

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 14

JULY 2018



SEASON REVIEW

Our writers look back at a season of highs and lows across the divisions and check out our NEW Columnists Corner

**THE WOMEN'S
FOOTBALL
MAGAZINE**

Welcome

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Welcome to the issue!

It's time for Issue 14!

As we came to print, we heard the upsetting news that Sheffield FC would not be in the Championship next season and had withdrawn. It really is devastating news for the sport and all those involved in the club. We wish you all the best for the future - and we hope you will back in the big leagues soon.

In other news we have been amazed by the positive response of Jacqui Oatley, Gaby Logan, Alex Scott, Eni Aluko and Vicki Sparks. They have all been incredible at the World Cup in Russia and they have been received mainly positively. To all the dinosaurs that say we don't belong - tough we are here to stay!!

Massive congratulations to Emma Hayes on the birth of your son Harry - he is gorgeous!

Congratulations also go to the new Mr and Mrs Darby! Steph has confirmed she will be keeping "Houghton" on her shirts though!

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Summers
Editor

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About my month

The transfer blog is well and truly open and haven't things been going crazy already! We are struggling to keep up with all the transfers but we are doing our best.

SoccerAid 2018 got me thinking on Twitter and since then things have been going a bit mental as myself and Rich Laverty are going to do our utmost to get a Women's Charity match off the ground. We are in need of sponsors and funding - so if you know anyone please do get in touch with us thewomensfootballmagazine@gmail.com.

I would like to welcome our four new columnists - Gill, Ammo, Emma and

Chelsea. They are going to bring a fabulous insight into the world of women's football and I cannot wait to follow their journey.

On a personal note - I took a well needed week off at the end of May to get married! I had a fantastic wedding (even if I planned it for the same day as the men's Champions League final much to my Liverpool supporting brother's disgust!)

Anyway, I hope you are enjoying the World Cup - it is getting me excited for France 2019!

Enjoy the issue,
Helen xx

Continental

WSL CONTINENTAL TYRES CUP



CHAMPIONS



FA Women's Super League 1 2017/2018 Season Review

Lorem Ipsum



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Reporter Dan Pentland takes a look back at what was a thrilling first 'winter' campaign of top flight women's football.

Manchester City Women were the red hot favourites ahead of the new campaign after winning the domestic treble. Nick Cushing's side were beaten to the 2017 FA Women's Spring Series 'stop-gap' title by Chelsea Ladies but many expected the dominance of the women's game to remain in the North West.

The competition started with a Merseyside derby as Everton Ladies took on Liverpool Ladies in Widnes. The Reds emerged victorious with Natasha Harding and Niamh Charles netting in a 2-0 win. Chelsea started with a 6-0 home win over Bristol City

Women while title rivals Manchester City won 4-0 at Yeovil Town Ladies.

The 'big two' ended the opening month with 100% records with Manchester City inflicting a 5-2 defeat upon the newly named Arsenal Women while Chelsea hit six again, this time at Sunderland AFC Ladies.

The title-chasing pair continued their winning form into October with both clubs collecting six points out of six. Life in the top flight was proving difficult for both Everton and Yeovil Town, the latter having failed to score in their opening four league fixtures.

Everton travelled to Yeovil Town in mid-November and it was The Toffees who grabbed their first points of the season thanks to goals from Courtney



Sweetman-Kirk and Chloe Kelly. Elsewhere, Reading Women caused an upset by drawing 2-2 with Chelsea at Adams Park. A month which was dominated by the FAWSL Continental Tyres Cup saw Arsenal, Manchester City and Liverpool all pick up league wins.

December saw Everton make it back-to-back wins with a 5-1 thumping of Sunderland in the month's only league fixture. The switch to a winter season brought plenty of critics but the vast majority of ties in the FAWSL Continental Tyres Cup went ahead as scheduled.

Liverpool started 2018 with a bang by hitting eight without reply against bottom club Yeovil Town. There were rare wins for Bristol City and Sunderland in the first fixtures of the New Year, against Everton and Birmingham City Ladies respectively. Chelsea beat Arsenal 3-2 in a London derby at Kingsmeadow while Manchester City scored eight goals in

two away fixtures in a 5-2 win at Reading and 3-0 victory over Sunderland. Reading were beginning to make a statement in the division with their two goals against City being backed up with a goalless home draw with Arsenal.

