

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

ISSUE 9 MAGAZINE JANUARY 2018



YEAR IN REVIEW

- Take a look back on

2017 with Helen Rowe-Willcocks,

Jess Pratt and Daniel Pentland with highlights
from the Lionesses, Women's Super League, the
Euros and a Big Match Special!

Welcome

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Welcome

Welcome to our ninth issue!

Firstly I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and all the best for 2018!

It has all been happening in the last few weeks with transfers, Cup drama and some fantastic games which have been advertising women's football so well.

We would like to mention "Ken from South Yorkshire" who went viral recently when his letter to a local newspaper said he is turning off BBC because it has WOMEN on football programmes! To Ken we would like to say goodbye, you will not be missed!

Football fans come in all ways of life, genders, nationalities and ages and that is what should be celebrated in the media, in squads and in pundits. We will keep moving forward and there will always be those who do not believe we belong but let's prove them wrong!

As we move forwards in 2018, we have lots of exciting things to bring you from TWFM including a brand new website. We cannot wait to share it all with you!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks
Editor



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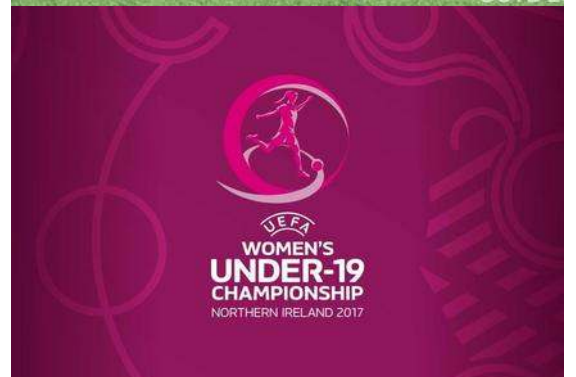
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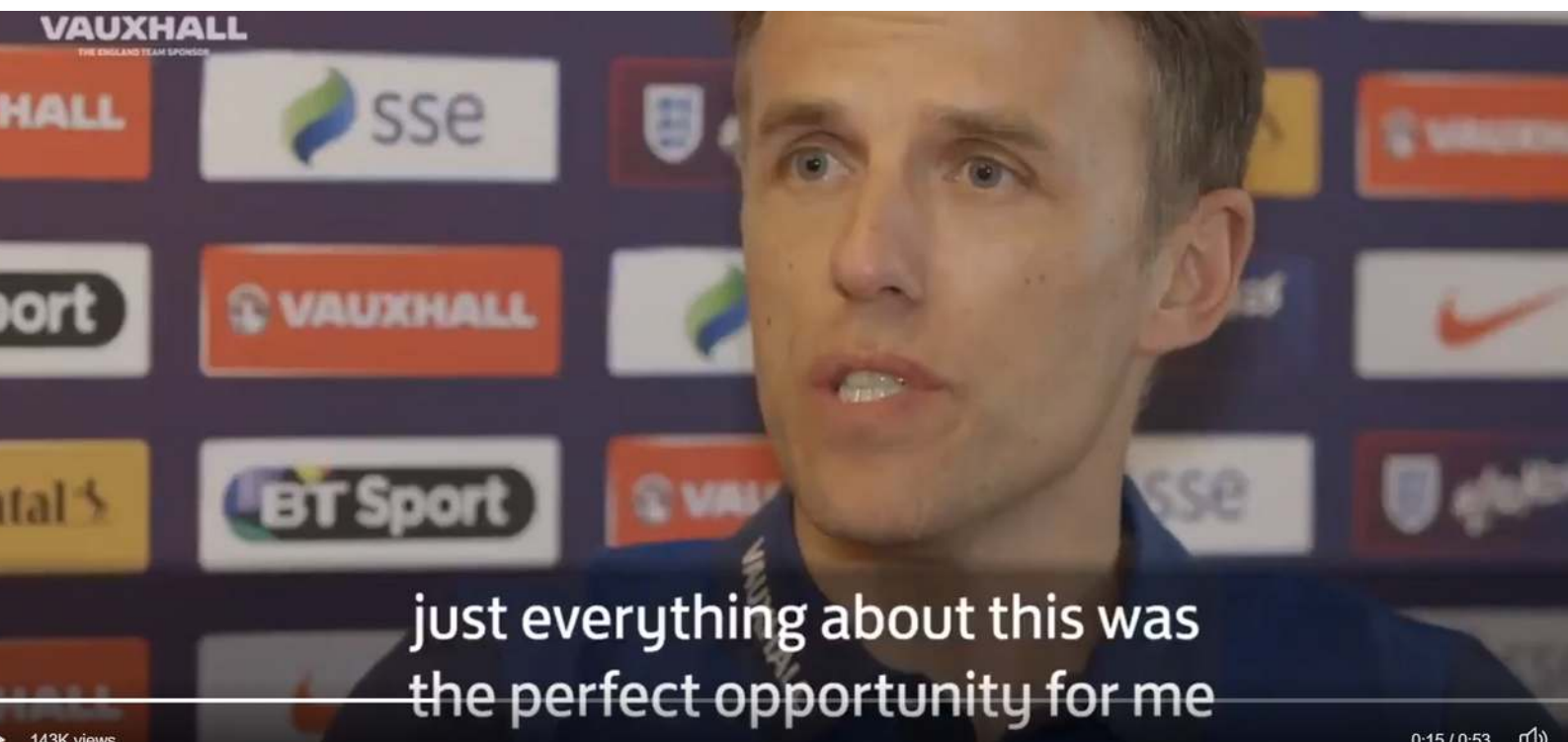
GOTB 2





