

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 49 - May 2021

10 years of the WSL

A look back at some of the
highs and lows

MARCO

FLOREALE

On looking
after footballers
during and after
their career

TWFM Awards

Find out about all the
nominees

HISTORY

MAKERS

£3

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



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Welcome

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Hello and welcome to Issue 49!

What a busy few weeks of football it has been!

It's been hard fitting everything in this issue, but hopefully we have managed to get the best of the action in!

England were back in action over the international break but the excitement goes to Northern Ireland for their amazing win over Ukraine to secure their place in the 2022 Euros.

Chelsea have also made history by making it to the Champions League final where they will face Barcelona.

As we were getting ready to complete this issue the footballing bodies announced there would be a social media boycott to send a message about online abuse and bullying. TWFM wanted to take part in the campaign and joined clubs, players and other media in taking part. So sorry this issue is being released a day late but it did not feel right to release it during the boycott.

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief
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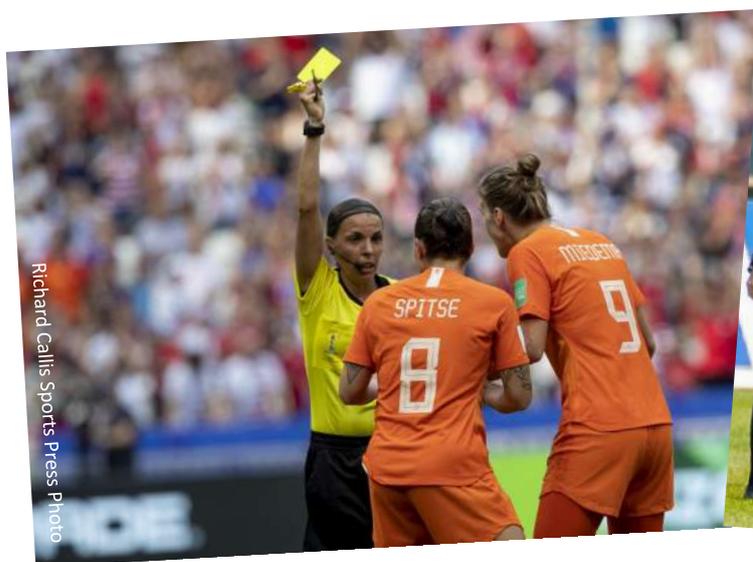
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WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



PGMOL to oversee management of WSL and Championship match officials



The FA has confirmed that from the 2021-2022 season match officials operating from within the Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship will transfer to the Professional Game Match Officials (PGMOL).

The move will see England's top referees in the women's game gain access to the same facilities, training and support that those in the men's game receive in the Premier League and English Football League (EFL).

Following the announcement of the Barclays FA Women's Super League's new domestic media rights partnership with Sky Sports and the BBC, The FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship Board agreed a new three year investment programme with the PGMOL, to enhance the support and development of officiating in the professional women's game.

The move is designed to further professionalise the environment for match officials, with an increased level of bespoke support tailored to the professional game.

Kelly Simmons, FA Director of the Women's Professional Game, said: "This is a major step for our match officials in their development and I'm confident that PGMOL have the right infrastructure to provide them with the necessary support to ensure they continue to

develop, and deliver at the highest standard within the professional game.

"The Women's game has moved on significantly over the last few years and we must ensure that our referees are provided the right environment to move with it.

"We have a highly dedicated and passionate pool of officials, and the time is now right that their development opportunities align with that of the men's professional game."

Mike Riley, PGMOL Managing Director, said: "We are extremely proud and excited to be in a position to help provide greater support for match officials working in the women's game.

"The popularity and the standard is higher now than ever before and there is a recognition that match officials should be afforded the opportunities that are available in the men's game.

"This is a really positive step and we are looking forward to working closely with the match officials to support their growth and development."

The agreement with PGMOL will commence from the start of the 2021-2022 season.

Officials outside the Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship will remain under the umbrella of The FA.

Celebrating 10



HALL OF FAME

The Barclays FA Women's Super League has reached one of its first significant landmarks as April 13 marked the ten-year anniversary of the league's launch.

To celebrate the anniversary, The FA has launched its first FA Women's Super League Hall of Fame, which will be sponsored by Barclays.

It will look to recognise those individuals who have made a significant impact on the league.

Whether that be a Golden Boot winner, a Championship winning coach, or an individual who has displayed excellence or leadership during the league's existence, induction into the Barclays FA WSL Hall of Fame will be reserved for an exclusive group each year, honouring

their contribution to the league.

An induction event will take place later in the year and an expert panel will create a shortlist of nominees before determining who will be the first inductees.

The launch of the Hall of Fame will double up as a celebration and acknowledgement of the ten year anniversary of the WSL, which has seen significant development since its inaugural season.

On this April 13, 2011, Chelsea and Arsenal stepped onto the field at Tooting & Mitcham Football Club to kick-off the very first match in the league, with the Blues' Helen Ward kicking the first ball in the competition, and Arsenal's Gilly Flaherty scoring the first goal in a 1-0

win for the Gunners in front of 2,510 fans.

What has followed has been a ten-year journey that started with an eight team, semi-professional competition, that has developed into a fully professional 12 team league with added exposure and an ever-increasing audience.

Teams have gone full-time, players have become household names, and some of the best talent has come through the England pathway, as well as from abroad.

Barclays showed their commitment to the league when they became title sponsor ahead of the 2019/2020 season, while the BBC and BT Sport have shone a light on the competition with their coverage.

years of the WSL



In addition, the league was made more accessible than ever with the launch of the FA Player in August 2019, which provides live streams, highlights and features from across the WSL.

Fans have played a significant part in the league's growth, with crowds growing over the ten years, supported by clubs opening their main stadia that has seen crowds flock to the Etihad Stadium, Stamford Bridge and the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium – where a record crowd of 38,262 witnessed last season's North London derby.

Kelly Simmons, FA Director of the Women's Professional Game, said: "I could never have envisaged the league having been on such a journey of growth and development

when we launched it ten years ago.

"The support we have received from clubs, stakeholders, the media and fans has been overwhelming.

"The launch of the Barclays FA WSL Hall of Fame is designed to recognise those who have made a major contribution to the league over the last ten years.

"I am delighted that Barclays will be supporting it, and I am really excited to have our first induction later this year.

"I want to say thank you to all those who have been on the journey with us over the last ten years.

"Without your support, we wouldn't be where we are now.

"Rest assured, we still have huge ambitions for this league, with the ultimate goal to have the best professional women's competition in the world."

Tom Corbett, Barclays Head of Sponsorship; said: "We are delighted to be the first sponsors of the new Barclays FA Women's Super League Hall of Fame.

"The positive change in women's football in the last ten years has been huge and the Hall of Fame is a great opportunity to honour the pioneers who have transformed the game for the next generation of women and girls who can now see that being involved with top football is not only a dream but a realistic opportunity."

Stat Attack: The Women's Super League

784

The number of games played in the WSL



Chelsea have the highest number of different players who have scored – 48

Emma Hayes holds the record for the most games managed in the WSL 143 and has the most wins (94)

100%

Manchester City hold the best performance record on the road after their 100% record in the 2017 spring series

Lauren Hemp is the youngest player to score in the WSL (16yrs 258 days)

Becky Easton is the oldest player to score in the WSL (41yrs 87 days)

4

The number of winners in the WSL – Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City

Kim Little has scored the most penalties (13)

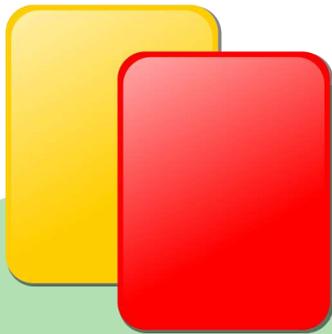
Karen Carney holds the records for the most assists (3) and most chances created (298)



The most passes leading to a goal in WSL history is 21, set by Manchester City against West Ham in November 2019 and Arsenal vs Aston Villa in February 2021

The record is set by...

Super League highs and lows



Megan Walsh has let in the most goals (203) but also made the most saves (450)

Birmingham City have received the most red and yellow cards (Red cards joint with Reading)

Karen Bardsley holds the record for most clean sheets (34)

rs of the
nelsea,
ter City

Beth England holds the record for the most consecutive games scored – she netted in nine WSL games in a row

11-1

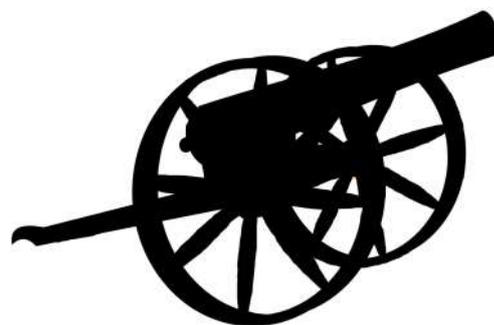
The biggest margin of victory between Arsenal and Bristol City in December 2019

has
or
(35)
ces
)

Viv Miedema holds the record for the most hat-tricks – 5

17

Remi Allen has made the most tackles (446)



Record losing run in WSL set by Doncaster Rovers Belles

Arsenal: The team with the highest number of wins in the WSL (112)

Jill Scott has made the most appearances – 157

Arsenal have scored the most goals in the WSL (404)

McCarron leaves Birmingham

Northern Ireland international Chloe McCarron has left Women's Super League side Birmingham City.

The WSL side confirmed that the contract of the midfielder had been mutually terminated.

McCarron, who was part of the Northern Ireland squad who successfully won their European Championships qualifier against Ukraine to qualify for next summer's Euros held in England, will remain in Northern Ireland for personal reasons.

She made 12 appearances for Carla Ward's side after joining on a two-year deal from Linfield in August 2020.

McCarron made history by becoming the first Northern Ireland woman to move directly from a senior Irish League club to the English top flight in August.

Manager Ward said: "Chloe McCarron has left the club, she's returned to Northern Ireland for family reasons.

"We wish her well, her family comes first."

McCarron could move back to the Danske Bank Premiership with former club Linfield being linked with a move to secure her services ahead of the new season.



Jordan Colborne / Sports Press Photo

Williams announces retirement

England legend Fara Williams has announced her retirement from football.

The Reading star has been a trailblazer for the women's game and is the most capped England player of all time with 172 appearances.

She began her career at Chelsea U14s and has played at a number of clubs including Charlton, Everton, Liverpool and Arsenal.

As well as representing Team GB at the 2012 London Olympics, Williams was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire in the 2016 New Years Honours for her services to both women's football and charity.

In a statement on Twitter, she finished: "Playing football is all I have ever known, but I am excited for the next chapter of my life. Thank you for everything."

West Ham sign with Metrica Sports

West Ham Women have become the first WSL team to partner with Metrica Sports, one of the biggest video and data analysis platforms in the world. Metrica Sports will be providing their video analysis technology to the West Ham Women's first team and academy, helping them to elevate performance through cutting-edge analysis of their matches.

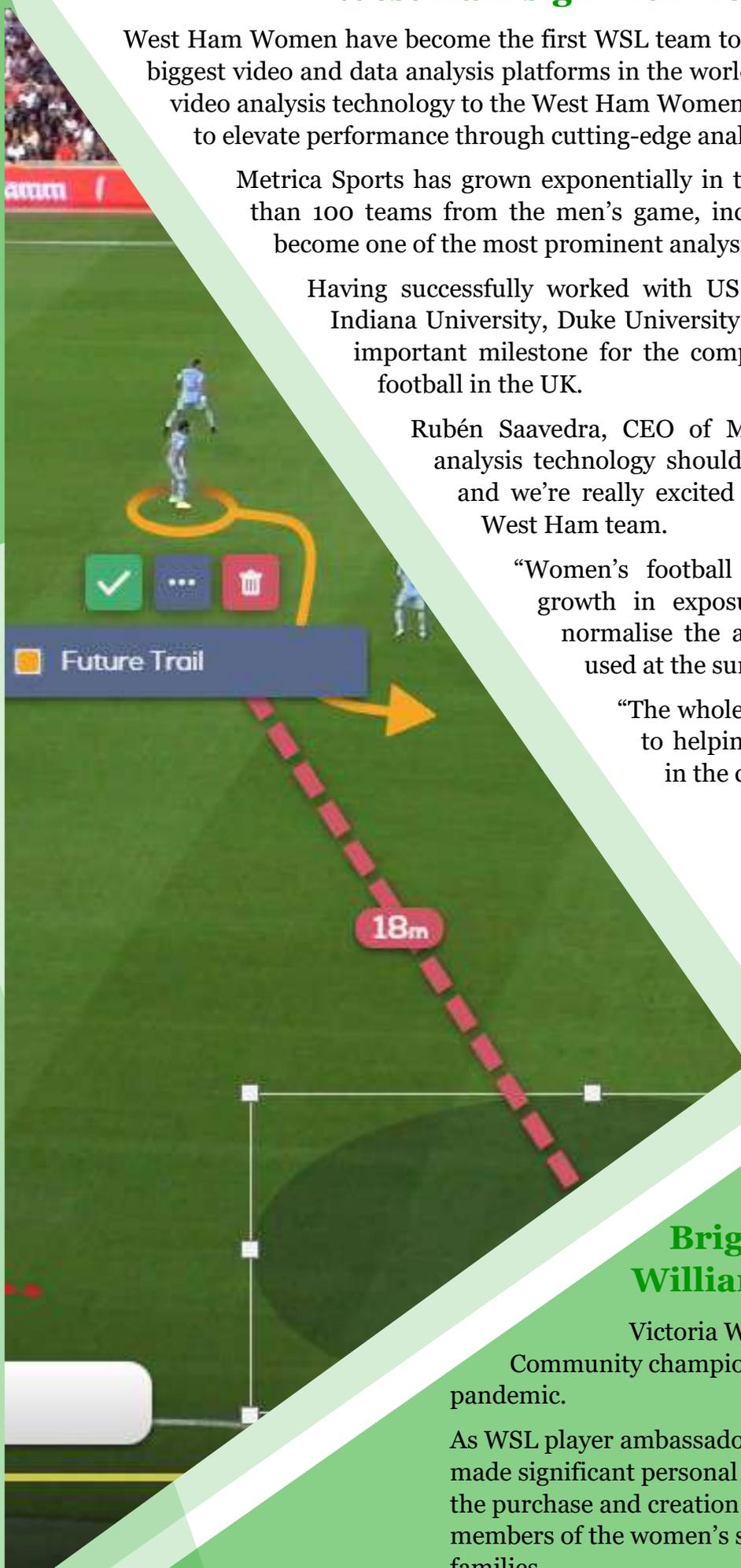
Metrica Sports has grown exponentially in the past eighteen months, signing more than 100 teams from the men's game, including PSG and AC Milan in 2021, to become one of the most prominent analysis platforms in football.

Having successfully worked with US women's team in the past, including Indiana University, Duke University & Penn State University, this marks an important milestone for the company as their first foray into Women's football in the UK.

Rubén Saavedra, CEO of Metrica Sports, said: "We believe that analysis technology should be available to every level of football, and we're really excited to be providing our technology to the West Ham team.

"Women's football in the UK is experiencing fantastic growth in exposure and popularity, and we want to normalise the adoption of the same technology being used at the summit of the men's game.

"The whole Metrica Sports team is looking forward to helping West Ham elevate their performance in the coming years."



Brighton & Hove Albion's Williams honoured

Victoria Williams has been named as a PFA Community champion for her work during the pandemic.

As WSL player ambassador for the 2020/21 season, Williams made significant personal contributions including organising the purchase and creation of generous food hampers from members of the women's squad to help feed vulnerable families.

Montemurro's time is coming to a n



Daniela Porcelli Sports Press Photo



Jacques Feirey Sports Press Photo

Daniela Porcelli Sports Press Photo

By Marissa Thomas

Arsenal are the most successful team in English women's football.

They are still the only English club to win the Women's Champions League and their standing in the women's game is unquestionable.

