

TWFFM

—THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE—

TWFFM

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The Women's Football Magazine is a monthly, digital publication which celebrates women's football in the UK from grassroots to the home nations. Helen has been editing the magazine for five years. In that time she won Sports Journalist of the Year 2019 and has been nominated twice for EVA Business Woman of the Year. She is a mother, wife and an avid Blackpool supporter.

Editor's Note



Welcome to our August/September Edition

Hey everyone and welcome back to another issue of TWFM. It's been a little while since we last had an issue. Due to some personal reasons we didn't have the capacity to get our August issue out so we are back with a bang with a bumper issue (our biggest ever issue!) to make up for it. We have an exclusive interview with Maria Texidor about the Spain fallout following the final of the Women's World Cup. A fascinating read conducted by Helen Jerome. Our writer Jamie was also at the tournament in Australia and New Zealand and shares all his thoughts from the summer's events and gives us an insight into how he found the tournament. The domestic football season is back underway and we are almost ready to start the Barclays Women's Super League but before then there is another international break with the Nations League starting so we certainly are not short of football going forwards, I hope you enjoy the issue, it's been worth the wait!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks
Editor-in-chief



**Exclusive
Interview**





ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

#SeAcabó

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: MARIA TEIXIDOR JUFRESA SPEAKS TO TWFM'S HELEN M JEROME

Maria Teixidor Jufresa was on the FC Barcelona board until 2020, and the major influence in women's football there as they moved to become professional from 2015. As head of Barça Femení from 2018, this lawyer, mediator and businesswoman also helped the club sign some of the best women's footballers from around the world and in Spain – arguably making them the best women's club side on the planet. So they boasted not only Caroline Graham Hansen and Asisat Oshoala, but also Spain stars Alexia Putellas, Mariona, Mapi León, and, until recently, Jenni Hermoso...

She has experienced the beautiful game at its most enchanting, but also the power, corruption and lies at the heart of football. And she knows many of the characters who now loom large in our consciousness – including Jorge Vilda and Luis Rubiales. She firmly believes

that we must galvanise ourselves, and not just talk about the historic moment we're in, but make this into a genuine turning point and time for deep change in women's football, in Spanish society, and far beyond...

First of all, I wonder what was your visceral, gut reaction as you watched the World Cup Final – and what happened after?

I was on holiday in a wonderful Italian village with friends and watching while having lunch – and when the match ended, I was in tears. Because most of this Spanish team is my Barça team; most of these players are the ones I saw growing up in terms of becoming professional. And what they did with the national team was to reach the top of my project. Deep inside, I've been following and building with them, so it was a total achievement. And when the match ended, I was in tears, I could not speak. It was wow,

we did it, and that's the best.

And after the match?

I was eating and had my phone there, and I saw some of the images, but I wasn't concentrating. It wasn't until I got into the hotel that I became aware of all that had happened, and I started receiving messages and images and videos. I was very disturbed. And the next morning when I woke up, in the Italian newspaper the news was the kiss. Not the fact that we had won the World Cup.

So I wrote to Rubiales directly, and told him we deserve better people in power, and that he needed to rectify, to say sorry, and be with the players. I got an answer from him later that day – so the day after – when he had already launched that awful video that was, I think, the worst thing to do. And then he was in this very proud position, of course, "you have written to me



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without hearing what I just said, apologising" and things like that. Saying: "what I did was not wrong". I think he still believes he behaved properly. So he accuses the rest of the world of being wrong, and we are all idiots. And he treated us so badly!

I kept saying: I want a better future for my children, and I need people in power to be role models, and you have not been that. And our conversations stopped then. All of this after my high from the victory.

So from that moment I started working with the union, with UN Women in Spain, and with the Business Association, on which I'm a member of the board. I

I sit on the women and business committee. So from these three positions, I started writing and helping write the statements and it has been non-stop calls, messages, launching statements, having interviews ever since, because this has grown very big.

So the end of my holiday was Rubiales and managing all this! And the most wonderful thing throughout these days has been sorority. I mean, all the groups of women that I have in my WhatsApp and all the people that I know have been reaching out to say: how can I help? And this this makes me almost cry because it's people from university, from the technological sector, from places that you would never

think that they follow football at all or are interested in these things. They even think these things don't matter to the women's revolution... and they were suddenly at our disposal saying ask for whatever you need. Women from the technological world have offered free help to the players to secure their social networks, so all this is happening and it shows how big the movement is. And this is what keeps us very confident that we will reach a different point after this.

We will win?

Yes!

You signed Jenni Hermoso to Barça Femini, and I



wonder if you've been in contact since all this happened?

I've been in contact with Alexia Putellas, but not directly with Jenni. Although I have been in contact with her through the specific women footballers' union [FUTPRO] that was launched a year and a half ago, in December 2021. This organisation has been representing her interests in this matter and helping her ever since. Jenni now plays in Mexico, but after everything that has happened she's quite protected by corporate lawyers and everyone, so she's not answering calls and things like that.

Presumably you'd already come across Luis Rubiales

and Jorge Vilda while working at Barça – what sort of dealings did you have with them?

Rubiales was appointed after I entered the Barça board. So we first met at the National Cup Final in 2017. At the beginning he showed his will to provide for and build better football for women. I remember at that first meeting, I told him: we needed a federation with more women, because we met in this in the presidential box in the stadium. And it was filled with these old men with big bellies, just eating food. I said: have a look. We need women in power, we need women here. And he said: give me time, I need to adapt the structure to help. So we worked well together then. Because we were building,

and aligned in our objectives.

Also, there have always been these stories appearing about corruption cases, him paying for private parties with women, with costs assumed by the federation. Stories that kept popping up that show you that we still have this patriarchal organisation of federations in sports in Spain, and this very machista (male chauvinist) world in power. So, although I know who the person behind him is now, I had quite a correct relationship with Rubiales when I was in office at FC Barcelona.

What about Jorge Vilda?

With Jorge Vilda when I was at Barça we had some issues with



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his training of the players, because we had launched a very ambitious plan for them to train. Lyon was one of our models to follow because they did it so well, training the players and building them as strong sports-women. We dedicated a lot of effort to the women's training and nutrition and everything you have to take care of when training with any sports-person. Good preparation, but also physiotherapists, psychologists, doctors and nutritionists – the whole thing. We had a very high standard – and the federation did not. They lacked nutritionists, they didn't have a psychologist; they didn't have dedicated people.

There were some injuries to players at the national team gatherings, and that worried us. Of course, you need to provide the players when the national team asks, but you want them back in good condition, because you have a full season. So we had issues with what they did. Our doctors' team and our staff constantly requested adjustments and changes so that we could make sure they had the best conditions. It's taken a long time for the federation to set up a proper structure and staff that's dedicated to all these aspects. And Barça had a lot to do with this.

It feels strange to me is how much nepotism there is – because Vilda works under his father Angel and Rubiales appointed and then sacked his uncle Juan. Is that normal because it feels like their power is all too concentrated?

Absolutely. Yeah. The law professor Jose Luis Perez Triviño has been writing recently in the Spanish press. He was appointed to the ethical committee of the federation, and dismissed after they arranged for the National Cup to be played in Saudi Arabia. The President didn't allow them to investigate, and started saying that the ethical committee had nothing to tell him. The professor describes Rubiales' ruling within the federation as one of an emperor. It's like "I have absolute power, I decide who is anywhere. I buy people, for them to vote for me" and things like that. So it's a lot about nepotism, a lot about favours.

So maybe Rubiales has changed since you first knew him... That word "emperor" is fantastic. Emperor. Yes, I think it's a good image of what you get. And you have to think of Rubiales, a Second Division player, as someone who didn't make it as a footballer.

And for a small team in Scotland as well, Hamilton. Yes, and suddenly, he arrives at

this federation (RFEF). And he's got this huge salary – in between what he's earning at the Spanish Federation, and what he's earning at UEFA, I think he gets 600,000 euros a year, which he cannot dream of earning anywhere else in any other post in Spain. And besides that, other costs are paid for him, like, he has help for his home, because he's not from Madrid. And he even has a percentage on the deals he closes for the federation. He's making a lot of money. And, of course, he doesn't want to be dismissed because he's not easily going to find another job with this level of earnings.

So you're implying that when he said Jorge Vilda could get another half a million euros – the idea is that all those people will keep him in place if he keeps them – all slapping each other's backs? Yes, of course. Absolutely.

The other thing that's weird is the idea that he – and in a way Vilda – are the victims, who've really suffered. Almost dismissing the fact that the women won it for them. "It's so awful how they've turned on me, the false feminists..." Is that just a way misogyny is kicking back? The whole thing for us is unbelievable. I mean, what we saw him saying at that assembly in front of his daughters... telling them what is and isn't



feminism, according to their father, the good person he is, how you should behave. He has insulted the whole nation. I think that his behaviour, not only the kiss, but the way he behaved in the presidential box next to our queen and one of the princesses and then all the authorities. The way he went off when he gave the medals and then started picking up players and putting them on his shoulder like potato sacks.

Do you think that these guys, particularly these two, are the problem? Or is it symptomatic of a bigger problem in Spanish women's football, and beyond? Zambia, for example?

Exactly. We've heard lots of stories during this World Cup. As far as the Spanish Federation is concerned, I think it's a structural problem. And that's what we are pushing for from the union. I'm also a member of UN Women in Spain and the National

Committee, and we have launched a statement that's gathered lots of support, and I've spoken to the Sports Ministry about structural changes, because I think that's what we need. It's a symptom of behaviour that has been going on for decades, and perceived as normal by the men in power. Because if we see the picture, the Spanish Federation has no women at the top. So the image at the assembly was only the secretaries.

Just a handful of women and around 140 men, I think?

Yes, but it's the women who have no real power – they are not heard and not supported. So a new law has been enacted in Spain, a new sports law that will come into force on January 1st, to get equal representation in governing bodies and federations. They require at least 40 per cent are women.

Wow, 40 per cent, that's

going to be a change.

Yeah, this is going to be a change and this is only the translation of the equality law that we already have into sports law. And that already says that you have to have an equal representation. We are living through a revolution here because this has started a movement in Spain that has allowed many women in different fields to speak up and explain how profound this is – how rooted this is in the professional world, not only in federations.

Women journalists have been writing a lot about how they weren't able to help the players better over the last year, where 15 players left the national team because they didn't agree with Jorge Vilda's way of training. This had some coverage in the press, but they rapidly treated the women as childish and selfish and only seeking attention – not as proper professionals claiming for better conditions. The journalists have said: it happened because in our media, the boards of our press companies are full of these men, and we have all gone through these sexual aggressions and harassment. So they've started a movement where lots of women are raising their voices. This is interesting because it expands from the football world to the whole professional



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world, not only in Spain. I think that will widen, but very importantly in Spain. It has brought all these issues to the agenda.

Even on the opening of the news on television you're seeing men asking themselves what's going wrong, and what are they doing wrong, and how you should behave in the 21st Century. And some of them wanting to go back 100 years to what they call 'normal'.

This moment has brought so much to the table, that we need to be focused so we don't lose this opportunity to make deep and profound changes. I think that politics has a lot to do – and the government has to enforce all of the laws and mechanisms to make this change happen. Otherwise the fear is – and these footballers have this fear deep inside – that Rubiales will be dismissed and someone will replace him who is the same.

The guy in charge now is just one of Rubiales' people, though isn't he?

Yes, Pedro Rocha is one of his people. I don't know him directly, but I've been speaking with [federation Vice President] Rafael del Amo, who was in charge of women's football. He resigned after Rubiales' speech, but he's now supporting his successor. He tells me he's a nice guy and

a proper person who can handle this. He's supporting him and planning to come back with a proper plan for women. I think Rafael del Amo is a good director and can do good for women. But besides him, I think you need to have deep change in the representatives in that federation.

Some people are calling it the #metoo moment for Spain. Although I wonder if it's a #metoo moment actually for football. Though it seems even bigger?

For me, the comparison is good, because the #metoo movement was started by the media and the entertainment industry. And here the #SeAcabó movement – or 'Enough is Enough' – has been started by the footballers themselves, so this has reached all spheres of society. We are seeing a movement – and a worldwide movement directly focused to the whole world.

Sarina Wiegman said the game has grown so much – and there's still a long way to go in women's football and in society. And it feels like she put her finger on the whole thing.

Yeah, yeah, that's what we're saying. Absolutely agree.

One sportswriter said of the Spanish FA (RFEF), UEFA, and FIFA: "Burn it all down!" She said the structures of football need tearing down and it feels

like you're in line with that.

Yes, we need deep change, because when you see the differences in the treatment of women and men in sports, it's so unfair. When launching the Barça professionalisation and speaking to, for example, sponsors, you always got the feedback that: "we'll invest in women when you generate money, because nowadays it's only men generating money".

This made me think a lot about how much we as a society had invested in men to create that market and the riches that now seem self-generated. But football in Spain would not exist without stadiums being built with public money; it would not exist without public television having broadcast matches, generating this product. So the whole thing has been paid with my mum's taxes. And nobody asked her: "Do you want it to be invested in men's or women's?"

Now it seems we're asking women to provide all this out of nothing. It's like "we're not going to invest in you, just show that you can do it". This is not fair at all. If we've invested so much public money in generating opportunities for men, then we should be doing the same for women.

When it comes to the international governing bodies that organise the game, they have



the power. They could decide to split their budgets 50-50, and make a faster growth for women's football. But instead of that, it's pouring in a little bit every year, and saying that yes, okay, you can do better. I think we lack a strong conviction that we have to do that, because it's what society is clamouring for and what we deserve as human beings. For me, it's about will; if you want it, it will happen. And all this slowing things down has a lot to do with men not wanting to lose their position, their power – and their money.

Did you experience sexism

and discrimination when working in Spanish football?

Yes, of course. I always speak about when I had my first lunch with Real Madrid. We had a clásico match and waited for Madrid's board of directors to arrive. And I was the only woman in the room. So our president Bartomeu, because of the shape of the place, put us into a semi-circle and closed the circle so that when the Madrid people arrived, they would shake hands with everyone in the circle, and end with the president. I was facing my president and two of the Madrid representatives skipped me totally. They said

hello to the man on my left than hello to the man on my right, and did not see me at all. My face was like: what's going on? And I remember the president seeing me, and when the first of these men got to the president, he said: "Oh, you've seen Maria, haven't you? She's our representative." At that moment, the board member went totally red, turned to me and said: "Of course. Hello, Maria, how are you?" But it was like I was totally invisible.



TIMELINE: key moments around the Spanish post-victory fallout

Words: Helen Jerome

SATURDAY August 19

One day before the World Cup Final, FIFA president Gianni Infantino has a message: "I say to all the women – and you know I have four daughters, so I have a few at home – I say to all the women that you have the power to change. Pick the right battles, pick the right fights."

SUNDAY August 20

World Cup Final: Spain beat England 1-0 in Sydney.

Spain coach Jorge Vilda grabs a female staff member's breast during the celebrations, in video footage taken seconds after Olga Carmona's 29th-minute goal.

On the final whistle, the RFEF (Spanish FA) President Luis Rubiales grabs his crotch in a victory gesture, standing alongside the Spanish Queen Letizia and her 16-year-old daughter, Princess Sofia.



Rubiales carries Real Madrid attacker Athenea del Castillo over his shoulder ("like a sack of potatoes")

Rubiales holds the back of Jenni Hermoso's head with both hands and kisses her on the mouth on the podium, during the medals ceremony.

On Instagram, Hermoso says: "I didn't like it."

RFEF tweets support of Jorge Vilda, "Vilda IN", before the players can even do their post-match interviews.

RFEF releases a statement claiming to quote Hermoso saying she had no problem with what was "a mutual gesture that was totally spontaneous due to the immense joy of winning a World Cup" and "there should be no more made of this gesture of friendship and gratitude".

Rubiales says on Spanish radio:

"We do not pay any attention to idiots and stupid people. It was a peck between two friends celebrating something. (The criticism) is really all nonsense, (from) dickheads and dumbasses. These are just losers who did not know how to see the positive side."

MONDAY August 21

Minister of culture and sport, Miquel Iceta, says it's unacceptable to congratulate soccer players by kissing them on the lips.

Minister of equality, Irene Montero, accuses Rubiales of "a form of sexual violence that women suffer on a daily basis and until now invisible, and that we cannot normalise."

Hermoso rejects the chance to appear in Rubiales' 'apology' video despite him begging "My position is at stake, do it for my daughters" and constant pressure on her family from Vilda.

Rubiales puts out a video message apologising to any “people who felt hurt” by his actions and claiming it was “normal, natural and not at all with any bad faith”.

TUESDAY August 22

Turns out the RFEF totally fabricated the Hermoso quote in their statement.

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez joins the calls for Rubiales to resign from his position

UEFA executive committee member Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, says the situation has been blown out of proportion. “What he did was – with all due respect – absolutely okay. I remember when we won the Champions League the last time, I got to kiss men. Not on the mouth, but with joy.”

Spanish publication El Confidencial accuses Rubiales of taking Mexican painter Roberta Lobeira on a six-day holiday to New York, pretending it was a work trip, and charging RFEF for the cost of the flights, hotel and rental car.

WEDNESDAY August 23

Former colleague Tamara Ramos (general director of Futbolistas ON players' union) speaks about her earlier experiences with Rubiales: “I've suffered humiliations and blows because of Rubiales. He told me in front of everyone: have you come here to put on your knee protectors?... what colour

underwear are you wearing? Being a woman, in the world of football there aren't many of us. With the power he held and holds today, it was very difficult to face him.”

Spanish women footballers' union FIFPRO demands FIFA's ethics committee investigate Rubiales' behaviour, saying: “Uninitiated and uninvited physical approaches towards players are not appropriate or acceptable in any context, and especially not when they are put in a position of vulnerability by a person who holds a position of power over them in their workplace.”

Spain's women's football league, La Liga F, joins calls for Rubiales to resign, saying: “One of the greatest feats in the history of Spanish sport has been tainted by the embarrassing behaviour of the highest representative of Spanish football who, once again, and guided by his continuous and habitual desire for the spotlight, has revealed to not be up to the position he occupies. A boss grabbing his employee by the head and kissing her on the mouth simply cannot be tolerated. It's not just about the kiss. Celebrating the triumph on the presidential balcony while holding his genitals next to the queen is unacceptable and disgusting.”

RFEF denounces Tamara Ramos' “false accusations” and says it is filing “appropriate criminal actions” against her.

RFEF calls an extraordinary general assembly for Friday August 25

THURSDAY August 24

FIFA announces it has opened disciplinary proceedings against Rubiales.

FRIDAY August 25

Luis Rubiales unexpectedly refuses to resign at the extraordinary RFEF assembly – “No voy a dimitir – I'm not going to resign” FIVE times – and is clapped and cheered by pretty much everyone in the room, including Spain's men's and women's managers, Luis de la Fuente and Jorge Vilda.

Rubiales hits out at “false feminism” and a “social assassination” of his character, saying “I don't deserve this manhunt.”

Rubiales promises Jorge Vilda a new four-year contract at half a million euros a year.

81 Spain internationals – including the entire 2023 World Cup-winning squad – confirm their intention not to play for the women's national team until Rubiales resigns.

Their letter includes a statement from Hermoso, outlining she had not consented to the kiss or lifted Rubiales in the air. “I will not tolerate that my word is doubted, much less words that I have not said invented.”

Hermoso later adds that Rubiales' words are “categorically false and part of the manipulative culture

Hermoso later adds that Rubiales' words are "categorically false and part of the manipulative culture that he himself has generated."

RFEF threatens Hermoso with legal action.

SATURDAY August 26

FIFA provisionally suspends Rubiales for 90 days.

FIFA order Rubiales and the RFEF to refrain from contacting Hermoso.

RFEF doubles down on its accusation against Hermoso at length, then deletes it.

The entire Spain coaching staff of eleven at the World Cup resign, with the exception of head coach Vilda.

Jorge Vilda releases a statement condemning Rubiales' actions, but refusing to quit himself.

MONDAY August 28

Spanish prosecutors open a sexual assault investigation into Rubiales.

All 19 of RFEF's regional heads call for Rubiales to resign, interim President Pedro Rocha takes charge, and they promise to make structural



changes for the women's game.

Rubiales' mother Angeles Bejar goes on hunger strike in the Divine Pastor Church in Motril, calling recent reporting on him an "inhumane and bloodthirsty witchhunt that they are carrying out with my son, something he does not deserve."

TUESDAY August 29

FIFA press for 15-year suspension of RFEF President Rubiales

Huge protests in central Madrid showing support and solidarity with Hermoso, and demanding change. #SeAcabó. Enough is enough.

WEDNESDAY August 30

Luis Rubiales' uncle Juan accuses him of numerous irregularities. Juan was chief of staff to his

nephew from 2018 to 2020, and things ended on bad terms. "He's a man obsessed with power, luxury, money and even women. I think he needs a social re-education program."

Rubiales is accused by a leading Spanish referee Xavier Estrada Fernandez of being one of three senior Spanish FA officials to have allegedly diverted €1.92m of money set aside for officiating for other purposes.

THURSDAY August 31

Rubiales' mother ends her hunger strike after two-and-a-half days

UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin says: "His case is in the hands of the disciplinary body of the International Federation... It saddens me that an event like this overshadows

the victory of the Spanish selection. Of course, what he did was inappropriate. We all know it."

At the UEFA awards ceremony Aitana Bonmati and Sarina Wiegman deliver harsh criticism of Rubiales: "We must not allow these abuses of power"

FRIDAY September 1

Spain's national men's team manager, Luis de la Fuente apologises for Rubiales support – "I received harsh criticism and it was deserved." He said his actions were a product of the "psychological stress" of the situation he found himself in and that if he could go back he would behave differently, although he did not explain what he was applauding.

Spain's sports court, Administrative Tribunal for Sport (TAD), agrees to investigate Rubiales through state-run National Sports Council (CSD). TAD says it considers the behaviour in question "serious".

In the main square of Motril – Rubiales' home town – young men hurl abuse at feminist protesters and the women reply with chants of "fascists and machistas [sexists] out!"

... and no doubt more to come, with a hopefully positive outcome.



Support for Jenni Hermoso and the Spanish team post-World Cup...



Megan Rapinoe:

On the biggest stage, where you should be celebrating, Jenni has to be physically assaulted by this guy. There was another picture that signals such a deep level of misogyny and sexism in that federation and in [Rubiales] at the final whistle, just grabbing his crotch. What kind of upside down world are we in?

Alexia Putellas:

This is unacceptable. It's over. With you teammate, Jenni. Se acabó.

Jess Carter:

It's sad that such a special moment is being tarnished... and ruined by that moment.

Beth Mead:

The game, the Spanish players deserve more, no players should have to endure this. It's unacceptable, and also laughable that these men still are allowed such power. Jenni we are all with you.

Alex Morgan

I'm disgusted by the public actions of Luis Rubiales. I stand by @Jennihermoso and the Spanish players. Winning a World Cup should be one of the best moments in these players' lives but instead it's overshadowed by assault, misogyny, and failures by the Spanish federation.

Lia Wälti:

So does he actually think he is the victim? The whole world has seen what happened. Makes me feel sick!

Casey Stoney:

FIFA, UEFA, anybody who's involved, step in because it's not acceptable... something needs to change.

Gary Lineker:

Could the RFEF possibly have handled this more wretchedly? A masterclass in turning a triumph into a disaster. Utter shambles!

Carlos Alcaraz (world No 1 in tennis):

In my opinion, these are attitudes that people in high-ranking positions should not display. Let's hope it gets resolved soon, as the women's team has made a historic achievement and has not received much credit because of what happened.

Ada Hegerberg:

This is the UEFA Vice-President, re-elected in the executive committee earlier this year, dropping that horrendous speech. If you don't see the issue, you are part of it. My thoughts with the players who should be celebrating, and with the ones who decided to stay home. Enough.

Hedvig Lindahl:

This fight is not only Spain's fight. This is a fight for everyone against toxic culture in football. Rubiales is a symbol of something much bigger,

the system that needs to go!