The month of February saw the top two meet in league action for the first time at Kingsmeadow but Chelsea and Manchester City could only battle out a stalemate, a result which did neither side any favours. Arsenal were very much the Team of the Month after grinding out wins against Liverpool, Yeovil Town and Everton. At the other end of the table, Jamie Sherwood's Yeovil Town side remained pointless and goalless in the top flight. The final fixture of the month saw Chelsea lead 2-0 at Manchester City before goals from Nikita Parris and Georgia Stanway rescued a point for the hosts.

There was just one round of fixtures played in March and Reading were again making the headlines with a second 2-2 draw with Chelsea. Birmingham City were the only club to play twice in the month in the league. The Blues impressively defeated Liverpool 4-0 on home soil before winning 2-0 at Bristol City. The league leaders at the end of the month were Chelsea by just two points.

Yeovil Town started April with consecutive 4-0 home defeats to both Liverpool and Reading but it was to get better for The Lady Glovers as they battled to a goalless home draws with Birmingham City and Arsenal to record their first points in the top flight. Fixture congestion had hit both Chelsea and Manchester City with the latter being the victim of the Result of the Season, a 2-0 victory for Reading



at The Academy Stadium. Arsenal and Chelsea played out another entertaining 1-1 draw while four wins in five for Reading saw them mount an unlikely challenge for third.

Manchester City started May with a 6-1 win at Bristol City to keep their title hopes alive but their season was soon to end in tatters as Liverpool stunned Cushing's side with a 1-0 home win. A 2-1 defeat for City at Arsenal followed, leaving Chelsea to romp to the title with three straight league wins in the final month. Arsenal held their nerve to beat Reading to third, The Gunners ended just one point behind second placed Manchester City. Yeovil Town finished bottom of the table with just two points, although they scored their first goals in defeats at Everton and Sunderland.

All-in-all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable season which saw thrills and spills at both ends of the table. Chelsea's multi-national squad were the deserved champions after breaking Manchester City's resilience while Team of the Season should surely have been Reading, a side which were given little hope when the season kicked-off. Bristol City and Everton ended the season having reached double figures in league points, achievements which they should be proud of given their recent promotions to the top flight.

We now move on to the new 'full-time' competition in 2018/2019 which will see Brighton & Hove Albion Women and West Ham United Ladies become Tier 1 clubs. At the time of writing, Sunderland have lodged an appeal over the decision to not be awarded a Tier 1 or Tier 2 licence.



Reporter Dan Pentland takes a look at five of the most thrilling fixtures in the FA Women's Super League 1 during the 2017/2018 campaign.

The 2017/2018 debut winter campaign will be one which will live in the memory for some time. A ding-dong title battle between Chelsea Ladies and Manchester City Women had fans of both clubs biting their nails while Arsenal Women and Reading Women fought an unlikely duel for third. We look at five of the matches which really stood out during a thrilling campaign in the top tier of the English game.



Everton Ladies 2 Manchester City W 3

FA Women's Super League 1 title favourites Manchester City Women were given an early season scare in an entertaining fixture at top tier debutants Everton Ladies.

The Toffees took a surprise lead after just four minutes when Claudia Walker thumped the ball into the net from 25 yards out but City roared back with Steph Houghton's goal soon levelling matters.

Nikita Parris and Pauline Bremer netted Nick Cushing's side's second and third goals within the opening 20 minutes but Simone Magill's second half strike for the home side kept the match in the balance until the very final whistle.

Reading Women 2 Chelsea Ladies 2

Reading Women became the first team to take points off a Chelsea Ladies side in unstoppable form by battling to a 2-2 draw at Adams Park.

Remi Allen pounced to score from close range to give Reading a shock 1-0 lead at the break. The visitors were in red hot form and when Karen Carney and Eni Aluko scored in the second half.

The Blues look set for yet another league win. Reading were set to enjoy a truly remarkable season which would end with them finishing in fourth and they grabbed an unlikely point in this match when Chelsea defender Magda Eriksson diverted Jo Potter's free-kick into her own net in stoppage time.



Chelsea Ladies 3 Arsenal Women 2

Second placed Chelsea Ladies notched one of their most important victories of the season by beating London rivals Arsenal Women 3-2 at Kingsmeadow.

Maren Mjelde's scrappy goal gave the hosts a one-goal lead at the break but Vivianne Miedema equalised early in the second half. A controversial goal from Ji So-Yun saw Chelsea soon regain their advantage before Dominique Janssen netted from a corner kick for Arsenal. Arsenal were good value for a point but there was to be a twist in the title race when Gunners keeper Sari Van Veenendaal spilt a cross into her own net seven minutes from time to hand Chelsea two bonus points.