However, since they won the Women's Super League in 2019, it would be fair to say that they have gone backward under Joe Montemurro, the manager who led them to their title success.

Since the 2018/19 season when they won the league, Arsenal have struggled to beat the top teams.

The Gunners have recorded just one win in eight games against rivals Manchester City and Chelsea since a 1-0 win over Man City in October 2019.

A 1-1 draw against Chelsea in November 2020 was particularly hard to take as Arsenal went ahead after 86 minutes but conceded an own goal right at the death to drop two much-needed points.

Arsenal almost always beat the other nine clubs in the league but when they falter against their title rivals, it undoes all of their season's work.

There is no point thrashing Tottenham and Reading 6-1 if you are completely

outfought by Chelsea and Man City.

Montemurro has previously stated, in an interview with Arseblog, that he prefers to operate with a smaller squad:

"I like working with smaller squads because you can give greater care to players and really develop them into your style and into your plan for the team," he said.

Continuing on, he explains: "If you've got 26 players, the reality is that someone becomes player 26 and they know player 25 has to get injured before they even have a chance of seeing the matchday squad."

Given how injury prone this Arsenal team have been over the last few seasons,

natural end but what next for Arsenal



Montemurro's philosophy is at odds with the squad he has.

When key midfielders Jordan Nobbs and Kim Little have been out with serious long-term injuries, the players that have come in have not been of the same quality and the team has suffered as a result.

Chelsea and Man City have world-class top-quality squads.

Being able to bring on Bethany England for Pernille Harder in a Champions League semi-final against Bayern Munich is the norm for Chelsea.

These are the sort of substitutions that allow them to compete on multiple fronts.

Arsenal on the other hand, often have an incomplete bench with academy players.

Montemurro's penchant for working with a small squad is detrimental when the quality level drops beyond the regular starting XI.

This Arsenal side has become stale under Joe Montemurro and a new manager with fresh ideas could go a long way towards Arsenal putting up a title challenge next season.

Jill Ellis is a front runner for the job and as a two-time World Cup winner, her experience is not too be sniffed at.

Honours

- FA WSL Champions: 2018-19

- FA Women's League Cup Champions: 2018
- FA Cup Runner's up: 2017-18
- FA Women's League Cup Runner's up: 2018-19, 2019-20
- UEFA Women's Champions League Quarter Finals: 2019-20
- LMA/WSL Manager of the Year: 2018-19
- LMA/WSL Manager of the Month: October 2018, March, December 2019
- FIFA. The Best. World Women's Manager of the Year Nomination: 2018/19 Season
- London Football Awards Manager of the Year Nomination: 2019 & 2020

Clubs, players and media join to



Football clubs, players, athletes and a number of sporting bodies took part in a four-day boycott of social media in an attempt to tackle abuse and discrimination on their platforms.

It began at 15:00 BST on Friday, April 30 and ended on Monday, May 3 at 23:59 BST.

The "show of solidarity against online abuse" hopes to encourage companies to take a stronger stance against racist and sexist abuse by users.

Rugby union, cricket and rugby league have also joined the protest.

The FA, Premier League, EFL, FA Women's Super League, FA Women's Championship, PFA, LMA, PGMOL, Kick It Out and the FSA all took part which saw social media accounts across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and others go silent.

The collective statement read:

The game recognises the considerable reach and value of social media to our sport. The connectivity and access to supporters who are at the heart of football remains vital.

However, the boycott shows English football coming together to emphasise that social media companies must do more to eradicate online hate, while highlighting the importance of educating people in the ongoing fight against discrimination.

In our letter of February 2021, English football outlined its requests of social media companies, urging filtering, blocking and swift takedowns of offensive posts, an improved verification process and re-registration prevention, plus active assistance for law enforcement agencies to

identify and prosecute originators of illegal content. While some progress has been made, we reiterate those requests today in an effort to stem the relentless flow of discriminatory messages and ensure that there are real-life consequences for purveyors of online abuse across all platforms.

Boycott action from football in isolation will, of course, not eradicate the scourge of online discriminatory abuse, but it will demonstrate that the game is willing to take voluntary and proactive steps in this continued fight.

Finally, while football takes a stand, we urge the UK Government to ensure its Online Safety Bill will bring in strong legislation to make social media companies more accountable for what happens on their platforms, as

Together for social media boycott



PROFESSIONAL GAME
MATCH OFFICIALS



discussed at the DCMS Online Abuse roundtable earlier this week.

Edleen John, The FA's Director of International Relations, Corporate Affairs and Co-Partner for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, said: "It's simply unacceptable that people across English football and society more broadly continue to be subjected to discriminatory abuse online on a daily basis, with no real-world consequences for perpetrators.

"This needs to change quickly, we will not stop talking about this issue."

Richard Bevan, Chief Executive at the LMA said: "The LMA fully supports the social media boycott across the professional game. A unified silence will send a loud and powerful message to those that

perpetrate online abuse that their actions will no longer be tolerated, and to the social media companies that they have a responsibility to do everything in their power to eradicate online hate.

"We also urge Government to understand the significance of this collective action and to ensure that its Online Safety Bill delivers appropriately strong legislation."

Kevin Miles, Chief Executive of the Football Supporters' Association said: "The Football Supporters' Association is fully behind the game's efforts to stamp out online hate and discrimination and will join next weekend's social media boycott.

"Much media attention has rightly focused on the vile abuse aimed at players, managers and journalists in

the men's and women's game and we see that aimed at fans groups too. It has to stop.

"Many of our most active fan groups tell us that they have received disgusting abuse when they are doing nothing more than trying to represent their supporter base.

"It's a threat to the very existence of supporter organisations who are run by volunteers in their spare time. As fans we stand with players, managers, referees and all in the game in calling for the social media companies to step up."

TWFM was proud to join in the blackout on all of our social media channels and our editor and a number of writers also took part their personal accounts as well.



TheFA Women's Super League

Table as of May 3		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Manchester City	21	16	4	1	51	52
2	Chelsea	20	16	3	1	52	51
3	Arsenal	21	15	2	4	48	47
4	Manchester United	21	14	2	5	22	44
5	Everton	21	9	5	7	11	32
6	Reading	21	5	9	7	-11	24
7	Brighton & Hove Albion	21	7	3	11	-22	24
8	Tottenham Hotspur	20	4	5	11	-22	17
9	West Ham United	21	3	6	12	-17	15
10	Birmingham City	21	3	6	12	-28	15
11	Aston Villa	21	3	5	13	-32	14
12	Bristol City	21	2	6	13	-52	12

May fixtures & results

Sunday, May 2

Aston Villa 0-0 West Ham
Everton 1-2 Arsenal
Bristol City 0-1 Manchester United
Reading 3-2 Brighton & HA
Manchester City 4-0 Birmingham City

Wednesday, May 5

Tottenham Hotspur vs Chelsea
(17:30)

Sunday, April 25

Arsenal vs Aston Villa
(14:30)
Birmingham City vs Tottenham Hotspur
(14:30)
Brighton & HA vs Bristol City
(14:30)
Chelsea vs Reading
(14:30)
Manchester United vs Everton
(14:30)
West Ham United vs Manchester City
(14:30)

Across the weekend, football, wider sport, organisations and individuals across the world united to boycott social media to demonstrate our collective anger. But this won't eradicate abuse on its own

We will continue to challenge social media companies to make changes to their platforms, urge Government to introduce strong legislation quickly and request that individuals call out and report online abuse when they see it

#STOPONLINEABUSE



CHAMPIONSHIP



Crystal Palace to support local refugee women and girls

Palace for Life Foundation and Surrey FA have launched a new Women and Girls refugee football session which aims to support Croydon refugees settling into their new homes.

Taking place every Saturday, the session will give football opportunities to local refugees who may have had to flee conflict and persecution, and are now attempting to rebuild their lives in a new country.

Aiming to help individuals settle in the community, the sessions will offer support and structure to their lives, especially important after a potentially traumatic and unsettling journey to the UK.

Crystal Palace F.C. are backing the new project and are calling for supporters to donate sportswear (t-shirts, socks, trousers, shorts, sports bras), trainers/astro turf boots, or sanitary products to assist some of the needs of those attending.

Items donated will be collected and redistributed to those who need them the most. Fans can donate these items at the donation point at Selhurst Park stadium reception, Monday–Friday, 10am–4pm.

Roxanne Bennett, Palace for Life Community Sports Manager and Women and Girl's Lead, said: "Our new sessions will be running weekly for females aged 16-18 years and for Women 18-years and over."

The Women and Girls Refugee Football Sessions will start on Saturday 1st May, 2021 at Heavers Farm School, SE25 6LT.

Flaherty joins Rovers

Blackburn Rovers have signed former Sheffield United goalkeeper Becky Flaherty until the end of the season.

The Northern Ireland international joins the club after making 13 appearances for the Blades.

Manager Gemma Donnelly commented: "It's great to have captured Becky.

"We looked to secure the services of Becky back in January, she has been on my radar for a while now.

"Having just returned home from the incredible Euro qualification for Northern Ireland, Becky will add experience and quality to our team."

Furness misses final games of the season

Liverpool and Northern Ireland star Rachel Furness missed the final games of the Championship season after picking up an injury.

The midfielder signed for Liverpool in December 2019 after Reading recalled from a loan at Tottenham Hotspur.

Furness confirmed on social media that during the first leg of the Northern Ireland Play-Off game against Ukraine, she blocked a ball and broke her fibula.

She wrote: "Thankfully it was a good break and doesn't require surgery so rehab has already started.

"Unfortunately this has meant I've missed the last couple of games for Liverpool and will be sidelined for a few months whilst recovering.

"I'm as determined as ever to get back on the pitch with the reds but for now I'll be their No1 fan."

Goddard gives health update

Crystal Palace midfielder Ashleigh Goddard has updated fans of her health on social media.

Goddard classed the ‘difficult year’ as ‘lifechanging’ for herself.

She wrote: “Last season I went for a header to flick the ball on from a throw in... I ended up getting knocked out—what I didn’t know at the time was that by that happening, it was actually going to give me a chance to save my life.

“I struggled with headaches and side effects from the concussion which lasted a few months. My sports therapist at Crystal Palace pushed my reluctant self to go and get checked. My GP sent me for a CT scan—they found something and wanted to look into it further so sent me for an MRI.

“The good news was that by this time, my effects/symptoms of concussion had gone and the MRI cleared me of anything regarding the knockout. The bad thing was that they found something else—an AVM.

“I had no idea what an AVM was, it’s pretty rare. It’s a cluster of tiny blood vessels that are either tangled or not fully developed and affect blood flow.

“I was referred to the National Hospital of Neurology, it was explained that there are three options of treatment—surgery, embolization and gamma knife. I was told that the first two were too dangerous for me, and would have to have an angiogram to see if I’m able to have gamma knife treatment.

“The AVM is placed deep in my right frontal lobe of my brain. The doctors are confident it will rupture, leak, burst in my lifetime and due to the placement, when it does—at best I’m looking at left side paralysis and at worst it will kill me.

“The recent angiogram results look like gamma knife radiation may be a possibility as a treatment.

“It’s been a crazy year and there is still a lot of uncertainty to go but I am lucky that we have found this AVM before it ruptured.

“The other best news for me is that it doesn’t affect football. I’m looking forward to the last few games of the season.”

Phillips extends contract at London City Lionesses

London City Lionesses confirmed that Melissa Phillips has signed a new contract to extend her stay.

Phillips took charge of the Lionesses in October 2020 and immediately guided the club to their first victory of the season.

Melissa said: “I am honoured to be afforded the opportunity to continue leading London City and driving the vision of the club forward.

“The growth of the team and each individual player has been tremendous and incredibly proud of the way we’ve come together amidst the challenges the past year has presented.

“We’ve enjoyed some successful moments throughout the season and have a number of exciting plans in place moving forward to achieve our goals.

“It is such an exciting time for women’s football in this country and I am grateful to Diane and the rest of the London City Lionesses Board for their belief in what we are building.”

Phillips was named FA Women’s Championship Manager of the Month in January 2021 after guiding the club to six games unbeaten – including five in a row without conceding a goal – and a first win away from home in 18 months. Chairwoman Diane Culligan believes that this level of consistency is evidence of the club’s progress and ability to compete with every team in the division.

Culligan said: “We have been delighted with Melissa’s enthusiasm and application in the most challenging of football seasons so it was a simple decision for the Board to extend her contract.

“Under Melissa’s leadership we’ve put down solid foundations as we build for success in the future and going six games unbeaten earlier in the season shows what we’re capable of.”



The FA Women's Championship

	Final table	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
C	Leicester City	20	16	2	2	38	50
2	Durham	20	12	6	2	19	42
3	Liverpool	20	11	6	3	22	39
4	Sheffield United	20	11	5	4	22	38
5	Lewes	20	8	4	8	-3	28
6	London City Lionesses	20	6	6	8	0	24
7	Crystal Palace	20	5	5	10	-9	20
8	Charlton Athletic	20	4	7	9	-10	19
9	Blackburn Rovers	20	4	6	10	-11	18
10	Coventry United	20	5	1	14	-30	16
R	London Bees	20	3	2	15	-38	11

May results

Sunday, May 2

Blackburn Rovers 1-2 Sheffield United

Crystal Palace 2-1 Lewes

Durham 7-1 Coventry United

Leicester City 4-0 Charlton Athletic

Liverpool 2-2 London City Lionesses

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE



West Ham Women's Mia North joins Dulwich Hamlet on loan

Dulwich Hamlet are pleased to announce the loan signing of Mia North for the forthcoming season.

The 19-year-old goalkeeper joins on loan from West Ham United Women, of the FA Women's Super League, where she is part of their academy programme.

She was previously at Yeovil Town Ladies, and has also featured with the Wales Under-19 setup.

Mia North said, "I'm 19 now, and I need to be looking to get women's football experience.

"Playing in the Under 21s for a couple of years, I need to start looking to go up an age group.

"The move was pretty easy and I'm really happy to be here.

"I think communication is definitely one of my biggest traits. I'm very loud on the pitch. I think as well, bravery-wise.

"I'll happily throw myself in front of the ball and not care if I'm going to get hurt. Shot stopping ability, distribution as well for sure."

"My teammates have been really supportive and welcoming. It's been really easy to settle in.

"I've been here [Dulwich Hamlet] to watch a game and I saw what the crowd was like, it was a really incredible atmosphere.

"I'm really looking forward to experiencing that myself when the time does come."

Manager Ryan Dempsey said, "Mia has great experience playing for Yeovil and West Ham, County teams and for Wales at international level.

"I'm delighted that West Ham have allowed Mia to continue her development with us by gaining valuable experience playing adult football where points are on the line every game.

"Mia has settled in really well and gave an assured performance on her debut against Crystal Palace DevA [in Sunday's 5-0 victory].

"Mia's composure on the ball was a big asset and she made an excellent save, tipping the ball onto the bar."

Bradford City announce recruitment plans

Bradford City have announced their plans for recruitment following the early conclusion of the league.

Manager Chris Hames plans to focus on recruitment to help deliver the goal of promotion next season and hopes to retain the majority of the squad he built in 2020/21.

The website information added: "The merger with the Bradford City Community Foundation in January will be key. There is now a clear link and progression right through from Bradford City Girls Under 10s to the Bradford City WFC First team, giving young players just starting out a vision of where they could be in six to seven years time."

General Manager Qasim Akhtar said: "The talent coming through further down the age groups is some of the best in the area and I'm looking forward to us building a successful pathway".

Any young players keen to join the club's Under 18 and Under 23 squads should first register their interest via the online form on the website.

Application process opens for upward movement



Following the curtailment of the 2020/21 league season for Tiers 3-6 of the Women's Football Pyramid (WFP), The FA can confirm that a process of Upward Club Movement, via application and based on set criteria, will take place.