Merel van Dongen (Dutch international):

Like the great Infantino once said: Women pick the right fights! Oooohh how the Spanish women are picking this fight. Proud to see how women, men, media and politics in Spain finally unite to change something that hasn't been right for years. Se acabó. It's time for justice

Vivianne Miedema (on FIFA suspending Rubiales for 90 days): A first step into the right direction. But still waiting for the UEFA to do the right thing. The RFEF needs looking into and it's time to rebuild and create a safe environment for everyone. We can't allow this to ever happen again. We're all with you @Jennihermoso

Kosovare Asllani:

The Women's World Cup has highlighted how many sexual abusers there are in charge of women's soccer! Players has to be protected from sexual abuse and other forms of physical and emotional abuse! Action must be taken, abusers must be forced out! Enough is enough! "Let's fight to the death."

Jessica Houara:

This humiliation should not remain without

sanction and these behaviours should no longer be protected.

Hector Bellerin:

The narcissist never believes they have made a mistake, they are able to lie, manipulate the truth & make the victim guilty in order to retain their power over others.

Mapi Leon:

It has not been necessary to spend a lot of time to see that what was demanded a few months ago was not a simple tantrum. The images speak for themselves, and I don't think there is much more to add. It is unacceptable. For all the women, with you @Jennihermoso

Aitana Bonmati:

There are limits that cannot be crossed and we cannot tolerate this. We are with you

Vicky Losada:

We are with you @Jennihermoso this is a situation that could be faced by any women around the world. Enough is enough!

Caroline Graham Hansen:

@jenniehermoso with you! This is all lies. We all see what really happened.

Sandra Panos:

It's over. Unacceptable what happened this morning. It is unfortunate to come to this to

believe that the complaints in recent months had a reason. For all, we are with you Jenni

Cata Coll:

What a shame that the 23 footballers are the protagonist... it's over! With you until death, Jenni

Irene Paredes:

Everyone saw what happened. The victim is you. I'm with you friend.

By Sunday 27th August, #SeAcabó is on the jerseys of Sevilla men's football team and is a hashtag used by the UN. Cadiz players and SC Freiburg fans also show their support.

Sarina Wiegman dedicates her Coach of the Year award to the Spanish team:

This team deserves to be celebrated and listened to... The game has grown so much, but there's also still a long way to go in women's football and in society. We all know about the issues around the Spanish team and it really hurts me.

Lise Klavness, Norwegian

Football Federation president:

A century of misogyny once again overshadows the joy of the game... The past week might be remembered as a dark moment in women's football, but it could also be a catalyst for positive change. I believe the energy from this movement

will inspire young girls and women in football and sports management. The Spanish and other international players' responses show promising determination.

Xavi:

Firstly, unconditional support for Jenni & players in the women's game. Secondly, condemn the behaviour of the RFEF president, which was totally unacceptable. Thirdly, express sadness that it has taken away from historic World Cup win.

Andres Iniesta:

I believe that we cannot tolerate

performances like the ones we have seen, which have tarnished a milestone as big as winning a World Cup. I cannot imagine the feeling that all the players of the national team must have right now seeing how they are not talking about the great tournament they had and the fantastic football they taught us all. It's a shame that a beautiful story that many players have built over so many years has become dirty.

Instead, we have had to put up with a president who has held on to his position, who has not admitted that his behaviour has been

unacceptable and that it is damaging the image of our country and our football around the world.

Isco:

If it was not consented to, I think it is an abuse of power and I send my full support to Jenni.

Simon Kuper in the FT:

Rubiales' kiss was atypical only in that he did it in public. Usually, sexual harassment in football happens behind closed doors. But the kiss needs to be the sport's "enough" moment. Women's football finally has the power to shove aside sexists.







BARCLAYS WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

Kirby honoured by BNU University



Chelsea FC and England national player Fran Kirby has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), joining the first all-female line up of honorary graduates since BNU began awarding honorary titles in 2001.

The Lioness previously attended BNU to study for a Foundation Degree in Applied Sports Coaching Science which she completed in 2015. This week she was on campus to receive the university's highest accolade in recognition of her successful sporting career.

Kirby received an enthusiastic welcome back to BNU, the University Women's Football Team joking that they were 'poaching' the star by presenting her with a specially commissioned BNU football shirt featuring her name and Chelsea FC player number. This, potentially making her one of the highest profile 'ringers' in student football.

The inspirational footballer said of the return to her former campus "It's surreal to be back at the University that I studied at not that long ago and a real treat to be here. My time at BNU was a great experience, I made many friends and I learnt so much both about sports coaching and beyond.

"BNU supported me through my studies, providing a grounding that has stood me in good stead ever since. Both in my professional playing career and personal life too so being back here today is a bit of a pinch me moment."

She continued "Looking ahead, I hope to inspire many more young people to believe in themselves and their dreams even when they might feel impossible, because as I found, thanks to the support of BNU and many others around me, where there is a will there is always a way, because we are all more capable than we know!"

Fran joined hundreds of graduating BNU students collecting their degrees in the presence of the University's most senior staff and academics. The star's former lecturers remembering her fondly, commenting on her cheerful disposition, warmth and humble nature.

Paul Morgan, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Student Experience at BNU and one of Fran's previous lecturers and mentors said "I'm thrilled to see Fran recognised in this way, and it's especially great to have her back at BNU where she was such a fantastic student. Fran truly embodies all that we value here at the university, through her commitment, determination, and personal resilience, her achievements to date are nothing short of inspiring. She stands as an exemplary role model to not only our students but to young people and aspiring athletes around the world, and we are beyond proud to recognise her with this award."

Evolution and revolution of the WSL

Words: Clare McEwen



When playing football in the garden, my son always asks which player I am.

"Karen Carney," I reply.

And when Karen Carney talks, I listen.

Carney's recent report on the future of women's football is exciting. Her recommendations are clear and sensible. The "Raising the Bar" report provides a strong foundation on which to build the future of women's football in England.

The report outlines a multi-pronged approach including reforms to the WSL and Championship. These leagues are no strangers to change. Initially introduced in 2011 to replace the FA Women's Premier League National Division, FA WSL1 was played through the summer. Sixteen teams applied to join, but at that time there were only eight places. Arsenal,

Birmingham City, Bristol Academy, Chelsea, Doncaster Rovers Belles, Everton, Lincoln Ladies, and Liverpool were given the honours.

In 2014, the second tier FA WSL2 was introduced, made up of 10 teams. Controversially, Doncaster Rovers Belles were relegated from the top-flight this season. One game in they were told no matter what position they ended the season, they would be the ones to lose their spot to incoming Manchester City for the following season. Understandably, since City didn't even win WSL2 that season, people suspected money influenced this decision, showing a complete disregard for the integrity of women's football. Changing teams in a league at will doesn't smack of a long-term, professional strategy.

In 2016, the third tier of women's

football - the FA Women's Premier League - was linked to WSL1 and 2 for the first time when Brighton & Hove Albion were promoted to WSL2. The WSL became a winter league, finally getting it in line with traditional football seasons.

Before the 2018-19 season, WSL1 became "fully professional" (more on this later) and was renamed as FA Women's Super League; with WSL2 renamed FA Women's Championship. Teams had to reapply for their WSL status, ensuring they could meet the new criteria including forming academies and offering players a minimum of 16 contracted hours per week.

The WSL was extended to 12 teams for the 2019-20 season, with Manchester United and Tottenham promoted from the Championship. The FA launched the FA Player service so live games could be watched all around the world. The

following year, Sky Sports and the BBC got in on the action, making a landmark deal to broadcast WSL games. In 2022, the leagues were rebranded as Barclays WSL and Barclays Championship to reflect the new major sponsor.

This potted history demonstrates how these leagues have evolved since their inception. From randomly switching teams around when the mood suited, to minimum contracted hours and a system of developing youth players through academies. The introduction television broadcasting deals was a major step forward. But as Carney's report shows, there is now a need for a considered and structured approach to growth and development. It's time for a revolution.

Raising the Bar spells out the need to raise standards across the game with improvements in corporate structures, the professional environment, fan experiences, and at grassroots level. Carney calls for the top two leagues to be fully professional - currently some Championship teams are semi-professional meaning players have to get jobs to support themselves. "Professional" needs to mean elite training facilities, top class physiotherapy and medical facilities, minimum salaries, more contracted hours, and full union representation. As Carney says, there must be an improvement in the minimum operating standards within women's football.

According to the report, this also means a reduction in disparities in salaries, improved physical and mental wellbeing of players, narrowing the gap in standards currently found between tiers one and two, improved parental packages, support for players as they head towards retirement and leave the professional game, and generally valuing players more highly.

Carney also wants to see a dedicated television slot for matches, preferably something high profile like the 3pm Saturday slot. She says the talent pathway must be fixed, ensuring an effective pipeline of generation after generation of top-class international players coming through the ranks but recognises the need for a strategic partner to invest in grassroots football to enable this. The government has a role to play too, delivering on promises for equal sports opportunities in schools - and schools being transparent about their participation rates. This, in turn, would lead to greater diversity at grassroots level, feeding into better representation across the board in women's football (on and off the pitch) - something Carney's report recognises needs considerable improvement. Clubs need to better value and support fans too: the report states the FA should raise minimum standards for fans as well as players.

Carney has laid out what her research shows needs to change. The next step is to ensure action is taken to start making these

changes. No easy task and one that needs a big investment. Carney estimates women's football could be worth billions in the future, so any investment could be a sound one, along with the right organisation to run it.

The FA acknowledges this need for the right organisation and accepts it's too thinly spread to take it on. There are plans to pass over control of the WSL and Championship to a new subsidiary company soon. The new company would be set up as a business with a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior executives to run it. The company would be independent of the FA, but the FA would remain a shareholder. This would allow the FA to use their resources to focus on grassroots football, encouraging girls into the game and developing a sustainable pipeline of talent. A Professional Game Working Group has already been set up to develop a long-term vision and plan for the future.

As Karen says, actioning her recommendations will help organic growth of the game. These changes will lead to cyclic improvements in the standard of play, bringing in larger audiences, new investment opportunities, better TV rights deals, and commercial partnerships. A few revolutions of this cycle is all it takes for meaningful change.

The Rise and Rise of Kerr

By Abbie Smith



Chelsea's number 20 is arguably one of the world's greatest attackers. Since the start of her career, she has grown from strength to strength, surpassing milestones and etching her name into the history books. Currently, she is playing in the World Cup on home soil, itching to make an impact and bring victory home with the Matildas. Kerr started her career at Perth Glory at the age of 15, making 22 appearances and scoring 5 times. She joined for Sydney FC and Western New York Flash before returning to Perth from 2014-2019, also making appearances for Sky Blue FC and Chicago Red Stars respectively. Her standout performances in the NWSL racked up numerous personal accolades, including three consecutive NWSL golden boot awards, Player of the Year, and MVP.

It wasn't until she joined Chelsea that the world started to take note. The attacker made her debut for the WSL giants against Reading on the 5th January 2020, assisting twice in a 3-1 win. She opened her account two k.

weeks later against rivals Arsenal with a delicate header. During her first season, Kerr helped the Blues to win the League Cup and the WSL title, despite the season being cut short thanks to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Kerr returned fitter and stronger than ever the following season, finishing the campaign as Chelsea's top scorer with 28 goals in all competitions. She was awarded the golden boot on the final day of the season after netting in their 5-0 title-winning thrashing of Reading. The Matildas star led Chelsea to retain their Continental Tyres League cup after becoming the first player to score a hattrick in the final, celebrating with her signature back flip. The world's stage was now hers.

In almost identical fashion, Kerr picked up the golden boot, this time upping her tally and bagging 32 goals in 34 games. She helped Chelsea to win back-to-back WSL titles by scoring twice against Manchester United on the final day in 2021/2022.

Sam Kerr shows no signs of slowing down. Her dedication to the game and her craft has rewarded her with the captaincy at both club and country level. Kerr made her international debut at just 15 and is still the only male or female Australian player to score a hat-trick at a World Cup after scoring five times at the 2019 tournament.

It is no surprise that the Australian was named Best Women's Player on the Planet by the Guardian in 2019. Her physical prowess and never-say-die attitude is what makes her so popular amongst fans and feared by opposition. When watching a Chelsea game, it is near impossible to take your eyes off her. The way she moves on the ball, glides past defenders like silk, and always manages to find the target is a special. Rarely is there a player who can do everything well.

With all eyes on Australia after their progression into the Round of 16, will playing at home be the drive Kerr needs to take her country all the way to the final?



THE LIFE OF A SUPER FAN

This month I spoke to dedicated Tottenham Hotspur supporter Phoebe. When she isn't at a Spurs game, Phoebe can be found honing her craft. Recently, she won a 1500 meter race, lapping most of the field and winning 'Athlete of the Year'. In the future, Phoebe would love to work in sports, maybe even within the football world. Remember the name.

Who is your favourite player and why?

My favourite Spurs player has to be Beth England. Since she joined in January, she's had such an incredible impact on the club and has been able to really showcase her skill - which is why she ended up being picked for the World Cup squad. On the wider stage, there are a few names I could pick, but I'm going to go for Keira Walsh. In my opinion, she's one of the best in the world. At the Euros she was able to demonstrate her talent on such a big stage, contributing to the win after playing exceptionally in the final. She is such a prominent figure on the pitch, not only with England but with Barcelona as well. It will be exciting to see what she will do over the coming season.

What is the best game that you've seen live?

For me, the best game that I have seen live was this year's FA Cup final between Chelsea and Manchester United. The match was incredible, with no clear winner being established for the majority of the game, making it very entertaining to watch all the way to the final whistle. It was a great experience to be there, not only watching the match, but also to see how much the game has grown over the past few years. I remember being at Meadow Park a few years ago with only a couple of hundred people watching. Getting the opportunity to watch a sold out final at Wembley was unbelievable.

What is your most valuable piece of women's football memorabilia?

In terms of value to me personally, it's between an England bear signed by Lucy Bronze and an old Spurs shirt signed by many of the current women's squad.

If you could sign one rival player for Spurs, who would it be and why?

If I could sign one rival player for Spurs it would have to be Lauren James. For Chelsea, she has had an incredible season. She is creative and also some of her plays are unpredictable, making her so hard to defend against. She's still so young and has an amazing future ahead of her. For England, she has been selected for every squad this year, and earning her place each game she plays.

What was the first Spurs game you went to? What was the score?

Since I was very little, my dad has taken me to White Hart Lane to watch games, immersing me in football from a young age. The first time I watched Spurs women play was on the in February 2019, at the Hive against London Bees. Not only did I get to watch the match, I was also given the opportunity to be both a mascot and a ball girl that same day. To top it off we ended up winning 3:0, it was an amazing first match and a day I love to look back on!

Who do you think will win the golden boot at the World Cup?

Honestly, there are so many incredible players at the World Cup who have the potential to get the Golden Boot. It's so hard to just pick one so I'll nail it down to two, the first of these being Alexandra Popp. At the Euros we saw what she was able to do, coming off a good season with Wolfsburg. She is definitely one of the favourites. The second player is England's one and only Rachel Daly, The season she has had for Villa has been unbelievable, it's going to be exciting to see this talent on the world stage.

Women's Super League transfers



The summer Barclay's Women's Super League transfer window has been a busy one with plenty of comings and goings at the 12 clubs.

The WSL transfer window officially opened on June 26 and closed on September 14.

Here is every transfer...

Arsenal

In

Alessia Russo (from Manchester United); Amanda Ilestedt (from Paris Saint-Germain); Laia Codina (from Barcelona); Cloe Lacasse (from Benfica); Michelle Agyemang (Academy to professional - loaned to Watford); Freya Godfrey (Academy to professional - loaned to Charlton Athletic); Naomi Williams (Academy to professional); Kyra Cooney-Cross (from Hammarby)

Out

Mana Iwabuchi (retired); Rafaelle Souza (to Orlando Pride); Fran Stenson; Anna

Patten (to Aston Villa); Laila Harbert (to Watford); Katie Reid (to Watford); Kaylan Marckese (Bristol City)

Aston Villa

In

Daphne van Domselaar (from FC Twente); Lucy Parker (from West Ham); Anna Patten (from Arsenal); Kirsty Hanson (from Man United); Ebony Salmon (from Houston Dash); Adriana Leon (from Man United)

Out

Evie Rabjohn (to Manchester United); Remi Allen; Emily Gielnik; Chantelle Boye-Hlorkah (to London City Lionesses); Ruesha Littlejohn (to London City Lionesses); Elisha N'Dow; Sian Rogers (to Charlton Athletic); Hannah Hampton (to Chelsea); Meaghan Sargeant (retired); Natasha Harding (retired); Freya Gregory (loaned to Reading for 2023/24)

Brighton

In

Charlie Rule (from Sydney FC); Mackenzie Hawkesby (from Sydney FC); Pauline Bremer (from Wolfsburg); Madison Haley (from Sydney FC); Vicky Losada (from Roma); Chelsea Ferguson (Academy to professional); Maria Thorisdottir (from Manchester United); Li Mengwen (from Jiangsu); Tatiana Pinto (from Levante); Jorelyn Carabali (from Atletico Mineiro); Sophie Baggaley (from Manchester United)

Out

Victoria Williams; Kayleigh Green; Megan Connolly (to Bristol City); Megan Walsh (to West Ham); Danielle Carter (to London City Lionesses); Rebekah Stott (to Melbourne City); Brianna Visalli (to AGF Fodbold); Lydia Williams (to Melbourne Victory); Park Ye-Eun (to Hearts); Zoe Morse (retired); Libby Bance (to Rangers); Lulu Jarvis (loan to Reading)

Bristol City

In

Megan Connolly; Satara Murray (from Racing Louisville); Amy Rodgers (from London City Lionesses); Brooke Aspin (on loan from Chelsea for 2023/24); Kaylan Marckese (on loan from Arsenal for 2023/24); Sille Struck (from Levante Las Planas); Jess Simpson (on loan from Manchester United for 2023/24)

Out

Vicky Bruce (to Western Sydney Wanderers); Elysia Boddy; Aimee Palmer (to Leicester City); Chloe Bull; Lia Cataldo; Lily Green-slade; Jodie Hutton; Brooke Aspin (to Chelsea); Liv Clark (on loan to Watford for the 2023/24 season); Maddi Wilde (on loan to London City Lionesses for the 2023/24 season)

Chelsea

In

Nicky Evrard (from OH Leuven); Mia Fishel (from Tigres); Sjoeko Nusken (from Eintracht Frankfurt); Catarina Macario (from Lyon); Alejandra Bernabe (from Atletico Madrid but has been loaned to Real Sociedad); Hannah Hampton (from Aston Villa); Brooke Aspin (from Bristol City but has been loaned back to the club for their return to the WSL in 2023/24); Cerys Brown (Academy to professional); Charlotte Wardlaw (Academy to

professional but has been loaned to Glasgow City for the 2023/24 season); Lexi Potter (Academy to professional but has been loaned to Crystal Palace for the 2023/24 season); Wieke Kaptein (from Twente FC but has been loaned back to the club for the 2023/24 season); Maika Hamano (loan with Hammarby IF ended due to a shoulder injury)

Out

Magdalena Eriksson (to Bayern Munich); Pernille Harder (to Bayern Munich); Reanna Blades (on loan to Lewes for the 2023/24 season); Emma Thompson (to Southampton); Emily Orman (on loan to Reading for the 2023/24 season); Alsul Abdullina (on loan to Paris FC for the 2023/24 season); Lucy Watson (on loan to Crystal Palace for the 2023/24 season)

Everton

In

Heather Payne (from Florida State Seminoles); Emily Ramsey (from Manchester United); Martina Piemonte (from AC Milan); Emma Bissell (from Florida State Seminoles); Karoline Olesen (from Fortuna Hjørring); Justine Vanhaevermaet (from Reading); Alyssa Aherne (loan from Manchester United)

Out

Leonie Maier (to Hoffenheim); Rikke Sevecke; Izzy Christiansen (retired); Jess Park (back to Man City); Kenzie Weir (on loan to Glasgow City for the 2023/24 season); Gabby George (to Man United)

Leicester City

In

Courtney Nevin (from Hammarby IF); Janina Leitzig (from Bayern Munich); Lena Petermann (from Montpellier); Janice Cayman (from Lyon); Aimee Palmer (from Bristol City); Lize Kop (from Ajax); Jutta Rantala (from Vittsjö GIK); Julie Thibaud (from Bordeaux); Deanne Rose (from Reading)

Out

Erin Simon (retired); Molly Pike; Sophie Barker (to Sheffield United); Natasha Flint (to Liverpool); Kirstie Levell; Charlie Devlin (to Birmingham); Lachante Paul; Jess Sigsworth; Abbie McManus; Connie Scofield; Jemma Purfield; Ellen Jones; Georgina Eaton-Collins

Liverpool

In

Teagan Micah (from FC Rosengård); Marie Höbinger (from FC Zurich); Natasha Flint (from Leicester); Jenna Clark (from Glasgow City); Mia Enderby (from Sheffield United); Grace Fisk (from West Ham); Sophie

Roman Haug (from AS Roma)

Out

Rylee Foster; Charlotte Clarke; Megan Campbell; Ashley Hodson; Carla Humphrey; Leighanne Robe; Rhiannon Roberts (to Real Betis); Faye Kirby (on loan to Aberdeen until the end of 2023); Eartha Cumings (to FC Rosengard); Katie Stengel (to Gotham FC)

Manchester City

In

Jill Roord (from VfL Wolfsburg)

Out

Hayley Raso (to Real Madrid)

Manchester United

In

Hinata Miyazawa (from MyNavi Sendai); Evie Rabjohn (from Aston Villa); Gemma Evans (from Reading); Geyse Da Silva Ferreira (from Barcelona); Keira Barry (Academy to professional); Emma Watson (first professional contract from Rangers); Melvine Malard (loan from Lyon); Phallon Tullis-Joyce (from OL Reign); Gabby George (from Everton); Irene Guerrero (from Atletico Madrid)

Out

Alessia Russo (to Arsenal); Ona Batlle (to Barcelona); Emily Ramsey (to Everton); Tara Bourne; Jade Moore; Estelle Cascarino (end of loan deal from

Paris Saint-Germain); Aissatou Tounkara (heading to Paris Saint-Germain); Grace Clinton (loan to Tottenham for 2023/24 season); Maria Thorisdottir (to Brighton & Hove Albion); Carrie Jones (to Bristol City); Adriana Leon (to Aston Villa); Vilde Boe Risa (to Atletico Madrid); Alyssa Aherne (loan to Everton for 2023/24 season); Sophie Baggeley (to Brighton); Jess Simpson (loan to Bristol City); Martha Thomas (to Tottenham); Ivana Fuso (to Birmingham City)

Tottenham Hotspur

In

Barbova Votíková (from Paris Saint-Germain); Olga Ahtinen (from Linköpings FC); Grace Clinton (on loan from Man United for 2023/24 season); Luana Bühler (from Hoffenheim); Lenna Gunning-Williams (Academy to professional); Martha Thomas (from Manchester United); Zhang Linyan (loan from Wuhan)

Out

Kerys Harrop; Kyah Simon;

Chioma Ubogagu; So-hyun Cho; Esther Morgan; Tinja-Riikka Korpela (to AS Roma); Mana Iwabuchi (retired, was on loan from Arsenal); Cho So-Hyun (to Birmingham)

West Ham United

In

Jessie Stapleton (from Shelbourne); Halle Houssein (Academy to professional, on loan to Reading FC for the 2023/24 season); Megan Walsh (from Brighton & Hove Albion); Katelin Talbert (from SL Benfica, on loan to Djurgårdens IF for the 2023/24 season); Emma Harries (from Reading); Riko Ueki (from Tokyo Verdy Beleza)

Out

Grace Fisk (to Liverpool); Kate Longhurst (to Charlton Athletic); Lucy Parker (to Aston Villa); Brooke Cairns; Sophie Hillyerd; Amalie Thestrup (end of loan from PSV Eindhoven); Halle Houssein (to Reading)







BARCLAYS CHAMPIONSHIP

FOOTBALL UNITES TO IMPROVE PARTICIPANT AND FAN BEHAVIOUR



LOVE FOOTBALL. PROTECT THE GAME.

