSL sides enter the cup in the fourth round and these ties are due to be played on Sunday 29th January (check FA website/clubs social media for kick-off times and locations).

<b>Fourth round draw</b>	Everton v Birmingham City	Durham v Crystal Palace
Arsenal v Leeds United	Ipswich Town v Lewes	Tottenham Hotspur v London City Lionesses
Aston Villa v AFC Fylde	Leicester City v Reading	AFC Wimbledon v Charlton Athletic
Bristol City v Oxford United	West Bromwich Albion v Brighton & Hove Albion	Wolverhampton Wanderers v West Ham United
Burnley v Cardiff City	Manchester City v Sheffield United	
Chelsea v Liverpool	Sunderland v Manchester United	
Coventry United v Hashtag United		





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WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY

HC

8

# Chelsea in control against Real Madrid



## By Paul Donegan

Vivianne Miedema scored the only goal as Arsenal beat Juventus 1-0 in the UEFA Women's Champions League at the Emirates Stadium.

Jonas Eidevall brought Leah Williamson back into the starting eleven for Arsenal in place of Jen Beattie for her first start since the end of September as she continues her recovery from injury. This was the only change from Saturday's 1-0 league win over Everton.

Joe Montemurro made one change for Juventus from the side that had drawn 1-1 with Arsenal two weeks ago in Turin with Linda Sembrant coming in for Martina Rosucci. Going into the match, the Italian side were second in the group, two points behind the Gunners.

Juventus had the first chances of the match in the 5th minute when Manuela Zinsberger saved with her legs to stop a low Arianna Caruso shot, then Cristiana Girelli put the rebound wide.

In the eighth minute, Steph Catley's dangerous cross for Arsenal went beyond everyone in the penalty area. Two minutes later, Juventus' goalkeeper Pauline Peyraud-Magnin came out to block Caitlin Foord after she had been played through. The home side did have the ball in the net in the 12th minute but Stina Blackstenius' effort was ruled out for

offside.

Arsenal did take the lead in the 16th minute when Blackstenius crossed in from the right hand side and Miedema finished on the half volley from about 6-yards out into the top corner of the net. This was Dutch forwards 20th Champions League goal for the Gunners, and her third goal in the last three games.

The home side continued to have chances throughout the rest of the first half. Foord saw a shot tipped wide by Peyraud-Magnin in the 23rd minute. Blackstenius shot over in the 31st minute, then Lisa Boattin got back to block the Swedish international after she was played through in the 39th minute. Lotte Wubben-Moy had the final chance of the half in the 44th minute but she couldn't direct her header from a cross and it went high and wide.

Foord had the first chance of the second half for Arsenal in the 57th minute when her low shot forced Peyraud-Magnin to get down low to save. Three minutes later, the Juventus keeper came out to claim the ball after Blackstenius had been played through.

Juventus had a half chance in the 62nd minute but Boattin's long range shot drifted wide.

Williamson was substituted seconds after that and received loud cheers as she went off on the far side of the

pitch in front of the supporters. She even had time to have a photo with a ball girl as she made her way around to the benches. Rafaelle came onto replace her, making her comeback from injury and first appearance since late September.

A dangerous cross from Catley was pushed away by Peyraud-Magnin in the 66th minute but the offside flag was up anyway as Arsenal went looking for a second goal. They had another chance in the 72nd minute when Miedema put a shot over after a corner had been only cleared as far as her.

There was a loud reception from the vast majority of the 6,592 fans inside the Emirates for Jordan Nobbs when she came onto the pitch in the 79th minute.

Julia Grossi's effort from distance was easily claimed by Zinsberger as the visitors had another half chance in the 82nd minute. At the other end two minutes later, Laura Wienroither cut in and sent a shot into the side netting.

Juventus had the final chances of the match in stoppage time. Boattin saw her shot from 30 yards go over, then Valentina Cernoia sent a free kick onto the roof of the net in the fourth minute of additional time.

Attendance – 6,592

# Champions League quarter-finals: Meet the teams



## Arsenal (ENG)

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): 10
- Group stage: Group C winners (W4, D1, L1, F19, A5)
- Last season: Quarter-finals
- Previous European best: Winners (2006-07)

## Barcelona (ESP)

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): 2
- Group stage: Group D winners (W5, D0, L1, F29, A6)
- Last season: Runners-up
- Previous European best: Winners (2020-21)

## Bayern Munich (GER)

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): 5
- Group stage: Group D runners-up (W5, D0, L1, F14, A7)
- Last season: Quarter-finals

- Previous European best: Semi-finals (2018-19, 2020-21)

## Chelsea (ENG)

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): 6
- Group stage: Group A winners (W5, D1, L0, F19, A1)

- Last season: Group stage
- Previous European best: Runners-up (2020-21)

## Lyon (FRA) - holders

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): 1
- Group stage: Group C runners-up (W3, D2, L1, F10, A6)
- Last season: Winners
- Previous European best: Winners x 8 (2010-11, 2011-12, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2021-22)

## Paris Saint-Germain (FRA)

- Uefa coefficient ranking

- (end of 2021-22): 4
- Group stage: Group A runners-up (W3, D1, L2, F11, A5)

- Last season: Semi-finals
- Previous European best: Runners-up (2014-15, 2016-17)

## Roma (ITA)

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): N/A
- Group stage: Group B runners-up (W4, D1, L1, F16, A8)
- Last season: N/A
- Previous European best: Debut season

## Wolfsburg (GER)

- Uefa coefficient ranking (end of 2021-22): 3
- Group stage: Group B winners (W4, D2, L0, F19, A5)
- Last season: Semi-finals
- Previous European best: Winners (2012/13, 2013/14)



# HOME

# NATIONS

# Home Nations stars honoured in New Years



Lionesses manager Sarina Wiegman and a number of the players have been recognised in the New Year Honours list 2023.

Wiegman has received an honorary CBE after guiding England Women to their first major trophy at the EURO in the summer.

Captain Leah Williamson has been awarded an OBE and there are MBEs for Lucy Bronze, the EURO's top goalscorer Beth Mead and England Women's all-time leading goalscorer Ellen White.

Jawahir Roble, who grew up in war-torn Mogadishu, Somalia and is the first Muslim woman to referee in the UK, has been given an MBE for her services to football and in recognition of the volunteer work she does with the charity Football Beyond Borders.

Brighton and Hove Albion chief executive Paul Barber, who also serves on the FA Council and Professional Game Board, has received a OBE for services to football, while there is an MBE for Jo Tongue, the director of Women in Football, in recognition of her services to football and gender equality.

Scottish Nationals, Jen Beattie and Kim Little, were also named to receive a Member of the British Empire Award (MBE) in 2023. Kim Little has been awarded her MBE for services to football after making her national team debut at 16. Throughout her 14-year career with Scotland, the midfielder scored 59 goals in 140 appearances before retiring from international football in 2021. In 2016, Little was named BBC women's footballer of the year and

continues as Arsenal captain. 31-year-old, Jen Beattie, has 143 caps for Scotland but was awarded her MBE for services to charity. In 2020, Beattie was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. The Arsenal defender underwent surgery and began radiotherapy all whilst playing for club and country. She began speaking publicly and campaigning for women to get checked, earning her the 2021 Helen Rollason BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award in recognition of her work.

Wales captain Sophie Ingle has been awarded an OBE for her services to football.

The 31-year-old joined Chelsea from Liverpool in 2018 and her place on the New Year Honours list comes just days after she committed her future to the London club. The Blues announced Ingle had signed a two-year extension, keeping her at Chelsea until at least the summer of 2025.

Former Northern Ireland women's football captain Gail Redmond has also been made an MBE.

The 43-year-old from Carrickfergus works at the Irish Football Association (IFA) as women's development manager, aiming to ensure young girls and women are offered pathways to excel in the sport.

The married mother-of-two said she won "around 28 caps" for Northern Ireland and jokes that the lack of certainty over the total is indicative of the state of the women's game when she played.

Redmond has been made an MBE for services to football.

# Lionesses: The 1980s



Pedro Soares/SPP

By Clare McEwen

Last issue we looked at the dawn of women's international football and the start of the unofficial Lionesses. The 1970s showed appetite for major international competitions and, although unofficial, they were well represented and well attended. The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) took note and the 1980s saw women's football continue to move forward, this time officially.