Manchester City W 2 Chelsea Ladies 2

Manchester City Women spurned the chance to regain top spot in FA Women's Super League 1 after drawing 2-2 with title rivals Chelsea Ladies at The Academy Stadium.

A thunderous strike from Millie Bright and a Ji So-Yun goal gave Chelsea a surprise 2-0 lead but Nikita Parris' effort early in the second half reduced the arrears.

Emma Hayes' side had looked to have hung on for three points until Georgia Stanway's long range effort four minutes from time rescued a precious point for City.



Manchester City 0 Reading Women 2

Reading Women's good record against the top sides in FA Women's Super League 1 continued with a 2-0 victory at Manchester City Women, a major milestone in the race for the league title.

Back-to-back draws for Chelsea meant that Manchester City could have returned to the league summit but party poopers Reading stunned Nick Cushing's side with a shock 2-0 win which could be classed as the Result of the season.

Remi Allen's first half strike put a significant dent in City's title hopes while Kirsty Pearce's second half effort left the home side in real trouble. City were far from being at their best and

could not find a way back into the match as they suffered a rare loss on home soil. City were to lose two of their next six matches as Chelsea were crowned the 2017/2018 FA Women's Super League 1 champions.

Final WSL1 Table

Team	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Chelsea	13	5	0	44	13	31	44
Man City W	12	2	4	51	17	34	38
Arsenal	11	4	3	38	18	20	37
Reading	9	5	4	40	18	22	32
Birmingham	9	3	6	30	18	12	30
Liverpool	9	1	8	30	27	3	28
Sunderland	5	1	12	15	40	-25	16
Bristol C W	5	1	12	13	47	-34	16
Everton	4	2	12	19	30	-11	14
Yeovil Town	0	2	16	2	54	-52	2

The FA Women's Super League 2018/19

Arsenal

Birmingham City Ladies

Brighton & Hove Albion Women

Bristol City Women

Chelsea FC Women

Everton Ladies FC

Liverpool Ladies FC

Manchester City Women

Reading FC Women

Yeovil Town Ladies

West Ham United Ladies

(Subject to appeals)



The FA Women's Championship 2018/19

Aston Villa Ladies FC
Doncaster Rover Belles
Durham Women FC
London Bees
Millwall Lionesses
Sheffield FC Ladies
Tottenham Hotspur Ladies
Charlton Athletic Women
Leicester City Women
Lewes FC Women
Manchester United Women
Sheffield United Ladies
(subject to appeals)



The FA Women's Super League and the FA Women's Championship:

Meet the teams

The 2018/19 WSL and Championship campaigns begin on the weekend of 8-9 September. Towards the end of May, it was confirmed which clubs would participate in the FA Women's Super League [Tier 1] and the FA Women's Championship [Tier 2]. The FA Women's Football Board reviewed and assessed all of the 15 applications received. At the end of the application process, it was decided that the Women's Super League would be made up of 11 clubs while the Women's Championship would have 12 clubs. The numbers will be evened out for the following season via promotion and relegation.

Here is a short preview on all of the clubs that will be competing in the Women's Super League (WSL) and the Women's Championship by Marissa Thomas.

Women's Super League



Arsenal

Arsenal narrowly missed out on Champions League qualification for next season after finishing one point behind second-place Manchester City Women. In a bid to secure Champions League football next season, they have already made their first summer signing. Austrian midfielder Viktoria Schnaderbeck joined Arsenal from Bayern Munich and has played in the Champions League so her experience will be beneficial to the team. Dutch trio Danielle van de Donk, Sari van Veenendaal and Dominique Janssen have signed new deals with Arsenal as has England international Jordan Nobbs. Heather O'Reilly is the only departure so far.

Birmingham City Ladies

Marc Skinner's Birmingham City Ladies finished 5th with 30 points. Ellen White scored 15 goals, ending the season as the league's top scorer. Ahead of the forthcoming WSL campaign, the Blues announced the departure of Freda Ayisi, Maddy Cusack and Coral Haines who will be free to find new clubs when their contracts expire in the summer. Emily Westwood, who retired at the end of last season after eight years with the Blues, will take up a role behind the scenes helping young players. Sarah Mayling has committed her future to the club by signing a new deal and the 21-year-old midfielder is targeting trophies with Birmingham after a fifth-place finish.