Phil Neville
Opinion Piece
By Helen Rowe-
Willcocks

@helenrw11



Following the appointment of Phil Neville as England coach, our editor Helen Rowe-Willcocks decided to put pen to paper on her thoughts

To say the appointment of Phil Neville as the new England Women's manager has been seen as controversial would certainly be an understatement.

The announcement came with disbelief, concern but at the same time also some relief. Since Mark Sampson was sacked on September 20, the process for finding a new manager has been a long and treacherous one with many hoping that it would have been all sorted before the end of 2017 so we could move on from ordeal.

The main concerns surrounding Phil Neville are not about him as a person, a footballer or as a manager. It is more a sheer confusion about the process and the lack of transparency.

It is astonishing that someone with such little experience in management not only in the women's game but also in the men's has been awarded with such a desirable job.

The men's and women's games are completely different – some would even say that they require completely different training methods. When the job was first advertised, the selection criteria was very strict. It read:

CANDIDATE:

“You will be an outstanding football coach with a track record of consistent and successful management and development of elite players and coaches to high performance

Rob Fox @saintyboyontour

Think the @FA could have appointed someone with a good pedigree for management for such an important job. Its smacks of them not valuing the importance of the job #PoorDecision

levels. You will have demonstrable understanding of International and Club Football and a sound understanding and knowledge of talent identification."

The concern here does not lie with Neville himself but with those choosing the candidate. After Kick It Out wrote a letter to the FA about tweets the new Lionesses had made years ago, the FA wrote a reply. It stated that the final six choices – including two women – were whittled down to four but over time all decided to withdraw from the process. What is concerning to me is that the future of women's football relies on people seeing this job as the pinnacle of their

careers yet the FA could not get to the end of the process with a single candidate remaining.

If a manager was appointed as a national coach in the men's game with no experience there would be an uprising. In fact there is not a chance it would ever happen. The FA needs desperately to look at the future of the sport. Change is needed desperately, we want people – men and women – fighting for the position. There is clearly something desperately wrong with the system if our only option was somebody with no experience what-so-ever.



For me, Neville has been chosen. He is the new England manager and whilst I have concerns about him, it is time to get behind him and see what the future brings. Change is needed to make this sport the best it can be. Onwards and upwards – hopefully.

#Lionesses

Twitter Poll



Helen Rowe-Willcocks

@HelenRW11



Are you pleased with the appointment of Phil Neville as the new England Lionesses coach? Please add further comments you may have too for use in [@womensfootiemag](#)

19% Yes

56% No

25% Undecided



Anthony Plant  @anthonyplant70 · 24h



Replying to [@HelenRW11](#) [@womensfootiemag](#)

Totally unqualified for the job and knows absolutely nothing about the Women's game. He'll take it backwards after all the hard work over the last few years.



Rob Fox @saintyboyontour · 18h

Replying to [@HelenRW11](#) [@womensfootiemag](#)

Think the [@FA](#) could have appointed someone with a good pedigree for management for such an important job. It smacks of them not valuing the importance of the job [#PoorDecision](#)



Steve Gregory @gasheadsteve · 22h

Replying to [@HelenRW11](#) [@womensfootiemag](#)

Very odd decision. I can understand the FA wanting to hire a famous name for publicity reasons, but surely they could find someone with more managerial experience than one game in joint-caretaker charge of a non-league team.