In 1973, UEFA set up a Women's Football Committee to try to standardise the game and its running throughout Europe. It had one female member – Kerstin Rosén from Sweden. But the growth of the women's game slowed, and the committee was dissolved in 1978.

A few years later, in February 1980, another UEFA women's football conference was held. Delegates from 18 national football associations attended and suggested UEFA should pay more attention to the women's game. The time for change had arrived.

UEFA Women's Football Committee was re-started, now with two women on-board – England's Patricia Gregory and Germany's Hannelore Rayzeburg. At a meeting in March 1981, it was agreed that UEFA should start a European competition with a minimum of 12 nations to take part. Soon after, the Executive Committee gave the go-ahead and regulations were drawn up.

There was no problem getting the minimum of 12 teams – 16

signed-up when a call for entries went out in December 1981 – and the first UEFA backed Euros was set in motion.

## 1984 European Competition for Women's Football

The 16 nations were grouped according to "economic criteria" and four groups were established for a qualifying competition. The qualification games began in the summer of 1982 amongst the following groups:

**Group 1:** Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden

**Group 2:** England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland

**Group 3:** France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland

**Group 4:** Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, West Germany

After years of playing friendlies and unofficial competitions, the 1980s Lionesses were about to compete in their first official Euros campaign. A 17-year-old Hope Powell was in the squad.

Matches were played over two 35-minute halves with a size four ball, and qualification consisted of a home and away fixture. Group winners went on to play a knockout phase over two legs to decide who would lift the trophy. The Lionesses won their group and were drawn against Denmark in the semi-finals.

The opening leg was played at Gresty Road, Crewe on the April 8, 1984. England won 2-1, thanks to goals from Linda Curl and Elisabeth Deighan. The return leg was played at the Hjørring Stadium, Hjørring a few weeks later. Debbie Bampton scored to win the game 1-0 for England and give them a 3-1 aggregate score.

### **First Euros, first final for the Lionesses**

The two-legged final was against Sweden. Both legs were played in May 1984, the first at Ullevi, Gothenburg in front of 5,500 spectators, photographers, and press. Sweden scored the only goal of the game, a header by Pia Sundhage, who would go on to reach legendary status as both player and coach. The return leg at Kenilworth Road, Luton drew a crowd of 2,500 but no reporters. As a nation, unlike Sweden, England still lacked interest in the women's game. This time a single goal from Linda Curl separated the teams. The final would be settled by every English fan's

worst nightmare, penalties. The Swedes nudged it 4-3 and lifted the inaugural Women's Euros trophy.

### **Mundialito**

UEFA were on-board, but FIFA were yet to join the party. Always willing to lead the charge, the Italians began a worldwide invitational tournament known as Mundialito, the little World Cup.

Between 1984 and 1988, hosted in northern Italy, it became a prestigious annual event. Four teams played each other in a group stage, with the top two teams playing the final and the other two playing the third-place play-off. In the inaugural competition, England beat Belgium 2-1 to get third, with goals from Marieanne Spacey and Linda Curl; Curl scoring two en route to the play-off.

In 1985, England won, beating Italy 3-2 in the final with goals from Spacey (2) and Brenda Sempore. They didn't feature in the final four for the 1986 edition but were back on winning form for the 1988 tournament (it wasn't held in 1987). They again defeated Italy in the final: 2-1 after extra time. Both goals from Curl.

### **1987 Euros**

Meanwhile, the major competitions were coming thick and fast, and 1987 saw the next Euros. The format was the same as in 1984, with the same, "economic" groups. England convincingly won the home nations' group, scoring 33 and conceding only two. Norway hosted the semis and the final. Despite their impressive group games, the Lionesses couldn't overcome

Sweden, and lost 3-2 after extra time. Goals from Jackie Sherrard and Kerry Davis were not quite enough. Despite Davis converting a penalty, they lost the third-place play-off against Italy, 2-1. Norway won the tournament, beating Sweden in the final.

### **1989 Euros**

The groups were formed in a more modern format for Euro '89. England's group contained Denmark, Norway, and Finland. Again, during qualifying, teams played each other in a home and away match. The Lionesses didn't qualify, finishing third in the group. The last qualifier, against Norway at Ewood Park, had an attendance of 300 – a reminder of how far the game has now come in England, albeit slowly. The finals were hosted by West Germany who beat Norway 4-1 in front of 22,000 people.

### **Euros Finals – Then and Now**

In 1984, the Lionesses reached the very first Women's Euros final. But the women's game was very different back then. Most of the players were amateur and playing for their country cost them money, for transport and accommodation. The game consisted of 35-minute halves, the balls were smaller and the crowds much smaller.

In the 1984 home soil Euros, 2567 watched England lose on penalties to Sweden. In 2022, 87 192 watched England lift the trophy at Wembley. It may have taken 38 years for the women's game to have a major breakthrough in the UK, but there's no stopping it now.

# Player Profile: Rachel Daly



By Clare McEwen

Rachel Daly is unorthodox: prolific striker for club, full back for country. Her versatility and determination make her an asset to any team, especially as she's world class in both positions.

Born in Harrogate, eight-year-old Daly began her career at grassroots club Killinghall Nomads. By her own admission, the boys would get jealous of her superior ability and, "would tackle me harder". Rachel later moved to the girls' team, until she was spotted by Leeds United centre of excellence, aged 12. For a die-hard Leeds United fan, this was a dream.

In 2010, Leeds United's bid to join the Women's Super League (WSL) failed and Daly went to St John's University in New York to further her playing career at Red Storm. The US led the way in women's football, so this was a chance to combine playing regular, top-level competitive football with an education.

During three years with Red Storm, she became their record goal scorer with 50 goals. She was nominated for the prestigious Hermann Trophy that recognises the best collegiate 'soccer' player each year and in 2015 was named in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) first 11. In her senior year she was named Big East Offensive Player of the Year (a big deal and the second time she'd won it) and graduated with a Sports Management degree.

Her superstar college status didn't go unnoticed by the US National Women's Soccer League (NWSL). I'm not going to pretend I understand how drafts work, but I do know that getting

picked sixth is a big deal! Houston Dash knew talent when they saw it and snapped Daly up in 2016. She didn't disappoint. In the first week, she was named player of the week, scored a goal, and provided an assist.

Daly continued to smash it, becoming both captain and record goal scorer for Dash (42 goals in 116 games). She steered them to the 2020 NWSL Challenge Cup (their only trophy), winning the golden boot and Most Valuable Player along the way.

For the 2022/23 season, she joined Aston Villa and opened her campaign with two goals in a victory against Manchester City.

Although representing England at youth level, it wasn't until June 2016 that she won her first senior cap. She scored on her debut, helping England qualify for the 2017 Euros. She wasn't in the Euros squad but was re-instated by Phil Neville for the 2018 SheBelieves Cup and the 2019 World Cup: her first major tournament.

Bizarrely at the time, Neville played Daly as a full-back. It soon became clear that Daly truly was a versatile player though, comfortably handling the defensive role, whilst using her attacking ability to create overloads out wide. Sarina Weigman capitalised on this, picking Daly as her first choice left back at the 2022 Euros. And that went OK.

It remains a wonderful quirk of our sport that a striker with eight WSL goals before Christmas is the Lionesses first choice left back. But in Sarina, we trust.

# **Wembley sold out for Finalissima between England and Brazil**

The exciting clash between England and Brazil at Wembley has officially sold out.

The two footballing nations will do battle in the first-ever female edition of the Finalissima – a contest between the European champions and Copa America winners.

It will give the Lionesses a chance to continue their unprecedented success with another trophy, with the match set to go ahead in April at the Home of Football.

England sold out when they faced the United States at Wembley last year, while Women's Super League sides have reported an increase in ticket sales during domestic games.

## **RIP June Mead**

Everyone at The Women's Football Magazine was devastated to hear the news that June Mead, mother of Beth Mead, had passed away.

Mead shared a statement on January 13, 2023 reading:

“Thought long and hard about what to write but there will never be any words that will do justice.

At 1am on the 7th of Jan, our beautiful, kind, funny Mum and Wife passed away after a long and brave battle against ovarian cancer. She was surrounded by myself, my brother and dad as she passed away peacefully.

“Our hearts are broken, there will be a piece missing forever but heaven has now gained a special angel. If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever. I’m sad that you are gone, but I’m more grateful for the time we had together. We love you lots, forever and always. RIP Mama.”