The Women's Football Board has made the recommendation having consulted with clubs, leagues and relevant stakeholders, with the response overwhelmingly in favour of Upward Club Movement taking place. The Board's recommendations were subsequently approved by both the FA Board and FA Council.

As a result, all clubs currently participating in Tiers 3 to 6 (inclusive) of the Women's Pyramid are permitted to apply for upward movement.

Clubs that are successful in their application will move into the league or division immediately above the Tier in which they currently play – clubs will not be able to move up more than one tier.

This would mean a club participating at Tier 5 would move into Tier 4, while a club participating in Tier 3 would be able to move into Tier 2 – The FA Women's Championship.

Applications submitted will be considered by the Women's Football Board, with those put forward evaluated against a set criteria to ascertain whether they are eligible for possible upward movement.

The application will be marked against a criteria weighted 75% on-field and 25% off-field.

The on-field criteria will consider aspects such as points per game, cup performances and goal difference, across the last two seasons.

The off-field section will mark clubs on areas such as club structure, workforce and facilities.

Clubs that meet these requirements will be ranked against those other clubs that have applied from within the same division and which have also fulfilled the relevant requirements.

The club with the highest number of marks within each division will be offered upward movement.

Those clubs in Tier 3 applying for Upward Club Movement must be able to demonstrate compliance with the licence criteria in

movement within the football pyramid



order to play in the FA Women's Championship.

The top scoring clubs in the Upward Club Movement application in each of the Northern and Southern Premier Divisions will be offered a place in Tier 2, as long as they also achieve the minimum licence criteria.

If they cannot achieve the licence criteria, then the club with the next highest scoring Upward Club Movement application may be offered a place in Tier 2 providing they meet the licence criteria.

Clubs were informed of the process and provided with application forms and guidance last week. The deadline for application is midday on Tuesday 4th May. The FA will look to communicate decisions by the end of May/beginning of June.

Division in which vacancies exist	Number of available spaces	Leagues from which applications will be accepted ("Feeder Divisions")
FA Women's Championship (Tier 2)	2	FA WNL Northern Premier (Tier 3) FA WNL Southern Premier (Tier 3)
FA WNL Northern Premier (Tier 3)	2	FA WNL Division 1 North (Tier 4) FA WNL Division 1 Midlands (Tier 4)
FA WNL Southern Premier (Tier 3)	2	FA WNL Division 1 South East (Tier 4) FA WNL Division 1 South West (Tier 4)
FA WNL Division 1 North (Tier 4)	2	NW Regional Premier Division (Tier 5) NE Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)
FA WNL Division 1 Midlands (Tier 4)	2	WM Regional Premier Division (Tier 5) EM Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)
FA WNL Division 1 South East (Tier 4)	2	Eastern Regional Premier Division (Tier 5) London & SE Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)
FA WNL Division 1 South West (Tier 4)	2	SW Regional Premier Division (Tier 5) Southern Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)
North West Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)	2	NW Division 1 North (Tier 6) NW Division 1 South (Tier 6)
North East Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)	2	NE Division 1 North (Tier 6) NE Division 1 South (Tier 6)
West Midlands Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)	2	WM Division 1 North (Tier 6) WM Division 1 South (Tier 6)
East Midlands Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)	2	EM Division 1 North (Tier 6) EM Division 1 South (Tier 6)
Eastern Region Premier Division (Tier 5)	2	Eastern Region Division 1 North (Tier 6) Eastern Region Division 1 South (Tier 6)
London & South East Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)	2	LSE Division 1 North (Tier 6) LSE Division 1 South (Tier 6)
Southern Region Premier Division (Tier 5)	1	Southern Division 1 (Tier 6)
South West Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)	3	SW Division 1 West (Tier 6) SW Division 1 East (Tier 6) SW Division 1 North (Tier 6)

FA launches new board to oversee



With the welcome return of grassroots football last week, the FA is delighted to announce a new board that will oversee the development of the FA Women's National League.

Following a challenging year, the new Board has been formed to drive forward women's football across Tiers 3 and 4 of The Women's Football Pyramid, taking on responsibilities such as agreeing and implement the strategic direction of The FA Women's National League and its Competitions, as well as making recommendations in respect of commercial partnerships, league development and policy.

The board will report into the FA Women's Board; and is made up of professionals making waves in their respective industry, with men and woman working in football, as well as in areas including finance and media.

The variety of skills, experience and diversity of thought that each member brings will be invaluable in supporting the

League Management Committee, who continue to run the league day-to-day, and together ensuring the league's competitions are progressing and developing.

The Board has a valuable and important blend of independent and club representation, alongside some FA representatives including Kelly Simmons, the organisation's Director of the Women's Professional Game.

The FA is pleased to confirm the board's independent chair will be Sandi Dosanjh, who is currently a Consulting Director at KPMG, as well as a former player of Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Inaugural Chair, Sandi Dosanjh, said: "Football has always been a happy space for me and the opportunity to Chair this Board and to drive and accelerate the progression of the Women's game is both humbling and inspiring.

"Having played football since I was a young girl, and as a current player in the women's

game, I am incredibly proud to be able to bring 15 years of corporate governance experience and combine it with my passion for the game to realise and maximise the potential of the FA Women's National League."

The Board's immediate role will be to assess how the pandemic has affected the FA Women's National League and plan for how it will come back even stronger at the start of the 2021/2022 season; and to create a new League strategy with clear priorities for the Leagues development over the next three years.

The FA WNL Board members are:

Chairperson: Sandi Dosanjh

- Sandi is an experienced director within Consulting at KPMG
- Currently sits on committees both at KPMG and outside of the organisation, including Governance and Strategic positions
- Previously played for Wolverhampton Wanderers, and now involved in the Vets team at

see Women's National League



Sporting Khalsa, whilst also supporting Wildcats sessions.

Independent: Jessica Creighton

- Jess is an award-winning broadcaster & journalist with more than 10 years' experience, currently working for Sky Sports.

- Advocate for diverse communities, including founding Rainbow Noir, sitting on the Sky Sports' Diversity Action Group and the BBC Black & Asian Forum

- Has a passion for female empowerment through sport, in particular in women's football

Independent: To be confirmed in due course

Club Representative: David Mallin (Huddersfield Town)

- First involved at Huddersfield Town Women 20 years ago, now Chair of the club

- Has grown the clubs relationship with the men's club, and led a campaign for changes to the Women's FA Cup expenses which led to alteration in competition rules

Club Representative: Tim Greenwell (Southampton FC)

- Tim is Chief Legal & Risk Officer at Southampton FC, having previously worked for Toyota

- Played a large role in building the management structure to support Women's and Girls' football at Southampton FC,

- Works on the club's Equality Working Group

League Representative: Carol West

- Carol has managed the FA WNL since 2014, having previously led leagues at all levels between Tiers 3-6 of the Women's Pyramid over a voluntary career spanning more than 25 years

- Oversaw the rebranding of the league in 2018, and has delivered countless cup finals at Football League stadia, as well as Charity fixtures to raise funds for vital causes

FA Representative: Sue Hough

- Sue is Chair the Women's Football Board and sits on The FA board, as well as serving on the National Game Board, The FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship Board, Disability Football Committee, Judicial Panel and Referees' Committee

- Received an MBE for services to Women's and Disability Football in 2013

- Sue is CEO of Dorset County FA

FA Representative: Kelly Simmons

- Kelly has been at The FA for over 20 years, and has previously been Head of National Game and Director of Grassroots before moving into her current role in 2018

- In 2002 she was awarded an MBE for Services to Football and in 2006 she received the BT Sports Industry Award for 'Leadership in Sport'.

Kelly leads the transformation of professional women's football in England, overseeing the Women's Pyramid of Football.

Fleur Robinson of Burton Albion is also currently a member of the board, but The FA is delighted to learn of Fleur's appointment as chief executive of Wrexham AFC from 1 June. We wish her every success in her new role and as a result of her appointment, a recruitment process for a Board Club Representative will follow in due course.

ITFC Heritage Society extends sponsorship with Ipswich Town

Ipswich Town have announced that Elizabeth and Tim Edwards have agreed to extend their sponsorship of the Tractor Girls by becoming shirt sponsors for their schedule of friendlies.

Ipswich Town Heritage Society previously sponsored the Tractor Girls earlier in the season with their logo appearing on the left sleeve of both first-team and academy shirts.

Now, they are using the new sponsorship to further promote their brand, which is working on two major partnership projects to be delivered later in the year.

A touring exhibition, created by Suffolk Archives, will take a professional-level display of Ipswich Town's history around the county, giving fans a chance to share their own memories of key moments and successes. Also, the New Wolsey Theatre's follow-up show to the brilliant 'Our Blue Heaven', this time celebrating the 40th anniversary of Town's 1981 UEFA Cup win, is scheduled for early autumn.

On the new sponsorship agreement, Elizabeth Edwards said: "Although the competitive season has finished for the Women, there is a lot to do so we are ready for next season.

"It has been so disappointing that, as fans, we have hardly been able to get to games this season, but next season promises to be huge for the club and its rapidly-growing fanbase."

Rosie Richardson, director of sales at ITFC, added: "It has been great to work with Elizabeth and Tim as fans and sponsors of the Women's team, and we are so pleased that they have agreed to increase their commitment."

Yeovil United join with Bridgwater Town to form new team

From next season, Bridgwater Town Football Club and Yeovil United FC are to unite under one name - Bridgwater United Football Club.

Following approval from the relevant football authorities, men's and women's football will be brought together in Bridgwater under the new name from the start of the 2020/21 campaign.

Adam Murry, who rescued Yeovil Town Ladies (as they were then known) from financial collapse in 2019, became Bridgwater Town's chief executive earlier this year.

Murry said: "This exciting announcement is only just the beginning for Bridgwater United FC.

"Supporters, and indeed the town as a whole, can expect further organisational developments to be released in the coming weeks."

442

Sports Management

Group

Supporting female footballers throughout their career

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FANWNL 2020/21 Tables

(up to date as leagues were suspended)

Northern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Huddersfield Town	10	8	1	1	16	25
2 Fylde	8	6	1	1	18	19
3 West Bromwich Albion	9	5	1	3	10	16
4 Derby County	9	5	1	3	7	16
5 Sunderland	9	5	0	4	0	15
6 Nottingham Forest	9	4	2	3	10	14
7 Stoke City	8	3	2	3	-7	11
8 Burnley	7	3	1	3	0	10
9 Middlesbrough	9	2	1	6	-9	7
10 Sheffield FC	9	2	0	7	-18	6
11 Hull City	7	1	2	4	-8	5
12 Loughborough Foxes	8	0	2	6	-19	2

Southern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Watford	8	6	1	1	22	19
2 Oxford United	7	6	0	1	16	18
3 Portsmouth	8	5	1	2	13	16
4 Milton Keynes Dons	8	5	0	3	12	15
5 Crawley Wasps	7	5	0	2	9	15
6 Cardiff City	4	3	0	1	11	9
7 Chichester & Selsey	6	3	0	3	4	9
8 Yeovil United	5	2	2	1	1	8
9 Keynsham Town	7	2	0	5	-2	6
10 Gillingham	7	2	0	5	-4	6
11 Plymouth Argyle	7	0	0	7	-40	0
12 Hounslow	8	0	0	8	-42	0



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL 2020/21 Tables

(up to date as leagues were suspended)

Division One North

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Chester le Street Town	6	4	2	0	8	14
2 Brighouse Town	5	3	1	1	6	10
3 Norton & Stockton Ancients	6	2	2	2	1	8
4 Leeds United	6	2	2	2	0	8
5 Durham Cestria	5	2	1	2	2	7
6 Liverpool Feds	3	2	0	1	2	6
7 Stockport County	4	2	0	2	1	6
8 Newcastle United	3	1	1	1	0	4
9 Barnsley	6	1	1	4	-2	4
10 Chorley	3	1	1	1	-3	4
11 Bradford City	4	0	3	1	-1	3
12 Bolton	3	0	0	3	-14	0

Division One Midlands

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Wolverhampton Wanderers	6	6	0	0	34	18
2 Doncaster Rovers Belles	8	4	3	1	8	15
3 Lincoln City	6	4	1	1	19	13
4 Solihull Moors	6	3	2	1	9	11
5 Long Eaton United	7	3	2	2	6	11
6 Boldmere St Michaels	4	3	1	0	12	10
7 Sporing Khalsa	6	2	2	2	-2	8
8 Bedworth United	7	2	0	5	-10	6
9 Wem Town	4	1	1	2	-6	4
10 Holwell Sports	6	1	1	4	-9	4
11 Burton Albion	7	1	0	6	-41	3
12 Leafield Athletic	7	0	1	6	-20	1



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL 2020/21 Tables

(up to date as leagues were suspended)

Division One South East

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Ipswich Town	4	4	0	0	18	12
2 Hashtag United	5	4	0	1	9	12
3 Enfield Town	6	3	2	1	7	11
4 Actonians	4	3	1	0	7	10
5 Norwich City	4	3	0	1	3	9
6 AFC Wimbledon	5	2	1	2	4	7
7 Cambridge United	6	2	1	3	-10	7
8 Kent Football United	6	1	3	2	-1	6
9 Leyton Orient	3	1	1	1	1	4
10 Cambridge City	7	1	1	5	-14	4
11 Billericay Town	3	1	0	2	0	3
12 Stevenage	7	0	0	7	-24	0

Division One South West

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Southampton FC	4	4	0	0	17	12
2 Chesham United	5	4	0	1	15	12
3 Swindon Town	4	3	0	1	5	9
4 Busckland Athletic	5	3	0	2	-1	9
5 Exeter City	6	2	2	2	-2	8
6 Cheltenham Town	5	2	1	2	4	7
7 Larkhall Athletic	5	1	3	1	0	6
8 Maidenhead United	3	1	1	1	0	4
9 Southampton Women's	4	1	1	2	-1	4
10 Brislington	3	0	0	3	-13	0
11 Poole Town	6	0	0	6	-24	0



TheFA Women's
National League

GRASSROOTS



‘Football welcomes’ back refugees

Leicester

Adela

Afghanistan

“ I want to show that girls and women from different backgrounds love football and playing football even without facilities. Interest is more important than having excellent facilities. ”



Amnesty International UK’s ‘Football Welcomes’ has made a massive comeback with a month long set of games throughout April.

The number of football clubs taking part broke records with 209 clubs playing compared to 160 in 2019.

Football Welcomes began as a weekend of activities in 2017 with 30 clubs participating.

Throughout April, football club foundations from the Premier League, English Football League, Women’s Super League, Scottish Premiership and non-league and grassroots teams across the country put on events and activities to welcome refugees and people seeking asylum, and highlight the role that football can play in creating more welcoming communities.

To mark the return, Amnesty and Goal Click teamed up for a special photography series to tell stories from refugees across the country through

football.

The photo series highlights the contribution players from a refugee background make to the game and highlights the role football can play in creating more welcoming communities for refugees.

What is ‘Football Welcomes’?

Our Football Welcomes programme celebrates the contribution players with a refugee background make to the beautiful game, and the positive role football can play in bringing people together and creating more welcoming communities.

Everyone wants to live in a place where they feel safe and welcome. For people fleeing conflict and persecution, football can play a hugely important role in helping to settle into a new country and culture, to make friends, learn the language and get to know the local area.

FA and Nationwide launch



Pedro Soares / Sports Press Photo



The Football Association [The FA] and Nationwide Building Society have launched a new initiative to promote mutual respect on and off the pitch, with a national competition to design the first ever Coin for Respect.

The coin toss is a symbol of fair chance at the start of every game, but until now, no official coin has ever existed.

The creative challenge is calling on children aged 3-17yrs across the UK to design a unique coin that will become a symbol of mutual respect at the start of each grassroots game.

The winning design will be brought to life and distributed to more than

20,000 grassroots referees across the country in time for the new season, allowing them to start every game with respect.

The Coin for Respect campaign has been launched with the support of England's football stars Beth Mead, Tyrone Mings, Jordan Nobbs and Nick Pope, plus legends David James and Karen Carney.