Shelley @Minett02 · 17h

Replying to [@HelenRW11](#) [@womensfootiemag](#)

It speaks volume when there's no word within the camp, we didn't need a publicity stunt we needed a proper manager, the FA continue to embarrass the women's game





— The FA —
WSL★

Women's Super League 1 roundup: City overtake Chelsea in tight title race



There is no doubt that there is still a long way to go in the race for the WSL 1 title, with more than half of the season still to go. Since my last round-up there has been one slight change at the top of the table, as Manchester City took advantage of Chelsea dropping their first points of the season and leapfrogged them into first place. Football fans and pundits alike have been vocal in their praise of City's men's side this season, but Nick Cushing's team have been equally as impressive as their male counterparts; winning all six of their league games to date.

It hasn't all been plain sailing for City, who were made to work in their win over Birmingham City at the end of October. Two stoppage-time goals saw them preserve their 100% league

record as they came from behind to win 3-1, but the game was full of talking points. Lucy Quinn scored inside six minutes to give Birmingham the lead for well over an hour. City were then awarded two second-half penalties which were both expertly dispatched by Izzy Christiansen either side of an injury-time headed goal from Jen Beattie. Birmingham captain Kerys Harrop was sent off moments after City's equaliser when she was given a straight red card for kicking out at Georgia Stanway in an off-the-ball incident which seemed to diminish any hope of her side escaping the Academy Stadium with a point.

City followed that tense home win with a routine 4-0 thumping of Bristol City in their only November fixture. Christiansen was on target



again from the spot with an early opener that set them on their way to a straightforward victory, with goals for Claire Emslie, Abbie McManus and Beattie. As rivals Chelsea dropped to second after an away draw with Reading, City assumed first place and have since visited Adams Park themselves for their first fixture of 2018. They ensured that they didn't suffer the same fate as their title rivals as they took all three points in an entertaining 5-2 win that saw debutant Nadia Nadim open the scoring with a superb header. Emslie soon doubled the lead for the visitors, but the Royals staged a fightback with two quick goals which drew them level – for all of two minutes, before Christiansen's calm finish saw City retake the lead. A second-half brace from Jill Scott sealed the win for Cushing and co, who are certain favourites for the WSL 1 title on current form.

Chelsea went into October's game with Yeovil Town as league-leaders and were yet to concede a goal, so it was no surprise when they swept aside the struggling visitors in a 6-0 win at Kingsmeadow. With goal difference proving vital in previous campaigns, Chelsea manager Emma Hayes will have been delighted to see her team score six without reply for the third time this season. Hayes may have been less impressed with the following match, as they dropped points for the first time in a 2-2 draw with Reading. The Royals took a shock lead through Remi Allen midway through the first half and subsequently became the first team to score past Chelsea and their goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl. Karen Carney's curling free-kick levelled for the visitors not long after the restart and, despite some great chances for Reading; it was inevitably Chelsea who then took the



lead thanks to Eniola Aluko's first-time finish from Fran Kirby's pull back. Just when it looked as if Chelsea were going to see the game out, a free-kick from Jo Potter was headed into her own net by Magdalena Eriksson, gifting the Royals a deserved and dramatic injury-time equaliser.

After a lengthy league break, Chelsea's first WSL 1 match of 2018 was an entertaining London derby against Arsenal. As both teams looked to attack, it was an end-to-end game with plenty of chances, saves and goals at both ends. The final result was a 3-2 victory to Chelsea owing to a late own goal from Arsenal goalkeeper Sari van Veenendaal. It was a much-needed win for Hayes' team as it keeps the pressure on rivals Manchester City, who recently knocked the west

@redjess14



Londoners out of the FA WSL Continental Cup at the Semi Finals stage.

Liverpool have shown the biggest improvement in recent weeks, winning their last three games to advance to third in the table. Their impressive form began after the international break in October when Natasha Harding claimed a hat-trick as they came from behind to win 4-1 at Sunderland. The win took them above the Black Cats into fourth place. The Reds then successfully edged a difficult home tie with Birmingham City, earning all three points thanks to a superb lob from midfielder Niamh Charles. Their most recent match was a staggering 8-0 win over Yeovil where on-loan Chelsea forward Bethany England ran riot, scoring four at the Select Security Stadium.