Brighton & Hove Albion Women

Former England manager Hope Powell led her Brighton & Hove Albion Women side to promotion and they will compete in the WSL as a result. This is the first time in the club's history that they will participate in the top flight of women's football. Brighton secured a second-place finish in FA WSL 2 and will now make the step up to full-time professional football when the 2018/19 season commences. Like all newly promoted clubs, it will take time for Brighton to get accustomed to life in a new league. Staying up and putting in several good performances should be Brighton's main aim for their first season.

Bristol City Women

Last season, Bristol City Women finished a lowly eighth place with 16 points. Before looking for new players to sign in the summer, the Vixens will have to find a new manager. After three years as head coach, Willie Kirk left the club with immediate effect. Bristol City will also need to sign another goal scorer after their top scorer Lauren Hemp departed for Manchester City Women. Without Lauren Hemp's seven goals, only five other goals were scored all season. Millie Turner, Yana Daniels, Julie Biesmans, Loren Dykes and Millie Farrow each scored a solitary goal. Rather than just depending on one player to produce the goals, the Vixens will have to spread the responsibility if they are to remain in the league and avoid relegation.



Chelsea FC Women

Towards the end of May, Chelsea Ladies announced that they would now be known as Chelsea Football Club Women. The change was made so that the men's team would not be referred to as the 'first' team to acknowledge the ever-growing status of women's football. The 2017/18 season was hugely successful for Chelsea. They were Invincibles after they won the WSL 1 title with 13 victories and five draws. The Blues achieved a league and cup Double as they defeated Arsenal 3-1 in front of a record 45,423 crowd at Wembley in the FA Cup Final. Chelsea also reached the semi-final stage of the Champions League for the first time in their history. Three Chelsea legends, Eni Aluko, Katie Chapman and Claire Rafferty left the club at the end of last season. Emma Hayes' side have already started planning for next season. Star players Ji So-Yun, Maren Mjelde and Fran Kirby have all signed new contracts.



Everton Ladies

Andy Spence's Everton Ladies side were one of three teams to lose 12 of their 18 matches last season. The Toffees finished ninth in the WSL 1 and won the WSL 2 Spring Series the season before. Like most teams, Everton have already had some arrivals and departures with the transfer window upon us. Marthe Munsterman left for Ajax after a season at Everton. Mollie Green has also departed after an agreement was reached to terminate her contract. Everton have an incoming arrival in the form of 22-year-old Dutch midfielder Inessa Kaagman who joins from Ajax. With a full campaign in the top flight under their belts, Everton and their young team will hope to significantly improve for the upcoming term.



Liverpool Ladies FC

Liverpool Ladies finished in sixth-place last season. Fans have been disgruntled that the club are standing still while others around them, such as Reading and Birmingham who finished 4th and 5th respectively, are progressing. The feeling that Liverpool has become a stepping stone for players over the last few years has been highlighted once again as Caroline Weir joined Manchester City Women. Tash Harding is another key player who left the club at the start of the year to join Reading. Kate Longhurst who joined Liverpool in 2013 will leave the club when her contract expires. Siobhan Chamberlain also left Liverpool following the expiration of her contract stating that she needed to be in “an environment that challenges me everyday and one where I can enjoy playing football.” Bethany England was signed on loan from Chelsea last season and scored 10 league goals for the Reds while Jess Clarke managed just four goals. If Liverpool are to avoid another season of mediocrity, they need to make good signings who can help them compete.



Manchester City Women

After failing to retain the WSL 1 title, Manchester City Women are determined to be back on top next season. Nick Cushing's side have already signed two talented youngsters in Lauren Hemp and Caroline Weir, an approach that has served them well in the past. Hemp joined from Bristol City having scoring nine goals in an excellent 2017/18 campaign. The 17-year-old has proved that she is a natural goalscorer and she should excel with Man City. Weir, another forward, signed from Liverpool after bagging six goals for the Reds. Man City will want to be lifting the WSL title at the end of the 2018/19 campaign and these signings should make that a possibility.



Reading FC Women

Reading Women achieved their highest-ever WSL 1 finish when they ended the 2017/18 campaign in fourth place. Kelly Chambers has worked hard to build a side who compete with the big guns and it came together last season. Remi Allen and Brooke Chaplen both had excellent seasons scoring nine goals and eight goals respectively as well as providing eight assists between them. Fara Williams has been a huge asset to the side scoring seven league goals and January signing Tash Harding also contributed four goals. Having so many regular goalscorers has been a key part of Reading's success. Three players, Harriet Scott, Kirsty Linnett and Melissa Fletcher are leaving the club following the expiration of their contracts. Mary Earps has also left the club to sign for 2017/18 Women's Champions League finalists Wolfsburg. With a few clever signings, fourth or even better should be a realistic target for Reading next season.