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

"The role of parents when it comes to respect in the game is vital.

"When you're looking at the development of football, kids are at the beginning of their journey and if they have the right respect towards everybody early on then they carry that through into the amateur and professional game.

"But the top of the game will also influence what the youngsters do.

"With professional game initiatives running alongside campaigns like this, that targeting the youngsters, we've got all ends covered and we will have a game that everyone can enjoy playing, watching or supporting."

'Coin for Respect' campaign



The campaign is launched with an emotive piece of video content starring David James and Karen Carney, which you can watch and download on YouTube.

How to get involved?

To get involved, hopeful entrants can visit:

www.nationwide.co.uk/mutual-respect/coin-for-respect.

Submissions open from the 7th of April at 00:01 and will close on the 20th of June at 23:59.

After this, a shortlist of the 11 best designs will then be selected by a panel of judges, with the public then choosing the overall winner.

Shortlisted children will win a tour of Wembley Stadium plus some amazing England prizes.

Paul Hibbs, Director of Advertising at Nationwide Building Society said: "Mutual respect is at the heart of what we believe in, and we are excited to launch this initiative with the FA to ensure that a moment of respect will start every grassroots game from the beginning of the 2021 season.

"We look forward to seeing the Coin for Respect design entries and engaging with children around what mutual respect means to our next generation of talent."

The Coin for Respect campaign is part of

Nationwide's pledge to ensure 1 million players, parents and coaches get involved with the FA Respect campaign by 2023.

The Coin for Respect campaign's PR and content production is being handled by Leeds-based sports PR, social and events agency, Hatch.

Full T&Cs can be viewed at www.nationwide.co.uk/mutual-respect/coin-for-respect

Making women's footb



A new project is aiming to break the last taboos in women's football from periods to pregnancy.

Staffordshire University is calling on women's football clubs across the UK to help identify best practices which can be shared across Europe.

Dr Jacky Forsyth, Associate Professor of Exercise Physiology, explained: "We know that there are huge gender inequalities in sport but we want to focus on the positives and highlight what is actually being done well.

"Women's football has made huge progress in recent years and by sharing best practice from grass roots to elite level we can help to continue that momentum."

Forsyth is a prominent researcher in women's exercise and her work covers a range of topics including ovarian hormones and bone health.

This latest research is part of the European Women in Sport (E-WinS) project which is funded by the Erasmus+ Sport programme and brings together experts from nine universities and sports organisations.

Staffordshire University is kicking off the three-year venture by gathering information from football players themselves but also coaches, leaders, managers and governors. UK-based clubs are being asked to take part in an initial online survey followed by a series of focus groups.

The research will address issues specific to women in sport including the impact of menstruation and hormone-based contraception on performance.

Chelsea Women recently became the football first club in the world to tailor training to players' menstrual cycles – something which Jacky believes more teams should follow.

She said: "We spend so much time talking about the science of sport and what we can do to improve performance, but relatively little time talking about the menstrual cycle, which can have important physiological, biomechanical, nutritional as well as psychological consequences.

all a level playing field



“A recent study found that performance was marginally better in the second part of the menstrual cycle when oestrogen and progesterone are elevated.

This is something that coaches should be aware of and factor into players’ training.”

The survey will also address pregnancy, maternity leave and the family responsibilities of players. In 2018, when Serena Williams dropped off Forbes’ list of the top 100 best-paid athletes it sparked much debate about maternity leave policies and the pressure women feel.

There is also a strong move to ban illegal pregnancy testing on athletes and to

get rid of anti-pregnancy clauses used by football clubs.

Jacky said: “We are interested to know what support is currently available for athletes.

“Some football clubs hire nannies to look after the players’ children during training and travel, and they also receive a specific training programme to help them get back in shape after pregnancy.

“We also know that women are paid less and that only a fraction of the total commercial investment in sport supports women’s sport.

“Pay, sponsorship, and media coverage are current and relevant topics that we want to explore as well.”

The E-WinS project partners will also collect feedback from women’s football teams across Europe with the ultimate goal of creating a freely accessible database of good practice tools and tips.

Jacky added: “We want to celebrate the great work happening in women’s football and so want to hear from as many people in the industry as possible.

“The more feedback we get, the more we can enhance the sport in future.”

UK football clubs are invited to complete the online survey or can contact Dr Jacky Forsyth on J.J.Forsyth@staffs.ac.uk for further information about the project.



AMMO'S ANTICS

Hi Ammo here,

Lots has happened since the last issue.

Firstly I played my first game for Birmingham City RTC U16s. It was tough as I've only just turned 14 but it was an exciting first match against a strong West Brom side.

We won 7-4.

It was end to end stuff right from the first whistle and I scored a curler into the top corner from the edge of the box. I was very happy to be back playing again and even happier to get my first goal for the U16s.

I also attended a Wales U16 camp at Colliers Park in Wrexham. It was a full day of training followed by an in-house game.

I really enjoy playing for Wales and there is some excellent talent coming through.

Definitely exciting times for Welsh female

football. My dream is to be part of a Wales squad that plays in the Women's World Cup.

Next up was a game for Birmingham against Aston Villa. We've had some great games over the last few years and there's obviously some local rivalry.

I played with the U14s in this one and after a slow start we cruised to a 7-0 win. I got a couple of assists and played in a holding midfield role. But overall it was an excellent team performance.

This was followed by a fixture against Leicester.

We were really up against it here. Me and three of the U14s were asked to play up in the U16s as all of our older U16s were playing for the Development squad. It meant our U16s team was made up of U14s and first year U16s. Against a very strong Leicester team.

It was probably one of the toughest games I've played in. We lost 4-0 and I got an "accidental"

punch in the face for good measure. I was left with a big bruise on my cheek which is still visible ten days later.

I've got to say the better team won but there was plenty for us to be proud of given how young our team was.

The jump from U14s to U16s is a big one.

Much bigger pitches, bigger goals, longer matches and some of the girls we come up against are quite frankly huge.

I'm happy with my performances this season, we only have a couple of weeks left until the season ends.

Then I'll be re-joining my old grassroots team Ross Juniors for some Summer tournaments before hopefully re-joining the Blues and signing a new contract.

Finally I'm really proud to say I've been selected for an U16s match for Wales against England.

I'll let you know how it all goes next time!

Stay safe

Ammo

Follow Ammo on Twitter at:

@AmmoCurtis



NEW! Introducing the first TWFM Player development programme



By Richard Redman

With the return of group sport across the UK, are you looking for something new for you and your team to get involved in over the summer which will improve your footballing skills and your love of the game?

As part of an exciting new collaboration between The Women's Football Magazine and The Coaching Manual (an extensive online resource for football coaches) we are launching our first ever football education course for girls aged 5-14.

How have clubs and players benefited from TopTekkers Player One?

Last month we told you about our new player development course brought to you by TopTekkers Player One, which starts on Monday, May 17.

But what do players get out of the course?

In this article, we take a look at what some of the course's previous participants had to say about it.

As well as the Irish FA's Elite Pathways development programme, TopTekkers Player One has been a success for players at Chicago Fire's Academy in Major League Soccer, as well as a number of respected grassroots outfits in the United Kingdom.

From St Oliver Plunkett FC to Hitchin Belles, grassroots teams up and down the country have seen an improvement in their players by using the course and part of their off-field development.

Not only are clubs seeing an improvement in their players' technical abilities, they're also finding that less time is being spent focusing on technical drills and one-to-one coaching during their training sessions.

The TopTekkers Player One course is unique because not only does it feature online sessions from Premier League Academy coach Steven Crane, it also allows young players to exercise their creativity off the field too, while learning about nutrition, scouting, tactical analysis, and more.

Players' parents love it too. One parent said on

Twitter: "My daughter is loving the TopTekkers Player One program. It's great to keep her motivated and interested during this mad time we are living in."

Another parent commented: "TopTekkers is a great app for footballers to be in charge of their own learning and development."

"The course is ideal for educating youngsters on many aspects including how to lead a healthy lifestyle."

The app that accompanies the course - TopTekkers - has helped even more players away from the training field.

With Sheffield United and Burnley's Academies both using the app as part of their players' development plans, and thousands of players submitting challenge scores every month, more and more young players are reaching their potential thanks to TopTekkers.

Most importantly, TopTekkers Player One is appealing to the young players who take part in it.

One candidate proclaimed: "It was a pleasure taking part in the TopTekkers Player One course. I have really enjoyed doing the course and it has improved my football and life skills."

If you are interested in booking your club's place on The Women's Football Magazine TopTekkers course, email Relationship Manager Mike Cross on mikec@thecoachingmanual.com

or call + 44 (0)7815 053161

For more information visit www.toptekkers.com.



THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE *Awards*

The shortlist has been decided and the voting has opened for the TWFM Awards 2021.

The Nominees

Women's Super League Player of the Season

- Fran Kirby, Chelsea
- Katie McCabe, Arsenal
- Chloe Kelly, Manchester City

Women's Super League Coach of the Season

- Carla Ward, Birmingham City
- Emma Hayes, Chelsea
- Gareth Taylor, Manchester City

Women's Championship Player of the Season

- Natasha Flint, Leicester City
- Bianca Baptiste, Crystal Palace
- Bridget Galloway, Durham

Women's Championship Coach of the Season

- Jonathan Morgan, Leicester City
- Neil Redfearn, Sheffield United
- Gemma Donnelly, Blackburn Rovers

Women's National League Player of the Season

- Helen Ward, Watford

- Laura Elford, Huddersfield Town
- Jade Cross, Wolverhampton Wanderers

Women's National League Coach of the Season

- Clint Lancaster, Watford
- Jordan Wimpenny, Huddersfield Town
- Joe Sheehan, Ipswich Town

Grassroots Player of the Season

- Libby Whittaker
- Abby Chiverton
- Meghan Heron

Grassroots Coach of the Season

- Brendan White, Verwood Girls
- Kevin Morris, Tupsley Pumas
- Chris Barker, Walton Casuals

Women's Football Fan of the Season

- Isabelle O'Toole, Lincoln City
- Jessica Bennett, Chelsea
- Anastasia Hill, Manchester City

How to Vote

To vote, go to our social media pages to find the link pinned to the top of the page.

Voting closes Friday, May 7

Winners announced Sunday, May 9



Grassroots Gossip



West Bridgford Colts launch women's team

West Bridgford Colts have announced the launch of its first women's team.

The club has appointed experienced coach and ex-Colts player Beth Heath as their Head of Women's Football and tasked her with helping set up the team, recruiting players and recruiting a head coach.

Heath, said: "I was delighted to hear that Colts has made the commitment to establish its first ever women's team – the time is right, and this will be a great

move, not only for the club but also for women's football in the county.

"I started my own football journey with Colts aged seven and so it's a particular thrill for me to have the opportunity to help to take this exciting initiative forward.

"It's a great club with ambition and an excellent reputation, and I'm proud to wear the club's badge again."

Harlow Signings

Harlow Ladies have announced the signings of goalkeeper Chinue Ayton and Coach Ruddy to the club.

Speaking about joining Dean Perrett's, Ruddy said: "It's a privilege to be here. It's my second stint in women's football, so I'm excited for the project.

"I came to watch the club once I had left Billericay and I just loved the football the club was playing. I've been speaking to Dean and we felt now was the right time for me to join. I'm happy to be here and happy to get started.

"I'll bring intensity, which is exactly what I think Dean wants. My style and ethos in coaching, it mirrors what the club want, so I think it will be the perfect match.

Winning is my middle name. I love winning and I'm a bad loser, so I'm glad I've come to a place where there is a winning mentality and a winning ethos. The team we have, we can achieve whatever we want."



CUPS



Chelsea make Champions League final



Chelsea have made it through to the Women's Champions League final for the first time after an impressive display against Bayern Munich.

After losing the first leg 2-1, Chelsea came out at Kingsmeadow with all guns blazing.

Fran Kirby opened the scoring to put Emma Hayes' side in control on away goals but Sarah Zadrazil soon made it 1-1.

Chelsea continued to press and Ji So-yun managed to put the hosts back in front.

With extra time looming, Pernille Harder headed in a cross and Kirby grabbed a second after running half the length of the pitch in the final minutes.

It was not plain sailing for Chelsea, with the minutes ticking down, Bayern through everything at them with even the goalkeeper coming up near the end as they continued to pile on the pressure.

Kirby's goal in the closing seconds saw the Chelsea management team go wild with Hayes bursting into tears on the touchline.

Speaking after the game, Hayes said: "I'd probably say we weren't [that good in the game], but what I would say we did have was luck on our side in the right moments.

"We are resilient. These games are always so even.

"The quality of the opposition is too high but I thought we started strongly in the first half and didn't in the first but the game had an ebb and flow.

"I am so proud of the players and the club, we have worked a long time to get to here."

Goalscorer Kirby added: "It's unbelievable. We have been in this competition for a long time.

"I was there the first season we were in the competition and we have grown as a team.

"Everyone was giving it everything and putting their bodies on the line. It's really special.

"It's one of the most important victories for me at the club but we still have so much to focus on going forwards. We want to win the league and we want to win the final.

"We have to go there and look to win. Barcelona are an unbelievable team and they beat a very good PSG team.

"It's a bit crazy in the dressing rooms, we are enjoying it!"

Stat Attack: Chelsea 4-1 Bo

Chelsea

- 30 Ann Katrin Berger
- 7 Jess Carter
- 4 Millie Bright
- 16 Magdalena Eriksson
- 21 Niamh Charles
- 8 Melanie Leupolz
- 5 Sophie Ingle
- 10 Ji So-yun
- 14 Fran Kirby
- 23 Pernille Harder
- 20 Sam Kerr

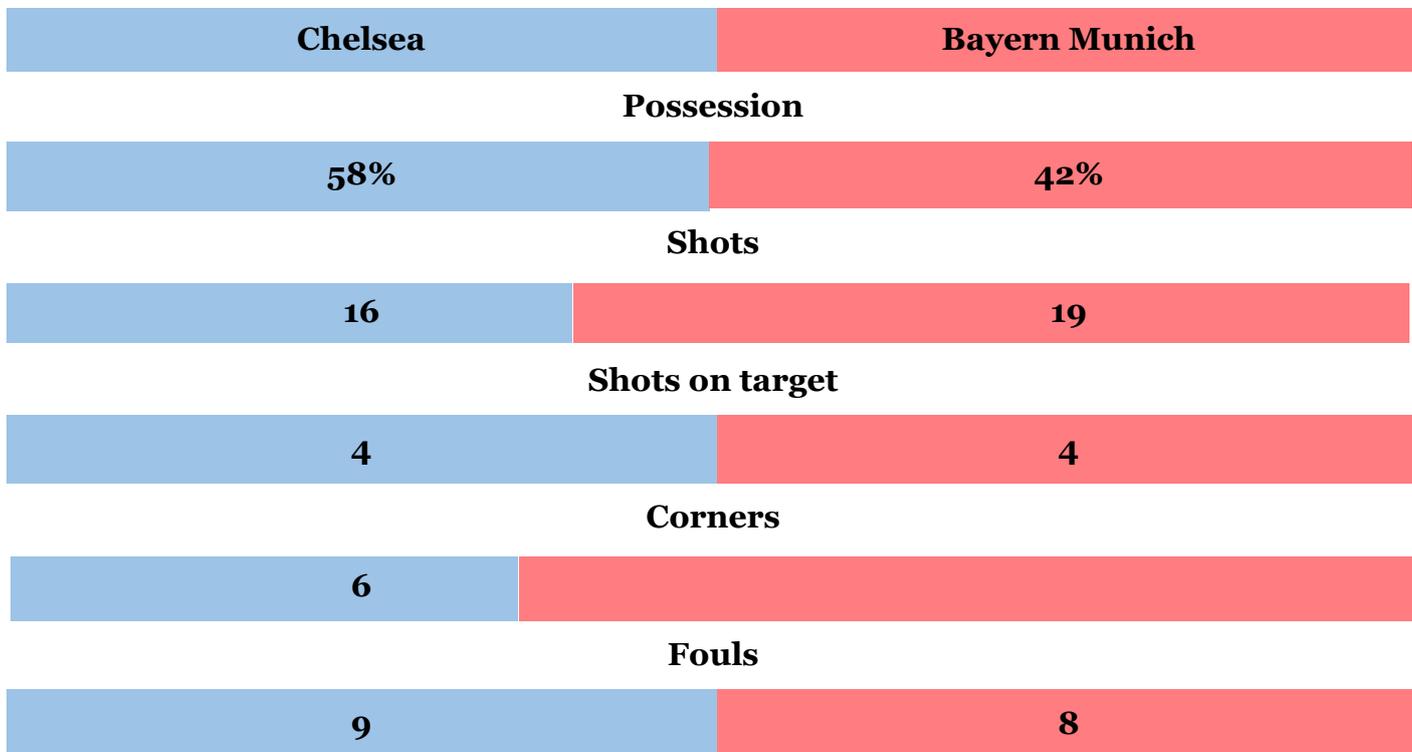
Bayern Munich

- 1 Laura Benkarth
- 30 Carolin Simon
- 27 Marina Hegering
- 14 Amanda Ilestedt
- 5 Hanna Glas
- 25 Sarah Zadrazil
- 16 Lina Magull
- 6 Lineth Beerensteyn
- 12 Sydney Lohmann
- 17 Klara Buhl
- 11 Lea Schuller

Substitutes

- 1 Zecira Musovic
- 3 Hannah Blundell
- 9 Bethany England
- 11 Guro Reiten
- 17 Jessie Fleming
- 22 Erin Cuthbert
- 24 Drew Spence
- 25 Jonna Andersson
- 28 Carly Telford
- 29 Jorja Fox
- 3 Simone Boye Sorensen
- 8 Gia Corley
- 10 Linda Dallmann
- 18 Viviane Asseyi
- 19 Carina Wenninger
- 21 Simone Laudehr
- 22 Maria Luisa Grohs
- 23 Karolina Lea Vilhjalmsdottir
- 44 Kathrin Lehmann

Bayern Munich (5-3 aggregate)



Pedro Soares / Sports Press Photo



Meet the opponents: Barcelona



Barcelona is the most successful women's football team in Spain.