Arsenal sit in fourth, having climbed two places since the October break as a result of back-to-back wins over Everton and Sunderland. They were

unable to take their winning streak into 2018 though, as their title charge suffered a blow with the 3-2 loss to Chelsea this month. The Gunners' 2-0 win against Everton was their first away from home this season, as Vivianne Miedema and Beth Mead secured the points in Widnes. Miedema was on the scoresheet again during the 3-0 victory over Sunderland, the first game since Joe Montemurro was named as the club's new manager. Montemurro took charge the following week and will have enjoyed seeing the Gunners return to winning ways after their defeat to Reading in the Conti Cup. The Australian will be looking for a similar response after the recent loss at Chelsea.

Sunderland are currently fifth as they dropped down from third place after consecutive losses to Liverpool, Arsenal and Everton. The Black Cats were easily swept aside despite scoring first in the 4-1 home defeat to Liverpool. They were then dominated by Arsenal in a 3-0 rout before their miserable form continued with a 5-1 December defeat to Everton in Widnes. They have shown signs of improvement in the new year with a comfortable 3-0 win over Birmingham City.

Reading's form has been mixed in the league so far with two defeats, two draws and two losses. They are currently sixth in the table but have displayed their goalscoring abilities with an impressive 5-0 away win at Bristol City. Despite that, their most impressive result so far is perhaps the ensuing 2-2 draw with Chelsea. The Royals are the only team to have avoided defeat against the Blues this season but they were unable to repeat the same feat against the unstoppable



Manchester City, falling 5-2 in their recent clash.

Birmingham City are seventh after seven games as they, like Sunderland, suffered three defeats in a row; the latter against the Black Cats. They were also beaten handily by Manchester City and Liverpool but claimed their first league win since the start of October with a recent 2-0 win over Bristol City.

Bristol City themselves have dropped down one place to eighth as they too have lost three out of their last four games since the October international break. The Vixens were unable to build on their impressive draw with Arsenal, suffering a 5-0 home hammering at the hands of Reading before an inevitable defeat away at Manchester City.

The new year brought hope as 17-year-old Lauren Hemp's brace secured a 2-1 victory against Everton, which lifted them above their opponents to seventh in the table but their most recent result, a 2-0 loss to Birmingham City, saw them drop back down to eighth.

Everton have struggled to show their quality in their opening seven games, losing five of them –although they have recorded their first two victories since my last round-up. After a 2-0 defeat to Arsenal, the Toffees earned their first points of the season with a 2-0 win over struggling Yeovil Town. The win seemed to give them confidence, as they sailed to a 5-1 victory over Sunderland in the following match – thanks to a brace from Courtney Sweetman-Kirk. The result took them up to sixth, largely because it was the



only WSL 1 match played in December as four other games were postponed because of poor weather conditions. Since then, Sweetman-Kirk's best efforts couldn't save them from falling back down the table after a 2-1 defeat at Bristol City.

Yeovil Town join Everton as the only non-movers since the October break, as their miserable run continues. Jamie Sherwood's side have now gone six games this term without any points or goals. Recent losses have come against Chelsea, Everton and Liverpool – who inflicted the Glovers' heaviest defeat so far as goalkeeper Megan Walsh had to pick the ball out of her net no less than eight times.





Doncaster Rovers Belles

FAWSL Focus: By Dan Pentland



In each edition of The Women's Football Magazine we look at one of the club's playing in the FA Women's Super League. In this month's issue, reporter Dan Pentland takes a look at a shock managerial appointment at FA Women's Super League 2 club Doncaster Rovers Belles.

FA Women's Super League 2 club Doncaster Rovers Belles have caused one of the shocks of the season in the women's game by announcing former Leeds United and Rotherham United boss Neil Redfearn as their new head coach with immediate effect.

The 52-year-old West Yorkshireman is widely regarded as one of the most well-respected coaches in the men's game and his decision to now become involved in the women's game comes as a huge surprise with Redfearn more than capable of having another crack at management in the English Football League.

Redfearn's main challenge at the Keepmoat Stadium will be to develop a club who have been granted a Tier 2 licence for the 2018/2019 FA Women's Super League into one which can grow into a Tier 1 outfit in the future. The Belles were unable to commit to operating as a full-time club in 2018/2019 but they hope to work towards that goal in the coming years with the club set to celebrate a half-century of women's football in the town of Doncaster next year.