The English football authorities are introducing a series of measures to help improve the behaviour of players, managers and coaches across the professional, National League system and grassroots game, as well as addressing the issue of football tragedy abuse.

New policies, procedures, and regulations will come into force from the start of the 2023/24 season, to address unacceptable conduct on the pitch, on the side-lines and in the stands, to ensure that the actions of the minority do not spoil the game for all. This builds on the work carried out throughout last season to combat dangerous and illegal fan behaviour, supported by the 'Love Football. Protect the Game' football-wide campaign.

PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOUR

As part of this reset, The FA, Premier League, EFL, Barclays Women's Super League, Barclays Women's Championship, National League System (Steps 1-4) and referees' governing body PG-MOL have collectively launched a new Participant Charter.

The charter which was developed in partnership with the League Managers Association [LMA] and Professional Footballers' Association [PFA] will see stronger measures for players, managers, coaches, support staff and club officials to adhere to on a matchday.

Under the new approach, match officials will be empowered to take more robust action alongside a consistent application of the existing measures when participant behaviour falls below expected standards, and The FA will apply stronger supplementary disciplinary action.

Captains are expected to take responsibility for their teammates encouraging them to play fairly and show respect towards the match officials and their decisions.

Where match officials are confronted, surrounded or their personal space invaded by multiple players, at least one player will receive a card. The FA could also take further action against the club.

New measures will include:

- A new technical area code of conduct to require managers, coaches and other club staff members to behave in a responsible manner.
- Increased financial penalties for serious and repeat offenders.
- Academy scholars to undertake refereeing courses to improve players' education into officiating.

For the grassroots game, The FA has announced new regulations from the start of the 2023/24 season, including point deductions for teams whose players or coaches commit repeated offences of serious misconduct.

The trial of bodycams for referees will continue into the 2023/24 season, while a new code of conduct will be introduced to set behavioural expectations and embed usage.

FAN BEHAVIOUR

To challenge the totally unacceptable presence of football tragedy abuse, for season

2023/24, regulation changes and tough new measures have been introduced which will see people who are found to have committed offences face stadium bans and potential criminal prosecution.

The issue is focused on offensive chanting, gesturing and displaying offensive messages based on football-related tragedies, which causes significant distress to the victims' families, survivors and affected-club supporters. Football authorities, supporter groups and law enforcement organisations, including the police and CPS, have united to crack down on fans who participate in this vile form of abuse.

In addition to bans and criminal sanctions, a range of in-stadium, in-classroom and online resources will be rolled out under the 'Love Football Protect the Game' banner, to educate adults and children alike about the hurt tragedy chanting causes. Ground regulations have also been updated to incorporate references to tragedy chanting.

The game will also continue its efforts to combat dangerous, illegal and unwelcome behaviour off the pitch, be it in the stands or online. Last season a host of new measures were introduced by authorities which saw enhanced sanctions applied for people identified entering the

pitch, using pyros, taking drugs to games, throwing objects or for discriminatory abuse.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PILOT SCHEME

To support the rehabilitation of those identified as having engaged in negative matchday behaviour, a new pilot scheme is now in development phase which will refer young people to a restorative justice education programme that will seek to inform and educate about the impact of their behaviour on others.

The scheme is being run by the Premier League, EFL, Premier League Community Fund and the EFL Trust with support from local police forces and will be trialled at ten clubs across the Premier League, Championship, League One and League Two.

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Speaking ahead of the new season's kick off, leaders from across English football offered insight into the game's renewed efforts to improve participant and fan behaviour:

Mark Bullingham, Chief Executive of the FA, said: "Football has the power to unite and inspire all those that play and watch the game. However, sometimes, this can be negatively impacted by a small minority of players, coaches and fans.

"Our collective approach is to reset this behaviour on the pitch and from the side-lines, whilst giving our referees the respect and protection that they deserve. We are also determined to address the rise in unacceptable behaviour from the stands. Incidents such as dangerous conduct, discrimination, and chanting about football-related tragedies have no place in our game – and can lead to football bans and potential criminal action. Passion, emotion and excitement are fundamental to football, however this must

be shown in the right way. Everyone can play their part, so that together we can create a safe and enjoyable environment for all."

Richard Masters, Chief Executive of the Premier League, said: "Football has an incredible power to inspire people of all ages, and the professional game sets an example to all those who play and watch the sport.

"We want players, managers and fans to continue showing their passion, but these new measures have been introduced to ensure that the line is not crossed when it comes to on-field and technical area behaviour.

"We also strongly believe there is no room for abhorrent tragedy abuse in football. Along with our clubs and the authorities, we are committed to sanctioning those found guilty and will also focus on educating fans of all ages so they understand why this abuse is so hurtful and unacceptable."

Trevor Birch, Chief Executive of the EFL, said: "Players and managers are looked up to and whether on the pitch, on the touchline or in the stands, we all have a role to play in protecting our game and making it an enjoyable place for all to enjoy the matchday.

"With over 22 million attending

EFL games last season, vibrant, lively stadiums and contests on the pitch make our game so great, but there is a line, and we must all do our bit to check, challenge and address behaviour that crosses the line. These measures build on the work of last season, and I hope they improve the matchday experience yet further in what is promising to be another memorable season."

Howard Webb, Chief Refereeing Officer at PGMOL, said: "Football has come together and recognised that it's time to change. There is a collaborative desire from all corners of the game to tackle unacceptable behaviour and we know we must play our part in delivering that.

"Whatever your role or connection with football, that pride and passion for the English game is there for us all and are key reasons why we love it, but the power of example is strong – what's seen in the professional game is replicated at grassroots level. We have a collective duty to set new standards and leave a legacy for the benefit of the game's future."

Jack Pearce, FA Vice Chair and Chair of the National League said, "It is vital that football comes together and acts now, to reset the culture within our game. Unfortunately, the game

has normalised unacceptable behaviour on and off the pitch in recent seasons and the message is clear; we will not allow this to continue. The National League System fully supports this approach and looks forward to seeing the impact it has across our leagues, ahead of what should be another thrilling season for us all".

Douglas Mackay, Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor and Sports National Lead Prosecutor, said "The CPS continues to work closely with the football authorities including the Premier League, Football Association, English Football League, Women's Super League, Women's Championship, National League, police, clubs, and charities to look to stamp out these appalling and horrendous incidents of tragedy chanting and gesturing.

"We want supporters to enjoy and be passionate in following their teams but not cross the line into criminality. The CPS takes this offending extremely seriously as seen in our recent prosecutions of Zakir Hussain, James White and Kieron Darlow.

"We are sending a clear message that we call on so called fans to stop this vile behaviour of a minority which has a terrible impact on the bereaved and communities."

London City Lionesses summer of signings



London City Lionesses retain Lois Heuchan for 2023-24 BWC season

London City Lionesses is pleased to confirm that full-back Lois Heuchan has been retained for the 2023-24 Barclays Women's Championship season. The 27-year-old arrived at Princes Park last summer, joining from local rivals Charlton Athletic.

The Scot quickly solidified her place in the squad in 2022-23, amassing 17 appearances in all competitions under Melissa Phillips and Nikita Runnacles.

Heuchan, who is naturally a left-back, was away from the squad in pre-season, recovering from illness.

The Dumfries-born defender is now back in first-team training and is already enjoying being around the squad.

"It's definitely good to be back with the girls, there are lots of new faces but it has been

really refreshing and there is a really positive feeling around the camp," explained Heuchan.

"Carolina [Morace] and Nicola [Williams] are very tactical and hugely impressive. I've only been in for a couple of days and I've already learned so much.

"The girls have done brilliantly to get four points from the first two games and I'm looking forward to being back in the squad once I'm ready to play."

London City Lionesses sign forward Danielle Carter on two- year contract

London City Lionesses is thrilled to announce that forward Danielle Carter has signed a two-year contract with the Pride.

The Londoner arrives at Princes Park after the expiry of her contract with Barclays Women's Super League outfit Brighton & Hove Albion, for whom she scored nine times last season.

Carter, who can play anywhere across the forward line, boasts a wealth of elite-level experience for club and country, headlined by eleven trophy-filled seasons with Arsenal.

The 30-year-old was involved in many iconic moments while dressed in red and helped the Gunners secure five Continental Tyres Cups, four FA Cups, and three Women's Super League titles.

Carter is also the holder of an impressive international record, with six goals in four appearances for England.

"I had conversations with Nicola [Williams] and Carolina [Morace] and the vision they set out for the Club was very exciting," the attacker said upon signing with London City.

"Promotion is obviously the main aim this season, that's the dream that we are all collectively working towards. We

need to get points on the board very quickly and build from there. It's an exciting prospect."

Carter is the latest player to join Carolina Morace's experienced core and will reunite with former teammates Emma Mukandi and Grace Moloney at Princes Park.

"Danielle's talent and experience will be important for the team," said the Italian.

"She has played at the highest level, which is something she can pass to the team. We have already seen how much her presence has impacted the other players because she can be a role model. She's very humble, which is something I really like because it means she is still willing to improve.

"I don't want static positions, I want the forwards to interact and rotate. She's very good at dribbling and in one-on-one situations, which is exactly what I want."

London City Lionesses sign Republic of Ireland midfielder Niamh Farrelly

London City Lionesses is thrilled to announce that Republic of Ireland international Niamh Farrelly has joined the Pride on a free transfer from Parma Calcio.

The 24-year-old has inked a

one-year contract at Princes Park, becoming the latest player with experience on the continent to arrive since the appointment of Carolina Morace as First Team Head Coach.

Farrelly, who adds to an impressive central midfield core of Sonia O'Neill and Connie Scofield, is prepared for the start of the 2023-24 Barclays Women's Championship season and excited to make a fast start with her new teammates.

"I was really impressed when I spoke with Carolina [Morace] and Nicola [Williams] about their ambitions for the Club and how they develop players," said the Dublin-born midfielder.

"The Club has been successful over the last couple of seasons and I think that we can push for promotion. After playing in Italy, I think I will be able to fit in quickly under the coaching staff. My first two days with the team have been great, everyone has been really welcoming and I'm looking forward to what's to come."

When asked about her style of play, she added: "I'm a hard worker. While I like to run off the ball and do the dirty work, I also like to create chances for my team."

Farrelly started her senior career in the Irish National

League, now known as the League of Ireland, with Peamount United in September 2015.

The Irishwoman played a crucial role for the South Dublin outfit as they secured a remarkable league and cup double, which saw her earn a transfer to Scottish Premier League side Glasgow City.

Farrelly enjoyed further success at Petershill Park, scoring three times in quick succession down the stretch to help Glasgow City win their fourteenth domestic crown in a row.

The 1999-born midfielder, who has made four appearances for the Republic of Ireland, spent last season in Serie A, in which she helped Parma secure an eighth-place finish in the regular-season standings.

First Team Assistant Coach Nicola Williams commented: "Niamh is a dynamic player who can contribute to the attack but also excels defensively. She's got a strong physique, which is another significant boost.

"Carolina and I are familiar with Niamh after her season in Italy, which she said helped develop her game because of the level of tactical detail in Serie A. We're really pleased to have been able to add her to our group."

London City Lionesses sign New Zealand international Paige Satchell

London City Lionesses is thrilled to announce the signing of New Zealand international Paige Satchell, who joins the Pride on a one-year contract from Wellington Phoenix of the A-League.

The 25-year-old forward's impressive professional career spans four seasons, during which she has established herself as a formidable talent for club and country.

Satchell arrives at Princes Park with a wealth of international experience, headlined by consecutive selections for the FIFA Women's World Cup and the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan.

The Rotorua-born attacker has showcased her offensive prowess for teams around the world, with spells at SC Sand (Frauen Bundesliga), Canberra United, Sydney FC, and Wellington Phoenix (A-League).

"I'm very excited to be coming to London," Satchell said of her move to Princes Park.

"I've been playing professionally for about four seasons now and I think it's a positive step to move to a new environment in England, where I will be challenged to grow and develop as a

footballer. I spoke with Carolina [Morace] and Nicola [Williams] before signing with the Club and it was good to see how things are run. They took me through in quite a lot of detail about what I would experience if I joined.

"The chat was really positive and they were really excited to have me on board. Likewise, I was super excited to speak with them and make the move to London City."

Satchell, a dynamic wide forward known for her pace and ability to break the lines, is the latest offensive threat to join the Pride's frontline, following the arrival of Tinaya Alexander and the return of Lucy Fitzgerald.

First Team Assistant Coach Nicola Williams added: "Paige is a very exciting addition for the Club. She will add to our depth of international talent and comes into the squad after a significant period with the Football Ferns at the World Cup. Her pace and ability to get past players on the wing will add an x-factor to our team."

London City Lionesses sign defender Georgia Brougham

London City Lionesses is pleased to confirm that versatile defender Georgia Brougham has joined the Pride on a one-year contract.

The Englishwoman, previously of Leicester City, boasts a wealth of Barclays Women's Super League experience and is an important addition ahead of the 2023-24 Barclays Women's Championship season.

"The girls have been great, they've really welcomed me in, and I'm really excited for the season to start," explained the 27-year-old.

"The coaching staff played a massive part [in my decision to join London City]. After speaking with them and seeing their vision for the Club, I felt that this would be the best environment for me.

"I'd like to say that I'm very composed. I like to build from the back and would describe myself as a ball-playing defender."

The Stockport-born defender arrives at Princes Park at the peak of an impressive professional career, headlined by a five-year stint at the heart of Everton's defence, two seasons on loan at Birmingham City, and promotion from the academy to the senior team with Manchester City.

First Team Assistant Coach Nicola Williams added: "Georgia is a very experienced defender who comes from Leicester City. She comes with a lot of knowledge from the WSL, where

she has trained in high-level environments and will be able to help us in that area.

"Georgia is an aggressive defender who reads the game well. I worked with her at Leicester [City] last season and found her to be very attentive in the sessions and that she had lots of questions about different scenarios on the field."

London City Lionesses sign forward Tinaya Alexander

London City Lionesses is thrilled to announce the signing of forward Tinaya Alexander on a one-year contract.

Alexander arrives at Princes Park in the prime years of her professional career, with previous experience in the Barclays Women's Super League, France's Division 1 Féminine, and the American National Women's Soccer League.

Before the talented 24-year-old entered the senior ranks, she played four seasons in the NCAA with Louisiana State University, for whom she amassed 74 goals and 22 assists in 81 appearances for the first division outfit.

The Englishwoman's standout collegiate performances were recognised ahead of the 2022 NWSL Draft, which saw the Washington Spirit select her w

with the fourteenth overall pick.

Transfers to Montpellier, Reading, and London City followed for Alexander, with the Berkshire-born attacker thrilled to put pen to paper with the Pride.

"I was drawn to London City because of the coaching staff at the Club," said Alexander.

"I visited the training ground [before signing] and I felt like they really knew what they were talking about. Carolina [Morace] has a good resume and has coached at a high level, it's a big thing that she coached a men's team. Nicola [Williams] has lots of experience and a good career too. They both seemed really keen, which made me want to sign here."

Alexander is London City's third new arrival of the summer, following the additions of midfielder Connie Scofield and goalkeeper Sophie Hillyerd.

First Team Assistant Coach Nicola Williams added: "Tinaya has a wealth of experience, having played in the United States, France, and England. She is a really exciting attacking player, who we will try to get on the ball as much as possible."

Grace Neville extends London City Lionesses stay to five seasons

London City Lionesses is thrilled to announce that New Zealand international Grace Neville has put pen to paper on a new one-year contract with the Pride. The London-born defender arrived at Princes Park ahead of the Club's inaugural season, making 53 appearances in all competitions since joining from Arsenal.

Neville, a key member of the squad that fought for promotion last term, switched her international allegiance to New Zealand in January and has since made four appearances for the Football Ferns.

"I'm very excited to be back at London City," explained the 23-year-old.

"The Club has a lot of unfinished business in the league, we have very high ambitions, and we've got the right people coming through the door in terms of coaching staff. I'm very excited to work with Carolina [Morace] and Nicola [Williams].

"Their philosophy and style of coaching is very technical, which is what I think the league lacks. Having been here for five seasons, [signing a new contract] feels like coming

home."

Neville returned to pre-season earlier this week and has already made an impression on First Team Assistant Coach Nicola Williams.

"Grace is one of those players who really plays for the team," said the Australian.

"It's really important that she has come back for another season because she really wants to make sure that we push for some of the objectives that she has been aiming for over the last couple of seasons.

"In addition to helping the team improve, one of our priorities is developing and producing national team players, so it's very positive for us to have Grace back."

London City Lionesses sign Venezuela international Sonia O'Neill

London City Lionesses is thrilled to announce the arrival of experienced international midfielder Sonia O'Neill on a free transfer from Turbine Potsdam.

The Venezuelan playmaker inked a one-year contract with the Pride on Sunday [13 August] to become Carolina Morace's latest summer recruit.

"It feels great to join the Club," explained O'Neill.

"There's a really positive attitude about the group and the girls have made me feel welcome from the first day I walked in. I love the way the coaches are giving feedback and the experience they bring to the table.

"I know that the goal for this season is clear, we want to get promoted. I've been playing away from home for twelve years now and I reached a point where I wanted to play at a high level in a country where I'm familiar with the language.

"I have family and friends in London, which made this opportunity stand out. I know players who have played here in the past and they have nothing but good things to say about the Club."

The Toronto-born midfielder arrives in the capital at the peak of an impressive professional career, spanning eight clubs from six countries around Europe.

O'Neill, who appeared twice for Venezuela at the 2022 Copa America Femenina, scored a brace on her senior debut in the Swedish Elitettan for Husqvarna FF and has since established herself as a reliable performer across the continent.

Transfers to Italy, Croatia, and Scotland followed for the versatile midfielder, who played an integral role for ŽNK Split as they clinched a historic domestic double and competed in the 2019-20 UEFA Women's Champions League qualifying round.

O'Neill also enjoyed a standout collegiate career with the University of North Florida and Niagara University, for whom she totalled a half-century of division one appearances.

First Team Assistant Coach Nicola Williams commented: "Sonia brings an impressive amount of international experience, which is exactly what we're trying to bring to the Club. She will help to raise the level of the squad and the players around her.

"Sonia is an aggressive midfielder, who looks to get on the ball and links really well with the other players in her rotations. She is a box-to-box presence who we expect will help us at both ends of the field."



Barclays Women's Championship transfers



The summer Barclays Women's Championship transfer window has been a busy one with plenty of comings and goings at the 12 clubs.

Here is every transfer...

Birmingham City

In

Ellie Mason (from Lewes); Charlie Devlin (from Leicester City); Charlotte Clarke (from Liverpool); Katie Dungate (from Chelsea); Remi Allen (from Aston Villa); Neve Herron (from Sunderland); Lily Agg (from London City Lionesses); Jade Moore (from Manchester United); Ivana Fuso (from Manchester United); Cho So-hyun (from Tottenham); Choe Yu-Ri (from Hyundai Steel Red Angels)

Out

Charlie Estcourt (to Reading); Eleanor Ryan-Doyle (to Durham); Lily Simkin; Mollie Green (to Nottingham Forest); Harriet Scott (retired)

Blackburn Rovers

In

Chloe Williams (from Manchester United); Niamh Murphy (from Manchester United); Tyler Toland (from Levante); Georgia Walters (from Sheffield United); Lucy Shepherd (from London City Lionesses); Hannah Silcock (on loan from Liverpool); Chelsea Ferguson (on loan from Brighton)

Out

Camilla Kur (retired); Ellie Leek (to Stoke City); Saffron Jordan (to Stoke City); Natasha Fenton (to Sunderland); Chloe Dixon (to Nottingham Forest); Kayleigh McDonald (to Stoke City)

Charlton Athletic

In

Kate Longhurst (from West Ham); Sian Rogers (from Aston Villa); Kayleigh Green (from Brighton); Elisha N'Dow (from Aston Villa); Rebecca McKenna (from Lewes); Carla Humphrey (from Liverpool); Karin Muya (from London City Lionesses); Freya Godfrey

(on loan from Arsenal)

Out

Lauren Bruton (retired); Alex Hennessy (to Billerica Town); Corinne Henson (to Watford); Emma Follis; Emily Simpkins (retired); Poppy Soper (on loan to Ipswich Town); Heidi Logan (on loan to Stoke City)

Crystal Palace

In

Lia Cataldo (from Bristol City); Hayley Nolan (from London City Lionesses); Shanade Hopcroft (from London City Lionesses); Kiera Barry (on loan from Manchester United); Lexi Potter (on loan from Chelsea); Lucy Watson (on loan from Chelsea)

Out

Rianna Dean (to Southampton FC); Hollie Olding (to Lewes); Emily Wilson-White; Lizzie Waldie (to Hearts); Coral-Jade Haines (to Watford)

Durham

In

Eleanor Ryan-Doyle (from Birmingham City); Amy Andrews (from Western Illinois University); Abby Holmes (from Sunderland)

Out

Maria Farrugia (to Lewes); Rio Hardy (to Rangers); Bridget Galloway (to Newcastle United); Hannah Greenwood (to Newcastle United)

Lewes

In

Caragh Hamilton (from Glentoran); Anna Grey (from Ipswich Town); Maria Farrugia (from Durham); Sarah Brasero-Carreira (from Ipswich Town); Hollie Olding (from Crystal Palace); Grace Riglar (from Sheffield United); Grace Garrad (from Stabaek); Kate Oakley (from Liverpool); Shauna Vassell (from London Bees); Kate Mooney (from Peamount United); Reanna Blades (on loan from Chelsea)

Out

Izzy Dalton (to Perth Glory); Ellie Mason (to Birmingham City); Paula Howells (to Saltdean United); Rebecca McKenna (to Charlton Athletic); Amber-Keegan Stobbs (to Newcastle United); Emily Kraft (to Southampton FC); Nat Johnson (to Nottingham Forest); Josie Longhurst (to Reading)

London City Lionesses

In

Connie Scofield (from Leicester City); Sophie Hillyerd (from West Ham); Tinaya Alexander (from Reading); Georgia Brougham; Paige Satchell (from Wellington Phoenix); Sonia O'Neill (from Turbine Potsdam); Grace Moloney (from Reading); Niamh Farrelly (from Parma Calcio); Emma Mukandi (from Reading); Danielle Carter (from Brighton); Ruesha Littlejohn (from Aston Villa); Chantelle Boye-Hlorkah (from Aston Villa); Izzy Groves (from US Saint-Malo); Paige Culver (from Turbine Potsdam); Maddi Wilde (on loan from Bristol City)

Out

Shae Yanez (to San Diego Wave); Amy Rodgers (to Bristol City); Lily Agg (to Birmingham City); Harley Bennett (to Watford); Charlotte Fleming (to Watford); Carly Girasoli (to Hearts); Katie Kitching (to Sunderland); Anna Pedersen; Lucy Shepherd (to Blackburn Rovers); Hayley Nolan (to Crystal Palace); Shanade Hopcroft (to Crystal Palace); Sarah Ewens (to Rangers); Jamie-Lee Napier (to Bristol City); Atlanta Primus (to Southampton FC); Kyra Carusa (to San Diego Wave); Karin Muya (to Charlton)

Reading

In

Charlie Estcourt (from Birmingham City); Ava Kuyken (from Hibernian); Rose Kite (from Oxford United); Rachel Dugdale (from Rugby Borough); Georgia Wilson (from Aab Kvinder); Josie Longhurst (from Lewes); Caitlin Smith (from Clemson Tigers); Emily Orman (on loan from Chelsea); Halle Houssein (on loan from West Ham); Lulu Jarvis (on loan from Brighton); Freya Gregory (on loan from Aston Villa)

Out

Emma Mukandi (to London City Lionesses); Faye Bryson; Chloe Peplow (to Southampton FC); Grace Moloney (to London City Lionesses); Becky Jane; Amalie Eikeland (to SK Brann); Emma Harries (to West Ham); Gemma Evans (to Manchester United); Justine Vanhaevermaet (to Everton); Natasha Dowie; Deanne Rose; Tinaya Alexander (to London City Lionesses); Hannah Poulter (to Southern California University); Rachel Rowe (to Rangers)

Sheffield United

In

Sophie Barker (from Leicester City); Jess Sigsworth (from Leicester City); Isobel Goodwin (from Rugby Borough); Ashley Hodson (from Liverpool); Jodie Hutton (from Bristol City);

Ella Kinzett (from Manchester United); Fran Stenson (from Arsenal); Tara Bourne (from Manchester United); Olivia Page (from Eastern Suburbs AFC); Alanta Brown (from Burnley); Juliet Adebowale-Arimoro (from London Bees); Ellie May (from Burnley)

Out

Ellie Wilson (to Wolves); Nina Wilson (to Hibernian); Georgia Walters (to Sheffield United); Grace Riglar (to Lewes); Naomi Hartley; Mia Enderby (to Liverpool); Courtney Sweetman-Kirk; Alethea Paul (to Burnley); Rhema Lord-Mears (to Burnley)

Southampton

In

Chloe Peplow (from Reading); Rianna Dean (from Crystal Palace); Emily Kraft (from Lewes); Molly Pike (from Leicester City); Jemma Purfield (from Leicester City); Isabel Milne (from Chelsea); Atlanta Primus (from London City Lionesses); Emma Thompson (from Chelsea)

Out

Georgie Freeland (to Portsmouth FC); Phoebe Williams (to Oxford United); Ella Pusey; Beth Lumsden (to Portsmouth FC); Ella Hunkin

Sunderland

In

Mary McAteer (from Rugby Borough); Katie Kitching (from London City); Natasha Fenton (from Blackburn Rovers); Jenna Dear (from Vålerenga); Amy Goddard (from Oxford United); Ellen Jones (from Leicester City); Mollie Rouse (from Turbine Potsdam)

Out

Abbey Joice (retired); Abby Towers (to Middlesbrough); Danielle Brown; Allison Cowling; Brenna McPartlan (to Burnley); Emma Kelly (to Newcastle United); Neve Herron (to Birmingham City); Nicki Gears; Tyler Dodds (to Newcastle United); Abby Holmes (to Durham)

Watford

In

Ellie Head (from Arsenal); Harley Bennett (from London City Lionesses); Coral-Jade Haines (from Crystal Palace); Abbie Lafayette (from Ipswich Town); Lucía León (from Real Betis); Corinne Henson (from Charlton Athletic); Carly Johns (from Oxford United); Charlotte Fleming (from London City Lionesses); Olivia Clark (on loan from Bristol City)

Out

Helen Ward (retired); Adekite Fatuga-Dada; Emily Wallace; Faye Brough (to Elfen); Georgie Ferguson (to Stoke City); Nicola Gibson (to AFC Wimbledon)





THE FA NATIONAL LEAGUE

NATIONAL LEAGUE: SEASON PREVIEW PLUS BEST TRANSFERS AND PLAYERS TO WATCH

by Helen M Jerome

with input from Niamh Deasy, Manfy Sharpe



NORTHERN PREMIER DIVISION

By Niamh Deasy, Stourbridge striker

Where do you think Stourbridge will finish this season?