They currently hold the record for the most Copa de la Reina wins, Copa Catalunya wins and share the record for the Primera Division and Supercopa de Espana.

This is the second time Barcelona have made the final.

During the 2018-19 season, Barca took on Olympique Lyon in the final but lost 4-1.

Road to the final

Round of 32

PSV 1-4 Barcelona

Barcelona 4-1 PSV

Round of 16

Fortuna Hjorring 0-5 Barcelona

Barcelona 4-0 Fortuna Hjorring

Quarter final

Barcelona 3-0 Manchester City

Manchester City 2-1 Barcelona

Semi final

PSG 1-1 Barcelona

Barcelona 2-1 PSG

When is the final?

The Champions League final is set to be held on Sunday, May 16.

It will be played at Gamla Ullevi, Gothenburg.

The game will be live on BT Sport.

National League South



Sam Mallia / Sports Press Photo



Jordan Colborne / Sports Press Photo



Kevin Hodgson / Sports Press Photo

By Daisy Passmore

Portsmouth hosted Cheltenham on the 4th of April for their FA Cup game.

It was quite an even game with both teams creating some chances but none of them could be put into the back of the net. At full time it was 0-0 meaning that the game went into extra time.

On the 101st minute, captain Jade Bradley scored directly from a corner giving Portsmouth the lead! A few minutes later they doubled their lead sealing them a 2-0 win.

However Portsmouth were then kicked out of the competition after they fielded an ineligible player.

Furthermore, Cheltenham faced Gillingham in the next round instead.

Yeovil United faced Keynsham in their FA Cup Second round game. Yeovil had a few chances during the first half which were either saved or came off of the bar.

It took captain Chloe Lloyd (doing what she does best) to score from a penalty to send Yeovil through to the next round.

In the next round Yeovil then travelled to play Southampton. It wasn't Yeovil's day as they lost 3-0 to a very good Southampton team, knocking them out of the competition.

Gillingham's second round FA Cup game was against Crawley Wasps. Crawley were probably the expected winners due to their placement in the league.

However, Gillingham managed to pull through as 3-2 winners. It was 1-1 at half time but 3 more goals were scored in the

second half. Due to this win it meant that Crawley would face Cheltenham (after Portsmouth had been kicked out).

The game against Cheltenham was quite end to end in the early stages. Both teams had some chances and both scored in the second half. After full time it was still 1-1 so the game headed into extra time. In extra time it looked as though the game may go to penalties but Gillingham had some good play and they took the lead sending them through!

One of Gillingham's biggest games was up next against Arsenal. Even though they suffered a 10-0 defeat, they put in a tremendous effort and did well against an extremely good opposition.

MK Dons traveled to top of the league Watford. It was MK Dons who started the better team as they scored on the 8th

thern FA Cup Round up



minute giving them a one goal advantage at half time.

However not long after the second half started Rosie Kmita scored. She later went on and grabbed a hatrick and Watford went through to the next round after a 3-1 win.

Watford then faced Wolves in the third round and it didn't go the way many people would've expected. Watford were down 1-0 within the first 10 minutes but we're back on levels terms just before half time after O'Leary scored. The second half didn't go Watford's way as they were beaten 4-1.

Hounslow Women were home to Leyton Orient on the 4th of April. Unfortunately for Hounslow they were beaten 4-0 by a Leyton Orient side who performed well. Orient were then knocked out in the next round by Chichester.

Plymouth Argyle travelled to Southampton women's ground to play their second round tie. It was a tough day for Plymouth as Southampton put 3 past them. The manager was happy though with how Argyle stuck to the game plan and they worked very hard.

The next teams to face each other were Cardiff and Oxford. It didn't take long for Oxford to find the back of the net and they were winning within the second minute. Cardiff did well to keep Oxford from scoring another. No more goals were scored and Oxford went through after their 1-0 win.

Their next challenge was against Billericay Town. The game ended 3-0 to Oxford and Emily Allen scored a worldie of a goal to help them go through.

Charlton traveled down to face Oxford and at half time it was even after both teams had

scored a goal each. In added time it was heartbreak for Oxford as Charlton bagged a goal making it 2-1 to them.

Chichester and Selsey's second round game was against Kent who are further down the pyramid than Chichester. Full time was 3-1 to Chichester after they put in a good shift.

The next game for them was Leyton Orient. Both of the teams did well in the first half but it was Chichester who had a 2-1 lead at half time. No more goals came in the second half and Chichester had to face WSL side West Ham next.

They needed up with a loss after West Ham put 11 goals past them. However the hard work Chichester put into that game and to get to that game shouldn't go unnoticed!

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

Vitality Women's FA Cup third round proper

Huddersfield Town	1-1 (5-3)	Brighouse Town
Middlesbrough	4-0	Wem Town
Burnley	0-0 (3-1)	Sunderland AFC or Sheffield FC
Oxford United	3-1	Billericay Town
West Bromwich Albion	1-4	Derby County
Watford	1-4	Wolverhampton Wanderers
Cheltenham Town	1-2	Gillingham
Southampton	3-0	Yeovil United
Leyton Orient	1-2	Chichester & Selsey



Third round proper

- All ties must be played on Sunday April 11, kick-off 2pm
Unless arrangements made before
- Deadline for player registration for the third round is 12 noon on Saturday April 10
- Prize fund payments:
 - Winners £1,250
 - Losers £315

Fourth round proper



- All ties must be played on Sunday April 18, kick-off 2pm
Unless arrangements made before
- Deadline for layer registration for the for round is 12 noon on Saturday April 14
 - Prize fund payments
 - Winners £2000
 - Losers £500

Vitality Women's FA Cup fourth round proper

Leicester City	1-0	Liverpool
Middlesbrough	0-9	Sheffield United
Birmingham City	5-1	Coventry United
Burnley	0-6	Manchester United
Everton	2-1	Durham
Manchester City	8-0	Aston Villa
Wolverhampton Wanderers	2-5	Blackburn Rovers
Huddersfield Town	3-2	Derby County
Reading	2-3	Tottenham Hotspur
Oxford United	1-2	Charlton Athletic
Arsenal	10-0	Gillingham
Chelsea	5-0	London City Lionesses
Lewes	1-2	Southampton or Plymouth Argyle or Keynsham Town or Yeovil United
Brighton & Hove Albion	1-0	Bristol City
West Ham United	11-0	Chichester & Selsey
Crystal Palace	3-0	London Bees

Vitality Women's FA Cup third round proper

Manchester United	vs	Leicester City
Brighton & Hove Albion	vs	Huddersfield Town
Blackburn Rovers	vs	Charlton
Birmingham City	vs	Southampton
Tottenham Hotspur	vs	Sheffield United
Manchester City	vs	West Ham United
Arsenal	vs	Crystal Palace

Fifth round proper

- All ties must be played on Sunday May 16
Unless arrangements made before
- Deadline for player registration for the third round is 12 noon on Saturday April 10
 - Prize fund payments:
Winners: £3,000
Losers: £750

When is the final?

The final which is expected to be on May 22 but that is yet to be confirmed due to the breaks in the competition because of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns.

It is thought that there are not many options for when the final could be played due to players going to Tokyo for the postponed 2020 Olympics.

The final is set to take place at Wembley.



HOME NATIONS



The rise and fall of the European Super League



Ameé Ruskai @ameeruszkai · Apr 23



A **Women's European Super League** with only one team that's won the Champions League, five who've never qualified, one nine months old & one in the second tier?

This week emphasised how disconnected those at the top of clubs are from the **women's** game



Josh Bunting @Buntingfootball · Apr 19

With this **European Super League** the **Women's** game worries me, shouldn't we get that sorted first but once again it's an after thought and plays second fiddle as always because of the money generated [#FAWSL](#)

On April 12, twelve of Europe's leading men's clubs announced they had agreed to establish a new midweek competition called the European Super League.

The proposal involved the clubs forming their own competition to rival the UEFA Champions League.

The Premier League's big-six clubs - Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham - were all involved.

The idea of the Super League did not go down well with fans with many calling for teams pull out and after the outcry all six English clubs pulled out.

Statement by UEFA, the English Football Association, the Premier League, the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), LaLiga, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and Lega Serie A:

If this were to happen, we wish to reiterate that we will remain united in our efforts to stop this cynical project, a project that is founded on the self-interest of a few clubs at a time when society needs solidarity more than ever.

We will consider all measures available to us, at all levels, both judicial and sporting in order to prevent this happening. Football is based on open competitions and sporting

merit; it cannot be any other way.

As previously announced by FIFA and the six Confederations, the clubs concerned will be banned from playing in any other competition at domestic, European or world level, and their players could be denied the opportunity to represent their national teams.

We thank those clubs in other countries, especially the French and German clubs, who have refused to sign up to this. We call on all lovers of football, supporters and politicians, to join us in fighting against such a project if it were to be announced. This persistent self-interest of a few has been going on for too long. Enough is enough.

Why did it matter to women's teams?

When the proposal was officially announced, there was one line tacked on the end mentioning that a women's league would follow in due course.

One line. An after thought.

Thankfully the voice of the fans won and there is still only one Super League worth talking about!

England struggle to



By Charlotte Stacey

On the afternoon of The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip's passing, the FA announced that the evening's scheduled match between France and England would indeed go ahead as planned.

In what was interim head coach Hege Riise's, most competitive fixture to date, the Lionesses lined up against a slightly depleted French squad. The current Covid-19 situation in France meant that a large number of regular starters, namely from Lyon, were not able to partake in the match.

England and Manchester City skipper Steph Houghton was not selected as part of Riise's April squad due to injury. Fellow City teammate Ellen White was named as captain in Houghton's absence. Lucy Bronze and Demi Stokes were ruled out from the evening's selection with minor injuries.

Broadcasting moved from BBC Four to BBC iPlayer due to the day's events. The Lionesses took to the field wearing black armbands and completed a minute's silence beneath a photograph of the late Duke prior to kick-off.

After a fairly uneventful first few moments, the first chance of the match fell to France on the five-minute mark. The quick pace of the French forward line pounce on an error made by the English side as Valerie Gauvin thunders up the left wing in possession before releasing the ball into the box. Millie Bright is able to get a foot to it and push it out for a corner. This was to become a common theme throughout the first half, the Lionesses getting caught on the counter as France seized sloppy mistakes.

England's first chance fell to Beth Mead at 13 minutes as the winger took an ambitious shot set up by a pass just outside of the box from Fran Kirby. Mead's shot is easily dealt with by Pauline Peyraud-Magnin.

England find themselves with another chance through a fiery shot from Nikita Parris as a momentarily lulled France allow an opening. Once again, the ball is cleared by Peyraud-Magnin. France then begin to gather steam and cause an awful lot of problems for England's back four. Goalkeeper Ellie Roebuck also finds herself in hot water after making two consecutive errors, yet still the score remains level.

England rouse as the clock tips half an hour and Keira Walsh slides in a well-timed ball to a running Mead. Mead squares it into the box as Ellen White slots it into the back of the net. Yet the whistle blows as the ball crosses the line, White was offside - goal disallowed.

As the panning game would suggest, France respond immediately as England shake off the decision. The French side waste no time in speedily dribbling the ball along the right wing, stretching England immensely. After taking the ball the length of the pitch, it is pulled back into the box where Sandy Baltimore fires a snarling shot around Roebuck into the top left corner. France open the scoresheet at thirty-one minutes.

What follows are chances created and missed by both sides, notably for Gauvin who skies a pinpoint cross over the bar, and Parris who misdirects an open header up the other end. The half finishes with France one ahead.

After the break, England have made two substitutions, one offensive with Chloe Kelly replacing Parris, and one defensive with Niamh Charles

find form in France



replacing Alex Greenwood. France's side remains unchanged. Just over a minute after the whistle has blown, Rachel Daly, who has switched from right-back to left, sends in a fiery left footed shot that lifts just above the crossbar.

A nasty looking injury then halts play as Gavin twists an ankle when preparing to jump. The Everton forward, who has suffered long term injuries before, looks to be in pain but remains on the pitch for the time being.

On the hour mark, Roebuck is forced into action once again as Baltimore dances through the English defence before laying the ball off to Katoto who sends in the shot. This time, Roebuck is able to tip it out of play. France are then awarded a penalty after a collision in the box after a scramble for a rebounded ball. Substitute Viviane Moudrakovska stands over the ball to take her first touch of the match, sends in a calm penalty and France are two nil up.

Yet, the pendulum began to swing the other way with just over ten minutes to go. Lauren Hemp is brought down in the box by France's captain for the day, Marion Torrent. With England's

usual penalty takers absent, Kirby walks up to take the spot kick. Never in doubt, the Chelsea star places a delicate low ball in the bottom left-hand corner. France 2, England 1.

England then begin to look a little more dangerous, their goal noticeably lifting spirits. Yet these were to be short lived as France once again take advantage of a disorganised English formation. Kadidiatou Diop runs the flank the pitch before slipping around Arsenal centre half, Lotte Wubben-Moy. She then passes it inside to Katoto, who is able to gently tap it into the net. The final whistle blows and it is France - 3, England - 1.

Not the ideal start for Hege Riise, yet on a more positive note, the match did reveal areas that need improvement which is key for progression. What was possibly most concerning was that an almost full and fit England was not able to really test a weakened side France, even when retaining around sixty percent of possession.

England's defensive holes and their sluggishness in snapping back to the 'present' after suffering disappointment in their

attack was ultimately their downfall and France very quickly learned how to exploit this. Let the Lionesses do the hard work and punish them on the counter attack when they are transitorily out of shape.