As a player, Redfearn was a tough tackling midfielder who took no prisoners. He took his first steps in management with Halifax Town (as a caretaker) and Scarborough however it was coaching where Redfearn began to shine with some excellent work done



within the academy systems at both non-league club York City and Sky Bet Championship side Leeds United.

Redfearn's work at academy level has been nothing short of sensational with his coaching qualities having helped a number of young stars to blossom and push on for first team football, particularly at Leeds United.

At current club Doncaster Rovers Belles, the key to future success could be for the club to produce and sell on their own talent, particularly with many clubs' incomes in the top tier set to increase and transfer fees set to rise.

In Redfearn, The Belles have appointed an open minded professional who can help develop

young players and let them express themselves on the football pitch, something which could be a huge plus for the South Yorkshire club.

As a manager, Redfearn's record also makes decent reading. Despite having to manage in what can only be described as thunderous conditions at former club Leeds United, Redfearn won 38.10% of his matches in charge during his three spells as a caretaker and one as a permanent manager.

His time in charge of other clubs have generally seen him having to manage under financial restraints and low playing budgets and Redfearn has not really had a level platform to show just what he can do.



New club Doncaster Rovers Belles currently top the FA Women's Super League 2 table after an excellent start to the season and there is plenty of potential around the club. New boss Redfearn is undoubtedly a good match for the club's long term ambitions and his appointment as head coach is a really intriguing topic of debate.

Redfearn secured his first win since becoming manager. Doncaster Belles beat Watford 2-0 with Leandra Little and Jess Sigsworth getting the goals.



The Fantastic Three

2017

We are looking for coaches of girls football clubs to feature in our Grassroots Girls feature in each month's edition of our magazine.

Please E-mail danielpentland@me.com for details.



Our reporter Dan Pentland summarises the top three women's fixtures which he attended and reported on in 2017.

The year of 2017 was one which I will remember for the rest of my life.

After writing for various publications for around 18 months, 2017 was the year that I found myself regularly reporting live from matches both around the UK and in Europe.

Throughout the calendar year, I reported on matches from a range of competitions including the FA Women's Super League, Continental Tyres Cup, FA Women's Cup, 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship and 2017 UEFA Under-19 Women's Championship.

Here is my top three women's football fixtures which I attended last year:

2017 Women's FA Cup Final - Birmingham City Ladies 1 Manchester City Women 4

2017 UEFA Women's European Championships - France Women 1 Austria Women 1

2017 UEFA Under-19 Women's European Championship - Italy Women 1 France Women 6

@DanPentlandpcuk



2017 Women's FA Cup Final - Birmingham City Ladies 1 Manchester City Women 4 (Wembley Stadium - Saturday 13 May 2017)

This game was a special one for me as it was the first time which I had been accredited to report live from Wembley Stadium and it was also to be a cherished afternoon for Nick Cushing's Manchester City Women side who lifted the Women's FA Cup for the first time in their history.

Manchester City raced into a three-goal lead in a little over half an hour at the national stadium with Lucy Bronze, Izzy Christiansen and Carli Lloyd all finding the back of the net.

A so often defensively astute Birmingham City outfit didn't really do themselves justice under the Wembley arch but youngster Charlie Wellings did temporarily reduce the arrears in

the second half with arguably the goal of the match, a powerful drive across goal into the far corner of Karen Bardsley's net.

Experienced midfielder Jill Scott blasted in the final goal of the match 10 minutes from time to give Manchester City Women a deserved 4-1 victory in front of a record crowd of 35,271.



2017 UEFA Women's European Championships - France Women 1 Austria Women 1 (Stadion Galgenwaard, Utrecht - Saturday 22 July 2017)

The opportunity to report from the 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship in The Netherlands was something that I previously thought I would only ever dream of. Sadly, due to work commitments, I didn't spend as much time at the tournament as I had hoped but I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of attending my first major UEFA tournament.

I reported from the Group C match between one of the tournament favourites France and minnows Austria at Stadion Galgenwaard in Utrecht. Ahead of the match, the French were naturally fancied by many, if not all supporters of the women's game to emerge with the three points but it didn't go to plan for

Olivier Echouafni's side on the night.

It was Austria who settled into the match the better of the two sides and they defended resolutely from kick-off. Dominik Thalhammer's side took a shock lead with 27 minutes on the clock when striker Lisa Makas rifled in from just inside of the area.

The French were so often stifled when in attack by an ultra-organised Austrian defence and while Amandine Henry did head in an equaliser from a corner kick in the second half, France could not break down their opponents and find a winning goal on a famous night for women's football in Austria.