Tributes have poured in for the Mead family.

Chelsea boss Emma Hayes said: “My condolences are with Beth Mead. More importantly as a human being, what an extremely tough time that person is going through.

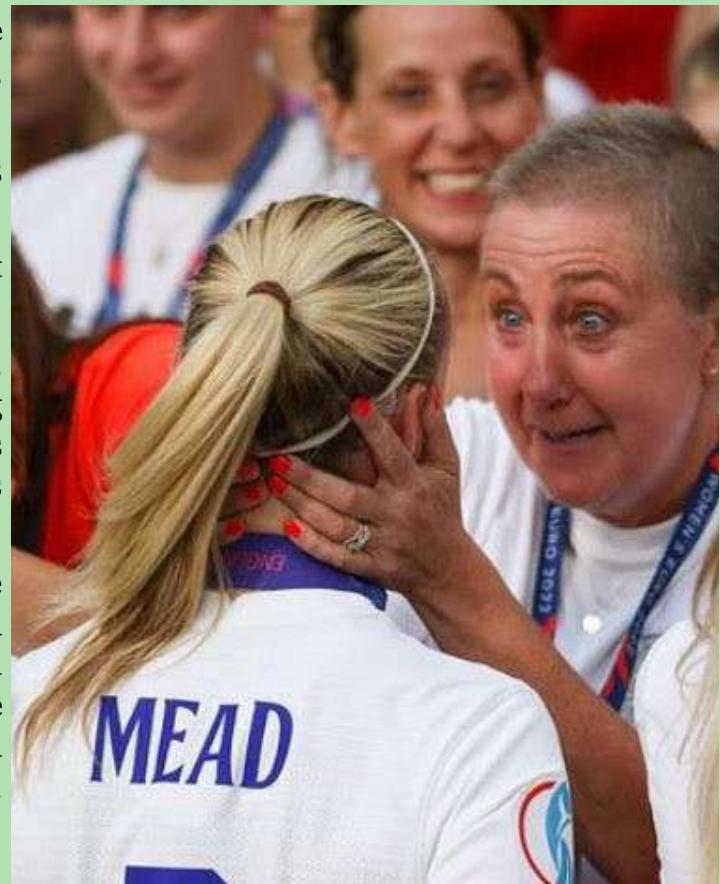
“I'm thinking about her today. Forget football.

“Today is about the football community being around her.”

Jordan Nobbs wore a top under her Aston Villa shirt which said: “For June”.

Arsenal are to wear black armbands on Sunday.

We send all our love to the Mead family.



# Scotland team make legal challenge to SFA over pay and conditions

Scotland women's national football team are taking legal action against the Scottish FA in a fight over equal pay and conditions after talks broke down.

The squad, led by captain Rachel Corsie, are ready to take their case to an employment tribunal.

The players consider there to be disparities between their treatment and that of their male counterparts.

In response, the SFA said "equality should be at the heart of the development of the game at all levels".

Speaking to BBC Scotland, Aston Villa defender Corsie said the players felt obliged to speak out after two years of failing to reach agreement with the SFA.

"There is a significant number of examples where the players feel the resources in place are not where they should be. It's really important we make sure that doesn't continue," said the 33-year-old captain.

"We want there to be change moving forward."

Earlier, in a statement issued on behalf of the players, Corsie said: "This is about all professional footballers being treated equally.

"After years of iniquity, disrespect, and in some cases abuse, we have a historic opportunity to advance equal pay and to promote equality for women and girls in football.

"This campaign is about parity, and we'll be seeking to engage with the Scottish Football Association, the fans, and everyone in Scotland's football community to deliver this long overdue change."



## Scottish FA appoint girls' and women's performance manager

The Scottish FA has appointed Michael McArdle as new Girls' and Women's Performance Manager.

Michael will lead the strategic development of female talent in Scotland, including overseeing and implementing a range of programmes and pathways for talent identification within girls' and women's football.

The role will also encompass responsibility for high performance programmes and transitioning pathways into the Scotland Women's National Team. This includes working closely with Head Coach, Pedro Martinez Losa, who oversees the

strategy and performance vision for the Scottish FA.

Michael joins the Scottish FA from St Mirren Football Club, where he currently works as Head of Coaching. He recently graduated with an MSc in Advanced Performance Football Coaching as well as gaining his UEFA Pro Licence earlier this year.

Scottish FA Chief Football Officer Andy Gould: "Michael was the standout candidate for the position, which garnered a strong pool of applicants from across the globe, including from other high-performance sports."

# Gemma Grainger signs new contract as Cymru Women's Team Manager



The Football Association of Wales are delighted to confirm Cymru manager Gemma Grainger has signed a two-year contract extension until 2027, taking the team through the qualifying campaigns for UEFA EURO 2025 and FIFA World Cup 2027.

Grainger, who was appointed manager in March 2021, guided Cymru to within touching distance of reaching a major tournament for the first time in her first qualifying campaign in charge. After finishing second in their 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying group, Cymru narrowly missed out on a place in the finals following a last-minute defeat in the play-off final against Switzerland.

The contract extension comes following a successful 2022 in a year that saw a record crowd of 15,200 in attendance at Cardiff City Stadium for Cymru's play-off semi-final win over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Speaking on the extension, Grainger said: "I'm delighted to have signed a new contract and extend my journey working with this special group of players. I'm an ambitious coach, these players are ambitious and the FAW are ambitious, so all those things are a great match."

"We want to drive our progress and momentum from the last qualifying campaign, both on and off

the pitch, and take that forward into the new year and the next two qualifying campaigns."

FAW CEO Noel Mooney said: "We have made huge strides with the Women's National Team and our focus now is firmly on qualifying for UEFA EURO 2025 and the 2027 FIFA World Cup."

"This group has captured the imagination of the Welsh public and we have no doubt they will break new glass ceilings for Welsh football in the coming years."

FAW Chief Football Officer David Adams added: "Gemma has demonstrated her ability to effectively develop this talented team, and during the World Cup qualification campaign we have seen tremendous progress both on and off the field."

"We are confident Gemma can continue this process as we aim to qualify for the Women's European Championships and use this as a catalyst to continue to increase participation across Cymru."

Grainger's side kick off the new year by returning to Spain to take part in the Pinatar Cup, where they will face the Philippines, Iceland and Scotland in February.

# Foster to referee at Women's World Cup



Cheryl Foster will officiate on the biggest stage of all this summer after being confirmed as one of the referees for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

The former Cymru international, who also officiates in the JD Cymru Premier and Genero Adran Premier, was named on the FIFA International Referees List in December 2015 and was promoted to the UEFA Elite List of Referees in the 2020/21 campaign.

Foster's selection for the World Cup comes following a successful 2022 in a year that saw her take charge of two UEFA Women's EURO 2022 group-stage games and the semi-final between Germany and France.

She also oversaw two matches in the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in Costa Rica and was the Fourth Official for the final between Spain and Japan.

Foster, who is the first Welsh official to be called up to the biggest stage since Clive Thomas took charge of a game at the 1978 FIFA Men's World Cup, will also

become the first Welsh woman to referee at a World Cup.

Speaking about her appointment, Foster said: "I am honoured that I have been given the opportunity to represent my country refereeing at the World Cup this summer.

"In the last 10 years I've put a lot of hard work and commitment in, and this is what I have been working towards. I'm looking forward to officiating the best players on the world stage."

FAW Match Officials Manager Lee Evans added: "This is absolutely fantastic news, and to have the opportunity to referee in a World Cup is something referees dream of.

"I am extremely proud of Cheryl's achievements and of this historic appointment. This shows what hard work and dedication can bring."

Inspired by Cheryl's selection and want to kickstart your career in football? Visit [Become A Ref](#) for more information.

# FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023

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# How the Northern Ireland women fanzone is bring the game to the masses

By Zoë Tisdale

This was the vision of a young man, William Strain, from Ballygowan, Co Down, when he set up what is now the biggest, specific, bespoke and only female football Northern Ireland Fanzone across all social media platforms.

William's passion for the women's game began when his local team Killyleagh YC set up a girls' team in 2004. He became an avid fan and watched the girls play religiously. His passion was further ignited when his second cousin, Kirsty McCaughtry signed for Killyleagh in 2012. McCaughtry then became involved in the Northern Ireland Women setup, playing for them at youth level where she progressed through the various age groups.