We're aiming to finish as high as we can. Realistically, in our first season in Tier 3, it would be incredible to finish mid-table. We are up against some of the best teams/clubs in the country, some of which are full time, so to finish mid table would be tremendous.

Which other clubs look likely contenders?

After playing Nottingham Forest in our first game, I have no doubts that they will win it again. Wolves have an excellent established team, and it will be interesting to see how Stoke

compete with all of their changes.

Which new Stourbridge signings are you excited about?

It has been great to welcome in new players. In particular, Lauren Da'Casto – a great friend of mine already. She offers something different in the midfield this year. And we've got Favour Omenazu from Northampton. However, I think the best change we have made is bringing in Tash Tezgal as a coach. An excellent female role model who is knowledgeable and empathetic towards us, with our challenges we'll face this season. A great asset for us to have on board.

Which other players do you rate in other teams in your league?

The league is full of wonderful

players. It's an honour to play alongside full-time footballers who commit so much to the game. In particular, playing against old teammates back in my University days, including Jade and Emma Cross from Wolves.

However, Saffron Jordan from Stoke and Liv Ferguson at Wolves show how competitive this league has become, both with Championship experience. It's going to be an invaluable experience for us to play against this calibre of players.

SOUTHERN PREMIER DIVISION

Teams to watch:

Newbies Hashtag United could make a major push, MK Dons look to have made some clever acquisitions, and having

watched London Bees a couple of times, they look much stronger than last season. Many will look to the big guns like Ipswich Town, Oxford United and Portsmouth, if they can push again – especially Ipswich, who missed out on top spot on goal difference.

Players to watch out for:

Portsmouth have moved to become semi-professional and boast loads of summer signings. Defender Riva Casley comes from Oxford United – and previously Millwall and Charlton in the Championship). Forward Beth Lumsden has already got goals in both her first competitive matches for Pompey, after arriving from Southampton – and they've also got winger Georgie Freeland from the Saints. Midfielder Leeta Rutherford returns after playing for Lewes, Crystal Palace and Southampton in the Championship. Loan star Ella Humphrey has signed permanently from Brighton, and promising 18-year-old forward Emily Pitman joins from Arsenal's Under-21 team. Another teenager, Kelci Bowers (19) arrives from Louisiana State University after being at Southampton and Chelsea as a youngster. And, of course, they have goal machine Sophie Quirk.

Ipswich Town have signed not one but two keepers, Laura Hartley (from Lewes) and Poppy Soper

(on loan from Charlton). 21-year-old full-back Maisy Barker joins the Tractor Girls from West Ham, and they've also snapped up midfielder Ruby Doe (17) on dual-registration from Arsenal Academy. And they have their own golden-boot-winning goal machine in Natasha Thomas!

Oxford United will look to rebuild with a new manager after the departure of Liam Gilbert, and have picked several players. Centre-back and Welsh international Shaunna Jenkins arrives from Swansea City, and Anais Trinci joins from Pontypridd United. Box-to-box midfielder Phoebe Williams comes in from Southampton, and 20-year-old forwards Zoe Barratt and Izzy Cook sign from MK Dons and Cheltenham Town respectively. Midfielder Kate Wiseman joins from the University of North Alabama, and full back Hayley Hoare comes from Championship side Coventry.

Lots to admire in the London Bees summer transfer activity. Crucially they've got in goalkeeper Ella Hunkin from Southampton. Flying down the right flank is wingback Ines-Lalini Colas Salpadoru from Spurs Academy, and brand new captain and no 5 Sophie Baigent from Actonians – and previously Reading in the WSL – who seems very much in the Alex Greenwood "none

shall pass" mould, plus Aaliyah Charles from Watford who helps boss the midfield. Added to the likes of existing stars like Janey Beaufort, (ex-West Ham) there's much promise here.

Hashtag United are ambitious and looking to progress again, and have acquired defenders Courtney Lumley from near-neighbours and rivals Billericay Town and Canadian Maddie Farrand from Gillingham. They already have a top keeper in Jamie-Lee Bamford, and look out for Belgium-born Malika Apindia too – who was an athletics star and can play upfront or in defence.

MK Dons Women made forward Lily Dolling (17) their latest summer signing, arriving from Watford Women's Development Squad, making 17 appearances last season, and scoring 23 goals. Experienced defender Catherine Beaver, played within the FA Women's Premier League between 2004-2007, and transferred to MK Dons after Oxford United's top three finish last season. And midfielder Megan Attenborough signed from FAWNL Division One South West side Swindon Town, where she spent five years across two spells. She registered 8 goals, 5 assists last season, and previously played in the US, where she earned three MVP awards across three years in Texas.

DIVISION ONE, SOUTH WEST

By Manfy Sharpe, Exeter City captain

Where do you think Exeter City will finish this season? We see ourselves as being serious contenders for promotion this year, but obviously are very aware this is a highly competitive league. After losing out on promotion through goal difference last year we are very keen to push on this year and I see this as our strongest squad yet.

Which other clubs look likely to be contenders? I think teams like Moneyfields, Bournemouth and Swindon will be in the top end of the table pushing for promotion too.

Which new Grecian signings are you excited about? Really excited by Zoe Cunningham, she oozes class and has a wealth of knowledge of the game from the league above. Beth Ireland is another player with experience from the tier above and I feel she'll be a huge part of our success this season with her quality on and off the ball and work ethic.

Tash Knapman is a striker who knows exactly where the back of the net is, she makes our squad competitive with us already hosting Sarah Stacey, the golden boot winner, and Jenna



Markham. It makes our attacking options really exciting. Amber Pollock is player that everyone wants to play with and no one wants to play against, she travels so freely with the ball and gives a completely different dynamic to our game.

Which other players do you rate who've been signed by other teams in your league? Chloe Gilroy at Bournemouth, who was at Exeter last season, she's a quality player and technically sound. A very talented footballer I hope to see flourish this season with opportunity – but not looking forward to playing against her, mind!

Amber Howden at Moneyfields was previously at Selsey and always stood out for me when we played them. A classic centre-back who always seems calm and composed on the ball and would

strengthen any squad she went to.

Milly Klinkenberg at Torquay, who was also at Exeter last season. At just 16 she's a very talented footballer with an admirable work rate. I'm looking forward to seeing her get minutes under her belt in the FAWNL and hopefully go from strength to strength.

DIVISION ONE SOUTH EAST

By Dan McKimm, London Seaward manager

How do you think London Seaward will get on this season?

We've set ourselves a goal of top four for this year as a collective at the start of the season. Last year was super positive for us, and right into the last game we had the opportunity to finish third, which would have been fantastic. I think the division is stronger now and we really overachieved last year, and it's a great place to be. If

we can break into the top four again, it'll show progression on fifth place from last season. It would solidify ourselves as one of the top teams in the division. I feel we are, but ultimately over the season, it's the points on the board that tells a story.

Which other teams look like contenders?

It's super competitive, which makes this division particularly interesting – if you look up and down the league, everybody's capable of beating everybody. You've got to be on it every single week. Wimbledon will be strong (unbeaten in the entire calendar year too). They've got a bit of a point to prove; they've been the bridesmaid for the last couple of years, and they just signed a Watford player. Norwich are a good side. They've got a new gaffer in this year, and he will have them playing a different way. I think Sudbury will surprise a few people, they're a decent team and I imagine they'll cause a couple of upsets. Also intrigued to see how Ashford do, as they came up and did all right. Whereas a lot of teams come up and don't stay up.

Tell me about some of your new signings?

We brought Tia Ginn in, a young goalkeeper who was previously at Watford as a youth. She's young, with super talent and loads of potential, so we're really

excited. She's added an awful lot of quality, great in the air, super brave, excellent shot-stopper and can play really well with her feet, which it really suits our style. The way we want to play, the keeper is paramount to that. So getting her in was massive.

Ella Wales-Bonner has come across from Dulwich. We've played against her a few times in my three years at the club, and she's always caused us problems when we played against her, so it's lovely to have her with us this. Liz Mulvaney has come in from Wimbledon, giving us strength in central midfield, a bit more height and more presence in the centre of the pitch. Kelsey Smith has joined from Bowers and Pitsea along with Maddie Thomas. Sharne Harris has come in – she's ex-London City Lionesses and spent a short period at Dulwich as well. Shamoy Campbell just came in for her first start for the first team today.

Which other players should we look out for in the league?

There's lots of individuals, you know, Ashley Cheatley down at Ashford's a good striker and she'll score a lot of goals, as she's done for them season in, season out. There's quality throughout to be honest. The teams that'll do well this year won't rely solely on one or two people to carry them through. I think the strength and

depth in the league now is at a point where teams who are just one-player teams will get found out because the quality is high.

DIVISION ONE, NORTH

Teams to watch:

Barnsley, Leeds United, Durham Cestria, Doncaster Belles all look really strong – and maybe Middlesboro and Hull City are in with a decent shout...

Players to watch out for:

Barnsley defender Autumn Housley after spells at Huddersfield and Sheffield United. Charlotte Stuart from Bradford City, a central midfield player. With her presence in the heart of the midfield, she should dominate the game. Katy Woodcock also from Bradford City, a tough Centre Back with good distribution. Abi Housecroft who's overcome an ACL injury, and plays on the wing and as a striker. They have a top keeper in Serena Clarke, plus Jodie Michalska.

Leeds United have new arrival Ellie Dobson from Newcastle United. Dobson predominantly operates as a midfielder but can also provide cover at centre-back. Ellie is a calm head, with previous experience at Brighouse and Middlesbrough, as well as representing Great Britain at the 2017 World

University Football Cup in China. Harriet Jakeman, another new addition who has plenty of experience in this league with former club Bradford City. A defender who relishes a one-v-one battle, Jakeman also loves to get forward and offer assists to her teammates. Charlyann Pizzarello is another exciting new addition, a current Gibraltar international who joins Leeds after an impressive career to date. Her previous experience includes four years in the USA, stints with Spanish clubs Malaga City and Rayo Vallecano as well as in England with Championship side Lewes FC, and last season's FAWNL Division One North Champions Newcastle United Women. Charlyann can operate at left-back or on the wing where she brings pace and quality. Plus Olivia Smart of course.

Durham Cestria's new signing Alisha Clarke-Mainwaring has joined from Brighton, plus had a year in the U.S. An attacker with an eye for goal, she's already found the net at the start of the season. And Jen Knowles is of course worth watching, while the prolific Poppy Pritchard scored 17 last season.

Doncaster Rovers Belles are mainly excited about getting a new head coach Alexandre Brito Nogueira – along with fellow new

arrival, manager Sam Winch.

Also look out for: Stockport County's Francesca Davies and top scorer Maria Figueiredo, Middlesboro's Sarah Burn, Hull City's Hope Knight (23 goals last season), Bianca Owens of Norton Ladies, York City's Felicity Jones, plus Chorley's Ellie Cook, and Chester le Street's Erin Third.

DIVISION ONE, MIDLANDS

With input from Niamh Deasy (ND), ex-Sutton Coldfield player (and just promoted with Stourbridge)

Teams to watch:

ND: Sporting Khalsa have made some good signings, including Lowri Walker, an excellent player that I've had the privilege of playing with (previously at Aston Villa and Wolves). Additionally, Lincoln City look like they're scoring goals and were a big test for us last season. I think Sutton Coldfield Town with Chloe Handy and their recruits will be safe.

ND: With Northampton having lost a valuable player in Favour Omenazu (to Stourbridge), they did well to get the three points against Peterborough, and Katie McLean is worth looking out for. Unfortunately, I think Solihull Moors will decline after the loss of their captain, Zoe Creaney. So my bets are on Peterborough, Lincoln and Khalsa.

Players to watch out for:

Peterborough have acquired the exciting ex-Doncaster midfielder Sophie Scargill, fellow summer arrival, defender Alex O'Neill from Sheffield, 21-year-old forward Katie Middleton from Loughborough Lightning, and of course, they have the mighty Evie Driscoll-King.

Lincoln have made some good signings: winger Millie Quaintance is already gelling with her team-mates, having joined from Loughborough Lightning. Also attacking full-back Brogan Pugh has joined, alongside Olivia Standeven and Summa Betts from Nottingham Forest. And box-to-box midfielder Kelly Poynton.

Sporting Khalsa have added Welsh international Olivia Owen from West Brom, Alex Liddiard from Stoke City, plus Olivia Lloyd, as well as Laura Cooper from Wolves, and already have the impressive Laura Smith.





BURNING BRIGHT

Manfy Sharpe has Exeter – and especially Exeter City – running through her like a stick of rock. She joined Exeter City's Centre of Excellence for Girls aged just nine, and played for local sides Exmouth and Brixington Blues while at school.

Words: Helen Jerome

After studying for a BTEC in Sport in a handy college partnership with City and playing much futsal, the dogged defender enjoyed a successful spell at Exeter Tedburn, then moved 8 miles up the road to join the Grecians at St James' Park in 2016. This was just after City looked like they might be disbanded, but galvanised with the help of their Community Trust, and started to rise again.

Fast forward to 2019 and Sharpe was a mainstay in the side that won the South West Women's Premier Division title by six points and reached the semi-final of the Devon Senior Cup. Sharpe's rise exactly mirrors City's trajectory, and her grit and determination means she now, perhaps inevitably, captains the team she loves with a burning passion. Professionally she has

dealt with the huge disappointment of City just losing out on promotion from WNL Division One South West last season. But that's nothing compared with her personal tragedy of coping with her beloved brother Paddy's death in 2022, yet still managing to play the same day.

Sharpe spoke to TWFM about everything, including her early nickname, dealing with grief, enjoying routine, and inspiring older and younger generations – plus her Really Big Idea to improve the Women's National League...

How's your pre-season going and what does it involve?

We started our pre-season schedule four weeks ago, and it's tough, very tough. It involves a lot of hard running. Our coach, George [Robinson] is really putting us through it, but

it'll be worth it. We've played two competitive games and got some good results with higher league opposition. So it's going well and we're making progress.

How did it feel last season to get so close and miss out on being champions on goal difference?

I'm not gonna lie, it was heart-breaking. It was one of the hardest ways to miss out, knowing we'd done so much. To miss by so little was really tough, but we can just build upon that. It's all behind us now. And it's got to be left there. This is a fresh season, and we've got to do more of the right things this year.

Tell me about the new signings? You've got Beth Ireland, Amber Pollock and Zoe Cunningham – all three from Plymouth Argyle – plus Natasha Knapman coming back. And it looks like Natasha

brings quite a few goals with her...

Yeah, they're all players with bags of quality, and they all offer really different things that we don't already have within the squad. Tash is a prolific goalscorer. In training she's technically one of the best. Then you've got Amber who is frighteningly quick and so eager to learn. She's probably one of the best footballers I've ever played with. She's scary on the ball.

In training I roll my eyes if I have to defend against Zoe, because she's really hard to read. She's very good and so young, and her potential is scary. Plus they're all really nice people. That's a big thing here, we like everyone to be a good person first and foremost. We're like a little dysfunctional family. But we love each other, and it works well.

I think each club has its own culture – and maybe women's football is a little bit more warm and inclusive?

Yeah, definitely. And then it will build, because when you've got that connection off the pitch it really shows on the pitch.

Looking back, who first got you into football?

Well, I've got three older brothers and they're all really rubbish at it. So I just wanted to be the good one, and in primary school, there were boys' teams and I

wanted to prove that girls could do it too. I think I was in year five in primary school and me and my teacher set up a girls' football team. And I just carried on ever since then, since I was about eight, nine, properly in school.

What do you remember of your first match – the first one you went to and the first you played?

I remember playing against all boys when I was probably about 10. It was scary, but I came away with the nickname Tiger, because I was so aggressive! But I liked that.

The first game I remember watching was England Women versus France at St. James's Park, Exeter, and I was a ball girl, so that was cool. That was a long time ago. And one of my teammates who I'm teammates with now was also a ball girl!

Did you keep the nickname Tiger?

No, I've tried to shake that one off!

What makes a good captain? And are you more of a carrot or stick skipper?

Well, I'm not the loudest player on the pitch. Never have been, probably never will be. But I think I've developed more as a captain in the past few years by learning off my teammates – and being a good person. I think as a good captain, you have to be a good person

I think as a good captain, you have to be a good person – and I always go back to that.

We've also adopted a bit more of a leadership group this year, and we're going to see how that takes us into the season. I'm all behind it. It doesn't take anything away from me as captain, it's to help me develop and ensure I've got support within the team.

Have you noticed more fans coming to watch – maybe a trickle down post-Euros, and if England progress through the World Cup, it feels like there might be something similar?

Yeah, definitely. I think it will go up after the World Cup. Any women's events raise awareness and interest in the game. At Exeter we've noticed a massive difference. Our attendances are averaging about 2-300 a week, which is amazing for Tier Four women's football.

What difference does it make when you play at the main Exeter City stadium, St. James's Park, rather than Culmpton – does it help you as players?

Playing at St. James's Park – and I think our last attendance there was around 2,900 – the atmosphere is amazing. It's goosebumps to have that support behind you. And not that you ever don't want to win a game, but you have to win that game and put

on a show and make them remember that it was worthwhile.

How closely are City's men's and women's teams linked? Is there an overlap in the fan base? Yeah, there's definitely an overlap with fans, a lot more of the men's fans are showing interest in the women's game now. The club are really good with stuff like sharing the women's team on social media, and we do a lot of events like kit launches together. So the club are doing their bit to raise the profile for the women's game as well, which makes a huge difference.

Personally how high do your own ambitions go – promotion, Championship – have you thought how far you might go? I personally want to achieve everything I can. And I want to do that with Exeter City. I've played here now seven years, I'm going into my seventh season, and I love it here. I'm very settled within the area, but I also love the team, the club and everything, I really enjoy it. Yes, I'd like to get promotion. That's a massive thing for me. When the coach Abbie [Britton] came in five years ago, she said this is the plan. It isn't going to happen overnight; it's gonna take a process – and I bought into that massively. And with what Abbie and Aaron [Wakeley, joint-coach] are building, I

want to play for as long as I can. But it will be with Exeter City.

So have you played under women's managers as much as men? Before Abbie and Aaron, it was a man, Clive. I've only ever played under a few managers before, and they've all been male, but Abbie and Aaron work really well together.

Is there any difference – and should there be more women managing women's teams – and men's teams, obviously! Yeah. I think psychologically it can help because a woman might understand more what a woman is thinking. But I know Aaron does a lot of hard work going on courses to help with that as well. Apart from that, I don't think it really makes that much difference. But it would be nice to see more women managers, especially in the men's game, because they're just as qualified.

Yes, I know it's only temporary but there's Hannah Dingley at Forest Green isn't there? And Lydia Bedford who's coaching the under-18 boys at Brentford. It feels like a step forward. Yeah, really good to see that. It's impressive as well to get that far within the men's game.

It'll be great when something like that won't be remarked on, it'll just be like, oh, yeah.

Yeah, exactly!

Do you fancy becoming a manager yourself? I wouldn't ever say no. It's not something I don't see myself doing when I stop playing – although I don't know when that will be. But when I do stop, I don't want ever want to be away from it, because I love it. I live and breathe for football.

I'd want to do it in the right way though. I'd take my time and learn properly and be in the best position possible to do it. I enjoy the little bit of coaching I get to do now. I'm helping out with the girls' development centre this year, so I'll be inspiring while learning on the job. It's under-10s to under-16s, different age groups, and I'm hoping to float around each one.

I wonder what you think about heading the ball. As a defender, it's important, but many say we should think about limiting heading in training – and in youth games, when your brain is still developing – as a preventative measure. Obviously, health concerns should come first, but personally, if I'm honest, I think the more practice you can have at heading the ball the better. And in a game scenario, I would never back away. I've taken some pretty hefty shots



to the head... it just happens. I always practised heading as a child. When you're watching a live game it can sound worse than it is – and I quite like the way heading a ball feels.

Tell me about your other job, outside football. Well, I'm actually a dog walker.

So are you one of those people who've got ten dogs on leads? Oh no! We're walking in an enclosed field. But it's really good. It keeps me fit and healthy – and being outside is good for the mental health. Yeah, it's a really good job to be in alongside my football because I can balance it really well. I work for a lady at a company called Tails and Trails in Exeter. I walk the dogs in the huge field at the back of our house in Exmouth. We take small groups

back there. Pick them up, take them for an hour's walk, then drop them home. Then we do the same again in the afternoon.

Is that every kind of dog from the tiny ones that look like vermin to the huge ones?

Be careful on that! I've got a chihuahua. Yeah, my little star, and he's only got one eye. We also take big German Shepherds and Ridgebacks and everything. They all get on, they're all friends.

So you can manage your own time off then?

Yeah, though I have been quite busy because alongside that I also do some dog sitting, staying at people's houses and looking after their dogs when they go on holiday. I like to keep busy. In the off-season I didn't really know what to do with myself. I enjoy structure. I'm very much a routine sort of girl. So football and dogs keep me happy!