While many watching fans may not have dubbed this match as a classic or even an entertaining affair, huge credit was given to the Austrians who were so organised, committed and determined throughout the 90 minutes. For me, other than the performances of The Netherlands last summer, Austria were arguably the next best side in the tournament. They were clinical in converting a handful of goalscoring opportunities which came their way while no other team in the competition were more organised and well-drilled than Thalhammer's side.



UEFA
**WOMEN'S
UNDER-19
CHAMPIONSHIP**
NORTHERN IRELAND 2017

2017 UEFA Under-19 Women's European Championship - Italy
Women 1 France Women 6
(Windsor Park, Belfast - Friday 11 August 2017)

One of the most topsy-turvy games which I witnessed in 2017 came at Northern Ireland's Windsor Park home as Italy Women took on France Women in the 2017 UEFA Under-19 Women's European Championship.

Both sides went into the match on the back of defeats to England and The Netherlands respectively on Matchday One and the pressure was on a fancied French side to get their first points on the board in Group B.

France never really looked like they had got off the bus for the first half hour as Italy dominated the proceedings. Annamaria Serturini's early goal gave the Italians a shock

lead and it wasn't until the introduction of the excellent Emelyne Laurent that the match turned in Gilles Eyquem's side's favour.

Laurent's impact was immediate with the player teeing up Catherine Karadjov to level before Mathilde Bourdieu rifled in to give France a 2-1 lead at the break.

Bourdieu doubled her tally early in the second half before Agathe Ollivier, Laurent and Christy Gavory all netted to help France to what had looked like an unlikely 6-1 success.



**WOMEN'S
EURO 2017
THE NETHERLANDS**



2017 UEFA Women's European Championship - A tournament to remember

Reporter Dan Pentland looks back at the 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship in The Netherlands, a tournament which was special for so many nations.

Ahead of the 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship in The Netherlands in the summer, I must confess that I didn't know exactly what to expect.

One opinion which I had was that eight-time tournament winners Germany's hold on the trophy could finally come to an end with the competition set to be stronger than it had been in previous years. My personal fancy to win the tournament was France with French club

Olympique Lyonnais having dominated European football at club level in recent years.

The tournament started with a real bang with Dutch winger Shanice van de Sanden firing in a second half winner as her nation stunned Norway with a 1-0 win in the opening match in front of 21,732 fans in Utrecht. It was to be a tournament to forget for Martin Sjogren's side who were eliminated at the group stage with both The Netherlands and Denmark going through to the knockouts.

Group B went as planned with champions Germany winning the group and Sweden finishing as runners-up. Italy defeated Sweden in



their final group match and the Swedes would have been eliminated had the Italians not fallen to a shock 2-0 defeat to Russia in their first group match in Rotterdam.

France and Switzerland were the favourites to emerge from Group C but nobody could have predicted the impact which minnows Austria would make on the tournament with Dominik Thalhammer's side winning the group as a result of some committed defending and sharp finishing. Austria beat both Switzerland and Iceland while a 1-1 draw with second favourites France helped the nation to a shock qualification.

Group D saw England and Scotland go head-to-head and The Lionesses secured the biggest win of the tournament with a 6-0 battering of Anna Signeul's injury-hit Scotland side. Despite injuries to a number of key players, this tournament saw something of a golden generation of Scottish talent take to the field but

their hopes soon fell flat as they bowed out of the competition with lowest ranked club Portugal. England won all three matches while the other team in the group, Spain scraped through on just three points.

The quarter-finals threw up four intriguing matches which produced some unpredictable results. The Netherlands beat Sweden 2-0 as a sea of orange continued to light up the tournament while a Jodie Taylor goal for England saw Mark Sampson's side knock out a much-fancied French outfit. The biggest shock came in Rotterdam as Denmark ended Germany's long hold on the tournament with a 2-1 win while Austria frustrated another opponent by holding Spain to a goalless draw before winning 5-3 on penalty kicks.

In the semi-finals, Austria again defended for their lives as they drew 0-0 with Denmark. Thalhammer's side had as good a chance as any to reach the final but bowed out with a 3-0 defeat on spot kicks. In the other tie, hosts The Netherlands took on England and it was to be a historic night for the Dutch who defeated The Lionesses 3-0 with goals from Vivianne Miedema, Danielle van de Donk and an own goal from Millie Bright.