William had been bitten by the bug and never missed a Northern Ireland girls or women's game. Through the years of attending though, he became frustrated at the lack of interest in the women's game, both by supporters and the media. At his first Northern Ireland senior team game against Estonia on March 5, 2014, at the Bangor Fuels Arena there was a small crowd of around 100 people.

As the women's game developed and the women's NI senior team became more successful crowds , but there still wasn't the level of promotion in the women's game that they deserved in comparison to the men's game.

In November 2020 the NI Women's team beat Belarus away in a Euro 2022 qualifying match, this was the catalyst and so the Northern Ireland Women Fanzone was born on November 7, 2020.

When the fanzone started in 2020 William was unsure how successful it would be, but he had a dream and a vision to promote women`s football in NI with a community of fans where they could not just follow the team and players, but show their support in an effort to grow the game. He created a family and a sense of belonging and from the offset the interest was amazing.

The explosion really took place of course in April 2021 when the NI women's team cemented their place at the 2022 Euros in Southampton. They had qualified for their first ever major tournament and the rest of the world were starting to notice. Excitement reached fever pitch, and this grew the popularity of not only the women's game but also the fanzone.

The NI Women Fanzone now has 6.7k followers on Facebook alone and is now spread across all social media platforms. The followers include all the players and coaching staff from the NI senior team , and there is nothing that isn't covered in relation to the NI team and specifically to the players, including their own domestic team's performance on match days. Prior to the Euros in Southampton the fanzone was the supporters and players go to for information from everything to squad announcements, travel, accommodation, and cost.

During the Euros there was an even bigger ground swell for the fanzone as it gave regular updates around the team and where supporters were meeting pre and post-match. Supporters and players could post photos and vlogs from the matches and gave their views and opinions on the team's performances. It even became a sticker swap site for the Euro 2022 sticker album!

William's dream was a simple one, to promote womens and girls football in NI. With the fanzone he has achieved that and more. He has driven popularity for the women's game and created a cult following for the women's team. It has surpassed his expectations but don't underestimate the hard work that has gone in to achieving this.

William recently won an award from the Northern Ireland Women's Football Association in recognition for all his hard work in promoting the game and I know that all the NI players and staff are also very appreciative of all his hard work.

The Northern Ireland Women Fanzone has even bigger plans for 2023 so keep an eye on their social media pages for all their exciting news and regular updates surrounding the NI team.

# Julie Nelson: History maker and NI hero



What a year 2022 has been for NI International and Crusaders Strikers legend Julie Nelson BEM. Zoë Tisdale chatted to Julie Nelson about her humble beginnings on the pitches of Sandy Bay in her hometown of Larne, Co Antrim, to making history at the 2022 Euros in Southampton for her country.

## Take me back to where it all began for you.

I played all sport, hockey and rugby but I lived beside Sandy Bay football pitches in Larne, and I joined in with the other kids that were playing football after school and during the school holidays. My dad told me to take my football kit into primary school and ask could I join the boys team. Thankfully the teacher said yes, and I was allowed to train and play with the boys. In those days I was goalkeeper and then a few years later I had the opportunity to join a girls' team in Larne, Gilmour Gals, after myself and a few friends were spotted playing at Sandy Bay by one of their coaches. That was my first introduction into girl's football and where it all began.

**Did you ever envisage, looking back on where you started, that you would be a NI international with 100 plus caps, qualifying with your national team in their first ever major tournament and scoring their first ever goal in the**

## tournament and being the most senior player ever to do so at the age of 37?

Not at all, when I first started playing, I wasn't even aware that there was a women's NI team, and it wasn't really until the late 90s that I became aware of them. I think they only played one game a year at that stage possibly, so to think what I have done now for my country both personally and also what the NI team have achieved collectively is the stuff of dreams. People don't realise, especially across the water, that our squad of players, 3/4 of them are part-time players, including myself, we all have full time jobs. Once we qualified for the Euros, we went into a full-time training programme in January which then ended in August. That is why it is such a massive achievement not just personally, but for our whole team to even qualify never mind being there and playing against the teams who are mostly all full-time professional footballers.

**You mentioned what the NI team has achieved and how far they have come. A lot of that is down to Gail Redmond, who has just been awarded an MBE for services to women's football. You know Gail personally, how much has her work helped develop the game here?**

It is lovely to see Gail recognised, she has made a massive contribution to women's football both on and off the pitch. Being

captain of her country and a head coach over in America when she was just 24 is incredible. The success she has also had at Glentoran, the silverware that they won with Gail's influence as well as some other coaches is great for the game here and its lovely to see not Gail but women's football being recognised in NI once again.

### **What did your friends and family make of NI qualifying for the Euros? Did they all travel out to be with you during the tournament?**

Yes, my whole family travelled out there for the duration, and I think after we qualified a lot of the girls were being recognised and approached in the street, being congratulated; that had never really happened to us before. There were so many young girls after we qualified that were inspired to start playing football. I know at Crusaders our phone was red hot with parents contacting us saying that their daughter wanted to join. Another thing was the fanzones that they had back home for our matches. We never thought there would be enough interest in the game to have fanzones back home for us. It was a fantastic time for us and such a super year for women's football. We can't rest on our laurels though and we have to start looking and planning ahead now and pushing on.

### **The team now walk out to sell-out crowds in comparison to a few years back when maybe the crowds were between 100 and 200. How important are the supporters and what does it feel like walking out onto the pitch in front of so many fans now and hearing the noise?**

It's like night and day. Walking out at Windsor Park in front of 15,348 people, some of us were like "what's going on?" We joked saying, were the men on after us as we just weren't used to so many people supporting us. When I won my 100th cap in 2018 I think there was only 150 people at the game so going from that, to now selling out stadiums like Seaview is just mad. It's great to have the support of the green and white army and I think the difference in our supporters is that it's families. It's mums, dads, aunts, uncles, boys and girls. The environment that we have created is fantastic. You know yourself after matches it's hard for us to get back into the changing room as we have so many selfies to take and shirts to sign, but we love it. Another thing which is great, and something that Kenny wanted to achieve, is that men and women who

supported the NI men's team supported us as well and became supporters of NI, that is starting to happen now. It was evident in Southampton when so many people came across to just support the team, they didn't have any ties with players they just came over to support NI.

### **Do you get used to being recognised and signing autographs or do you still find it all a bit surreal?**

It's still very surreal for all of us, we are all from NI and they are no prima donas in our squad, we are all very down to earth. I think that's why we connect so well with our supporters; we have all been supporters in the stands. It's very surreal when you get asked to send a birthday message to someone or write them a letter, don't think I will ever get used to it but its part and parcel of being a NI player now and we all embrace it.

### **We have to talk about 'that' goal. What did it feel like scoring the first goal for your country in their first ever major tournament?**

It's the best moment of my career to date on an individual basis but as a team qualifying for the Euros and to be able to walk out together in Southampton for your country, it's just an amazing feeling. The feeling of elation and the noise that was created after I scored, you would have thought we had won the Euros! I remember only being able to run about 2 yards before getting mobbed by my teammates. The whole team was celebrating and whilst it is disappointing not getting a result in the Euros, that goal is still the highlight.

### **You have such a wealth of experience having played for Everton, Durham and Glasgow City. How as that experience of playing at such a high level helped in your career?**

I was fortunate enough to come along at a time when we were starting to get those opportunities. I played in America first of all on a scholarship and then I played two seasons in Iceland. At that time that was the best place for players from our country to get semi-professional opportunities, their league was good 10 years ago and still is now. The women's teams were treated the same as the men, they trained on the same pitches, played the same number of games and there was a women's match shown on tv every week and that was 10 years ago. The likes of myself, Ashley Hutton, Rachel Furness all went there to get



experience of semi-professional football. There are so many different facets to it of course, different language, different culture, different food so it was just a great experience for me to be able to do that and experience it all. I came back home and then was given the opportunity to trial with Everton. It was just the second season of the WSL, and I was playing against the likes of players from Chelsea, and Liverpool. I was playing with the likes of Jill Scott, Nikita Paris, England international players and it's just fantastic to be involved in that kind of environment. I think when myself and Simone Magill went across there, we couldn't believe how competitive the girls were. Our first game we went in at half time and the girls were all arguing back and forward, and Simone and I were just looking at each other thinking is this normal? We were competitive back home of course but at that stage we weren't as vocal but that helped us kick on and obviously Simone has played there for years and is now with Aston Villa and what a career, she has had from that. For me to play there and then go to Glasgow City, who were all Scottish internationals, the likes of Jess Fishlock, Denise O'Sullivan, the players that you are playing with day in day out were just as vocal, argumentative and competitive in training and

on the pitch, but as soon as you walk over the white line it's all forgotten, and we all got on so well. It just showed their winning mentality and they had that at Glasgow City, winning the league 14 years in a row and playing in the last 32 of the champions leagues, last 16, qualifying for the quarter final and it's something that's really helped me develop as a player. I know the likes of Simone Magill, Rachel Furness and Sarah Robson are all better people and players because of the same experiences.