England certainly possess the individual defensive talent to perform to a higher standard than was shown tonight. Having not played together since March 2020, except from a recent friendly against Northern Ireland, will have no doubt contributed to this inconsistency. Furthermore, looking higher up the pitch, there were most definitely some pleasurable moments. Midfielder Keira Walsh made excellent decisions on the ball, Fran Kirby was instrumental in producing creative passages of play and substitute Lauren Hemp's presence was immediately uplifting.

Now is the time to dust off the cobwebs and work out the kinks as we look forward to the Olympics and the Euro's 2022.

Stat Attack: Fra

France

- 21** Pauline Peyraud Magnin
- 4** Marion Torrent
- 5** Aissatou Toukara
- 22** Elisa de Almeida
- 23** Perle Morroni
- 11** Kadidiatou Diani
- 8** Grace Geyoro
- 14** Ella Palis
- 17** Sandy Baltimore
- 12** Marie-Antoinette Katoto
- 13** Valerie Gauvin

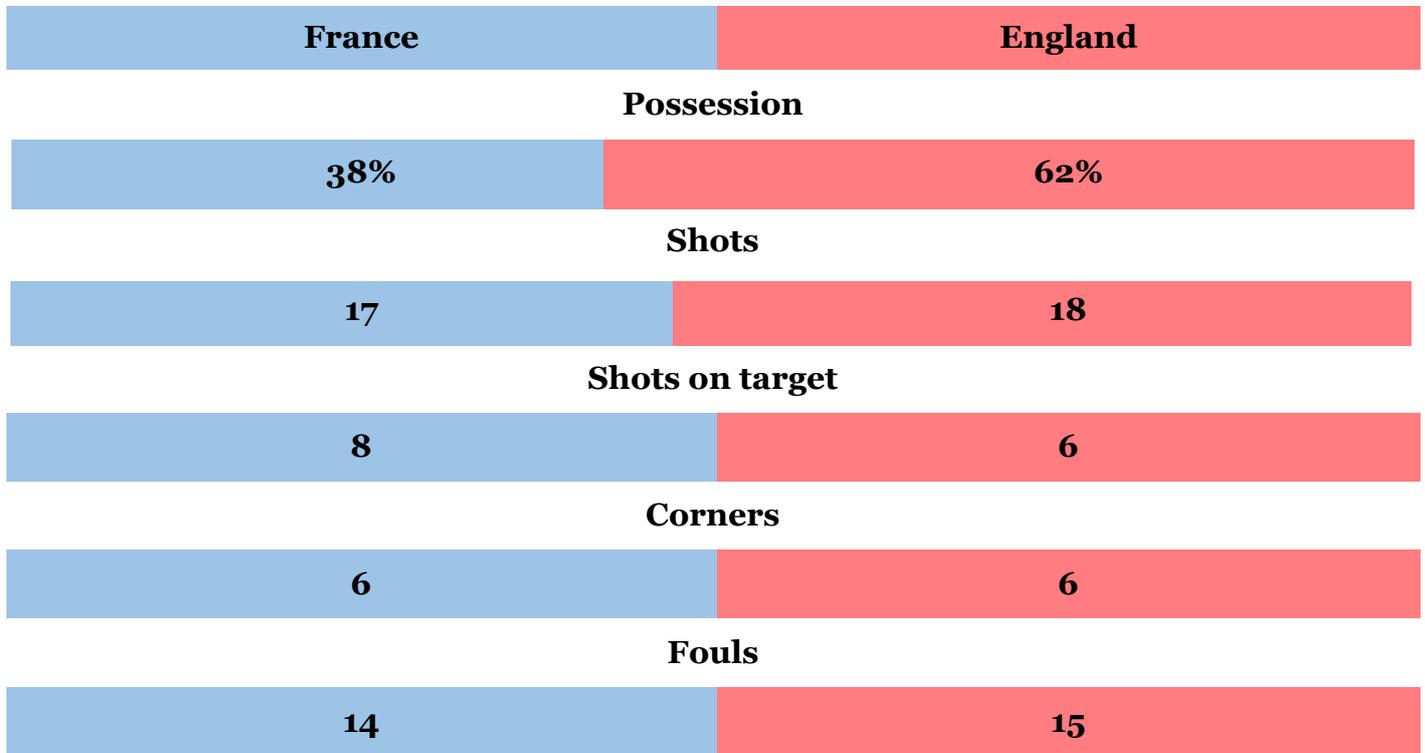
England

- 1** Ellie Roebuck
- 2** Rachel Daly
- 5** Millie Bright
- 6** Leah Williamson
- 3** Alex Greenwood
- 8** Jill Scott
- 4** Kiera Walsh
- 7** Nikita Parris
- 10** Fran Kirby
- 11** Beth Mead
- 9** Ellen White

Substitutes

- 1** Solene Durand
- 2** Eve Perisset
- 3** Julie Thibaud
- 6** Ines Jaurena
- 7** Oriane Jean-Francois
- 9** Eugenie Le Sommer
- 10** Lea Khelifi
- 15** Kenza Dali
- 16** Constance Picaud
- 18** Viviane Asseyi
- 20** Louise Fleury
- 24** Oceane Deslandes
- 25** Grace Kazadi Ntambwe
- 12** Niamh Charles
- 13** Sandy MacIver
- 14** Millie Turner
- 15** Charlotte Wubben-Moy
- 16** Ella Toone
- 17** Chloe Kelly
- 18** Jordan Nobbs
- 19** Bethany England
- 20** Georgia Stanway
- 21** Carly Telford
- 22** Karen Bardsley
- 23** Lauren Hemp
- 24** Esme Morgan

France 3-1 England



© Joerdeli Photography | Daniela Porcelli

Canada outplay England



By Charlotte Stacey

On the 10th Anniversary of the Women's Super League the Lionesses lined up to play their final friendly before the selection for the upcoming Olympic games.

After their 3-1 defeat to France, England had to prove themselves, not only for their places in Team GB, but to their supporters who have been patiently waiting for, and intently willing, their team to regain their confidence after a poor run of form.

The Canadian side they were to face was one that would be challenging, not only due to the quality their players possess, but also as former England assistant coach Bev Priestman was at the helm.

Captain for the night, Millie Bright, led the Lionesses out of the tunnel ahead of the game in which a convincing performance was sought.

It was a mere 180 seconds after the opening whistle blew when England found themselves chasing the game. Canada's Janine Beckie made a driving run through the middle before releasing a pass that was collected

by England left back, Demi Stokes. Stokes took a heavy touch towards goalkeeper Carly Telford, as Canadian forward Eveylne Viens muscled through on the mis-controlled ball. Viens made no mistake in taking advantage of the error and put the visitors in front early on.

England, needing an equaliser to rid the effect of beginning a game on the back foot, begin to press as Georgia Stanway took the first of her three long range strikes. A free kick on the right side of the area then gave Jordan Nobbs the opportunity to float in a decent cross, and she did just that. Yet no one is able to connect with the delivery and Canada cleared the ball away from Bethany England's threat.

By the twenty-five-minute mark England had begun to build some more promising packages of play. Passes in triangles through the middle between Fran Kirby, Lauren Hemp and Nobbs allowed a time of possession, and Georgia Stanway, playing in an unfamiliar holding midfield role, was able to begin to springboard play out to either side. Yet, as was to occur until the very end, Canada's resolute defensive play did not give England an inch to

manoeuvre anything much further than that.

Another set piece for England and Nobbs stepped up to the plate once again. This time the Arsenal midfielder fired in a tasty shot that was ultimately tipped over the crossbar by goalkeeper, Stephanie Labbe.

Canada then roused with a dangerous spell of their own as the pacey Deanne Rose managed to beat out Rachel Daly and Bright down the right-hand side to feed a ball into Chelsea's Jessie Fleming.

In reaction, England substitute, Alex Greenwood, sent a curling ball down the line to meet a well-positioned Kirby. Although Kirby was unable to do much with the intended play, it was refreshing to see England move the ball with some imagination as little had been created so far. The half drew to a close with Canada still leading from their early goal.

The Lionesses started the second half brighter than the first. Within five minutes, and after some quick passes around the 'D', Nobbs had sent a high ball into the box that was met by England, however the resulting header was collected comfortably by Labbe.

d as poor form continues



The visitors then switched it up and brought a tirade of attacking play to the hosts. Notably, Leah Williamson put in a timely challenge to deny Canada breaking through, yet a number of aerial balls remained undealt with by the English defence.

England, then with an attacking play of their own, called for a penalty after Nobbs toppled over in the area. Penalty denied and the Lionesses, as in their previous match, were caught out in transition. Nichelle Prince was able to drive the ball down the field, eventually she was closed down by Williamson and Karen Bardsley collected the loose ball.

Nobbs, sensing a Canadian dominance, then took the opportunity to stretch their line. After picking up the ball in her own half, Nobbs carried it forward before lining up her pass into the area. Ella Toone was unable to pick the ball up as projected and the chance fell away.

The next real chance of the game came with just ten minutes to go. Hemp pinched the ball from the midfield and ran it through the middle toward goal. Hemp was just about able to strike the ball

before Vanessa Gilles blocked the shot.

Just a couple of minutes later Hemp was on the receiving end of a nasty head collision. The winger remained down whilst being checked over by medical staff as the Lionesses took this time to take on some needed tactical advice from the touchlines.

However, as play resumed another blunder at the back meant Canada doubled their lead. A pass back to Bardsley from Bright was not cleared quick enough by the keeper and Prince softly tapped the ball across the line from under Bardsley's feet.

Full time, England 0 – 2 Canada.

Once again supporters were to end up disappointed with their team's performance. Despite positive spells of possession and a working midfield with some quick and intricate passing, the Lionesses did not take the opportunities they grafted to create. Canada's holding double pivot, made up of Desree Scott and Quinn, made it increasingly difficult for England to progress any higher than the middle third.

Lauren Hemp did have some luck along the wing. Yet once experienced defender, Ashley Lawrence, caught wind of Hemp's tendency to take play on the outside, crosses that would usually channel in from the left became few and far between. In fact, it seemed that Alex Greenwood's long curling ball toward Fran Kirby was about the most creative play that England could muster.

This is not to say that there were not other pleasing aspects of the game. Georgia Stanway put in an excellent shift as a defensive midfielder and remained positionally disciplined to allow partner, Jordan Nobbs, to push forward. Similarly, centre back's, Millie Bright and Leah Williamson looked to be working as a more unified partnership in holding a firmer back line than they did in the previous fixture.

However, defensive mistakes were once again made. Aerial threats were not dispelled and mindless mistakes cost a game, that for the most part, remained a fairly even match. It is these disconcerting errors that if permitted to continue, will creep in to and become the very bones of this capable team.

Stat Attack: Engl

England	Canada
1 Carly Telford	1
2 Rachel Daly	10
5 Millie Bright	23
6 Leah Williamson	4
3 Demi Stokes	2
7 Nikita Parris	11
8 Jordan Nobbs	5
4 Georgia Stanway	16
11 Lauren Hemp	17
9 Bethany England	6
10 Fran Kirby	24

Substitutes

12 Lucy Bronze	7 Julia Grosso
13 Karen Bardsley	8 Jayde Riviere
14 Keira Walsh	9 Jordyn Huitema
15 Millie Turner	13 Sophie Schmidt
16 Alex Greenwood	14 Gabrielle Carle
17 Chloe Kelly	15 Nichelle Prince
18 Jill Scott	18 Erin McLeod
19 Ellen White	19 Jordyn Listro
20 Ella Toone	20 Jade Rose
21 Ellie Roebuck	21 Rylee Foster
22 Sandy MacIver	22 Lindsay Agnew
23 Beth Mead	25 Samantha Chang
24 Niamh Charles	26 Cloe Lacasse
25 Charlotte Wubben-Moy	27 Sarah Stratigakis
26 Esme Morgan	28 Jenna Hellstom

England 0-2 Canada

England

Canada

Possession

58%

42%

Shots

14

7

Shots on target

4

4

Corners

9

5

Fouls

10

10



How to solve a pro



By Charlotte Stacey

We need to talk about the Lionesses.

After suffering defeat in their two recent fixtures, England's national side tally a less than convincing record of four wins out of fourteen since the last World Cup.

Hege Riise's stint as interim head coach was not the fast-acting injection of mettle one had rather naively hoped for. At a first glance, things looked positive. Camps were loaded with a selection of young and in-form players, along with the more experienced usual suspects, yet Riise's neutrality encouraged a notion that starting elevens may skew towards a different dynamic. Yet, the line-up's nominated were suspiciously Neville-esque.

Although there was a tactical shift in formation, with Riise opting for a double pivoted 4-2-3-1, little else had changed. We were once again forced to

bear witness to 'the established' playing out of position over the more naturally placed youth. Rachel Daly was chosen to fill in at right back ahead of Niamh Charles, Chloe Kelly did not start a match, and our only consistent left sided centre-back, Lotte Wubben-Moy, appeared in just half a game.

It is here that Riise's insistence that these friendlies were to 'get England right', and not a focus on Team GB, that has one slightly baffled. If this was indeed the case, it can surely be argued that line-ups should have reflected longer term positional options, rather than being used as an experiment for versatility.

There is often talk of finding a balance between youth and experience within England's side and time should be used wisely in further exploring this mix. Of the younger players that did make the cut, many gave considerable

performances; Georgia Stanway's surprising debut as an understudied holding midfielder, Lauren Hemp's dominating zeal along the wing, Leah Williamson's graft to improve her positioning in a left sided role and what one could arguably call Keira Walsh's best game in an England shirt.

Friendlies provide an opportune time to test run a deviated cohort, perhaps one that may become the norm in just a few short years. And so, the decision to play Demi Stokes and Karen Bardsley was questionable. Although both have weighty international experience, neither Stokes nor Bardsley have had ample time play domestically since recovering from injury. In fact, Bardsley had not played a match in over 600 days. It begs the question as to why either were played, when sat on the bench was versatile defender Esme Morgan and developing goalkeeper Sandy MacIver. One shall refrain from heading

blem like England



down the Hannah Hampton shaped rabbit hole, who was not even selected for the squad.

Riise's reasoning for these choices may lie in using friendlies to iron out the kinks with those familiar to the system, to rid surplus nerves before a main event. Though this is valid, we must be realistic in looking forward. The Euros are still a year away, the World Cup a further two. Decisions should contemplate the very real possibility that not all of these 'tried and tested' players will be fit to partake. Coaching must become rational, not sentimental.

This is not to say that one does not recognise or value the gravity of 'old hat', far from it. Having seasoned professionals line-up can be somewhat comforting and their mere presence can instil a sense of sureness for inexperienced internationals within the squad. In fact, the absence of skipper Steph Houghton was

rather evident. There is also little doubt in what this set of players have achieved on the worldwide stage. They have been the driving force in our world rankings over the past few years. However, when a tentativeness creeps up upon these greats, progression begins to stall. Whilst other countries begin to move forward, we find ourselves standing still.

The Lionesses are a talented side. This is a statement one shall not budge on. But what use is talent if it is not being tuned to the sweetest chord? A magician is wistfully wasted without supporting props, without anticipation, without a little pizzazz. But further than all of this, a magician is simply lost without a little belief.

This is exactly where we find the Lionesses, a group of skilled individuals that have seemingly forgotten their collective worth.

Dishearteningly for supporters and likely for players

themselves, it often feels as if they are chasing their own tails. Trying to emulate the successes of their previous endeavours has left them void of creativity, resigned with a demeanour that lends itself nicely to defeat.

One reiterates, the Lionesses are a talented side. The evidence is as clear as day when keeping up with the WSL, the league in which most of the Lionesses play in. We are treated to the zest of Lauren Hemp and Chloe Kelly, the cross balls of Millie Bright, the cleverness of Jordan Nobbs and the irrefutable form of Fran Kirby.