So it was to be a Netherlands v Denmark final and the match did not disappoint. Nadia Nadim's sixth-minute penalty gave Denmark the lead but efforts from Miedema and Lieke Martens saw the game swing in the Dutch's favour. Pernille Harder levelled matters just after the half hour mark before second half strikes from Sherida Spitse and Miedema handed The Netherlands the trophy for the



first time in their history.

Looking back on the tournament, the Dutch were the deserved winners. Sarina Wiegmann's side thrilled and entertained more than any other nation while they consistently produced the goods. Their brand of football was one which was on another level to the other 15 nations in the tournament and their victory could transform the sport in the country for years to come.

The Dutch public were as inspired as their team. They packed out stadiums across The Netherlands and embraced the tournament, filling it with both noise and colour. The country welcomed fans of all nations and they should be proud of their off-field achievements as well as on-field

success. On the whole, the tournament showed the ever-closing gap in the women's game. Other than England's 6-0 victory over Scotland, no other club suffered a mauling and the majority of matches ended in narrow one or two-goal winning margins.

For the first time, I felt that any nation could beat another and the biggest example of this was Austria, a side which beat Switzerland, Iceland and Spain while drawing with France. The Austrians proved that working hard and being organised could make up for not having a squad blessed with world class players and I felt for them as Denmark defeated them on penalties. The Danes deserve huge credit themselves for beating tournament favourites Germany in the quarter-finals in a match which was played a



day after originally being scheduled due to a waterlogged pitch in Rotterdam.

The tournament belonged to The Netherlands. They were winners, superb hosts and the players brought back some respect to the sport with the men's side currently in a real dark period having recently missed out on qualification for another major tournament.

RESULTS:

Winner: Netherlands

Runner-up: Denmark





2017 UEFA Women's Under-19 European Championship - Northern Ireland's moment of glory

Reporter Dan Pentland looks back at the 2017 UEFA Women's Under-19 European Championship in Northern Ireland, a tournament which saw some of the top young players in Europe come under the spotlight.

Eight European nations went into battle at various grounds in Northern Ireland in August in the 2017 UEFA Women's Under-19 European Championship.

Both Germany and France went into the tournament expected to do well while many were interested to see just how the Dutch would fare on the back of the senior side having won the 2017 UEFA Women's Championship just days earlier. England were not there

just to make up the numbers while history was to be made for hosts Northern Ireland who were set to compete in major finals for the first time at under-19 level.

Group A went exactly how one would expect with the Germans winning the group by beating Scotland, Spain and Northern Ireland, scoring 11 and conceding none in the process. Spain finished as runners-up with six points following wins over Northern Ireland and Scotland.

The main talking point in the group came on matchday two as Northern Ireland took on Scotland in Lurgan. The hosts fell behind to Kirsty Hanson's goal for Scotland but five



minutes from time, Northern Ireland netted their first goal in a major tournament when Louise McDaniel equalised with an effort which brought tears to the eyes of coach Alfie Wylie, a truly unforgettable moment.

Group B matters were more complicated. England beat Italy 2-1 on matchday one while The Netherlands stunned France with a 2-0 win in Ballymena. The Dutch backed up that maiden success by beating England by the same scoreline at Windsor Park after France had demolished Italy 6-1 at the same venue.

A 3-3 draw between The Netherlands and Italy saw the Dutch win the group in their final match before France beat England 1-0 in a 'winner takes all' match to dump Mo Marley's side out of the competition at the group stage.

The semi-finals saw the tournament's most impressive side, The Netherlands, bow out with a 3-2 loss to Spain while the other pace-setters

Germany were defeated 2-1 by France.

France went into the final heavily fancied to beat Spain but there was to be a shock as the Spaniards won 3-2 with Patricia Guijarro bagging a late winner after French defender Pauline Dechilly had harshly been sent off minutes earlier.

Overall, the tournament was a huge success for hosts Northern Ireland. The city of Belfast threw their support behind the competition and plenty of fans attended matches throughout the tournament, particularly games involving the hosts.

Northern Ireland should be proud of their efforts. The venues were excellent, the volunteers and staff were well organised and the fans were very welcoming.

While Spain won the competition, nobody can take away the golden moment of the tournament from Northern Ireland, that McDaniel goal against Scotland. The player made history for her nation and the emotion experienced by all involved is the reason why we love the sport so much.

RESULTS

Champions - Spain (2nd time)

Runners-up - France

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