**We have made great strides in NI in the women's game, but we are still playing catch up and there is a lot more work to do in comparison to the men's game. What is the vision of women's football in NI?**

I don't think it's as pigeonholed as it used to be in comparison to the men and the success of the lionesses has certainly helped that. You are still going to get people that will say women shouldn't be playing football, I don't want to watch it, it's not as good as the men but that's fine. Some people will like watching men's rugby but may not like women's rugby and vice versa. We are not here to compete with men as it's a different

sport, we are just there to have our own place within the sporting realms and it's great to see the media giving more coverage to the women's game, but there is still long way to go if you compare the women's league here in comparison to the men. I know it's been talked about a lot but is a Wednesday night the best night to have a women's league game to get supporters out, absolutely not. We need to try and find a way so that supporters at clubs who follow the men also follow the women's team just like what is happening with NI. We need to look at how we develop the league so that supporters at the same club follow both teams.

### **Will the women's premiership turning professional in NI from January help develop the league?**

Realistically, I don't think there will be many clubs who financially can afford all their players to be full-time professionals. There may be a few players who will turn professional at the bigger clubs, but it is unlikely that most of those players even then will be able to make a living out of it. As it develops maybe yes, eventually.

In terms of the men's game, I am aware of what some players get paid a week and its crazy money in comparison to what will be made available to the women. The game isn't going to change a whole lot at this stage apart from maybe some accountability of the players that are getting paid, but some will not get any money at this stage.

The teams that have been successful over the years in the league and Europe in the men's game may have more financial backing and may be able to offer some money. Down the line there will probably be one player who will be a benchmark and the first one who will solely be doing it as their job. When I was in Scotland, we were training 4 nights a week and there were 4 players, myself included, who were actually getting paid to be there.

There were other senior players who were just getting travel expenses. Glasgow City were the first team to bring in players from outside and pay them and obviously now you have Rangers and Celtic who are full-time professionals. That was 10 years ago when it first started in Scotland, so it has probably taken the Scottish league 8-9 years to get to where it is now in terms of full-time professionals.

I think it's fantastic for the girls here, but it will be a long-term process and in terms of our league being full time professionals I think is a bit false to say that at this stage.

**Julie, what a year 2022 has been for you, being awarded a BEM back in October to receiving an honorary doctorate alongside another NI legend Steven Davis. You must feel so proud to be recognised for your contributions to sport?**

Very honoured to be recognised with an honorary doctorate from Queen's University alongside men's international captain Steven Davis. It's touching to be recognised for my contributions but equally pleasing to see the recognition that women's football is now being given in NI and further afield. I had a lovely day receiving my BEM with my parents alongside me. It has been such an eventful year and I am not sure too many years will top 2022.

Many thanks to Julie Nelson for such a super and in-depth interview, it has been quite the year but don't worry, we will see plenty more of Julie Nelson in a green and white shirt as she has informed me that she has no plans to retire just yet! Phew!







# INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

# FIFA Announce a Women's Club World Cup

By Jamie Davies

Last month FIFA President Gianni Infantino confirmed that there will be a female version of the Club World Cup.

In the final few days of the men's FIFA World Cup in Qatar, Infantino held a press conference to announce the latest of what is going on at the world of football.

He announced an expanded men's Club World Cup from seven teams to 32 teams come 2025 followed by a women's version of the tournament.

The plans however are only considered for now as no date has been mentioned of when the first ever edition of the competition will take place.

## What is the FIFA Club World Cup

The current Club World Cup that we see in the men's game has been a bit hit and miss in the footballing world as many don't really consider it as a major competition. On paper, the global tournament in club football should be the biggest club competition there is but it really isn't.

FIFA introduced the Club World Cup in 2000 where the likes of Manchester United and Real Madrid took part but would lose out to Brazilian football club Corinthians who won on home soil. After just its first year the tournament lacked funds to keep the Club World Cup going.

It made a return in 2005 when Japan was selected to host the next four years as the likes of AC Milan and Man Utd would be crowned world champions.

Ever since 2005, the Club World Cup has been an annual fixture on the football calendar where a majority of the winners have come from a European club.

Next month sees the competition return and will take place in Morocco between the champions of each federation including Bayern Munich (UEFA Champions League winners), Seattle Sounders (CONCACAF Champions League winners) and Flamengo (Copa CONMEBOL Libertadores winners).

There might not be a Women's Club World Cup until after 2025 as FIFA have no plans to change their current international match calendar for women's football until then.

## How would the format work?

FIFA have not really revealed any real details as of yet of what the Women's Club World Cup will look like. We don't know how many teams will participate, we don't know if it will be group stages before it wraps up with knockout football – it is simply all up in the air.

But if this tournament does actually happen then we would expect FIFA to start with only a handful of clubs.

You would assume it would follow similar traits as having champions from each confederation so the winners of UEFA Women's Champions League and Copa Libertadores Femenina for example would qualify.

## Where would it take place?

Again a question with no answer at this moment in time.

FIFA's recent history when it comes to hosts has seen the likes of Qatar and Russia run smaller FIFA competitions in build-up to the men's World Cup.

We don't know the hosts of the 2027 Women's World Cup but maybe the eventual right holders will host the first Women's Club World Cup in prep for the bigger picture.

## 2023 could be even bigger than 2022



**By Jamie Davies**

As the glorious events of 2022 become a thing of the past, it is now time to look forward to what 2023 has for us in the world of women's football.

It still feels like it was yesterday when Chloe Kelly stretched out her right leg to tap the home the European Championship winner for the Lionesses at a full house Wembley Stadium.

All the celebrations that followed and the media attention the England women's team had received was a breath of fresh air and seeing young girls get inspired by kicking a ball about for the first time really put women's football on the map in the UK.

The following season of the Women's Super League recording higher attendance figures and appearances at bigger and iconic stadiums

including Old Trafford, Anfield, The Emirates, Stamford Bridge and Tottenham Hotspur Stadium showed the impact of Euro 2022.

Then to wrap it all up the BBC Sports Personality of the Year awards were dominated by the Lionesses. The England team would pick up 'Team of the Year', manager Sarina Wiegman was chosen for 'Coach of the Year' but the biggest moment of the night was Beth Mead becoming the first female footballer to win Sports Personality of the Year. It simply summed up what a year 2022 was for women's football.

While we reminiscent on what happened last summer, 2023 could be the best year yet for international football in the women's game.

Come the dates between July 20th and August 20th, the

world will be watching Australia and New Zealand as they co-host the 10th edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup. A new expansion of 32 teams sees the tournament get a bigger slot in the football calendar as well as new opportunities for nations that have not reached the finals before.

There is still a lot of things happening before we can look forward to the start of the World Cup. So from an international perspective, here is what we should all be excited about...

### The Lionesses in 2023

Wiegman's reign in England could not be off to a better start after nearly 18 months into the role.

Since she was appointed England Manager, her Lionesses have not lost a single game even if you include friendly matches. This unbeatable form has seen England go onto win the Arnold Clark Cup and of

course, that little thing called the Euros.

Let us not forget that even though it was just a friendly, England beat the world champions the USA back in October at Wembley Stadium. The victory was a good warning sign to the world that England are coming.

This year's Women's World Cup is England's best chance to become world-beaters for the very first time in history, as the preparations could not be any better.

It does feel to many that Wiegman's team are entering this World Cup down under at just the right time. The challenge will be tough with 31 other teams bidding for the same success as well as being a long way away from home in a period of 4-6 weeks.

Can England reach the final come Sunday August 20th?