But working this closely together in competition comes with its pros and cons. Playing week in week out develops a custom. Rhythms, strengths and weaknesses of both teammates and oppositions are quickly learnt which works well domestically. Yet, this runs the risk of becoming all too familiar and when this group of

English league compatriots come up against something altogether different, they quickly become unstuck. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be such a problem for other countries in comparable positions, so why is it that England struggle?

We can pin it on management, we can pin it on tactics, we can even partly pin it on the pandemic. But essentially a great deal of England's woes comes down to attitude. Take the US Women's National Team for instance. Similarly to the Lionesses, the majority of the USWNT play in one league, the NWSL. Yet when the national side comes together they do not buckle under the weight of the unknown, if anything, they thrive in it. The USWNT approach matches with the intent to win. They share a unanimous belief in their play, an almost arrogant sense of superiority, yet typically this characteristically elitist mentality is compensated.

England, on the other hand, have become hesitant. This was demonstrated as a severely doctored French side were able to outdo an almost fully fit England. France's victory was not down to skill. France, for the most part, were not the "better side". Their win came down to attitude. France picked out England's weaknesses and had the confidence and conviction to exploit them. They tuned into England's sluggishness in transition, their chronic defensive gaps, their tendency to hold possession

with little resolve to finish, and they punished England for it.

Of course, one realises, that from the outside looking in, it is easy to categorise the shortcomings of the side they so desperately stand behind. The reality is that a far more difficult conundrum to wrestle with. It is not a case of out with the old and in with the new or a fix of bringing in a new coach and expecting an overnight miracle. Each of these is akin to sticking a plaster over broken leg.

The Lionesses need a shake-up, both on and off the pitch. A commitment to stripping it back to basics to re-establish a singular team spirit. To work on developing a collective mentality, casting aside the shadow of previous performances and to resist the urge to dwell on what once was. The time between now and the Euro's must be used to regain a lost confidence, to initiate an investment of a 'future England' and to steadily begin to move on to pastures new.

Although one would rather take these defeats on the chin now, there is a very real fear that nothing will change if risks are not taken and lessons are not duly acted upon, sooner rather than later. For these two friendlies have served as a prime example of a team nervous to make the next move. But as others delicately leap into uncharted waters, there is little to doubt that if we do not jump soon, we will be pushed.



GEORGIA STANWAY

Manchester City and England midfielder Georgia Stanway has been playing in a multitude of positions this season, is it her way of securing her place in the Team GB squad? Helen Rowe-Willcocks spoke to her after the Canada game.

What was your reaction to the result against Canada?

It's frustrating. It's just those fine margins which we are still talking about. We played really good football, the statistics are on our side but we are just not quite getting there in the final third. Our build-up, our creating, it's there but it's just that final bit which is missing. We are working on it. I personally feel like we are working in the right direction and hopefully it looks like that to people watching.

How was the mood in the changing room after two defeats to two big rivals?

It just shows what we can do against tier one opposition. The way we move the ball, the way we create opportunities it's getting there. We are disappointed for not creating enough and not finishing off those chances and obviously due to personal error KB

[Karen Bardsley] has owned up to her mistake but we take it on the chin. There's 10 other people on the pitch that have a job to do and if the forwards aren't delivering then we are stuck. It's something which we are working on.

How is Karen [Bardsley]? It's such a big night for her after injury for so long.

She's in a really good headspace, obviously tonight might set her back a little but it's one of those that could happen to any of us.

Do you feel like you have done enough to go to Tokyo?

You don't know. There are that many people challenging for specific spots, there are that many unbelievable players, it's exciting for the coaches to be able to pick from such a

talented bunch and such an enthusiastic set of players. I will just wait for my time, if it's meant to be, it's meant to be. I have worked my socks off to be in this position I am now. It's been a rollercoaster, you just have to enjoy the ride.

How did you find playing in a deeper midfield role against Canada?

I really enjoyed it. I managed to get on the ball quite a lot and I managed to play the switch. I borrowed Keira Walsh's number for the game, she was happy to let me borrow it. It's another opportunity for me to play in a different position and show how versatile I am. It allows me to tackle and that's something I really enjoy.

Do you feel your versatility could give you the edge in being picked for the Team GB squad?

It could potentially work in my favour. I have to make sure that I have the quality in each position I play in. I bring in the ability to play in both attacking and defending roles. I have played in many different positions for Manchester City and England this year and hopefully it's just another string to my bow.

“ We are just missing that final piece, it's coming ”

SWF release statement following increase in media abuse



On April 19, Scottish Women's Football (SWF) released a statement about online abuse in the women's game.

The statement came following the restart of the SWPL 1 season.

It read: Since the restart of the SWPL 1 season, we've seen a significant increase in the media coverage of the women's game. We welcome this development and thank all those involved in making it possible.

However, we have also noticed an increase in abusive language used on social media towards the clubs, teams, players, officials, and many others involved in the game. We will not tolerate discriminatory language or abusive behaviour.

SWF will continue to monitor social media activity around the game and will now take further action where and whenever possible. We simply will not tolerate it.

SWF will also begin dialogue with our

members and key stakeholders to discuss how we tackle these issues and how we can further support players and officials in our game.

We want accountability on social media. We ask everyone involved in girls and women's football to support each other and the game. It's time to take a stand and say enough is enough.

Be accountable.

See it. Report it. Stop it.

Since the statement, SWF and clubs joined in the social media boycott between Friday, April 30 and Monday, May 3.

It has also been announced that the SWPL 2 will restart contact training on May 17.

There is a commitment to complete the 2020/21 season after two rounds of fixtures with two teams gaining promotion to SWPL 1.

The SWPL 2 season will conclude on 4th July.

Rangers FC announce game-changing partnership with BioWaveGO



BioWaveGO, the brand behind a pioneering pain relief device, has announced a landmark partnership with SPL Champions and emerging SWPL force, Rangers FC, for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 seasons.

The brand, launching its innovative BioWaveGO device in the UK this month, will be granted official club partnership status for the team – featuring as Women’s front of shirt sponsor, men’s training bib sponsor, branding at the iconic Ibrox stadium and will be used as a treatment option by club physios.

Rangers commercial and marketing Director, James Bisgrove, said: “We’re proud to welcome BioWaveGO as an Official Club Partner and the new Main Partner for Rangers Women’s team in a multi-year agreement.

“Rangers is entering an exciting period in the club’s illustrious 150-year history, and we are thrilled

to partner with an organisation with the health and wellbeing of our players, but also our loyal fanbase, at the heart of its strategy.

“It’s an exciting time for commercial partners to be involved with the Rangers Women’s team, who are challenging for the SWPL title, in their first season as a professional side and with a profile that is growing rapidly”.

Amy McDonald, Women and Girls Football Manager at Rangers WFC commented: “Having seen the positive impact BioWaveGO has had with other elite sports teams here and in the US, we can’t wait to start using BioWaveGO as part of the drug-free pain relief, rehab and recovery for our first team as we kick off the next season.”

To find out more about the partnership go to:

www.biowavego.co.uk



LOSERS QUIT
WHEN THEY ARE TIRED,
WINNERS QUIT
WHEN THEY HAVE WON.

Scottish Women's Premier League 1

Correct up to May 3		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Glasgow City	13	12	0	1	40	36
2	Rangers	13	11	0	2	49	33
3	Celtic	13	10	1	2	34	31
4	Spartans	13	6	0	7	-7	18
5	Hibernian	13	5	0	8	4	15
6	Forfar Farmington	13	3	2	8	-34	11
7	Motherwell	13	2	0	11	-41	6
8	Hearts	13	1	1	11	-45	4

May results & fixtures

Sunday, May 2

Forfar Farmington 0-8 Celtic
 Motherwell 0-6 Rangers
 Glasgow City 3-1 Spartans
 Hibernian 6-0 Hearts

Sunday, May 9

Celtic vs Motherwell (14:00)
 Spartans vs Hearts (14:00)
 Forfar Farmington vs Hibernian (14:00)
 Rangers vs Glasgow City (16:10)

Wednesday, May 12

Rangers vs Hearts (19:00)
 Celtic vs Glasgow City (19:00)
 Hibernian vs Spartans (19:00)
 Forfar Farmington vs Motherwell (19:00)

Sunday, May 16

Motherwell vs Hibernian (14:00)
 Hearts vs Celtic (14:00)
 Spartans vs Rangers (14:00)
 Glasgow City vs Forfar Farmington (16:00)

Wednesday, May 19

Forfar Farmington vs Hearts (19:00)
 Celtic vs Spartans (19:00)
 Hibernian vs Rangers (19:00)
 Motherwell vs Glasgow City (19:00)

Sunday, May 23

Hearts vs Motherwell (13:00)
 Rangers vs Celtic (14:00)
 Spartans vs Forfar Farmington (14:00)
 Glasgow City vs Hibernian (16:00)

Wednesday, May 26

Glasgow City vs Hearts (19:00)
 Motherwell vs Spartans (19:00)
 Forfar Farmington vs Rangers (19:00)
 Hibernian vs Celtic (19:00)

Sunday, May 30

Spartans vs Glasgow City (14:00)
 Hearts vs Hibernian (14:00)
 Rangers vs Motherwell (14:00)
 Celtic vs Forfar Farmington (14:00)

Wales 0-3 Canada

New Wales boss Gemma Grainger took charge of her first game at Leckwith Stadium, but saw her side lose the friendly 3-0 to Canada.

Deanne Rose gave the visitors the lead in the first half in Cardiff, before Evelyn Viens doubled the advantage and Jessie Fleming curled home a third.

Wales' best chance came when Natasha Harding had a penalty appeal rejected.

Grainger chose a 4-3-3 system for her first game, with Liverpool midfielder Ceri Holland given a debut in midfield while Brighton forward Kayleigh Green earned her 50th cap.

It was always going to be a tough test for Wales against a side ranked in the world's top 10.

Wales finished the contest positively, with Esther Morgan handed a debut off the bench and Harding shooting over from long range as they sought a consolation goal.

But the winning margin could have been bigger as Ashley Lawrence and Sarah Stratigakis almost added a fourth goal for Canada.

Wales manager Gemma Grainger said after the game: "I thought it was a really competitive game.

"We competed for periods of time in the game and not only competed but dominated against a top -10 team.

"Some of the play I saw from us was positive and that is why we want to play teams like this.

"I am learning about the group."

Wales 1-1 Denmark

Wales held Denmark to a 1-1 draw at the Cardiff City Stadium in an impressive performance.

Denmark took the lead midway through the first half when Pernille Harder raced clear and finished calmly.

Wales equalised when Jess Fishlock volleyed home on the hour to cap a fine team move at the Cardiff City Stadium.

Neither side could find a winner in a friendly that was competitive and entertaining throughout.

Manager Grainger said: "We wanted to build from the performance on Friday [against Canada] and we have definitely done that.

"The girls have taken things on board really well.

"We scored a fantastic team goal and the celebration showed how much it means to the team.

"I was pleased we came from 1-0 down, we showed resilience."

Northern Ireland's Road to Euro 2022



By Joshua Bunting

Northern Ireland created history last month as they reached their first ever major tournament in Women's football by qualifying for Euro 2022.

Kenny Shiels who was rewarded with a new contract after making history said it was "the best achievement in UK sporting history" due the fact that his side is made up of mostly amateur players.

The Green and White army as they are known qualified in second in the group behind top seeds Norway who defeated Northern Ireland twice.

However two draws against Wales 2-2 away thanks to a last gasp Ashley Hutton header on her 100th appearance and a 0-0 scoreline back in Belfast gave Northern Ireland a lot of confidence to build on.

A double header with Belarus and the Faroe Island's followed, first came the Faroe Island's match as they

navigated past that in comfortable fashion with goals from Rachel Furness, Kirsty McGuinness and a brace each from Simone Magill and Lauren Wade.

Then came another away trip this time to Minsk to square off against Belarus, disaster struck early on as Jackie Burns was sent off in the Northern Ireland goal.

Kirsty McGuinness was sacrificed for Becky Flaherty who came on and put in an excellent display making a string of fine saves before the moment of magic struck as Furness rose highest to head in from a corner and seal a massive three points in the group.

On November 27 the penultimate qualification game arrived with Belarus arriving in Belfast for a huge battle as they still had a chance like Shiels and his troops to qualify.

Kirsty McGuinness gave the home side the perfect start before Anastasiya

Schcherbachenya equalised but in typical Northern Ireland fashion they fought back once more and Rachel Furness netted from the penalty spot but once again like a boxer fighting back Belarus wounded the home side again with Schcherbachenya levelling the tie.

However the home side landed the knockout blow when McGuinness cut inside before fizzing her effort off the post with the ball deflecting off the back of keeper Nataliya Voskobovich.

The final group game arrived on December 1st with Faroe Island's rounding off the campaign, Northern Ireland knew a win would secure a playoff place.

Jensa Tórolvsdóttir gave the Faroe Island's an early lead but in typical fashion again Northern Ireland came fighting back once more with an equaliser from Furness before Kirsty McGuinness and Chloe McCarron added to the score McCarron with a screamer to

Euro 2022 as history is made



open her account for her country.

Caitlin McGuinness made it four before an own goal from Jacoba Langgaard put the icing on the cake as Northern Ireland made history in reaching the playoffs.

The celebrations went long into the night but that was only the beginning the best was yet to come.

Friday 9 April 2021 was the first leg of the playoff and it couldn't have started any better for Shiels and his side as Furness took advantage of a defensive mistake and rolled the ball into the net.

Ukraine got themselves level when Daryna Apanaschenko headed in a cross via the post before Furness was forced off with an injury that was later revealed as a broken fibula as she attempted to block a ball.

But once again in typical fighting spirit Northern Ireland put themselves back ahead 12

minutes after half-time with a clinical finish.

A 2-1 win to bring back to Belfast but Shiels reminded his players not to celebrate after the final whistle the job was only half done.

There were several fine individual performances out in Ukraine with Rebecca Mckenna who plays her football with Danske Bank Women's Premiership side Linfield and Burns in goal made several key saves throughout.

April 13 was then to turn into the biggest night in Women's football in Northern Ireland as history was made at Seaview.

Goals from Marissa Callaghan and Nadene Caldwell booked Northern Ireland's place in England for the Euro 2022 finals for the very first time.

What makes the achievement even more remarkable is that the team was only reformed in 2004.

After a goalless first-half, Callaghan who is the captain of the side broke the deadlock 10 minutes into the second-half when she beat Ukraine goalkeeper Kateryna Samson to the ball and slotted into the empty net.

Ukraine were then reduced to ten as Natiya Pantsulaya made a cynical foul on Sarah McFadden before Caldwell sealed the victory taking advantage of a defensive error to round the keeper confidently and slot into the net to make it 2-0 on the night and 4-1 on aggregate.

The full-time whistle sparked wild celebrations as Northern Ireland became the second smallest nation to qualify for a major tournament and will be known as the underdogs, that didn't only shake Europe but the world.

No matter who they will face this team has one big heart and are ready for any challenge in their way.