West Ham United Ladies

The most surprising addition to the WSL is West Ham United Ladies. The Hammers will move from tier three to tier one after they pledged to turn professional. West Ham are the only club to join the top flight of the 15 clubs who were not already playing in the top two tiers and applied for a licence. West Ham were in the Women's third-tier Southern Division last season, along with Charlton Athletic and Lewes, and finished seventh.

Yeovil Town Ladies

Yeovil Town Ladies had an eye-opening experience in their first season in WSL 1. They were the only part time team in the league and they struggled greatly throughout the whole season. Yeovil Town lost 16 of their 18 matches and drew the other two. Despite finishing bottom of WSL 1 with two points, Yeovil Town will be competing in the top flight again next season.



Women's Championship



Aston Villa Ladies FC

Aston Villa Ladies will compete in the Women's Championship after their application was approved. They finished in ninth place in WSL 2 last season. The Lady Villans will be looking for a new captain when they begin their new campaign as Chloe Jones ended her playing career in Aston Villa's final game of the season.

Doncaster Rovers Belles

Despite winning WSL 2 last season, Doncaster Rovers Belles will remain in the second tier of women's football. Promotion and relegation was suspended by the FA while the leagues were restructured. While Doncaster had the chance to apply for a Tier 1 licence, they did not have the budget to meet the requirements of Tier 1.



Durham Women FC

Durham Women FC finished fourth in WSL 2 with 35 points, their highest-ever WSL points tally. There have been some incomings and outgoings at Durham in the past few weeks. Annabel Johnson departed at the end of the season after two years at the club. Since Durham's place in the Women's Championship was confirmed Zoe Ness and Nicki Gears have committed their futures to the club.

London Bees

London Bees ended last season in sixth place. Their league top scorer was Paula Howells with six goals. After three and a half years, Ashleigh Goddard left the London Bee once the season had come to an end.



Millwall Lionesses

Millwall Lionesses have retained their Tier 2 licence for next season after finishing third in WSL 2, one point behind Brighton & Hove Albion. They had three top scorers in WSL 2 last season with Rianna Dean, Ellie Mason and Ashlee Hincks all notching six goals.

Sheffield FC Ladies

Another club to retain their Tier 2 licence was Sheffield FC Ladies. They finished fifth in WSL 2 last season. In 2014–15, Sheffield Ladies won the FA Women's Premier League Northern Division for the third year in a row. Promotion was introduced by the FA WSL so a play-off between both division champions was held. Sheffield beat Portsmouth 1–0 and became the first team to earn promotion to the WSL 2.



Tottenham Hotspur Ladies

During their first season in WSL 2, Tottenham Hotspur Ladies finished seventh. At the end of the season, Toni-Anne Wayne retired after four years at Tottenham. Spurs will be hoping to build on their first campaign in the second tier when the 2018/19 season begins.

Charlton Athletic Women

Charlton Athletic Women earned their place in the Women's Championship after winning a third-tier play off against Blackburn Rovers Ladies, the winners of the third-tier Northern Division. Following Charlton's promotion to the Women's Championship, First Team Manager Riteesh Mishra and First Team Coach James Marrs committed their futures to the club. At the FA Women's Football Awards, Mishra was named FA Women's Premier League Manager of the Year.



Leicester City Women

Leicester City finished second in the third-tier Northern Division. Their application was accepted so they will move up to the Women's Championship. Leicester captain Holly Morgan, who has been with the club for 14 years, was excited that the club is progressing but states "our end goal is to reach FAWSL 1."



Lewes FC Women

Lewes FC Women ended their 2017/18 season in fifth place of the third-tier Southern Division, equalling their highest ever league finish. They have been granted a place in the Women's Championship meaning they will move up a league. The club also launched Equality FC which means that Lewes are the only women's team in the world to be paid the same as the men, which is very commendable.