Before all that though, they do have a mini tournament coming up in February as the Arnold Clark Cup returns after its first appearance last year.

## **Arnold Clark Cup is back!**

The very first edition of the Arnold Clark Cup proved to be a success in England when the invitational competition toured across the country in Middlesbrough, Norwich and Wolverhampton.

The hosts would go onto win after draws with Olympic

champions Canada and Spain before beating Germany to get their hands on the trophy.

Nearly 12 months on, England will look to defend it as South Korea, Belgium and Italy hope to take the crown away from them the European champions.

It all kicks off on February 16th at StadiumMK in Milton Keynes which was one of the venues of last year's Euros. After that all four teams travel to Coventry Building Society Arena, or as it used to be known as the Ricoh Arena and where Coventry City used to play their home matches until recently, on February 19th. Then the curtains come to a close three days later at Ashton Gate in Bristol where we find out who will be the winners of Arnold Clark Cup 2023.

It will be a great warm-up for England ahead of this summer's World Cup.

## **SheBelieves Cup**

Another four team international tournament that has been on the women's football calendar a little longer than the Arnold Clark Cup.

This year will be the eighth edition since it all began in 2016 and it will yet again be staged in the USA on similar days to the Arnold Clark Cup between February 16th to February 22th.

Orlando, Frisco and Nashville are the host cities this year and the fans will not be disappointed as it is some

line-up with neighbours Canada participating along with South American champions of Brazil and 2011 World Cup winners Japan.

All teams have qualified for the World Cup and they will be itching to show their potential especially those in front of the world champions.

## **Inter-Confederation Play-Offs**

We do not fully know all 32 teams that will be at the World Cup in Australia and New Zealand just yet but once the inter-confederation play-offs are settled, we will have our late entries confirmed.

10 nations will be fighting for the final three qualifying spots between the dates of February 18th and February 23rd.

The tournament will be used as a test event for New Zealand to host prior to the Women's World Cup. The cities of Auckland and Hamilton will be hosting the play-off matches.

Portugal and Chile have been automatically positioned in the play-off finals as they only need to win one match to make the World Cup. The other participants of Cameroon, Thailand, Senegal, Haiti, Chinese Taipei, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea and Panama must play a semi-final and then a final if winners in the semis.

No looking back now for all 10 teams, it's now or never.

# FIFA Women's World Cup

## Australia & New Zealand 2023 unveils the Beyond Greatness Champions Programme



An impressive team of stars has been unveiled to hero the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™

Beyond Greatness Champions are a group of inspirational trailblazers who represent the best of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand across sport, entertainment, media, arts, and business

The starting line-up of Beyond Greatness Champions includes Aotearoa New Zealand's first Winter Olympic gold medalist Zoi Sadowski-Synnott and business leader Dame Therese Walsh, and Australia's most successful female Paralympian Ellie Cole and inaugural Rugby Sevens Olympic gold medalist Chloe Dalton

FIFA has today unveiled the first of a stellar team of local stars to be known as 'Beyond Greatness Champions' to support and promote the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Beyond Greatness Champions are a group of inspirational trailblazers who represent the best of Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand across sport, entertainment, media, arts, politics and business. They will be using their passion for women's sport, inclusivity and unity to build anticipation for the tournament through their social channels, representing FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 at key milestones and events, and sharing the excitement within their industries and networks. They are a team who are united by their achievements and commitment for change, history makers who exemplify what it means to go Beyond Greatness.

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 COO Australia Jane Fernandez highlights how the Beyond Greatness Champions will play a crucial role in supporting the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 within local communities.

"The FIFA Women's World Cup is going to create history and make change right across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, and what better team of inspirational people to help celebrate this than our very own history-makers. Our Beyond Greatness Champions will help shape moments of empowerment for women on and off the pitch in the lead up to the tournament, now and for generations to come.

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 COO Aotearoa New Zealand Jane Patterson says history is all about firsts and inspiring the next generation.

"We've called upon inspirational Australians and New Zealanders who represent our host nations' diverse communities, who share values with our event, and who have achieved their own moments of greatness to help us engage with our communities and promote the FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023."

**Beyond Greatness Champions:**  
Australia's most successful female Paralympian and cancer survivor, Ellie Cole, joins the Beyond Greatness Champions line-up having recently retired from life as an elite athlete. Over almost two decades Ellie has not only inspired Australia by becoming the first S9 swimmer to break 29 seconds in the 50m freestyle, breaking multiple world records and with her incredible seventeen Paralympic medals, but by spreading awareness and instigating change for people of all abilities. Ellie grew up in Melbourne / Naarm but now resides in Sydney / Gadigal where she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2014, and Most Outstanding Woman in Sport at the Australian Women in Sport Awards in 2022.

"I became invested in women's football after watching the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup, combine this with my passion for women's sports in Australia and it was an easy decision to be a Beyond Greatness Champion. The future of women's sport is very exciting and we're going to be seeing some powerhouse women competing at this FIFA Women's World Cup." {Quote attributable to Ellie Cole}

Chloe Dalton was famously a member of the first ever Women's Rugby Sevens Olympic gold medal-winning team in Rio 2016 and has since blazed a trail as founder of the Female Athlete Project; a podcast and news outlet shining a light on women's sport and female athletes in an industry dominated by male headlines. Hailing from Sydney / Gadigal, Chloe has been dubbed a rare three-code athlete, playing at an elite level in basketball, rugby sev-

ens and currently AFLW. In 2017 Chloe was recognised for her service to sport with the Medal of the Order of Australia.

"When I think of what Beyond Greatness means, for me it's all about the next generation of little kids who will watch footballers from all around the world, and this Tournament will have a huge impact not just on their sport but on their whole lives too.

I'm really passionate about investing in women's sport, so I'm excited to become a Beyond Greatness Champion for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 and the opportunity to continue campaigning for these incredible athletes, and shine a light on the amazing things they are achieving day in and day out." {Quote attributable to Chloe Dalton}

Melanie McLaughlin is a sports presenter who has heralded much needed change in the face of sport in Australia. Mel is a highly respected sports presenter and live-to-air broadcaster who has covered a host of major international sporting events, including both summer and winter Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, the FIFA World Cup, tennis and most recently the 2021-22 Ashes series and 2022 Winter Olympics. A self-confessed football 'tragic' from a young age growing up in Sydney / Gadigal, she formerly worked at Fox Sports where she hosted multiple football shows including Kick Off, Indian Super League and Fox Sports FC, whilst being a regular on Fox Sports News.

"I decided to become a Beyond Greatness Champion, because what a privilege it is. I'm already so excited and I still can't

believe the FIFA Women's World Cup is coming to our shores. But to be able to be involved on another level like this, is just incredible.

I genuinely don't think that the mainstream public in Australia and New Zealand understand just how big the FIFA Women's World Cup is going to be... what impact it's going to have on kids and adults, all walks of life. The world is coming to our shores, the world is going to be watching. A whole generation is going to be inspired." {Quote attributable to Melanie McLaughlin}

Maia Jackman is a FIFA Legend and former Football Ferns' captain, with a career in the New Zealand national team spanning 1993-2012. She played in the 2007 FIFA Women's World Cup and in the same year was selected for the FIFA All Star World XI. She was also awarded the Order of Merit MNZM for services to football in 2013. Maia is passionate about women's development in football and hopes she can show aspiring young footballers there is a pathway to greatness in the sport.

"Football is such a passion of mine, building our next generation is so important and I wanted to be a part of that. My hope is that the Beyond Greatness Champions can also help inspire all types of people to come and watch this amazing landmark event. Equally I'm really excited to see the Football Ferns in action this year." {Quote attributable to Maia Jackman}

Aotearoa New Zealand's first Winter Olympic gold medalist, and most successful ever Winter Olympian Zoi Sadowski-Synnott, grew up playing football in Australia. She also

became the first snowboarder ever to defend a Slopestyle World Championship title in March 2021. She's an inspiration to young snow sports athletes around the world, with two slopestyle world champion titles to her name and four X Games gold medals.