On a serious note, you've dealt with personal tragedy, and you played on. I often wonder if there's something in sport that helps us – as fans or players – to deal with life and trauma. It occurs to me, when you're attached to a team, there's maybe something unifying and cathartic?

Yeah, absolutely. Obviously, the hardest time of my life was losing my brother. And it was on

the day I found out – I carried on and played in a cup final. And I couldn't have done it or got through that time without my teammates. As I said earlier, we're like a dysfunctional family. I love them all in a weird way.

Yeah, it was tough. I know other players who have been through the same thing. And it's the structure that keeps me going – and football has helped me get through it. Paddy, my brother, was so proud of me playing football. And I know for a fact that if I didn't carry on, he would have been grumpy with me. So I've got to do it.

Having that strength of character, and being the captain and figurehead, what you think of being a role model to younger girls and boys?

Yeah, it's a massive thing here to make sure I'm setting an example – and inspiring not only younger generations, but also older people who've watched the game go by and perhaps not had a chance to play. Or women who never had that opportunity to be as involved as they wanted. I want to inspire them and show them it's possible. And the younger generation too, now it's growing.

I walked out my front door the other day, and a little girl asked me to sign her shirt, so it's amazing how far it's going. It's

so important that we do our bit in the community, because when we were younger, it wasn't there. We want to make sure we're doing our bit to raise the game, and show that there's pathways they can take, and from an early age to grow through the game. It's amazing how much community work is being done in Exeter now.

Did you have role models when you were growing up - maybe even in sport? Well, I always had my mum and she's incredible. She's a big role model of mine because of her personal strengths. But in other aspects, not really, if I'm honest. I just wanted to be the best version of me that I could be, footballing-wise.

I was a Paul Scholes girl. I loved him and think he was great. But there was never a female sporting role model for me; it just wasn't there when I was younger. So if I could try and inspire even one little girl to continue her journey playing football, that's my job done.

Finally, if you could wave a magic wand and change something about women's football, and especially the way your club and the league operate, what would it be? Ha, that's not difficult for Exeter City. I'd just go back to last season and make two teams



go up. Get one more point!

But seriously, I'm not sure, because on the money side of things especially, it is getting there. I remember playing five years ago and having to pay to play. So it's not quite the same.

It's hard to just wave a magic wand, but I'd like to see more integration of the leagues. There's too much of a bar between our league and the league above us. I don't think it would be a bad thing if they were merged and made it into a bigger league. Because I think women can play as many games, and the travel and playing new teams is exciting. If you think about it, we only play like 11 teams a year. So yes, I would like to see bigger leagues.

So all the Southern leagues

should become a bigger Southern league - and the top of the southern league would go up to the Championship? You'd have to, otherwise it would be the world's biggest league, if you had all of them! And maybe for the Northern ones, the Midlands would join them? Yeah, so how the men do it in terms of structure, and just in a bigger league would be nice. Because you play the 11 teams, you've played them once, and then you think: oh, we're playing them again! It'd be nicer just to stretch the season out a little bit. But then we've got postponements all the time, so games don't really get played...

Is that because pitches get waterlogged or frozen, because no one puts in the

infrastructure to drain or defrost?

Yeah, it is such a nightmare and it comes round about January every year. And you don't play a game again until March because of it. It's crazy. Luckily, here we play on 3G, so our games will always be on. But you can't guarantee that for every away game.

And I know some pitches that we'll be playing at away this year aren't great. At the time we're playing them, they're going to be bobbly, horrible, muddy, so we also have to adapt our game to that.

It's understanding that and knowing that we'll have to change... but it's difficult, because no-one wants to have to change their style of play just for a pitch. But I guess it's part of the game.

I do like your idea of expanding the league; the season can seem quite short. Yeah, I think just a little restructure. It's just an idea. Because there's also quite a divide in some leagues, so that teams will lose every single game, and you have to think: is that fair on them that they go down because they don't fit into this league?

Or does there need to be more competition?



WNL Chiefs Resign

The entire management committee of the Women's National League have resigned after a dispute about the decision to start the season on the same day as the Women's World Cup Final.

The National League, which is made up of six divisions and features sides such as Newcastle, Wolves and Burnley, kicked off the 2023/23 campaign on August 20 - with participating clubs having unanimously agreed to start the season on the third Sunday in August. The decision sparked widespread backlash, with fans launching a petition calling for games to be moved to avoid a clash with the World Cup Final.

The National League eventually conceded that fixtures could be changed, subject to the league's approval, so that fans and players could watch England's showpiece clash with Spain. However, according to Mail Sport, the situation is believed to be a key factor behind this weekend's shock walk-out, with chair



Carol West having reportedly informed National League Board members of the mass resignation via email on Friday night.

One of the other major grievances is believed to be the challenges of recruiting volunteers to run the National League on an unpaid basis. The FA have now offered to step in to run the National League with immediate effect.

It is an additional burden for the governing body at a time when they are in the process of handing over the running of the top two tiers of the women's game, the Women's Super League and the Championship, to the Premier League.

"The FA Women's National League Board has regrettably accepted the resignation of the FA Women's National League Management Committee," a spokesperson for the National League told Mail Sport.

"The Board have asked the FA to put in place the necessary services to ensure that the league and the clubs are best supported as we move into the new season."

While describing the reasons behind the resignations as 'varied and complex' the criticism received for staging matches last Sunday is understood to have been a significant factor.

Difficulties in recruiting volunteers to run the National League on an unpaid basis also played a part.





GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

Leicestershire girls football club appeals for help



A Leicestershire girls football club that has more than 180 players on its books is appealing for help to find a permanent home following a new surge of interest prompted by the current World Cup.

East Goscote United (Girls and Women) Football Club was founded 11 years ago and has grown to run 10 different age group teams from age four upwards, but is struggling to find nearby pitches on which to play, with facilities often claimed by more established boys sides.

Darren Foster, chair, explained that the success of the current tournament in Australia and New Zealand was putting more and more pressure on the club to simply find places to play.

"We've been gradually developing the club for a decade or more but when big tournaments happen – such the Lionesses winning the Euros last year at Wembley – we see a lot of girls

take an interest in the game for the first time and join the club. Something similar is happening this summer with the World Cup.

"On the one hand, it's great. We know from experience that once someone shows interest, the vast majority stay with us for years and it's a joy to see their desire to learn and the fun they have but on the other hand, it does create issues because it's not easy to find pitches on which to play, especially within easy reach of our part of Leicestershire.

"We often find that the best local pitches are used by well-established boys' teams. Now, there is nothing wrong with that and we don't want to create a girls versus boys situation, but it is very much the case that longstanding arrangements are often in place for boys clubs that sometimes don't have anything like the number of players that we are attracting."

Simon Riley, founder of the club,

added that if the club was given or was able to buy a piece of land, it could establish a permanent base on which all of its sides could train and play.

"If we were able to get a commitment of this kind – and we realise it is a very big ask – then we would be able to accommodate everyone who wants to get involved and meet the kind of interest in football that we are seeing from girls.

"Also, if we had a piece of land, we should be able to potentially access external help from organisations that support the development of grass roots football, very much placing us on the next level.

"We're very keen to hear from anyone who may be able to help us directly or who has any ideas. We have a lot of girls who want to play football and sometimes not enough facilities for them all to do so successfully."

Women's World Cup can inspire game to new level, says BCU and West Brom coach



The Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand will help fuel massive interest in the game back in the United Kingdom, says Birmingham City University (BCU) coach development officer and new West Bromwich Albion manager Siobhan Hodgetts-Still.

And she believes that programmes like the one she oversees at BCU, which was awarded Women's High Performance Centre status by the Football Association last year, will help grow the num-

ber of coaches in the region and, in turn, assist the development of the next generation of players.

"If you can see it, you can be it, so the exposure is so important," said Hodgetts-Still of the huge media coverage generated by the Women's World Cup, which ended on Sunday with Spain beating England 1-0 in front of a crowd of 75,784 in Sydney and with millions more watching around the globe.

"I was never able to watch the games on the telly when I was

younger," she added. "It's amazing now. You can now get easy access to watch the Women's World Cup, The Women's Super League, The Women's Championship. It's all over social media.

"There's buy-in from clubs as well. That's massive. There are opportunities to play on better pitches, to get better kit, especially women's kit. It can still improve, but it's definitely got better from when I first started."

The BCU role is one Hodgetts-Still is ideally suited for

After starting to play football against boys at the age of 11, she is aware of most of the challenges that face the women's game.

"Around my area, there just weren't any girls' teams, so it was just kicking around with the lads in the park," she said. "I turned 16 and I went and played for a local girls team, then started at West Brom, my hometown team."

Hodgetts-Still started coaching as well, finally deciding it was going to be her main priority following a stint working in Florida in the United States of America.

It was a different challenge, being out of my comfort zone, living abroad and away from my family," she

said of her time in the US.

"America gave me the full-time football experience. It was also a great challenge, coaching players three times a week and then taking them to games at the weekend. I thought 'that's for me' and never looked back."

Now, alongside her BCU commitments, the former central midfielder is leading West Bromwich Albion Women in National League Premier North after being appointed manager earlier this summer.

"It was a shock, but it was a good thing," said Hodgetts-Still, now 34, of her new role.

"I wanted to take the opportunity. It was the right time for me to test myself.

"What better way than with my hometown club.

"Management and coaching are totally different. I'm a big believer in the environment we create for players.

"It's important we have a togetherness amongst the team. I think that's really important, especially in the female game.

"I've always been told to work hard and do everything to the best of my ability.

"That includes treating people the way you would like to be treated and being a good person.

"I think that's one of the big things really. We're all human."



SCHOOLGIRLS JOIN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STARS CHEERING ON ENGLAND, AS RESEARCH REVEALS THE GRASSROOTS IMPACT OF FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023



As the nation celebrates the success of England, Visa, World-wide Partner of FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, is teaming up with HSBC UK to provide grassroots sport and financial education support for schoolgirls.

Today, HSBC UK is hosting a 'Football Fun Day', thanks to Visa, at Alexander Stadium in Birmingham with Liverpool striker and Team Visa athlete, Megan Campbell. The event saw 120 local schoolgirls participating in skills and drills training with Birmingham City Women's Football Club, a live football watch-along of England v China at FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, and financial education sessions to help build their financial health.

Coinciding with the event, new research by Visa* reveals that 86% of girls aged 8-16 surveyed say that FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ is inspiring them to follow their own dreams, with 87% of girls and boys aged 8-16 surveyed agreeing that football is a sport for girls as much as it is boys.

Meanwhile, seven in ten (70%) parents surveyed say that the tournament is empowering them to encourage their daughters to take up football, with four in five (80%) being inspired to look for more local sports facilities and clubs for their children. This comes as 76% of parents agree that it's important that their children participate in team sports, with 84% believing that the skills children learn

playing team sports can also be transferred to life off the pitch.

Sport and football can act as a powerful platform for promoting gender equality and play an important role in empowering women and girls, which is why Visa is encouraging engagement at a local level, as part of its longstanding commitment to driving excellence, equality and inclusion for women, on and off the pitch.

Team Visa athlete and Liverpool footballer, Megan Campbell, who is attending the Football Fun Day comments: "As a professional women's player, I'm humbled by the incredible journey the sport has taken me on. Football has not only shaped me on the pitch,

but off the pitch as well, fostering personal growth, teamwork and unwavering determination.

"It's so rewarding to be involved in this 'Football Fun Day', as we increase visibility of sport at a grassroots level, empower the next generation of girls to achieve their dreams, and drive acceptance of football as a gender-equal sport".

Empowering participation: 12-week coaching programme

With investment in grassroots support being a key recommendation of Karen Carney's Women's Football Review, Visa's partnership with HSBC UK is also extending long-term football coaching access to Birmingham schoolgirls. Each school will have the opportunity to participate in a 12-week football coaching programme with Birmingham City FC, which will culminate in an inter-schools tournament next year.

Guy Martin, Head of Sponsorships Europe at Visa, comments: "At Visa, we have long recognised the immense talent and dedication of women in football and we remain fully committed to supporting the growth of the women's game."

"Our research shows that women's football is having an

incredibly positive influence on the aspirations of young girls and, as we all fight to make the sport more equal and inclusive, we will continue to champion initiatives like this that expand access and drive acceptance of women's football in local communities."

Madhu Kejriwal, Head of Unsecured Lending for HSBC UK, comments: "We're incredibly excited to team up with Visa on this unforgettable day of football and fun for aspiring women footballers, centred around a love of sport and our ambition to help young people build financial capabilities that will help them now and in the future."

Visa was the first FIFA Women's Football partner and became the first standalone sponsor of UEFA Women's Football in 2018. Visa also supports women players through Team Visa, providing

33 women football players with tools, resources and support to help them thrive. As part of its FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 campaign, Visa is also putting women entrepreneurs centre-stage, highlighting the important role support networks play in supporting them achieve their professional goals.

For more information about Visa's sponsorship of FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ and initiatives helping women to thrive, visit: <https://www.visa.co.uk/about-visa/sponsorships-events/fifa-womens-world-cup.html>

For more information about HSBC UK's financial education programmes for young people, including free resources for schools and families, please visit www.hsbc.co.uk/financial-education/



INSPIRING POSITIVE STRATEGY UPDATE

When we launched our Women's and Girls' strategy, Inspiring Positive Change, in October 2020 eight months into a global pandemic, we could not have foreseen the incredible two years that lay ahead. While things in the world have changed, we have remained constant in our belief that football has the power to change lives for the better and improve opportunities for girls and women across society.

The power of women's football was evident on 31 July 2022, a day that will live long in the memory for us all. One goal in the strategy was to 'win a major tournament' but none of us could have imagined the impact of victory in a home tournament. When the Lionesses lifted the UEFA Women's EURO trophy at Wembley Stadium in front of 87,000 fans, it was a moment of great joy, but it was also a moment of great opportunity. The reaction to the success and the way it transcended society has given us an unprecedented chance to change the future of the women's game forever. It has turbo charged our strategy with demand growing right cross the game. We have seen more girls stepping forward to play, more fans filling our stadiums and new commercial partners all wanting to be part of this great movement for change.

Another big goal was our pledge to transform the game at the grassroots level by ensuring that girls have equal access to football in schools and clubs. It's a passion shared by our special group of England players, who are doing everything in their power to make change in this area. Our strategy sought to achieve this goal by 2024 but we know that we must capitalise on the Euros and work in partnership with government and other key stakeholders to drive this ambition as quickly as possible.

Our strategy was based on understanding an individual's motivation to be involved in football. Whether that be playing for fun or competition, coaching, refereeing, volunteering or becoming a fan, we want to ensure there is access and opportunity for every girl and woman. Building on our highly successful Weetabix Wildcats offering for primary age girls, we launched our SQUAD programme for 12–14-year-olds and saw 90,000 girls take part in the Let Girls Play Biggest Ever Football session. Alongside the development of our club pathway, we launched the Women's National League three-year strategy, produced a comprehensive plan for the development of the Barclays Women's Super League and Barclays Womens Championship and saw a significant uplift

CHANGE

in prize money for the Vitality Women's FA Cup competition. We have redesigned our talent pathway to ensure it is more diverse and inclusive, and produced a blueprint for success for our England teams from under 14 to senior level. All this progress has been underpinned by the rapid development of coaches and referees at all levels of the game and the support of an increasing number of commercial partners.

We still have a long way to go but we are making good progress on all fronts. Thank you to all our partners who have played a pivotal role in helping us make strides towards our strategic goals, including our County FAs, schools, clubs, and of course the talented and committed team at The FA.



“We have seen more girls stepping forward to play, more fans filling our stadiums and new commercial partners all wanting to be part of this great movement for change.”

Baroness Sue Campbell

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL – TWO YEAR

Participation:



of all schools are currently offering **equal access** through girls' football in PE lessons



of schools are currently offering **equal access** through extra-curricular clubs [outside of school hours]

171 New **Weetabix Wildcats** providers



=10

328 **SQUAD** approved providers



=10

17%

40%

15%



Increase in female affiliated players from October 2021 – October 2022

growth in female affiliated teams since strategy launch

growth in female youth teams since October 2021 (aged 5-18)

88%

of County FA areas now have a **high-quality girls' league offer**

Women's Leagues



A new record for the attendance was recorded at **Arsenal**

893

new record for cumulative BWSL and BWC matches



49,094

record attendance for the 2022 Vitality Women's FA Cup Final

HIGHLIGHTS 2021 and 2022

and Competitions



highest Barclays WSL
at the North London Derby,
v Spurs

381

ative attendance across
thes on one weekend

1,084

Record breaking average
attendance for the opening
weekend of the 2022/2023
Barclays WC season



Player pathway:

94%

of County FAs with Equality,
Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) plans
specifically for the female game



player referrals received between July
and September 2022 and the number of
EFL Community Club Organisations
involved increasing from 34 to 53

England:



UEFA Women's EURO
2022 Champions



England qualified for next
summer's FIFA Women's
World Cup

Refereeing:

Increase in the number
of referees since 2021
Female referees

1,495 VS 1,130

September 2021

21%

Increase in registered
female referees
across all levels since
October 2021

Coaching:



UEFA A Licence
Applications from
the female game
(2023/24 Cohort)

UEFA EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

Operational success:

574,875



total match attendance across the tournament, including **110,555** international spectators from **104** countries



85% of spectators are likely to attend professional international and domestic women's football events again in the future

87,192



Record breaking final attendance, and an average match attendance of **18,544**

Social Impact:



of local residents feel that the **UEFA Women's EURO 2022** has brought their local community closer



of participants reported that participating in the **UEFA Women's EURO 2022** Legacy activity/activities has **improved their confidence and self esteem**¹

Economic Impact:

81m



Host cities received a **£81m** boost in economic activity as a result of the tournament. Domestic and international visitors made over

552,000



Enhanced International reach: IC Impact



The most watched Women's EURO ever, with a **projected global live viewership of 365m**, across **195 territories**

¹ Based on independent surveys of spectators, local residents in host cities, tournament volunteers and legacy programme participants – **REPORT**

2022 – HOST CITY IMPACT REPORT



total spectator spending
around matchdays and
trips across England



**day and overnight
trips to host cities**

ational



Globally, **UEFA Women's EURO 2022 generated 453m cumulative social interactions**, with TikTok (39%) and Twitter (21%) contributing the most

Growth of the professional game:



289%
Increase in media rights
values since the previous
Women's EURO



of spectators say UEFA
Women's EURO 2022 has
improved their perception
of women's football¹



of spectators are **likely**
to watch a professional
international or domestic
women's football event on
TV in the future¹

Physical exercise, sport and grassroots football participation



Over **416,000** new opportunities
created in schools, clubs, and the
community to engage women and
girls in grassroots legacy football
activities across the host cities.
Includes opportunities to play,
coach, officiate and volunteer



More than half of local
residents and **2 in 5** spectators
and tournament volunteers
have been inspired to do more
sport and physical activity
generally, as a result of UEFA
Women's EURO 2022

A MEMORABLE YEAR FOR WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

Participation



Increase in participation amongst women (16+) compared to October 2021*



Increase in participation amongst girls (5-15) compared to October 2021*



856%
rise in unique visits to the SQUAD Girls Football landing page on England Football.com since launch



196%
increase in bookings through FindFootball.com



Interest



increase since awareness of girls' football (Girls' aged 5-15)

Interest in women's football is up 12%
girls aged 5-15 pre and post

* Source – The FA's Participation Tracker+
* Source – The FA's Participation Tracker+ Youth
* Source – The FA's Youth Tracker and Girls' Tracker
* Source – Women's and Girls' exports for WEUFA
in female teams

GIRLS' FOOTBALL



June 2022 in
the Lionesses.
16 in England)

12%



men's football
amongst
16 in England
the WEUROS*

Tracker
Wave 7
Legacy, Female coaches (active)

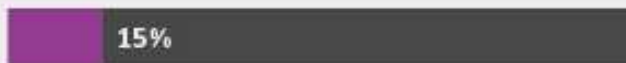
Refereeing



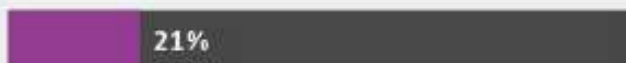
Increase from October 2021 to October 2022 in female referees aged 14-15 beginning training



Increase in female registered football teams from October 2021 – 2022*



Increase in female youth teams from October 2021-2022



Increase in female registered referees across all levels since October 2021

75%



Number of female coaches working in affiliated female teams is up 75% compared to the same point last year, before the WEUROS*



Kent's all female football team score space in FA Cup



Following the Lionesses amazing journey which saw them make the final of the Women's World Cup, XL@Football, Kent's all female football club are heading towards their first game in the women's FA Cup on 10th September when they face Herne Bay.

XL's senior team with an average age of 17, are the first in their clubs history to secure a spot in the renowned competition. The competing teams face 11 stages in order to get into the final for a chance to win the £2m prize fund which is 100% increase on the previous competition.

On the 10th September, XL@Football will be hitting the pitch in their new kit which promotes a tripartite relationship with Demelza a children's hospice and Kent Reliance, an award winning savings

provider, who both operating across the Kent area. This relationship has been developed over three years and exists to support people in the local area. Families from Demelza will be special guests invited to the game and help cheer on the players.

Stuart Grist, Director, XL@Football said, "It is a huge achievement for the team to make it into the FA Cup for the first time in our clubs history.

"The players pour so much effort into their training and this is an amazing opportunity for them to have a taste of how their career path can progress.

"Women's football has very rightly been bought into the spotlight over recent years and now football is seen as

a very real career option, something that all female football clubs across the UK and beyond have been working for over a long period of time."

Jon Hall, Group Managing Director, Kent Reliance agreed "What a truly wonderful achievement and very well deserved.

"We've partnered with XL@Football for a number of years and their passion for supporting females in football is infectious!

"We are delighted to help support them through this competition and whatever the journey holds next. We wish them all the luck in the world for their first games in September."

Dream come true for football loving Georgia



Middlesex University student Georgia Rosenberg can't wait to become a part of the rise of girls and women's football after being offered a place on The FA Universities Women's Leadership Programme.

The 20-year-old, from Bushey, Watford, was encouraged to apply for the prestigious programme after becoming involved in the university football teams shortly after starting a Sport and Exercise Rehabilitation degree.

The application process is very rigorous and this is the most competitive year the programme has ever seen.

Based on FA commissioned research, the programme aims to support females with aspirations to work within the

women's game to be competitive when they enter the job market

Georgia will have the opportunity to develop skills, behaviours, confidence and her professional network, as well as be supported in defining career goals and ambitions by exploring and understanding the diverse opportunities that exist in women's football.

"I was offered the opportunity as they believed I could create a positive influence to the women's game in the future due to my love and passion for the sport," she said.

"The programme involves unlocking the potential of young females who aspire to work in the sport and teaching the best way to promote it to girls and women."

For Georgia, the dream is to complete a Master's Degree in physiotherapy and then join a championship or premier league club.

"There's no better career than mixing the sport I love with the job I've dreamed of since I was 15," she said.

She was drawn to Middlesex University for the modern facilities, cultural diversity and communal atmosphere on campus.

"I have loved every second," Georgia said. "The cohort and lecturers are calm, fun and understanding and will help in any way they can."

Georgia started playing football at the age of six and competed in small tournaments before

moving to Garston Ladies club where she was a member and regular lead goal-scorer until she was 16.

She has already competed for Great Britain and spent two years with Pro Direct Academy, playing against teams such as MK Dons and Cambridge.

Middlesex's women's football team was a vital part of Georgia's university choice and she was named captain in her second year.

She said: "The diversity of girls that join the football team is incredible and there's always a positive team spirit which provides an amazing atmosphere.

"The sport staff are brilliant and very supportive in helping the women's team grow."

Georgia believes that the Lionesses' achievements with the Euros and just this month the Women's World Cup have given a "massive boost to women's football and inspiring girls to play."

"It has even shown with the team at Middlesex, where people have joined due to being motivated.