Stat Attack: Northern

Northern Ireland

- 1** Jacqueline Burns
- 20** Rebecca McKenna
- 5** Julie Nelson
- 6** Ashley Hutton
- 3** Rebecca Holloway
- 7** Chloe McCarron
- 17** Laura Rafferty
- 4** Sarah McFadden
- 8** Marissa Callaghan
- 9** Simone Magill
- 11** Kirsty McGuinness

Ukraine

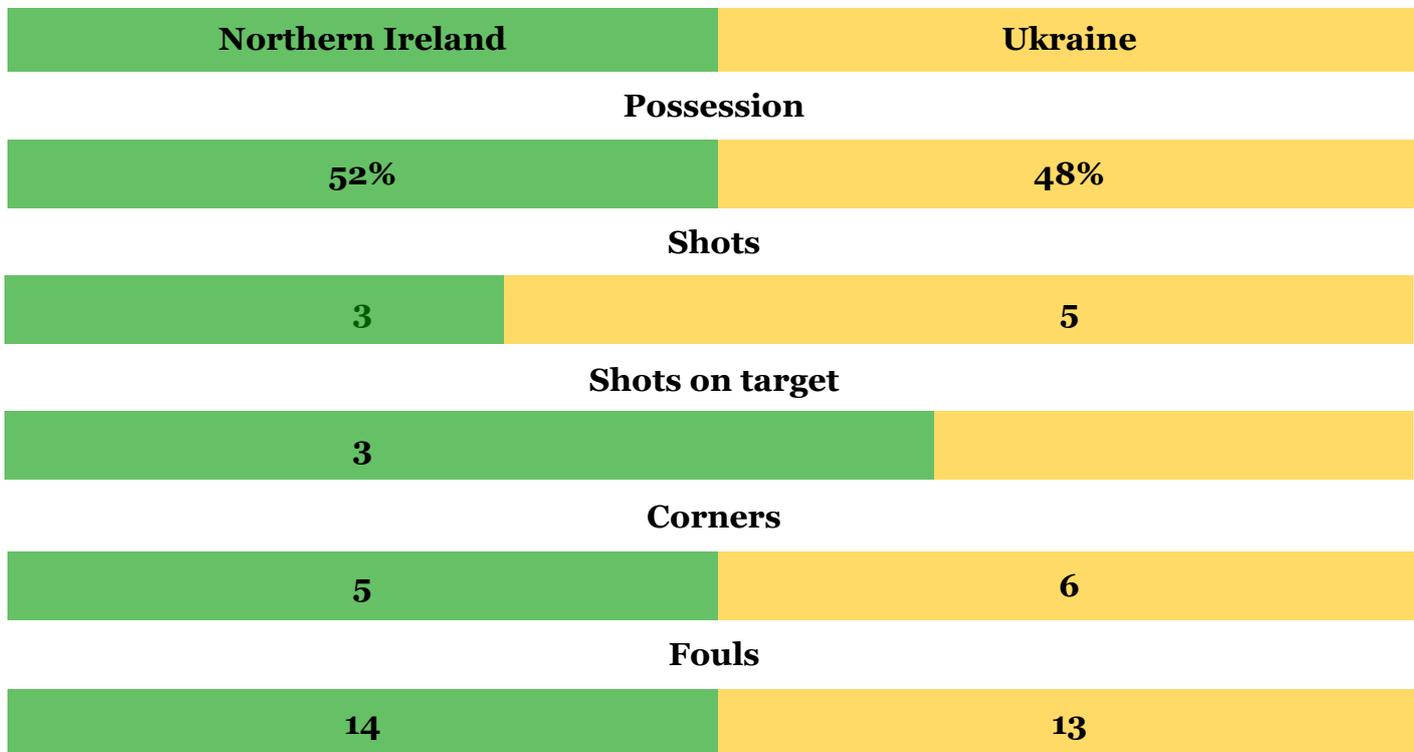
- 23** Kateryna Samson
- 4** Anastasiia Filenko
- 22** Darya Kravets
- 14** Lyubov Shmatko
- 6** Olga Basanska
- 8** Olha Boychenko
- 13** Natiya Pantsulaya
- 21** Tamila Khimich
- 16** Olha Ovdiychuk
- 17** Daryna Apanashchenko
- 10** Nadiia Kunina

Substitutes

- 2** Kelsie Burrows
- 12** Becky Flaherty
- 13** Emma McMaster
- 14** Toni Leigh Finnegan
- 15** Samantha Kelly
- 16** Nadene Caldwell
- 18** Louise McDaniel
- 19** Emily Wilson
- 21** Danielle Maxwell
- 22** Ciara Watling
- 23** Kerry Anne Beattie

- 1** Daryna Bondarchuk
- 2** Iryna Podolska
- 5** Veronika Andrukiv
- 7** Yana Kalinina
- 9** Nicole Kozlova
- 11** Ganna Voronina
- 12** Irina Sanina
- 15** Iya Andrushchak
- 18** Anastasiia Voronina
- 19** Roksolana Kravchuk
- 20** Yana Malakhova

n Ireland vs Ukraine



INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS



GB Olympic journey confirmed



Great Britain will face Chile in the opening game of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games football tournament this summer.

Hege Riise's GB Football squad join hosts Japan, Canada and Chile in Group E, playing their first two group games in Sapporo.

Great Britain meet Chile on July 21 in the Sapporo Dome, followed by hosts Japan on July 24, before travelling to Kashima to take on Canada on July 27.

The top three nations from each group will then progress to the quarter-finals at the end of July, with the final to be played on Saturday 7 August in Yokohama's International Stadium.

England and Scotland were drawn in the same group as Japan in the opening stages of the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup and, as regular participants in the prestigious SheBelieves Cup, Japan are known well to many of Riise's Olympic hopefuls.

Canada and Japan both progressed to the knockout stage of the Women's World Cup in France, but defeat by Sweden and Sarina Wiegman's Netherlands respectively halted their progress beyond the Round of 16.

There are 12 nations competing in this year's Olympic football tournament and it is only the second time in history that Great Britain will take a women's football team to the Games; the first time was nine years ago at the London 2012 Olympics.

Great Britain qualified for the Tokyo Games due to England's performance at the FIFA Women's

World Cup 2019. Hege Riise, an Olympic gold medallist with Norway at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, was appointed in March to lead GB Football.

Responding to the draw Riise said: "Now that we know what our tournament journey will look like and the opponents we face, we can really focus in on our preparations for the Olympics.

"There is no doubt we have been drawn in a very exciting group. The host nation Japan are an extremely talented team and have been a strong force in women's football for many years.

"Canada are another very good physical team, as we saw earlier this month when England and Wales both faced them at home in the April FIFA window. Chile are not a team I know quite as well, but they put in a very impressive performance against Cameroon to secure their place in this summer's Games for the first time in their history.

"The players on our shortlist for Great Britain know what is expected of them if they are to make our 18-player squad. Physical and mental resilience, together with versatility, will be very important to our chances of success at the Games. These are the qualities we need in order to cope with the demands of Olympic tournament football, with a high frequency of games over a short period of time.

"We will name our GB squad towards the end of May and with our first training camp now only eight weeks away we can't wait to get started."

Euro 2022 final 16



Following the completion of the play-off matches, the final 16 teams have been confirmed for the Uefa Women's Euro 2022.

Hosts England will be joined by 15 other nations in a bid to lift the trophy on 31 July 2022 at Wembley Stadium.

Our qualified nations are:

- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- England
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Iceland
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Russia

- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland

What happens now?

Each of the above teams will be drawn into four groups of four in the tournament draw later this year.

The tournament kicks off at Old Trafford on 6 July 2022, and will see 31 matches played to decide who will be crowned UEFA Women's EURO 2022 winners.

Who are the current champions?

The 2017 edition of the competition was won by Netherlands.

It was the first time they had won the competition and they beat Denmark 4-2 in the final.

England were knocked out by the eventual winners 3-0 in the semi-finals.

The Lionesses Jodie Taylor was named top goalscorer.

Europe's route to 2023 WWC mapped out



The four home nations teams have found out their opponents as they bid to make the 2023 Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand.

England and Northern Ireland have been drawn in Group D against Austria, North Macedonia, Latvia and Luxembourg.

Scotland will face Spain, Ukraine, Hungary and the Faroe Islands in Group B.

Wales have a tough group in Group I where they will face France, Slovenia, Greece, Kazakhstan and Estonia.

A record 51 teams have been split into nine sections (six groups of six teams, three of five), with the qualifying matches set to be played between September 2021 and September 2022.

The groups are as follows:

Group A: Sweden, Finland, Republic of Ireland, Slovakia, Georgia

Group B: Spain, Scotland, Ukraine, Hungary, Faroe Islands

Group C: Netherlands, Iceland, Czech Republic, Belarus, Cyprus

Group D: England, Austria, Northern

Ireland, North Macedonia, Latvia, Luxembourg

Group E: Denmark, Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, Malta, Montenegro

Group F: Norway, Belgium, Poland, Albania, Kosovo, Armenia

Group G: Italy, Switzerland, Romania, Croatia, Moldova, Lithuania

Group H: Germany, Portugal, Serbia, Israel, Turkey, Bulgaria

Group I: France, Wales, Slovenia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Estonia

The winners of the nine qualifying sections will advance directly to the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 in Australia and New Zealand.

The group runners-up will take part in UEFA play-offs in October 2022 for the remaining two direct tickets, which will be awarded to the two top-performing play-off winners. The third-best play-off winner will be entered into the inter-confederation play-offs.

Around the World



Fifa Rankings update

FIFA

The USA have retained the top spot in the Women's Fifa rankings which were published on April 21.

The current World Cup champions are asserting their dominance with the highest points total since 2013.

European champions Netherlands have replaced France in the top three, who have dropped a spot to fourth.

Sweden and England stay fifth and sixth respectively, Brazil are seventh, Australia are down two to ninth and previously unranked North Korea return to the top ten, despite still not playing a game since March 2019.

Scotland drop two places to 23 and Wales drop one place to 32.

Back-to-back reigning World Cup champions, the USWNT have won six and drawn once since the last rankings update, keeping them top by a significant margin ahead of Germany.

Netherlands, meanwhile, impressively thrashed Australia 5-0 to round off the April internationals and were also victorious over Germany earlier this year.

Third place matches a highest ever ranking for the Dutch, which they previously achieved off the back of reaching the 2019 World Cup final.

Elsewhere, just outside the top 10, Japan, Norway and Spain have all fallen a place each.

Ukraine are the biggest fallers in the top 50, slumping 7 places to 31st. They lost a Euro 2020 playoff to Northern Ireland this week, who have climbed one rung on the ladder to 48th.

FIFA women's world rankings top 10: April 2021

1. USA (-)
2. Germany (-)
3. Netherlands (+1)
4. France (-1)
5. Sweden (-)
6. England (-)
7. Brazil (+1)
8. Canada (-)
9. Australia (-2)
10. North Korea (new)

Simon Says

This month I interviewed Soraya Hilali of SC Buitenveldert (Netherlands).

How did you start playing football?

I started playing when I was seven-years-old at ScBuitenveldert in Amsterdam.

Did you start in a boys' or girls' team?

When I started playing, I started in a girl team. I have never played in a boys team.

At what age did you choose your position? What attracted you to it?

I always played in the front. I am a really fast player so I played as a winger and a striker. In the first years of my career I played as a number 9. After some years I started playing as a left and right winger. I liked playing as a winger more. Now I prefer playing as a left winger because I am two footed. I can give the ball a cross to the goal or I can go to the centre of the field and shoot.

How did you progress from youth football to your current team?

I always played in the highest team for my age category. I never left the club because its a very good club to develop yourself. I am currently playing in the First Senior team (highest team of the club). A couple years ago the senior team played in the highest amateur competition but unfortunately due to some circumstances they relegated to the second highest amateur level. The goal is to get back at the highest amateur level in two years.

Is the team you play for semi professional or professional?

The team I play in is amateur level. In Holland we don't have semi-professional divisions for women. There is only Eredivisie and under that, you have the amateur levels.

How do you find the standard of football in the team you play for?

The team is working hard to compete in the highest amateur level again. We train three times a week –twice on the field and once in the woods. We work hard as a team and individually.

What did you find hard moving from the youth side to that of the first team?

In the youth sides, the competitions are less physical. In the women first team, the competition and team mates are more physical so I had to adjust and train my physical aspect harder.

What do you like most about training?

I like to play 11 vs 11, position games and shooting drills. I love to stay moving.

Do you work outside of football?

I am currently working at DHL in the mornings from 07:15 until 10:00. I wanted to work in the morning so that I have the rest of the day to train to keep making progress.

What advice would you have for girls looking to make a career in football?

Don't give up on your dreams. It will not be easy and it will definitely not always be fair but keep working hard for what you want to achieve. Women's football is still developing every year so there will always be chances. Work hard, give all you got!

Any ambitions left to fulfil?

My ambition is to play at a professional club abroad. I want to have a new adventure in another country. Also a big ambition is to play for the Moroccan Senior team and I will do everything I can do achieve those dreams.



News from around the world



Lloyd reaches 300 caps

USA legend Carli Lloyd has joined the history books by playing her 300th game for her national side.

Lloyd becomes only the third player in history, men's or women's, to reach the milestone.

Her former team-mates Christie Pearce Rampone (311) and Kristine Lilly (354) are the other two.

"What Carli has done is incredible," USA coach Vlatko Andonovski said before the match. "She's a living legend for this team and for women's soccer in general. I'm honored to be a part of her incredible journey."

Sky Blue face rebrand

NWSL side Sky Blue have been rebranded as NJ/NY Gotham FC, effective immediately.

The club hopes to strengthen its ties to the New Jersey and New York region by changing its name and identity.

The club has been in the NWSL since its inception in 2013.

The press release saw club chair Tammy Murphy say: "It marks a new chapter for women's soccer in the region."

"Our new name reflects our expanding regional reach and captures the relentless determination, unlimited energy, and incredible diversity of the communities we represent."



EURO2020

Frappart to make history again

Stephanie Frappart will become the first female referee official at a men's European Championship this summer.

Uefa confirmed the list of officials at the end of April and she was named as one of the 51-strong contingent.

While Frappart, 37, hasn't been named as one of the 18 match referees, she will be there either as a fourth official, or a standby assistant referee.

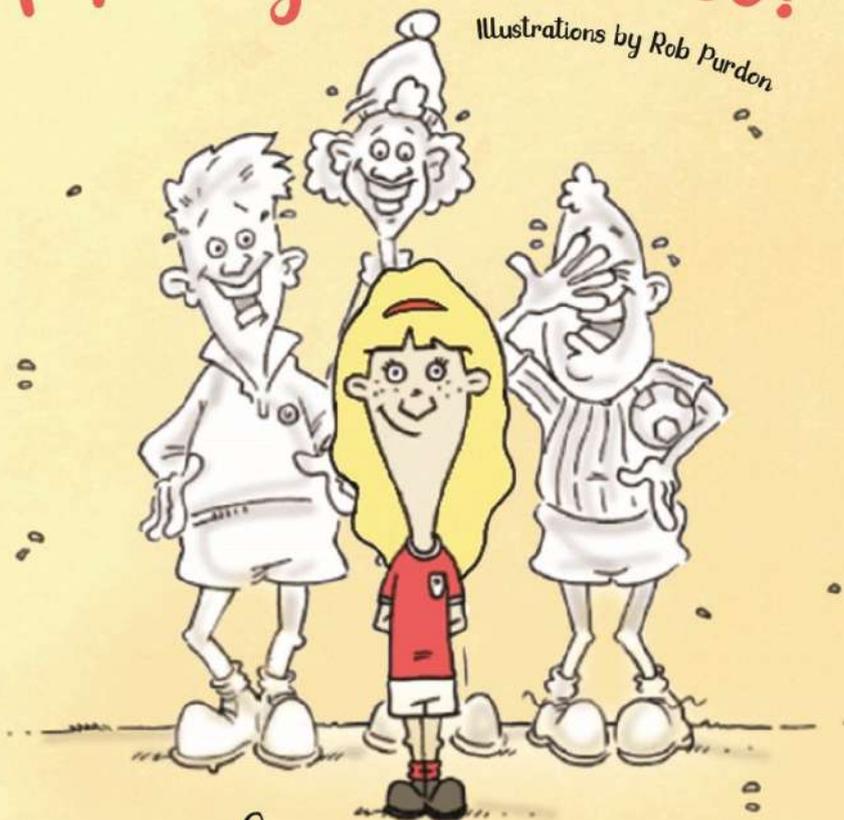
Frappart, from France, has already made history in the men's game as the first female to referee a men's Champions League game, a Ligue 1 match and a men's World Cup qualifier.

She took charge of the 2019 Women's World Cup final between the United States and Netherlands and has also refereed in the Europa League as well as in the 2019 men's UEFA Super Cup final between Liverpool and Chelsea.

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