"It's really awesome that New Zealand is hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup, it's going to be amazing to see world class matches happen on home soil. I'm really proud to be a Beyond Greatness Champion. One of the reasons I got into snowboarding is because I also wanted to inspire the next generation and I think this tournament is going to do just that for aspiring footballers around Aotearoa New Zealand." {Quote

attributable to Zoi Sadowski-Synnott}

Dame Therese Walsh is currently Chair of ASB and Air New Zealand and has a strong background in major events in Aotearoa New Zealand. She was part of the team that secured the hosting rights for the 2011 Rugby World Cup, and then went on to hold the role of Chief Operating Officer for the tournament. She was also the Head of NZ for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015. Dame Therese was recognised for her contribution to sport when she was made a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2015.

"I'm so proud Aotearoa NZ can host the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2023. We've got this wonderful history of hosting incredible major

sporting events, and this one is the largest women's sporting event in the world, so how incredible to have it in this beautiful, small country that really comes together and supports these events in a special way that I don't think you'll see anywhere else on the globe." {Quote attributable to Dame Therese Walsh}

Stay tuned for more exciting names to be added to the full line-up of Beyond Greatness Champions in the lead up to the tournament kicking off on 20 July 2023.



# FIFA to introduce a Women's Futsal World Cup



**By Jamie Davies**

December saw big announcements from the world governing body of football including a Women's Futsal World Cup.

On December 16th, FIFA President Gianni Infantino made a few announcements on future plans of new tournaments/ additions to football and futsal in a bid to grow the games.

As already mentioned in one of our articles in this month's magazine, there is going to be a Women's Club World Cup on the cards as well as an extension for the men's version of 32 teams participating in 2025.

It was certainly a morning press conference that Infantino had lots to talk about and share with the media.

An historic day for women's futsal which shows signs of FIFA, you could say, playing catch up as it was only a few years ago in 2018 we witnessed Ada Hegerberg become the first female player to pick up a Ballon d'Or.

The men's Futsal World Cup has been running for 33 years now so a definite gap between the two launching but better late than never as some would say. The announcement will be welcoming for the players that have been campaigning for an equivalent World Cup for some time.

Last September had Spain's Association of Women's Futsal Players raise their voice on the issue after many times before that to denounce what they viewed as discrimination. It may have taken a while but now women's futsal has a new platform and a new opportunity to grow the game all over the world.

Normally the Futsal World Cup happens every four years and has followed that cycle since 1992 and it currently welcomes 24 teams since 2012. The 24 participating nations split to a six group round-robin tournament with four teams in each group. The top two teams in each group, together with the four highest-ranked third place finishers, advanced to a 16 team knockout stage.

Just like the announcement of the Women's Club World Cup on the same day, there isn't really any details of when and where the inaugural Women's Futsal World Cup will take place. There'll be hope Infantino and FIFA have not just said it to keep those that have been wanting it satisfied, but when the FIFA President was elected he promised he would develop the ideas of these competitions.

There is a growth in women's futsal happening in the United Kingdom, particularly in England as the FA National Futsal Series is accessible to watch for free on YouTube. The league organizers themselves have every game live streamed, which comes to show that the interest is there.

If you fancy attending a futsal game, you can find the details of upcoming matches on the FA website. Simply search 'The FA National Futsal Series' and the same on YouTube if you can't get to the games.

If we hear any more announcements about this Women's Futsal World Cup, we will keep you up to date here at The Women's Football Magazine.



# AROUND THE WORLD

# NWSL draft time



## By Peter Mann

As with other, American sports the National Women's Soccer League partakes in an off-season 'draft,' where clubs, from the country's dozen league clubs, select the best of their college system, ahead of the new season.

Later this month, the NWSL Draft for the 2023 campaign, will take place in Philadelphia, on 12 January, live on the CBS Sports Network, Paramount+ and CBS Sports HQ, and which includes a number of future stars from across the Americas, and several from European shores, including EIGHT with UK Citizenship.

The eight, UK college stars, alphabetically, are Amy Andrews, Kelis Barton, Hannah Blake Nicole Douglas, Georgia Eaton-Collins, Anna Loftus, Brenna McPartlan, and Elicia Mulvaney, whilst there is also four players, from Europe in

Jessica Cravero (Italy) and Anna Vila (Spain), as well as Carla Morich and Gwen Mummert (Germany).

So, we take a quick look (where possible) at the stars of the future, from our shores, Stateside...

### AMY ANDREWS

An attacker who was born in Birmingham, England who has knocked in goals galore for both Western Illinois University, and, most recently, for South Georgia Tormenta, with whom she won the USL W (United Soccer League Women) League title, alongside being named Player of the Year, and won the Golden Boot.

Breaking records with both her previous 'clubs,' the NWSL will either be sink or swim for WIU all-time goal-scorer, with Tormenta Head Coach, Jim Robbins, saying after he signed her January last year, that: "Amy is a proven goal-scorer and

has shown that she can score in a variety of ways.

"She is always dangerous in and around the goal and will be a key player for us as we build a roster with multiple players who are dangerous with the ball at their feet.

"I am confident that she will be a prolific goal scorer in the league."

He couldn't have been more accurate with those, final words, Andrews netting sixteen goals in just ten games (19 inc. play-offs) during the leagues' debut season, this adding to the impressive record she amassed at WIU – seeing, really is believing.

### KELIS BARTON

A defensive-midfielder who qualifies for UK Citizenship through her grandfather, Frank, who played for a number of English clubs during the sixties and seventies before moving to

the Seattle Sounders (1979-82).

His granddaughter, Kelis, was born in Renton, Washington, and majored in Journalism and Media Production, spending last season at the University of Central Florida (UCF Knights).

#### HANNAH BLAKE

Already an established footballer having been capped by the New Zealand national team a handful of times since making her debut as a raw, 17-year-old.

Born in London, Hannah has been at the University of Michigan, appearing for the Michigan Timberwolves, since 2019, netting half a dozen times which, as a forward, a good draft placing will do wonders for her career moving forward.

#### NICOLE DOUGLAS

Another forward who was born in London, Nicole was previously with England's Women's Super League side, Chelsea, whilst also being capped by England at youth level, before moving Stateside, and to Arizona State University.

Scoring twice on her Sun Devils debut (August 2018), she has netted 60 goals in just 89 games

making her, alongside Andrews, high prospects in the draft, she also becoming the Sun Devils' first, two-time All-American.

Sun Devils Head Coach, Graham Winkworth saying of the achievement, in December: "I am so proud of Dougie.

"To be an All-American is incredible and takes remarkable talent and hard work.

"To do it back-to-back seasons is a whole other level that is only achieved by 'special' players.

"I could not be prouder and it's a lovely honor for her as she moves into the next stage of an incredible career.

"It will be a very special moment as I plan to join her in Philadelphia to receive this prestigious award."

#### GEORGIA EATON-COLLINS

An Ipswich-born defender whom is a fifth year University of Central Florida where, in her last season, started all sixteen matches, playing the full ninety minutes in fifteen of them, helping her side keeping eight clean sheets – she'll be a rock for years to come for someone.

ANNA LOFTUS A midfielder with Louisiana Tech, Loftus hails from

Milton Keynes and began at the MK Dons School of Excellence before spending three years in France and comes with a winning pedigree whilst at Lamar, before joining LATech.

#### BRENNNA McPARTLAN

A former, Manchester City Academy player, where she captained their U19 to League and FA Cup glory in 2018, McPartlan has also represented her country, Northern Ireland, at youth level whilst building a career, Stateside.

Previously with the University of South Alabama, the Blackburn-born player heads into the draft having spent the past two seasons with Louisiana State University, netting more than twenty times overall, in near a hundred games.

#### ELICIA MULVANEY

Is a strong, experienced midfielder who, in her home country, played for Reading and Oxford United Academies, and London Bees, and was leading goal-scorer, before moving to Iowa and spending two years as captain at Iowa Central.

Born in Reading, Elicia goes into the draft from the Young Harris College whilst majoring in Sport and Recreation Studies.