"The England team have had a huge positive impact to the awareness of the women's game, and I would

only expect more publicity and engagement for the future."

So what advice does Georgia have to girls or women who might want to become involved in the beautiful game?

"Jump right into it," she said, "There is no judgement. Don't be afraid that you may not be as good as other people, everything comes with practice, but having the right team around you is one

of the best motivational boosters.

"Football for me has not only become an escape from uni and work, but it has become my personality and I would love to see as many females getting involved as possible. You won't know until you try!"

Georgia will undertake her first leadership residential course in October followed by two more next year.





CUP COMPETITIONS



Women's Champions League draw

Women's Champions League debutants Manchester United will play Paris St-Germain in the second qualifying round for a place in the group stage.

Scottish champions Glasgow City face Norwegian club SK Brann after beating Lithuania's Gintra in the first round.

United were runners-up in the Women's Super League last season to qualify for Europe for the first time.

They will play the first leg at home against the French side, who are two-time finalists, on 10 or 11 October.

The return legs will be played on 18 and 19 October to decide the remaining 12 places in the groups.

Holders Barcelona plus Lyon, Bayern Munich and WSL

champions Chelsea have already qualified for the group stages, which start in November.

Last season's Champions League semi-finalists Arsenal were knocked out in the first qualifying round, alongside Scottish side Celtic.

Champions Path

- Apollon Ladies FC (CYP) vs SL Benfica (POR)
- FC Zürich (SUI) vs AFC Ajax (NED)
- AS Roma (ITA) vs FC Vorskla (UKR)
- Valur (ISL) vs SKN St. Pölten Frauen (AUT)
- SK Slavia Praha (CZE) vs AS FC Universitatea Olimpia Cluj (ROU)
- Glasgow City FC (SCO) vs SK Brann (NOR)
- ŽFK Spartak Subotica (SRB) vs FC Rosengård (SWE)

League path

- BK Häcken FF (SWE) vs FC Twente (NED)
- Real Madrid CF (ESP) vs Vålerenga Fotball (NOR)
- Eintracht Frankfurt (GER) vs AC Sparta Praha (CZE)
- Paris FC (FRA) vs VfL Wolfsburg (GER)
- Manchester United Women (ENG) vs Paris Saint-Germain (FRA)

How it works

Seven teams from the Champions Path and five teams from the League Path will join Barcelona, Lyon, Bayern Munich and Chelsea in the group stages.

Conti Cup Group Stage Fixtures Announced



The group stage fixtures of the 2023/24 FA Women's Continental Tyres League Cup have been revealed today, with ten Round 1 fixtures kicking off the competition across 11-12 October 2023.

The draw promises excitement across all five groups, with 2022-23 semi-finalists Manchester City and West Ham taking on Everton and Charlton Athletic respectively in the first round of their campaign, while newly promoted Watford take on locals London City Lionesses.

Pete Robb, Marketing Director at Continental Tyres, said: "At Continental Tyres we are proud of our long association with Women's Football, now in its 13th year, and look forward to continuing our support of the Continental Tyres League Cup, which promises some thrilling

match ups from the group draw.

"This season represents another marquee year for the women's game, and with top-flight women's football throughout the league, we'll be joining the fans in supporting another exciting cup season."

Chelsea will enter the competition at the quarter-final stage.

With Arsenal getting knocked out of the Women's Champions League in Round 1, they will join the Conti Cup in the group stages.

A draw took place to determine which group (C, D or E), Arsenal would join and they were put in Group D.

This means they will take on Bristol City, Reading, Southampton and Tottenham Hotspur.

The Gunners are the current

champions having beaten Chelsea 3-1 at Selhurst Park last season.

Arsenal's full fixture details will be confirmed in due course.

If Manchester United get knocked out of the Women's Champions League in Round 2, they will also enter the competition in the group stages and will be in Group B.

The group stages of the FA Women's Continental Tyres League Cup will run from 11-12 October 2023 through to 24-25 January 2024, with the quarterfinals scheduled for 7-8 February 2024, the semi-finals 6-7 March 2024, and the final on 31 March 2024.

P	D					
A	1	11 Oct	Sheffield United	Sunderland	19:45	TBC
A	1	11 Oct	Durham	Blackburn Rovers	19:00	Maiden Castle
B	1	11 Oct	Everton	Manchester City	19:00	Walton Hall Park
B	1	11 Oct	Leicester City	Liverpool	19:00	King Power / Pirelli Stadium
C	1	11 Oct	Lewes	Crystal Palace	19:30	The Dripping Pan
C	1	11 Oct	London City Lionesses	Watford	19:00	Princes Park Stadium
D	1	11 Oct	Bristol City	Southampton	19:30	TBC
D	1	11 Oct	Tottenham Hotspur	Reading	19:30	Brisbane Road Stadium
E	1	11 Oct	Birmingham City	Brighton & Hove Albion	19:00	St. Andrews
E	1	11 Oct	West Ham United	Charlton Athletic	19:30	Chigwell Construction Stadium
ROUND 2						
A	2	8 Nov	Sheffield United	Aston Villa	19:45	TBC
A	2	8 Nov	Sunderland	Durham	19:30	Eppleton CW
ROUND 3						
A	3	23 Nov	Durham	Sheffield United	19:00	Maiden Castle
A	3	22 Nov	Aston Villa	Blackburn Rovers	19:00	Poundland Bescot Stadium
B	3	22 Nov	Liverpool	Everton	19:00	Prenton Park
B	3	22 Nov	Manchester City	Leicester City	19:00	Academy Stadium
C	3	22 Nov	Crystal Palace	Watford	19:15	Sutton United FC
C	3	22 Nov	Lewes	London City Lionesses	19:30	The Dripping Pan
D	3	23 Nov	Southampton	Reading	19:45	Eastleigh FC
D	3	22 Nov	Tottenham Hotspur	Bristol City	19:30	Brisbane Road Stadium
E	3	22 Nov	Brighton & Hove Albion	West Ham United	19:00	Broadfield Stadium
E	3	22 Nov	Charlton Athletic	Birmingham City	19:00	VCD Athletic, The Oakwood
ROUND 4						
A	4	13 Dec	Aston Villa	Durham	18:00/18:30	Poundland Bescot Stadium
A	4	13 Dec	Blackburn Rovers	Sunderland	19:00	TBC
ROUND 5						
A	5	24 Jan	Blackburn Rovers	Sheffield United	19:00	Lancashire FA County Ground
A	5	24 Jan	Sunderland	Aston Villa	19:30	Eppleton CW
B	5	24 Jan	Leicester City	Everton	19:00	King Power Stadium
B	5	24 Jan	Manchester City	Liverpool	19:00	Academy Stadium
C	5	24 Jan	London City Lionesses	Crystal Palace	19:00	Princes Park Stadium
C	5	24 Jan	Watford	Lewes	19:30	Wealdstone FC
D	5	24 Jan	Reading	Bristol City	19:00	Select Car Leasing Stadium
D	5	24 Jan	Southampton	Tottenham Hotspur	19:45	Eastleigh FC
E	5	24 Jan	Birmingham City	West Ham United	19:00	St. Andrews
E	5	24 Jan	Charlton Athletic	Brighton & Hove Albion	19:00	VCD



HOME NATIONS

England U23s

Head Coach Emma Coates names a 23-strong squad for the first two fixtures of the new campaign

England women's under-23s will travel away to Norway to kick off the season before hosting Belgium at home in Shrewsbury.

The Young Lionesses, who remain undefeated in 2023, will first travel to Bryne to take on Norway on Thursday 21 September (17:30 BST).

Emma Coates' side will then welcome Belgium to the New Meadow, home of Shrewsbury Town FC, on Monday 25 September (19:00 BST), which tickets are now on sale for.

The fixtures form part of a new organised competition for the WU23s in the 2023-24 season, which will see the age group compete against fellow European nations in a league format across the course of the campaign.

Emma Coates said: "It's going to be a hugely exciting year for the WU23s as we compete in our first structured competition.

"As the women's game continues to grow, we need to ensure our WU23 age group is connected to the pathway to the senior team, and this competition gives us the chance to do exactly that.

"The first two fixtures

against Norway and Belgium will be a tough test against quality opposition, which is exactly what we want to start our campaign strongly.

"We hope to see a good crowd turnout in Shrewsbury to cheer the team on in our first home game of the new season."

The squad

Goalkeepers: Lucy Thomas (Birmingham City), Fran Bentley (Bristol City), Kayla Rendell (Southampton)

Defenders: Poppy Pattinson (Brighton & Hove Albion), Naomi Layzell (Bristol City), Mia Ross (Charlton Athletic), Kiera Skeels (Charlton Athletic), Tara Bourne (Sheffield United), Ella Morris (Southampton), Asmita Ale (Tottenham Hotspur), Anouk Denton (West Ham)

Midfielders: Laura Blindkilde Brown (Aston Villa), Ruby Grant (BK Hacken), Missy Bo Kearns (Liverpool), Ruby Mace (Manchester City), Grace Clinton (Tottenham Hotspur, on loan from Manchester United), Melisa Filis (West Ham)

Forwards: Freya Gregory (Aston Villa), Aggie Beever-Jones (Chelsea), Missy Goodwin (Leicester City), Molly Pike (Southampton), Jessica Naz (Tottenham Hotspur), Emma Harries (West Ham)

U19s Squad named by Amy Merricks

Goalkeepers: Eve Annets (Reading), Lucy Jones (Birmingham City, dual registered with West Bromwich Albion), Hannah Poulter (University of South California)

Defenders: Brooke Aspin (Chelsea, loan to Bristol City), Ria Bose (Chelsea), Cerys Brown (Chelsea), Araya Dennis (Arsenal, dual registered with Crystal Palace), Evie Rabjohn (Manchester United), Katie Reid (Arsenal, dual registered with Watford), Jessica Simpson (Manchester United), Mari Ward (Bristol City)

Midfielders: Ashanti Akpan (Chelsea), Jemima Dahou (Manchester City, dual registered with Blackburn Rovers), Maddy Earl (Arsenal), Grace Ede (Sunderland), Shauna Guyatt (Crystal Palace), Lois Marley-Paraskevas (Manchester City), Alexia Potter (Chelsea, dual registered with Crystal Palace),

Forwards: Ava Baker (Leicester City), Mia Enderby (Liverpool), Freya Godfrey (Arsenal, loan to Charlton Athletic), Georgia Mullett (Aston Villa), Poppy Pritchard (Durham), Katy Watson (Sunderland)

WORLD CUP FINALISTS RETURN TO ACTION

Sarina Wiegman has named the England squad for the inaugural UEFA Women's Nations League fixtures later this month.

Keeping faith with players involved in the run to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup final at the tournament in Australia and New Zealand this summer, Wiegman has named a 24-player selection, including Lucy Staniforth and Maya Le Tissier, who travelled Down Under, and Jess Park, who withdrew from finals contention with injury.

World Cup duo Bethany England and Keira Walsh are both unavailable for selection because of injury.

The Lionesses will first be in action on Friday 22 September with Scotland making the short trip across the border to the home of



Sunderland. Four days later, England will play the Netherlands away in Utrecht on Tuesday 26 September – scene of a memorable 6-0 win against Scotland at EURO 2017.

The Nations League campaign sees England drawn with Belgium, the Netherlands and Scotland in one of a quartet of League A four-team groups.

The winners of each section will qualify for the semi-finals in February, before a final is played to determine the overall champions.

Wiegman said: "By the time we play our first game, it will be little more than a month since the World Cup final.

"We have had little time to reflect on all we have achieved so far

this year. Instead, we will have to make sure the players are fresh enough and ready to perform straight away, if we want to go far in another competition. We will play a derby match against Scotland and they have shown good development recently and are getting stronger and stronger, while we know all about the Netherlands of course and the very talented players they have.

"It is the first time we have had the Nations League in the women's game, and it will mean even more competitive matches for us to test ourselves. While the time to look back on a special period for us will come at the end of the year, it will be good to see the fans again in Sunderland. We have a great connection with the north-east and I know they will give us tremendous support again."



ENGLAND
WOMEN'S
SENIOR TEAM

SEPTEMBER UEFA WOMEN'S NATIONS LEAGUE

SQUAD ANNOUNCEMENT



UEFA
women's
NATIONS
LEAGUE

POS.	NAME	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GOALS	DEBUT
GOALKEEPERS	MARY EARPS	MANCHESTER UNITED	07.03.1993	41	0	V SWITZERLAND (10.06.17)
	HANNAH HAMPTON	CHELSEA	16.11.2000	2	0	V SPAIN (20.02.22)
	ELLIE ROEBUCK	MANCHESTER CITY	23.09.1999	11	0	V AUSTRIA (08.11.18)
DEFENDERS	MILLIE BRIGHT	CHELSEA	21.08.1993	73	5	V BELGIUM (20.09.16)
	LUCY BRONZE	BARCELONA	28.10.1991	112	12	V JAPAN (26.06.13)
	JESS CARTER	CHELSEA	27.10.1997	24	1	V KAZAKHSTAN (28.11.17)
	NIAMH CHARLES	CHELSEA	21.06.1999	9	0	V FRANCE (09.04.21)
	ALEX GREENWOOD	MANCHESTER CITY	07.09.1993	82	5	V ITALY (05.03.14)
	MAYA LE TISSIER	MANCHESTER UNITED	18.04.2002	2	0	V NORWAY (15.11.22)
	ESME MORGAN	MANCHESTER CITY	18.10.2000	5	0	V CZECH REPUBLIC (11.10.22)
	LOTTE WUBBEN-MOY	ARSENAL	01.11.1999	10	0	V NORTHERN IRELAND (23.02.21)
MIDFIELDERS	LAURA COOMBS	MANCHESTER CITY	29.01.1991	7	0	V CHINA (23.10.15)
	JORDAN NOBBS	ASTON VILLA	08.12.1992	71	8	V ITALY (06.03.13)
	JESS PARK	MANCHESTER CITY	21.10.2001	4	1	V JAPAN (11.11.22)
	LUCY STANFORTH	ASTON VILLA	02.10.1992	17	2	V KAZAKHSTAN (03.09.18)
	GEORGIA STANWAY	BAYERN MUNICH	03.01.1999	57	16	V AUSTRIA (08.11.18)
	ELLA TOONE	MANCHESTER UNITED	02.09.1999	38	17	V NORTHERN IRELAND (23.02.21)
	KATIE ZELEM	MANCHESTER UNITED	20.01.1996	10	0	V LATVIA (30.11.21)
FORWARDS	RACHEL DALY	ASTON VILLA	06.12.1991	76	14	V SERBIA (04.06.16)
	LAUREN HEMP	MANCHESTER CITY	07.08.2000	45	13	V PORTUGAL (08.10.19)
	LAUREN JAMES	CHELSEA	29.09.2001	16	4	V AUSTRIA (03.08.22)
	CHLOE KELLY	MANCHESTER CITY	15.01.1998	33	7	V AUSTRIA (08.11.18)
	ALESSIA RUSSO	ARSENAL	08.02.1999	29	14	V SPAIN (11.03.20)
	KATIE ROBINSON	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION	08.08.2002	5	0	V NORWAY (15.11.22)

PROUD SUPPORTERS OF ENGLAND WOMEN



HARPERCOLLINS TO PUBLISH WHAT IT TAKES, FROM AWARD-WINNING HEAD COACH SARINA WIEGMAN THIS NOVEMBER



HarperCollins Publishers will publish *What it Takes: My Playbook on Life and Leadership*, from record-breaking England Head Coach Sarina Wiegman this autumn on 9th November.

This is Sarina's first book and will track her extraordinary journey to becoming one of sport's most inspirational figures, and the book will provide insight into her coaching philosophy, leadership style and her vision for the future of women's football.

HarperNonFiction Publishing Director Rose Sandy acquired World All Language rights from Lienke van Santvoort and Pauline Siemers at Sparkling Orange Netherlands, Publisher Erwin Koning will

oversee HarperCollins Holland's publication and it will be co-written with Jeroen Visscher. *What it Takes* will be published globally in Hardback, audiobook and eBook on 9th November 2023.

Sarina Wiegman first entered the history books in 2017 when she led the Dutch women's team to victory at the UEFA Euros at home, and two years later the team were crowned runners-up in the 2019 FIFA World Cup.

In 2021 Sarina took up the role of England's Head Coach, and last summer she entered the history books once again when she led the Lionesses to victory on home soil at the 2022 Euros, winning the country's first major title since the men's World Cup victory in 1966.

Last month Sarina took the Lionesses to a historic first World Cup final – as the first England men's or women's team to make a final in 57 years – with Sarina becoming the first manager to lead two

nations to a Women's World Cup final in successive tournaments.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest coaches in the game, Sarina has won Best Women's Coach at the FIFA Awards three times, making her the first coach of either gender to do so.

Just last week she won the 2022/23 UEFA Women's Coach of the Year for a second year running and in 2022 received an honorary CBE for her services to football.

Sarina Wiegman says: 'Football teaches us about teamwork, perseverance, and the importance of pushing ourselves to be the best we can be. In my book, I hope to share my love for the game, and the impact it has had on my life both on and off the field. I believe that everyone has a unique story to tell, and that by sharing our stories, we can inspire and connect with others.'

"I'm looking forward to share my personal journey as a coach,

key moments on the field, and the lessons I've learned along the way about courage, vulnerability, and the power of human achievement. My hope is that through my story and experiences, I can empower others and contribute to the further growth and development of coaches and leaders.'

Rose Sandy says: 'I am thrilled to be publishing Sarina's book as it not only tells the inspiring story of one of the most successful female football managers in the world, but also provides invaluable insights into leadership, innovation, and change. I am always on the lookout for stories that inspire and empower readers.'

Sarina's book will do exactly that, offering a unique perspective on the world of football and leadership.

Her unwavering commitment to excellence and her ability to create winning teams is a testament to her talent, passion, and dedication. I am honoured to be a part of bringing her story and passion to the world.'

Erwin Koning says: 'What Sarina has done for the teams in both the Netherlands and England is beyond impressive, and I think this book will appeal to a lot of people who

her success in both countries.

"Combining this with her strong message of inclusion and female leadership guarantees a book that will be a bestseller in the making, and we are extremely proud to be working with Sarina and her team to make this happen.'

Jeroen Visscher says: 'I am thrilled to collaborate with Sarina on this upcoming book.

"I have seen first hand the impact that her leadership style has on those around her.

"She has a way of bringing out the best in people and helping them reach their full potential, both on and off the field.

"With her success and leadership style Sarina is a role model for girls and women around the world.'



LEICESTER DATE FOR LIONESSES



England will welcome Belgium to the home of Leicester City in the UEFA Women's Nations League on Friday 27 October.

The 7.45pm match, which will be broadcast across ITV channels, will be the first time the Lionesses have played in the East Midlands city since a 1-1 draw with Sweden on 17 September 1980.

The Lionesses' home fixture with the Red Flames will be followed four days later with the return fixture in Leuven.

The England-Belgium double-header will mark both teams' third and fourth games in the inaugural Nations League with the competition beginning the previous month.

Tickets for the fixture will go on sale to My England Football members on Friday 11 August.

Tickets then went on general sale on Tuesday 15 August.

Sarina Wiegman's squad start the campaign with their first post-FIFA Women's World Cup match on Friday 22 September at home to Scotland at Sunderland's Stadium of Light before facing the Netherlands away in Utrecht on Tuesday 26 September.

The final matches in the group will be played on 1 and 5 December respectively with England first welcoming the Netherlands to a yet-to-be confirmed venue before

making the short trip north of the border to Scotland.

The team that tops the four-team section will progress to the Nations League finals between 21-28 February.

Two semi-finals will be played before a showpiece match to determine the overall winners.

League A Group 1

Belgium

England

Netherlands

Scotland



SCOTLAND SQUAD

FIONA BROWN (FC ROSENGÅRD), KELLY CLARK (CELTIC), RACHEL CORSIE (ASTON VILLA), EARTHA CUMINGS (FC ROSENGÅRD), LAUREN DAVIDSON (GLASGOW CITY FC), NICOLA DOCHERTY (RANGERS), CLAIRE EMSLIE (ANGEL CITY FC), LISA EVANS (WEST HAM UNITED), JENNA FIFE (RANGERS), AMY GALLACHER (CELTIC), LEE GIBSON (GLASGOW CITY FC), CHRISTY GRIMSHAW (AC MILAN), KIRSTY HANSON (ASTON VILLA), SOPHIE HOWARD (LEICESTER CITY), SAM KERR (FC BAYERN FRAUEN), RACHEL MCLAUCHLAN (RANGERS), KIRSTY MACLEAN (RANGERS), EMMA MUKANDI (LONDON CITY LIONESSES), JAMIE-LEE NAPIER (BRISTOL CITY), AMY RODGERS (BRISTOL CITY), MARTHA THOMAS (TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR), EMMA WATSON* (MANCHESTER UNITED), CAROLINE WEIR (REAL MADRID CF)

*DENOTES SCOTTISH FA JD PERFORMANCE SCHOOL PARTICIPANT

News from Aber



Aber named Community Club of the Year

Aberystwyth Town Women have been crowned Central Wales Community Club of the Year in the FAW/McDonald's Grassroots Football Awards.

The Seaside's picked up the prize in recognition of their work over the last year introducing a mascot programme and continuing to expand their girls' holiday camps with a female-led coaching team - with both initiatives giving local girls and young women the chance to enjoy football in a safe, supportive and welcoming environment.

Club volunteer Lucie Gwilt collected the award and said: "We are so pleased to win this prestigious award. Lots of people give their time freely to create these opportunities for girls and young women and we hope we will be able to do even more for the community in the months and years to come."

Goalkeeper joins Aberystwyth

Aberystwyth Town Women are delighted to announce the signing of goalkeeper Margot Farnes. The 18-year-old joins the Seaside's after spells at Bowers and Pitsea, and West Ham United's academy, and has also played in Middlesex county representative teams. She will take shirt number 1.

"I'm really excited to be joining Aberystwyth Town, and can't wait for the new challenge," said Farnes. "Everyone has been super welcoming and made the transition really easy. I'm looking forward to seeing what we can achieve, and can't wait to get started!"



Duggan is back at the Seaside

Midfielder Niamh Duggan is back at Aberystwyth Town Women for the 2023/24 season. The 18-year-old returns to Park Avenue following a spell with Reading FC's academy in the Women's Super League. She has been given the shirt number 7 for the upcoming campaign.

"I'm really happy to be back, and can't wait to get started," said Duggan. "It'll be great to have another homegrown talented player on the pitch for us," added manager Gavin Allen.

Swapping boots for dance shoes

One of Aberystwyth Town Women's young stars has spent the close season swapping her football boots for dancing shoes - and being crowned world champion.

Imi Scourfield, who will be 17 next month, won the Novice Solo category for under-18s at the United Dance Organisation's World Championships in Blackpool.

"I entered the competition with confidence, but also with nerves as there is so much outstanding talent shown throughout the four days," said Scourfield.

"When I found out I had won, I was utterly shocked and it felt like I was dreaming - but it was a dream come true."

Scourfield began dancing when she was four years old, and football when she was eight.

She now attends Ysgol Greenhill School, Tenby, where she is in year 12 and studying PE, IT and Chemistry - and she makes the journey up to Aberystwyth for training and matches.

"I am able to balance my football and dance well and being able to do that is really good," she added - although she admitted that picking up the odd knock in football does affect her dancing. Her biggest dream now is to become a professional footballer, which she describes as "my ambition since the day I fell in love with football".

Aberystwyth Town Women begin their season in the Genero Adran Premier against Barry Town United at Park Avenue, Aberystwyth, on Sunday 17th September, kick-off 2pm.