# NWSL draft results

## Round 1

1. Angel City FC -- Alyssa Thompson, FWD (Harvard-Westlake Prep)
2. Kansas City Current -- Michelle Cooper, FWD (Duke University)
3. Orlando Pride -- Emily Madril, DEF (Florida State University)
4. NJ/NY Gotham -- Jenna Nighswonger, MID (Florida State University)
5. Portland Thorns FC -- Reyna Reyes, DEF/MID (University of Alabama)
6. North Carolina Courage -- Olivia Wyngate, FWD (Notre Dame University)
7. Chicago Red Stars -- Penelope Hocking, MID/FWD (Penn State University)
8. North Carolina Courage -- Sydney Collins, DEF/MID (California University)
9. North Carolina Courage -- Clara Robbins, MID/FWD (Florida State University)
10. Kansas City Current -- Alexa Spaanstra, MID/FWD (University of Virginia)
11. North Carolina Courage -- Haley Hopkins, FWD (University of Virginia)
12. Portland Thorns FC -- Izzy D'Aquila, FWD (Santa Clara University)

## Round 2

13. San Diego Wave -- Sierra Enge, DEF/MID (Stanford)
14. Chicago Red Stars -- Grace Yochum, MID (Oklahoma State)
15. Kansas City Current -- Gabrielle Robinson, DEF/MID/FWD (West Virginia University)
16. Racing Louisville FC -- Kayla Fischer, MID/FWD (Ohio State University)
17. Racing Louisville FC -- Brianna Martinez, DEF/MID (Notre Dame University)
18. Kansas City Current -- Jordan Silkowitz, GK (Iowa State University)
19. OL Reign -- Shea Holmes, DEF (University of Washington)
20. Houston Dash -- Sophie Hirst, MID (Harvard University)
21. Orlando Pride -- Messiah Bright, FWD (Texas Christian University)
22. Houston Dash -- Jyllissa Harris, DEF/MID (University of South Carolina)
23. Chicago Red Stars -- Allison Schlegel, MID/FWD (Penn State University)
24. Portland Thorns FC -- Lauren DeBeau, MID/FWD (Michigan State University)

## Round 3

25. Orlando Pride -- Tori Hansen, DEF (University of North Carolina)
  26. Washington Spirit -- Nicole Douglas, FWD (Arizona State University)
  27. Angel City FC -- Angelina Anderson, GK (University of California)
  28. Washington Spirit -- Lyza Bosselmann, GK (Gonzaga)
  29. Racing Louisville FC -- Jaydn Edwards, MID/FWD (University of New Mexico)
  30. Washington Spirit -- Riley Tanner, MID/FWD (University of Alabama)
  31. Racing Louisville FC -- Riley Mattingly Parker, MID/FWD (University of Alabama)
  32. Portland Thorns -- Lauren Kozal, GK (Michigan State University)
  33. San Diego Wave FC -- Lauren Brzykcy, GK (University of California, Los Angeles)
  34. Washington Spirit -- Lena Silano, FWD (Long Beach State University)
  35. Kansas City Current -- Mykiaa Minniss, DEF (Washington State University)
  36. Houston Dash -- Lindsy Jennings, DEF (Louisiana State University)
- ## Round 4
37. Washington Spirit -- Civana Kuhlmann, FWD (University of Colorado)
  38. Kansas City Current -- Ella Shamburger, DEF (Vanderbilt University)
  39. Orlando Pride -- Summer Yates, MID/FWD (University of Washington)
  40. Washington Spirit -- Delaney Graham, DEF/MID/FWD (Duke University)
  41. Orlando Pride -- Kristen Scott, MID/FWD (University of Central Florida)
  42. Kansas City Current -- Rylan Childers, MID (Kanas University)
  43. Chicago Red Stars -- Sophie Jones, MID (Duke University)
  44. NJ/NY Gotham FC -- Iliana Hocking, DEF/MID (University of Arizona)
  45. San Diego Wave FC -- Giovanna Demarco, MID (Wake Forest University)
  46. OL Reign -- Natalie Viggiano, MID/FWD (University of Wisconsin)
  47. Kansas City Current -- Ashley Orkus, GK (University of Mississippi)
  48. Houston Dash -- Madelyn Desiano DEF (University of California, Los Angeles)

# Bundesliga continues to excite



By Peter Mann

Currently on their mid-season, winter break, Germany's Frauen-Bundesliga stopped play on 11 December and isn't scheduled to return until 3 February, the current state of play is an, as-you-were scenario.

Tommy Stroot's seven-time league champions, VfL Wolfsburg, are leading the way and, at present at least, are also on course for their first, undefeated season, since 2019-20.

Holding a five-point advantage on second place Bayern Munich, this seasons' Wolfsburg boast a hundred percent record in the league, registering ten-wins-from-ten, and with a goal-difference of +35; three of their stars,

Ewa Pajor (8), Alexandra Popp (6) and Jill Rood (5), are amongst the divisions' top scorers.

In breaking down the German powerhouses Bundesliga record of recent seasons, is rather insightful in itself, and their win-loss record, well, it's just breath-taking.

They've had their challengers as well, Bayern, and Eintracht Frankfurt among them, but, the 'Queens of German Football' will take some toppling; their record, back in 2015-16, when they finished second to Bayern, saw them draw twice and lose five times.

In the six-and-a-half seasons that have elapsed since then, they've lost just seven times, en-route to

lifting five championships, Bayern being the only blot on the title copybook as the Munich giants also tasted championship glory in 2021.

Games won since the conclusion of the 2015-16 campaign -122, and counting!

The largest gap in which they've won by, in recent seasons, was the eight points from Bayern in 2020, whilst in the season before (2019) and like Bayern did when breaking the Wolfsburg stranglehold in 2021, the biggest gap over third place has been an impressive, seventeen points, Hoffenheim holding that position on both occasions.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the table, the pairing of Koln, and USV Jena,

have been seen, albeit briefly, as a ‘yo-yo club’ of sorts of late; Koln were relegated in 2016, 2018 and 2020, whilst also tasting promotion in the intermittent years of 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021, Jena (now Carl Zeiss Jena) on the other-hand, suffered relegation themselves in 2018, 2020 and 2022, with promotions coming in 2019 and 2021.

As for the current, 2022-23 campaign, where does one begin, without looking at the leaders Wolfsburg and their trail of destruction at the top of the table, at the bottom though, the iconic, German women’s club, Turbine Postdam, are certainly suffering.

The two-time Champions League winners, six-time GDR and six-time Bundesliga champions, are cast adrift at the bottom with just the one draw, and one point, from their ten outings thus far, and a goal-difference at -23, they’ve only scored five times.

Their solitary point, a 1-1 draw on the opening day of the season, away to Werder Bremen, back on 18 September 2022; substitute Irena Kuznetsov’s 64 minute opener was cancelled out by the hosts’ Saskia Matheis’ goal ten minutes later.

How the mighty are falling!

Now though, with the dust settling on the festive frivolities, and 2023 getting underway, a top three in the Frauen-Bundesliga of Wolfsburg, Bayern, and Frankfurt, find them separated by just seven points, with two separating second and third alone.

The two rounds of matches in December, prior to the winter break, would see that of Jill Rood notch a treble as leaders Wolfsburg tore apart their third place visitors, Frankfurt, 5-0, and Lea Schuller scored a double as Bayern won 4-0 away to Hoffenheim, at the start of the month.

Riola Xhemaili also scored twice, in the second half, to help her Freiburg side defeat visiting Duisburg 4-1; meanwhile, the weekend before the break saw both Frankfurt and Wolfsburg collect 3-0, home wins, against Postdam and Meppen, respectively, whilst Bayern defeated visiting Bayer Leverkusen 2-0, England’s Georgia Stanway with the opener after thirty minutes.

Top-scoring, prior to the break, was Essen with a 6-0 win away to Duisburg, the visitors racking up six without reply, Vivien Endemann with a second half brace alongside efforts from Julia Debitzki, Natasha Kowalski,

Ramona Meier, and Maria Edwards.

As for the Bundesliga’s leading scorers going into said break, unsurprisingly, it’s a Wolfsburg player topping the pile thus far, in Ewa Pajor, alongside Freiburg’s Janina Minge, on eight goals apiece.

Pajor, is a 26-year-old forward from Poland, she having begun her professional career with Medyk Konin before heading to Germany in 2015, netting more than sixty times in over eighty appearances for the Bundesliga powerhouses.

Having won six league titles, and nine cups, with both clubs, Pajor has also lifted the Istria Cup (2-15) and Women’s U17 Championship (2013) with Poland, for whom she’s played at all levels from U15 upwards, earning seventy caps and scoring over fifty times in the process.

Other players in the scoring charts include that of Popp (Wolfsburg) and Schuller (Bayern) on six, and numerous others on five apiece with Rood (Wolfsburg), and the Frankfurt pairing of Lara Prasnikar and Laura Freigang firing goals.

# EURO 2022 PRINTS



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