Wales Squad



GWLAD YR IÂ v CYMRU 22.09.23 Laugardalsvöllur, Reykjavík
CYMRU v DENMARC 26.09.23 Cardiff City Stadium

CHWARAEWR	CLWB	DG	CAP
Laura O'Sullivan	Cardiff City Ladies	23/08/91 (32)	59
Olivia Clark	Watford (On loan from Bristol City)	30/08/01 (22)	9
Safia Middleton-Patel	Manchester United	21/09/04 (18)	1
Rhiannon Roberts	Real Betis	30/08/90 (33)	59
Charlie Estcourt	Reading	27/05/98 (25)	37
Hayley Ladd	Manchester United	06/10/93 (29)	83
Josie Green	Leicester City	25/04/93 (30)	24
Gemma Evans	Manchester United	01/08/96 (27)	54
Lily Woodham	Reading	03/09/00 (23)	16
Esther Morgan	Heart of Midlothian	28/08/02 (21)	9
Ella Powell	Bristol City	01/02/00 (23)	3
Sophie Ingle	Chelsea	02/09/91 (32)	128
Angharad James	Tottenham Hotspur	01/06/94 (29)	109
Anna Filbey	Crystal Palace	11/10/99 (23)	7
Jess Fishlock	OL Reign	14/01/87 (36)	141
Ceri Holland	Liverpool	12/12/97 (25)	23
Ffion Morgan	Bristol City	11/05/00 (23)	25
Megan Wynne	Southampton	21/01/93 (30)	24
Rachel Rowe	Rangers	13/09/92 (31)	57
Carrie Jones	Bristol City	04/09/03 (20)	20
Kayleigh Green	Charlton Athletic	22/03/88 (35)	70
Elise Hughes	Crystal Palace	15/04/01 (22)	19
Mary McAteer	Sunderland	02/01/04 (19)	-
Chloe Williams	Blackburn Rovers	22/12/00 (22)	1
Alice Griffiths	Southampton	22/01/01 (22)	6
Lauren Thomas	Blackburn Rovers	10/01/00 (23)	-

Gemma Grainger has announced her 26-player Cymru squad for the opening matches of the UEFA Women's Nations League, away to Iceland (Friday 22 September) and home to Denmark (Tuesday 26 September).

Rachel Rowe returns to the squad after missing July's 2-0 defeat to the USA in San Jose, while

Hannah Cain misses out due to injury. Mary McAteer and Lauren Thomas are the two uncapped players in the squad, with Wrexham born Thomas receiving her first senior team call-up.

The fixtures are the start of the first ever UEFA Women's Nations League

competition, where Cymru will face Iceland, Denmark and Germany in League A.

The competition is also a potential opportunity for Grainger's side to guarantee a qualification place for the 2025 UEFA Women's EURO competition.

Roll on December



© Joerdell Photography | Daniela Porcelli

Cymru's final UEFA Women's Nations League matches, against Iceland (Friday 1 December) and Germany (Tuesday 5 December) will be played at the Cardiff City Stadium and Swansea.com Stadium.

The matches will be the final games of the inaugural UEFA Women's Nations League campaign, and Cymru will be hoping to welcome the Red Wall to both stadiums for what will be two key games to conclude the exciting competition which starts next week away to Iceland (Friday 22 September) and home to Denmark (Tuesday 26 September).

Cymru have witnessed record attendances recently at the Cardiff City Stadium, peaking with the FIFA Women's World Cup play-off semi-final against Bosnia & Herzegovina last October which saw 15,200 of the Red Wall attend. The last time Cymru played

at the Swansea.com Stadium was in June 2018, against the same side. Kayleigh Green's goal was the difference in that match where a vital three points were gained to secure Cymru's highest ever FIFA Women's World Cup qualification round finish up to that point.

Speaking about the announcement, Gemma Grainger said; "We know the Cardiff City Stadium is a fortress for us and hopefully we can build on the attendances we have set there over the last few years when we face Iceland.

"It's been a few years since we've played at the Swansea.com stadium, but I can't wait to face Germany there December in what will be a great test for us. The Red Wall means so much for us and I'm positive we will see them come and support us in their numbers for both matches."

Speaking about playing in her home city, Cymru midfielder Rachel Rowe

said "Being born and bred in Swansea and having played for the club for several years, I can't wait to play at the Swansea.com Stadium in December.

"The support we've had over the last few years has been incredible and I can't wait to see the Red Wall in my home city against one of the world's strongest teams."

Tickets for both matches will be going on sale at 10am on Friday 22 September on the FAW ticketing website, available at £10 for adults and £5 for children. Red Wall member and group booking (10+ tickets) will also be available at £8 for adults and £3 for children.

Both matches will kick off at 19:15 but the final match may be subject to change due to UEFA regulations. Tickets for the first home match against Denmark on Tuesday 26 September at the Cardiff City Stadium (KO 19:15) are already available to purchase.



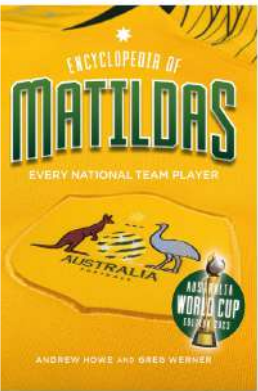
NORTHERN IRELAND SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: RACHAEL NORNEY (CLIFTONVILLE LADIES), SHANNON TURNER (WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS WOMEN), LILIE WOODS (MID ULSTER LADIES).

DEFENDERS: REBECCA HOLLOWAY (RACING LOUISVILLE, USA), ABBIE MAGEE (CLIFTONVILLE LADIES), ELLIE MASON (BIRMINGHAM CITY WOMEN), SARAH MCFADDEN (DURHAM WOMEN), REBECCA MCKENNA (CHARLTON ATHLETIC WOMEN), LAURA RAFFERTY (SOUTHAMPTON WOMEN), DEMI VANCE (GLENTORAN WOMEN).

MIDFIELDERS: JOELY ANDREWS (GLENTORAN WOMEN), MEGAN BELL (RANGERS WOMEN), NADENE CALDWELL (GLENTORAN WOMEN), MARISSA CALLAGHAN (CLIFTONVILLE LADIES), RACHEL FURNESS (BRISTOL CITY WOMEN), CARAGH HAMILTON (LEWES), CHLOE MCCARRON (GLENTORAN WOMEN).

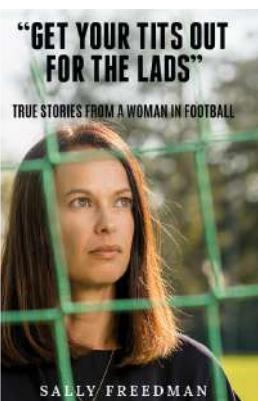
FORWARDS: KERRY BEATTIE (GLENTORAN WOMEN), SIMONE MAGILL (ASTON VILLA WOMEN), CAITLIN MCGUINNESS (CLIFTONVILLE LADIES), KIRSTY MCGUINNESS (CLIFTONVILLE LADIES), LAUREN WADE (READING WOMEN), EMILY WILSON (GLENTORAN WOMEN).



We love football as much as you do.



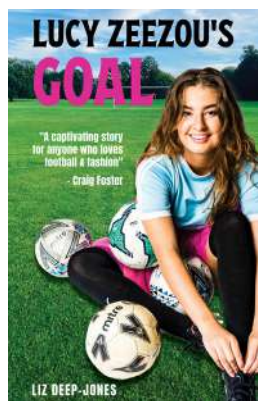
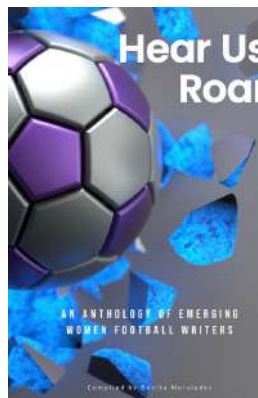
And here are just some of our books about women, for women, by women



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INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

Infantino hails transformational tournament



Gianni Infantino has said that the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™ has transformed the face of women's football and appealed to governments, member associations, broadcasters and media to help keep the momentum going towards equality once the tournament ends on Sunday.

Speaking at the opening of the Second FIFA Women's Football Convention in Sydney, the FIFA President thanked Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand for co-hosting "simply the best and greatest and biggest FIFA Women's World Cup ever".

"This FIFA Women's World Cup has been truly transformational, not only in Australia and New Zealand but all over the world," he said.

"In the host countries, we had almost two million spectators in the stadiums -- full houses everywhere -- and two billion watching all over the world --- and not just watching their own country but watching the World Cup, because it's an event [where] I don't just watch my team. It's great sport, it's entertaining and people love it."

"We have to thank and congratulate

Australia and New Zealand because without them this would not have been as magical."

Australia's Minister for Sport Anika Wells echoed the FIFA President's comment. "While this is almost the end for this [FIFA] Women's World Cup, it is only the start of a new era for sport in Australia. The sleeping giant has awoken," she said.

"In Australia, this FIFA Women's World Cup has not just changed women's football; it has changed women's sport. Australia is now a football country.

"I want to thank FIFA for what you have done to accelerate the pursuit of gender equality in our country."

The FIFA President said there was still much to do and urged FIFA's partners to contribute.

"We need everyone. We need the UN agencies, who have been very helpful to us in this World Cup, participating with us.

"We need the governments, we need the institutions, to create dedicated spaces for women, and for women's sport and women's football in particular, of course.

We need the partners, the sponsors to pay a fair price. We need the media," Mr Infantino said.

He asked broadcasters "to pay a fair price for women's football, not just for the (FIFA Women's) World Cup, but for women's football in general, in all the countries, all the leagues, in all the competitions".

"Female players cannot all go to play in a few clubs in Europe or the USA. We need in the next four years to create the conditions for them to be able to play at professional level at home and this is the biggest challenge we have to take on board," he said.

In concluding, the FIFA President also appealed to the assembled audience to act at all levels: "We have to start treating women and men in the same way. I say to all the women that you have the power to change. With FIFA, you will find open doors, just push the doors, they are open. And do it at national level in every country, at continental level in every confederation, just keep pushing, keep the momentum going, keep dreaming and let's really go for a full equality."

Jamie at The Women's World Cup



Blog Post One

Just under nine months since the famous men's World Cup final in Qatar won by Lionel Messi's Argentina - Jamie Davies was out travelling again in Australia & New Zealand.

Now Qatar feels like a cake walk in terms of travel compared to making a move down under. A direct flight from Manchester (UK) to Doha was about seven hours but London Heathrow to Sydney was over 24 hours, including a stop off in Dubai.

Never travelled this far before, a similar route has been done to get to Singapore but even that feels like nothing compared to this! Once landed in Sydney it was around 7am, best advice given was to stay awake until night time.

That advice was taken on and thankfully there was two Women's World Cup games to delve myself into to kill the time. The first game of the last 16 was Spain vs Switzerland which turned out to be very one-sided as the Spaniards won 5-1. Not going to lie, I was at a sports bar and was falling asleep on the table as the jet lag was kicking in. The terrible taste of Victoria Bitter didn't help either.

There was one more game before the end of the day and that was Japan versus Norway.

Both teams with one thing in common, they have both won a World Cup each - Norway in 1995 and Japan in 2011. The Japanese were favourites going into it and despite getting through at 3-1, Norway

showed a gutsy performance and maybe just maybe they can improve going forward.

Right bedtime as I had been awake for nearly three days! It was an early start as I was attending a lunchtime kick-off of the 2019 runners-up of the Netherlands and their opponents, reaching the knockouts for the very first time, South Africa. I slept like a baby and the energy was there to get going and head to the Allianz Stadium - a venue that is only 6 months old, so I was told.

It is a magnificent modern day football stadium and is the home to A-League football club, Sydney FC.

There was more support for South Africa with a sneak peek of vuvuzelas being heard in some parts of the stadium.

It takes you back to the 2010 World Cup when you couldn't get away from a noise that sounds like a swarm of bees!

After a tight start, the Dutch drew first blood thanks to Jill Roord tapping the ball home.

Keep an eye out for Roord as she will be joining Manchester City before the new season.

Goals can change everything and despite South Africa's efforts later on, their goalkeeper Kaylin Swart let the ball go right through her arms to allow Lineth Beerensteyn to double the lead.

South Africa had pride but it just wasn't enough as the Dutch made the quarter-finals, waiting for the outcome of USA vs Sweden later that day. I got home to spectate the latter match as this was going to be a good one! USA are known as the world beaters with their four World Cup victories but at this tournament they just haven't been anywhere near the best. It really does feel other countries have caught up with the Americans in terms of quality and experience.



I was sat at home with my cousin, Darren, watching the game and even though there was no goals after 90 minutes - it was a great fixture as we saw some heroic saving by Sweden's Zecira Musovic to keep the game at a tie. Americans are used to sports where a conclusion has to be made but I don't think they enjoyed this ending. The knockout tie went to a penalty shootout and it had everything... Megan Rapinoe missing her kick, USA's goalkeeper scoring from the spot and then Sweden's Lina Hult scoring the winning penalty by the barest of margins as the ball had just crossed the line!

The world champions were out! Sweden were through!

It has made this World Cup a very open competition. If this is what the last 16 can provide for us as entertainment, I look forward to the further rounds.

Blog Post Two

The last 16 continued as the morning after the world champions were knocked out on penalties to Sweden, many felt new opportunities had arisen.

Maybe just maybe we are going to have a nation winning this tournament for the very first time. Your previous winners of Norway and Germany had also bowed out early with only Japan left remaining. They won the World Cup in 2011. It's Monday August 7th and the Matilda's were in town as they were up against the Euro 2017 finalists of Denmark.

The game was an evening kick-off and it was taking place at another venue inside Sydney.

This one was at Stadium Australia which is best known as the Olympic Stadium from Sydney 2000. Famous for Australia's very own Cathy Freeman who won Olympic gold in

front of a home crowd. Could the Australians be witnessing glory again at this very stadium?

Before entering the ground, all you could see was green and gold (or is it yellow!?) decorated everywhere whether that's on scarfs, tops, beanie hats or on buildings. Australia were pumped for this.

Their final group game win over Olympic champions Canada helped them escape the exit doors even before the knockout stages. That win clearly gave the co-hosts belief that they could go all the way with this momentum.

Before I made the trip to Stadium Australia, pre-match food was needed so I visited a Wahlburger's famous for being ran by actor Mark Wahlberg's family. I tried out their biggest burger on the menu called 'The Matilda's Burger' and oh boy it was delicious and I could even taste victory in that bap. Even before I entered the stadium, there was a cue so long I couldn't see the end of it. And this was just for a free Australia blanket. Which is fitting to wear over your legs if it starts to get a bit nippy. I'll be honest, I did join the cue and grab one. Thanks Adidas for the freebie!

I was gutted to not be at England vs Nigeria in the other



last 16 tie as that was taking place in Brisbane. I kept an eye on the game on my phone but the game went on forever as Nigeria pushed England into extra time and then a penalty shootout. We all know us English have a terrible history at penalties. But a couple of errors from their opponents allowed Chloe Kelly to score one of the fastest penalty kicks I had ever seen to give her team a ticket to the quarter finals.

The England win happened just 15 minutes before Australia and Denmark were walking out. An Aussie sitting behind me really wanted England to go out - no surprise there! Now then all eyes on Australia - could they keep their campaign going for another week?

The game started off pretty calm

from both sides and the visitors looked more threatening. However, Australia were now waking up realising they had to improve. Sam Kerr yet again started on the bench due to an injury picked up before the tournament. But the crowd cheer every time Kerr was caught on the big screen was absolutely crazy - imagine the reception if she came on and scored!

Arsenal's Caitlin Foord found the breakthrough just before half-time as she beat her opposition defender to then produce a low stroke goal. Stadium Australia was loud and proud making it very challenging for the Danes.

This Denmark side has had better days and you are never really sure what goods they will come up with especially with Pernille Harder up front. Hayley Roso made it 2-0 to Australia after 70 minutes to put the game to bed. Australia were heading to the last eight. We even saw a few minutes on the field for Kerr which was the cherry on the top for the Matilda's.

With it being a night game, I didn't get back to my cousin's place until 1:30am and had a flight booked to Melbourne at 8am. About a good 3/4 hours sleep and I was up again to head to Sydney airport. I caught a first thing in the morning plane to

Melbourne as it is a sporting city I could not miss out on.

Plus there was also a World Cup match taking place later that day of Jamaica vs Colombia.

After a 90 minute delay waiting for the plane to Melbourne (I could have had more sleep!), I arrived into the afternoon and straight away you could feel how much colder Melbourne is compared to Sydney.

There was about a four hour gap to fulfil before the kick-off at 6pm local time. Now if any of you know me well I am a BIG fan of the Aussie soap drama called 'Neighbours'. They film the show on the outskirts of Melbourne so I travelled to Pin Oak Court, which on TV is known as Ramsay Street, to visit the famous cul de sac.

The sun was shining to make it a much more glorious experience to see the houses and view a very nice neighbourhood setting.

When I got there I could straight away recognise the houses we see on TV and it just felt surreal seeing it all in front of my very own eyes. What you must know is these houses are real so real people live in them. I got told by the security guard that they film outside the houses one day a week while they film the rest at a studio down the road.



Well I'm sure anyone that lives on Pin Oak Court becomes good neighbours and good friends - see what I did there. Photos taken (thanks to the security guard) and off straight back to the city centre to get ready for tonight's game!

The match was happening at the Rectangular Stadium right next to the Rod Laver Arena and the MCG. I didn't realise most of Melbourne's sporting events happen right next to each other.

As expected when entering the ground, Colombia brought in way more supporters than the Jamaicans. From my experience of going to the Qatar 2022 World Cup, South Americans always come in big numbers. My seat was allocated with a group of Colombian supporters, who work and

live in Australia, which made the experience more fun from the national anthems to when they took the lead in the 2nd half. This tie was an interesting one as England would face the winners of this game. I felt like I was scouting for Colombia and Jamaica's weaknesses.

Just like in the group stages, Jamaica never really looked like a side that can score goals. Instead they seem to focus more on defending and taking the game the full distance. A tactic like that is great when it works but not once you have conceded. Catalina Usme producing a stunning finish to score the only goal of the game as Jamaica were out. However, this was the first time Jamaica had gotten out of the group stages so they had a successful campaign despite the defeat.



The sun had gone for the night making it a cold evening experience. But that didn't stop me from freezing to death by watching the following last 16 tie later that night at the FIFA Fan Festival in the city centre.

It was France vs Morocco to finalise the schedule for the quarterfinals and it proved to be a comfortable win for the French at 4-0. England to take on Colombia in the next round - I am feeling the excitement as I have a ticket for a Lioness game!

Don't let me down England!

Blog Post Three

It is the weekend before the final weekend of this year's Women's World Cup and yet it still feels like the finish line is hundreds of miles away.

It's Saturday August 12th and England were coming to Sydney to face the impressive Colombians. Now this side of the draw favoured the winners of this tie as this would keep them in Sydney if they are to reach the final. Hardly any travel required whatsoever - very convenient.

The match wasn't until the night sky was up so there was time to kill. The Sydney Swans were entertaining the city in the early hours of the

afternoon so I thought 'why not!'

Sydney Swans play in the AFL which is also known as Aussie Rules Football, a sport well watched and admired all over the country. I had never watched a single game of AFL before so this was all new to me and it was exciting to see what the atmosphere would be like.

Would I find myself getting into a new sport?

I must admit, it took me a good 10/15 minutes to understand the basics. Thankfully a Sydney resident sitting to my right, who was originally from Ipswich in England, showed me the ropes including how the scores are recorded. If I can remember it well it was six points if you kick the ball in between the middle posts and then a single point if you slot the ball in between the side posts.

The one thing I really enjoyed was the kicking accuracy from passing the ball to their teammates to then place the ball into the opponent's goal.

The match was at Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) so no wonder the pitch was nice and round. The Swans went onto win quite comfortably and it seemed obvious even before the final period had started. A sporting event to tick off, would I go and

see a game ever again if asked?

Not sure but it was different.

It was now off to Stadium Australia for the evening kick-off. I did fear there would be many Colombian fans at this one after seeing so many in Melbourne for the Jamaica encounter.

There were screens planted all over outside Stadium Australia as everyone couldn't avoid the outcome of Australia vs France, taking place in Brisbane.

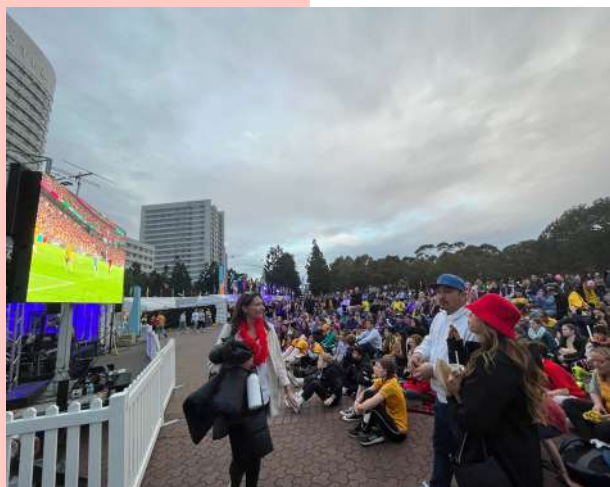
Every screen was invaded by football fans - it was the biggest talking point in Australia. The Matilda's were one win away from the last four.

Their match with France went to penalties after no goals in normal time or extra time.

During the breaks I made sure I entered the stadium to not miss the start of the England game but to also see the conclusion of Australia and France.

There were hardly any fans in their allocated seats as they were all watching the penalty shootout on the concourses. It felt like a nation had paused everything to witness this shootout.

It was one crazy shootout as



Australia were handed two match points to go through but they scuppered up both chances. But they were given another opportunity as Cortnee Vine scored the winner to send Australia to a World Cup semi-final for the first time!

We finally had a winner as locals started the party inside the stadium. As much as I would have liked to have get involved, I didn't want to miss my country playing.

As expected, I could see a lot more yellow shirts than white all over the stands as this fixture was going to look like an away one for the Lionesses.

By now both teams would have probably known that the co-hosts of this tournament were waiting to play the winner of this tie.

The first 20 minutes looked even as Colombia looked brave despite this being new territory for them. Then out of nowhere, Colombia's Leicy Santos scored a blinder from the right hand side outside of the box that flew over Mary Earps' head and into the top net.

I was starting to feel even more nervous for England but they held their cool better than me as Lauren Hemp equalised in 1st half stoppage time. England were back in it!

From memory the 2nd half saw England look more organised and had more control over Colombia. And because of that Alessia Russo found the opportunity to put the European champions ahead.

Of course I jumped out of my seat believing that they are going to reach the semis.

Colombia kept trying but England's defending kept them shooting from long range, which became a hit and hope scenario at this point. England had a scare but they showed to us they can overcome these loop holes and get the job done.

Just weeks after the cricket Ashes series had finished in England, we were going to have one more test before the summer was done. Australia vs England in Sydney for a place in the World Cup final.

Blog Post Four

After quick celebrations of England's win over Colombia, I flew to Auckland in New Zealand the morning after the game for a couple of nights.

This fourth and final World Cup blog will focus on the semi-final and the final.

No games were attended in New Zealand despite the first semi-final taking stage at Eden Park. It was more just to say that I had set foot on the grounds of New Zealand.

What surprised me was how many Americans travelled to New Zealand in hope their USWNT would have reached the semi-finals. But that last 16 defeat to Sweden interrupted their

plans. Still great to see a lot of Americans following a sport they don't favour highly back at home.

Annoyingly my flight back to Sydney was during the Sweden-Spain semi-final but luckily I was able to watch the late drama on my phone when getting off the plane. I'll be honest, my heart was pumping for a Sweden victory as I thought Spain would be a lot trickier for England in the final.

Spain went ahead with minutes to spare which looked to be the winner. But the Swedes, like they have done for the entire tournament, came up with another surprise trick up their sleeve as substitute Rebecka Blomqvist scored with two minutes remaining.

Those celebrations were cut short however as less than 60 seconds later, Olga Carmona put Spain ahead again!

Crazy last few minutes but the Spaniards cemented their first ever appearance at a Women's World Cup final.

The following day was Australia vs England. After following the Lionesses' progress at the 2015 and 2019 World Cup, the last thing I wanted to see was England miss out on another final.

This was going to be a real test for England as it was going to be 11 players vs a stadium of over 75,000 Aussies. The last time these two sides met was back in April in a friendly in Brentford where Australia won 2-0.

The game started with both sides going end to end, you could already sense a classic brewing.

England struck first with Ella Toone drilling a dead ball into the top corner, silencing a stadium. Of course, I was out of my seat without a care in the world I might get Aussies after me.

As obvious as it sounds, a 2nd goal was definitely needed for England just to be absolutely sure. But then Sam Kerr turned up and scored, in my eyes, the goal of the tournament which left me with a gulp in my throat. I had never heard a Stadium noise like it before - I simply couldn't hear myself.

Australia were back in it and the crowd were alive again, I feared England were going to bottle another World Cup semi.

However, a few minutes later and Lauren Hemp ran after a hopeless ball but her efforts were awarded as her opponent gave the ball away and the Man City forward made it 2-1 to England! I couldn't believe it - how did



Hemp make that happen!?

Then the dream scenario happened late on as Hemp's through ball to Alessia Russo put the game to bed. Russo's goal was so similar to her one against Colombia, it looked like watching an instant replay. Aussies were crying, the English were cheering. England are heading to a first World Cup final since 1966!

THE FINAL - Sunday August 20th
The night before the big one, I found myself at a bar called Cheers... no not the TV show! It was a bar in the Sydney city centre and thanks to friends I made on the trip of Nathan and Sam - I got a text to say that they were filming BBC's Football Focus inside the bar.

I headed there as the bar

was packed due to Football Focus but also a lot of Aussie and Swedes watching the 3rd/4th play-off match.

Many England fans were standing right next to Football Focus host, Alex Scott, and her guests of Fara Williams, Rachel Brown-Finnis, Arsenal Manager Jonas Eidevall (wearing a Sweden shirt at the time) and Ellen White.

It was a great atmosphere and a good chance for fans to meet some footballing legends. I had a quick chat with Mr Eidevall and Mrs Brown-Finnis at the bar. The ex-England goalkeeper told me that she had been wearing the same England kit throughout the tournament when co-commentating on the games.

A great night overall!

The final wasn't until 8pm at night so it gave me the chance to see Taronga Zoo in Sydney during the day, which by the way had a great view of the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House.

Then onto the final as quite frankly I was very nervous. England were one win away from being world champions - only Spain were now in their way.

All the pre-match stuff was quite a blur when looking back now

including the closing ceremony. I always find opening and closing ceremonies in football to be very forgetful, no offence to those that organise and spend hours on it.

The big question before the kick-off was if Sarina Wiegman was going to start Lauren James after serving her two game ban. I was happy to see Wiegman stick with the same starting line-up from the Australia encounter and so she did.

Once the game got going, England started well as Hemp struck the post who looked hungry to add another World Cup goal to her tally. But that sadly proved to be England's biggest chance of the night.

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A handball in the England box gave Spain a penalty - I feared this was it. Jennifer Hermoso of Barcelona was going to take it. I shouted 'go on Mary' and then moments later she saved the penalty! Again, I was up on my feet hoping this is the moment England wake up and change it around. An opportunity for James minutes later was finger tipped over

the bar was the closest England could get for an equaliser.

The sound I didn't want to hear was heard as the final whistle was blown. Spain were world champions! Just like the England team, I felt deflated but what a run and what a summer it was for English women's football and overall what a tournament it was for everyone. It was by far the greatest Women's World Cup since it was introduced in 1991. It had everything from upsets to shocking moments to a host nation leaving a lasting legacy.

Yes England lost but it felt like a win for women's football and you can't argue with that. I'm sure Wiegman and her Lionesses will be back again! I was happy for Spain, they have built a threatening team over the last 12 months. They nearly beat England at last year's Euros so we always knew they were going to be a big challenge. Stayed for the trophy ceremony and it was great to see Earps leaving with the Golden Glove. Left the stadium an hour after the game and headed back to the Cheers bar. Reunited with friends made over the last two to three weeks to have a few drinks before the long trip back home.

It's coming home... one day!



Anna Black 'This Girl Can Play'

Anna Smith is a footballer with a dream.

In the book 'Anna Black: This Girl Can Play' you get to follow the journey of a young footballer as she discovers the highs and lows of navigating her dreams.

Sitting in a coffee shop in Manchester Texi Smith, the Australian author, talks to Helen Rowe-Willcocks passionately about the book, women's football in Australia and how much he is looking forward to this summer's Fifa Women's World Cup.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I have been writing for years whether it's been match reports for the kids or things online and I realised I wanted to give it a go properly. I started writing the first book and thought I would

see how it would go.

My first two books came out at the same time at the Football Writer's Festival in Sydney and since then I have been bringing out a book a year. I just love the writing process. I have done a bit of journalism in the past, it's a passion I have.

What inspired you to write 'Anna Black: This Girl Can Play'?

I was at a part of my life that kind of mirrors the story a little bit about making changes and doing what you want to do.

My daughter plays at a decent level in Sydney and I am just around women's football all the time. I take her to training three times a week, go to the games, take photos, do the match report. It just felt natural. The book is for anyone, it's

been set as an age 15 book but there are some themes in there which are so important for young adults. It's not just women who should read it.

Is the character based on your daughter?

In the first few chapters yes, but then in the rest of it, it's all fictional.

Alongside the book, there is an interactive element with a website which features match reports from the teams in the book, tell us about the inspiration behind that idea.

That was not my idea. Originally the book was too long so the publisher came up with a clever idea to put a QR code in the book which could be used alongside the book. It's such a great idea and we can change and update things if we need or want to.



Have you got any plans to bring out a second one?

I am writing another women's football book at the moment – not a sequel to this one but I would definitely love to revisit her.

How excited are you for the Women's World Cup?

It's going to change women's football in Australia forever. I am really excited about it, I have loads of tickets and I have scheduled a month off. I am not doing anything apart from football. It's going to be amazing. We saw the European Championships last summer from a far and the hype round the tournament in England and we all just sat and thought 'we want that too'.

Your daughter plays football, do you think the World Cup will help grow the game?

It's important for all the players like my daughter to be able to see what they could achieve. The level my daughter plays in plays in the off-season and she gets to play alongside players in the A-League. If we get the fans and the hype that the tournament could bring,

it's just going to bring so much more to the game in Australia.

Are you hopeful for

Australia's chances?

All of a sudden, yes. We have been very doubtful of Tony. He's a nice guy, he says all the right things but on the field it's been abysmal up until recently. I am quietly confident.

How widely watched is women's football in Australia at the moment?

Not at all. There are some double headers but you only get a handful of people at the women's game. It's not on free to watch TV anymore, now you have to pay and people cannot afford that or are interested enough.

We are trying to build a legacy in a World Cup year but that doesn't help. The game doesn't have the tradition and the history yet. There are some very new clubs which don't have any fans. Women's football – no one watches. It's a niche thing.

People don't talk about the football, they talk about the rugby league, the cricket, Aussie Rules. There are so many other sports, I sincerely hope that changes thanks to the world cup.

Do the players like Steph Catley and Sam Kerr get a lot of coverage about how they are doing over her in the Women's Super League?

It does if you are in the football sphere. If you are not then you won't know anything about it. It's never in the news and it's very rare that you will see anything to do with football about.

If it is it will be about Australia, but never the leagues either in Australia or across the world. People on the street would not know who Sam Kerr is. It's different to in the UK, football is low down in the pecking order. It's a funny market to crack but I think we will get there. Ticket sales have been amazing so I am hoping this is the moment for the sport.

People think Australia, they think sandy beaches and glorious sunshine but it's easy to forget that it's going to be winter when the tournament is on. What can fans expect of the weather?

I am a bit concerned about that! Last winter was horrible, it poured with rain! Come to Australia when it's dark at 5pm, the Sydney Bridge will be in clouds – it doesn't sound appealing does it but it's not always like that. It's crisp mornings, you get dew on the park, it warms up and it's t-shirt weather. You might need a coat though for the games so don't just pack your shorts!

You can find Anna Black on Amazon and GoodBooks.

Did the 32-team format work?

By Jamie Davies



The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand was the first edition to have 32 teams compete.

The new format in women's football is the same current structure of the men's World Cup as we saw last winter for Qatar 2022. In the men's game, the 32 teams competition has been around since France 98 and has proven to be a success both financially and competitively.

Before this year's World Cup, FIFA had the Women's World Cup have less teams as there was 24 nations in 2019 and 2015 after it was 16 countries in 2011. The competition has grown quickly as it is clear FIFA's vision is to have two big World Cups in the space of a four-year window.

FIFA also have in the works an updated men's Club World Cup which will also feature 32 teams and it is expected to have it's inaugural in 2025. Last December, FIFA President Gianni

Infantino announced there will be a Women's Club World Cup but it is unclear when that will happen. We take a look at how this summer's Women's World Cup did with the expansion to 32 teams...

It was a financial success!

Within days after the Women's World Cup final as Spain were crowned world champions for the very first time in the women's game, FIFA announced the revenue made from their venture in the Southern Hemisphere.

The 2023 edition generated, in US Dollars, of \$570 million. This meant for the very first time the tournament broke even. This includes the record smashed in attendances a total of 1,978,274 fans going to 64 matches across 10 stadiums in Australia and New Zealand. The previous record of 1,353,506 spectators was in 2015 when the tournament was staged in Canada.

In a way it's no surprise there

was more attendances this year when the tournament expanded from 24 to 32 but it just shows the high interest there is in women's football.

There was quality from every confederation

Some are arguing this year's World Cup to be the best there has ever been in the women's game and one of those points to back that is how competitive all six confederations were.

Each confederation won at least one game which comes to show that younger and less advanced footballing nations are growing and building something special.

Some of the highlights of smaller nations causing shocks include Jamaica's solid performance against Brazil in which a draw was enough to get them through and knockout the Copa America champions. Another was South Korea taking down Germany to stop them from advancing from the group stages and speaking

of the same group, we witnessed Colombia beat Germany in the dying moments and nobody saw it coming.

Especially when you consider Germany being runners-up at last year's European Championships to England. EA Sports' World Cup predictor has been known for getting their tournament winners prediction correct with the men's competition since it was introduced in 2010. However, EA Sports backed the USA to win a third World Cup in succession but not even they could get past the last 16 no thanks to Sweden.

This tournament was a defining moment of Europe and other continents catching up with the USA and maybe the Americans winning a World Cup from now will look very difficult.

The world watching set new records

Australia's run to the semi-finals just kept growing its audience viewing figures as the top number was 11.15 million of Australia watched their Matilda's lose to England. It was the most watched TV programme in over decades, it even beat the viewing figures of Cathy Freeman winning gold at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. With the other co-hosts, FIFA announced that 39.2% of New

Zealanders watched their opening game against Norway on the opening night of the tournament.

Outside of Australia and New Zealand, China had apparently attracted 53.9 million viewers for when they lost 6-1 to England in the final round of group stages.

Back here in the UK, For the final, a peak audience of 12 million viewers watched on BBC One in the UK and the game was viewed 3.9 million times on BBC iPlayer and the BBC Sport website and app. Combined with figures from commercial broadcaster ITV, the final was watched by an average of 13.3 million people on television, peaking at 14.8 million, a new UK record for a women's soccer game.

Overall, an audience of 21.2 million watched the BBC's television coverage of the tournament.

Conclusion

Despite the sad conclusion of what happened during the trophy ceremony at the final with Spain and their Spanish Football Federation President, this World Cup has set a mark for FIFA to surely continue this 32-team format going forward.

The next edition is in 2027 and we will not know until April next year which nation will host in four years' time. But whoever it shall

shall be, it will be a big task to fulfil to try and match or beat the record numbers we saw this year.

Where will the next Women's World Cup be?

The 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup is scheduled to be the tenth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, the quadrennial international women's football championship contested by the national teams of the member associations of FIFA.

There are currently four bids:

- Belgium Germany & Netherlands
- Brazil
- Mexico & USA
- South Africa

2023

- 8 December: Member associations to submit their bids to FIFA

2024

- February: FIFA to organise on-site inspection visits to bidding countries
- May: Publication of FIFA's bid evaluation report
- 2nd quarter: Designation of bids by the FIFA Council
- 17 May: Appointment of the 2027 Women's World Cup host(s) by the FIFA Congress

The Players Who Shined at The World Cup

Four weeks of festival football has seen so many names come through and show the world what they are capable of. We've seen at women's and men's World Cups in the past where at least a handful of players will be remembered for their contributions towards great individual moments that'll be remembered for many years to come.

Some of those performances even grants them a big move to another football club like James Rodriguez of Colombia in 2014 when he moved to Spanish giants Real Madrid, or Keira Walsh to Barcelona last summer after an unforgettable European Championships.

That's what we love about tournaments like the World Cup, we all keep our eyes open for the next big thing to hit the big stage.



So which players shined at this summer's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand?

Here's some Jamie Davies has picked out that impressed.

Linda Caicedo (Colombia)

My word what a magical player Linda Caicedo is and what a future she has, the Colombian international is only 18 years old and no wonder Real Madrid signed her earlier this year way before the World Cup just in case another club got Caicedo's signature.

I was fortunate enough to watch Caicedo inside Stadium Australia when her Colombian side took on England in the quarter-finals. Some may not have heard of Caicedo before the World Cup kicked off on July 20th including myself but she made sure we will remember

legacy at this tournament.

No doubt Caicedo's most memorable moment was in the group stages when the attacker dribbled the ball well inside the 18-yard box followed by slotting the ball into the top corner. This was in the dying moments of the game to overcome Germany and it was breathtaking. To come up with that display after playing an entire match is just stunning.

Two goals and an assist in total from Caicedo at this World Cup – do keep an eye on her for Real Madrid in Liga F and the Champions League this season.

Lauren Hemp (England)

A name we know as she was part of the England squad that won the Euros last summer but there was something different about Lauren Hemp at this World Cup. The reliance left on her

shoulders to start for the Lionesses while Lauren James was suspended, after being given a red card against Nigeria in the last 16, was enough motivation for the Manchester City player to do her bit and shine for her country. Hemp was so vital in the games against Colombia and Australia as she scored in both games. Both goals in fact were from balls that should have been dealt with by the opposition player but that desire and not giving up attitude allowed Hemp to open a gate in for England.

We all knew Hemp was a class act out on that pitch even before this World Cup but she has certainly reminded Sarina Wiegman and her fans why she is one of the best forwards in women's football right now.

Salma Celeste Paralluelo (Spain)

Now this is a player who isn't shy of winning World Cups, not just this year's World Cup but Salma Paralluelo has also won FIFA's Under-20 and Under-17 World Cups for Spain.

The 19-year-old has already completed the set it's like she has already completed football.

Paralluelo did not properly show up until the knockout stages when Spain faced the Netherlands in the quarter

finals followed by Sweden in the semi-finals. An extra time winner against the Dutch kept them in the tournament for another round and then an opening goal in the semi-final tie at Eden Park cemented her place at this World Cup.

Her contributions in those two games were rewarded by sealing her starting line-up place at the World Cup final against England. And to put the cherry on top, Paralluelo also picked up best young player of the tournament. The striker currently plays for FC Barcelona so if she gets it right more success will come very soon.

Hinata Miyazawa (Japan)

Our Golden Boot winner by scoring the most goals out of all players at this year's World Cup. Hinata Miyazawa scored a total of five goals and despite Japan being knocked out of the quarter-finals, none of the likes of Kadidiatou Diani, Amanda Ilestedt and Alexandra Popp could catch up as they all finished on four goals each.

Miyazawa's World Cup performance has seen the Japanese international linked to the Women's Super League and has joined Manchester United.

It looked as though Japan were one of the dark horses to win

this year's World Cup after a convincing 4-0 win over, eventual champions, Spain in the group stages but their lack of running out of the blocks early on against Sweden cost them. They nearly fought back but it was too little too late but at least one of their players didn't leave down under empty handed.

Zecira Musovic (Sweden)

Where do we even start with Zecira Musovic? Yes, England's Mary Earps reached a World Cup final and won the tournament's Golden Glove but Musovic was also up there as one of the best goalkeepers.

Even before Sweden's World Cup campaign, Musovic was one that many knew had the talents to be a top keeper, but Ann-Katrin Berger at Chelsea has been the favorable number one under Emma Hayes. Could that change when the season gets going in October? Well if not, she may want a transfer elsewhere as you simply can't waste that talent on the bench.

Musovic's highlight has got to be the last 16 clash with the USA as she made 11 saves against the likes of Alex Morgan and Lindsay Horan. USA were by far the better team in the 120 minutes played before the penalty shootout, but Sweden held on thanks to Musovic.



AROUND
THE WORLD

90
ST



Kerr

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
85	88	74	90	42	85

88
LW



Reiten

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
88	80	86	86	60	63

87
RW



Mead

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
81	84	84	87	67	73

86
GK




Earps

DIV	HAN	KIC	REF	SPD	POS
83	83	83	85	41	85




  

86
LW



Hemp

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
90	76	84	87	63	68

86
RB



Lawrence

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
86	67	82	80	82	78

86
CM



Little

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
76	78	83	88	62	66

86
ST




Miedema

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
82	85	70	86	32	81




  

86
CAM



Roord

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
77	84	84	85	52	73

85
CB



Bright

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
57	50	69	58	86	87

85
CB



Buchanan

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
67	44	58	65	87	85

85
ST



Daly

PAC	SHO	PAS	DRI	DEF	PHY
77	85	76	82	64	76

**FC24****RATINGS**

Fifa: The Best Nominees



Less than a month after the final whistle blew at the ninth FIFA Women's World Cup™ final, the nominations have been announced for the eighth edition of The Best FIFA Football Awards™.

The nominees were short-listed by a panel of football experts who reviewed longer lists compiled by FIFA based on the candidates' achievements during the respective award eligibility periods (see below).

Voting is now open across the various categories, with the international jury being comprised of national team captains and coaches, journalists, and fans from all over the world.

Performances at the record-breaking FIFA Women's World Cup Australia & New Zealand 2023™ are reflected in The Best FIFA Women's Player nominees. Adidas Golden Ball winner Aitana Bonmatí leads a quartet of Spanish nominees.

Four players from tournament runners-up England and a trio of Matildas - who were a victory away from reaching the final on home soil - are also part of a 16-player shortlist.

Half of the candidates for The Best FIFA Men's Player were part of Manchester City FC's 2022-23 treble-winning squad, while coach Pep Guardiola, is nominated for The Best FIFA Men's Coach alongside four of his peers. Meanwhile, the 2021 and 2022 winners of The Best FIFA Women's Coach - Emma Hayes and Sarina Wiegman - feature among the quintet nominated in this category.

The FIFA Puskás Award is guaranteed to generate hundreds of thousands of votes each year, with the prize recognising the player 'judged to have scored the most aesthetically significant goal, regardless of championship, gender or nationality and scored without the result of luck or a mistake and in support

of fair play.' The nominees will be announced on 21 September.

The winners of The Best FIFA Women's Player, The Best FIFA Women's Coach and The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper will be selected by an international jury comprising the current coaches of all women's national teams (one per team), the current captains of all women's national teams (one per team), one specialist journalist from each territory represented by a national team and fans from all over the world registered on FIFA.com.

The Best FIFA Women's Player Nominees

- Aitana Bonmatí (Spain);
- Linda Caicedo (Colombia);
- Rachel Daly (England);
- Kadidiatou Diani (France);
- Caitlin Foord (Australia);
- Mary Fowler (Australia);
- Alex Greenwood (England);
- Jennifer Hermoso (Spain);
- Lindsey Horan (USA);

- Amanda Ilestedt (Sweden);
- Lauren James (England);
- Sam Kerr (Australia);
- Mapi León (Spain);
- Hinata Miyazawa (Japan);
- Salma Paralluelo (Spain);
- Keira Walsh (England).

The Best FIFA Women's Coach Nominees

- Peter Gerhardsson (Sweden);
- Jonatan Giráldez (Spain);
- Tony Gustavsson (Sweden);
- Emma Hayes (England);
- Sarina Wiegman (Netherlands)

The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper Nominees

- Mackenzie Arnold (Australia);
- Ann-Katrin Berger (Germany);
- Catalina Coll (Spain);
- Mary Earps (England);
- Christiane Endler (Chile);
- Zečira Mušović (Sweden);
- Sandra Paños García-Villamil (Spain).

The FIFA Fan Award Nominees

- Club Atlético Colón de Santa Fe fan (Argentina);
- Fran Hurndall (England);
- Miguel Ángel, Millonarios fan (Colombia).

Award Qualifying Periods

The qualifying period for the women's awards – The Best FIFA Women's Player, The Best FIFA Women's Coach and The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper – was from 1 August 2022 to 20 August 2023, the date of the FIFA Women's World Cup Final.

For the men's awards – The Best FIFA Men's Player, The Best FIFA Men's Coach and The Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper – the qualifying period was between 19 December 2022 to 20 August 2023.

When does voting open?

Fan voting in all the above categories will commence on FIFA's digital platforms on Thursday 14 September when the respective shortlisted nominees are announced, along with the candidates for The FIFA Fan Award. Voting will close at midnight CET on Friday 6 October.

Voting for the FIFA Puskás Award, which will be presented to the scorer of the best goal during the period from 19 December 2022 to 20 August 2023 inclusive, will commence on Thursday 21 September and close at midnight CET on Tuesday 10 October.



The Most Influential Players of the WWC

To celebrate the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, TV and electric retail giant, Currys have analysed FIFA's "players to watch" in each team to discover which are the most influential, based on their social following.

For each player, their Instagram and Twitter following were collected and combined to give their total following overall.

In first place is USA's forward, Alex Morgan, who boasts a mammoth following of 13.8m across Twitter and Instagram. This will be her 14th year representing the USA, who have won the past two Women's World Cups (2015 and 2019).

In second place is Alexia Putellas, Spain's midfielder, who beat first place Alex Morgan in The Best FIFA Women's Player running in February. When it comes to following, however, Putellas has quite the way to catch up with her USA rival. Across both platforms, Putellas has 3.33m followers, which is over 10m less than Morgan. Putellas missed playing in the UEFA Women's EURO last year due to a knee injury but has recovered in time to

showcase her versatility and skill as a midfielder in the world cup.

In third place is Brazil forward Marta Silva, with a combined following of 2.6m on Instagram and Twitter, although only a small amount of the following can be attributed to Twitter. Dubbed a "true living legend" Marta has scored an impressive 17 goals across 20 Women's World Cup matches. At 37 she is one of, if not, the oldest players in the competition this year, but this doesn't stop her being a fan favourite.

1. Alex Morgan (USA)
2. Alexia Putellas (Spain)
3. Marta (Brazil)
4. Sam Kerr (Australia)
5. Lieke Martens (Netherlands)
6. Julie Ertz (USA)
7. Ada Hegerberg (Norway)
8. Lucy Bronze (England)
9. Jenni Hermoso (Spain)
10. Lauren James (England)
11. Tamires Dias (Brazil)
12. Chloe Kelly (England)
13. Eugenie Le Sommer (France)
14. Lindo Caicedo (Colombia)
15. Debinha (Brazil)
16. Georgia Stanway (England)

17. Lindsey Horan (USA)
18. Wendie Renard (France)
20. Pernille Harder (Denmark)

Four Lionesses on the... table

After their stellar performance in the UEFA Women's Championship 2022, where they actually 'brought it home', it is no surprise to see four Lioness names feature in the top 20 most influential players.

Defender Lucy Bronze features in the top 10 at number 8 with a combined following of 759.8K. FIFA labels her as "unquestionably one of the finest full-backs in the world" due to her polished, determined defending combined with her ability to make marauding runs forward.

Next in at number 10 is Lauren James, a forward for the Women's England team. This will be the Chelsea starter's first World Cup with the national team. She boasts a follower count of 687.9K.

In 12th is forward Chloe Kelly with 625.7K followers and in 18th is Georgia Stanway with 401.7K.

Although a good social following isn't everything, it is an engaged audience that footballers can address to raise awareness of certain issues.





It's necessary to be
in the now. You
always have to learn
from the experience
and take out the
things it takes to
become better.

SARINA WIEGMAN