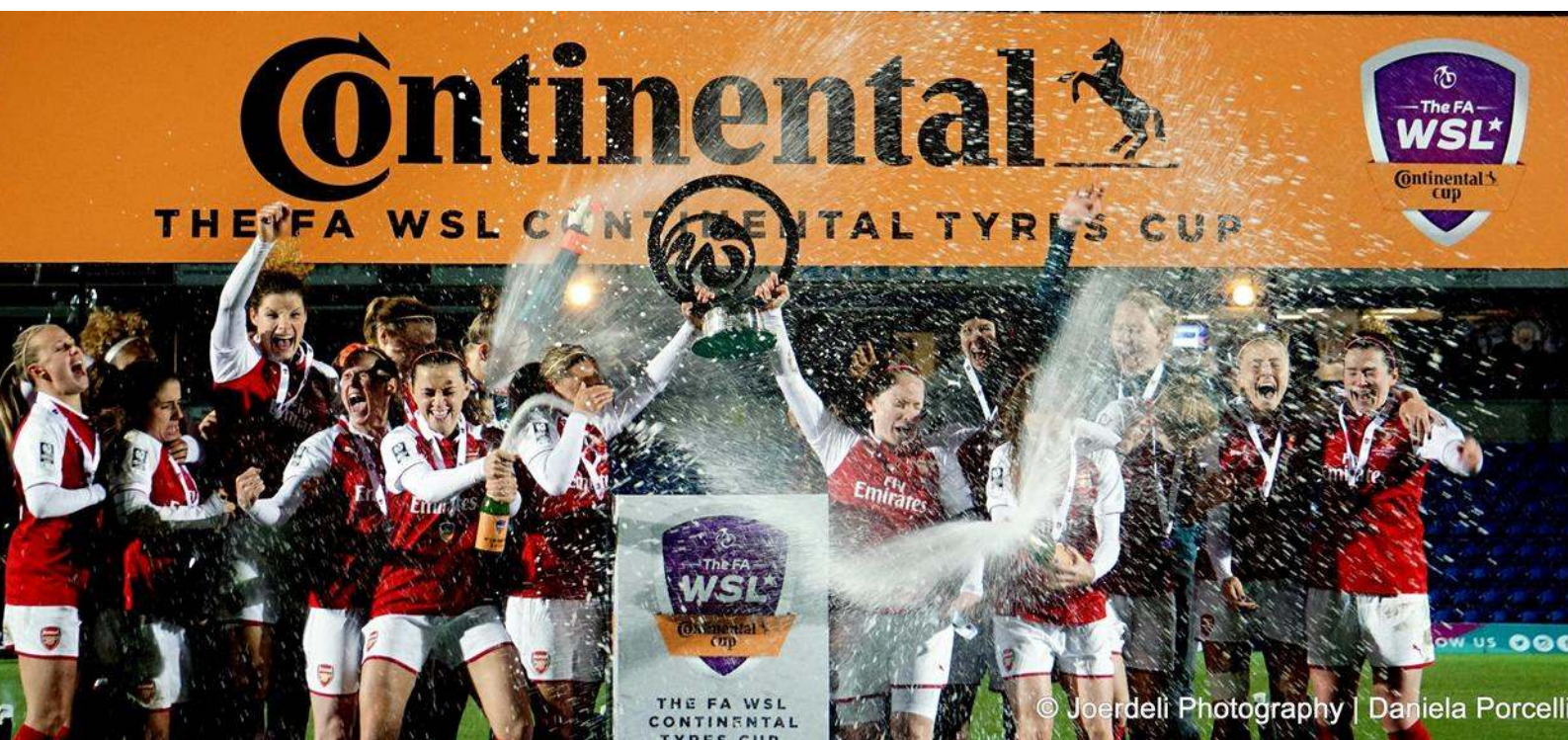
Manchester United Women

For the first time since 2005 when they disbanded their team, Manchester United will have a senior women's side. Former England international Casey Stoney is widely expected to become their manager. They have gone straight into the second tier after their application was approved.



Sheffield United Ladies

Sheffield United Ladies finished third in the FA Women's Premier League Midlands Division, the highest finish that the United Ladies have achieved so far in the women's pyramid. WSL 1 players such as Millie Bright, Ellie Roebuck and Beth England began their development at Sheffield United Ladies.



Who won the Cups? - A Year In Review

By Jessica Pratt

We've enjoyed an entertaining season of Cup football in 2017/18 with the seventh edition of the FA WSL Continental Tyres Cup getting us started back in October. After a year-long experiment with a pure knockout format last season, this time the Conti Cup returned to its former set-up with four regionalised groups – two Northern and two Southern, made up of five teams each from the top two divisions. After each team played each other once, the two teams with the most points from each group then progressed to the knockout stages.

The group phase concluded with few surprises, as all eight clubs who made it through to the quarter-finals were from the WSL 1. In fact, only two

WSL 1 sides were eliminated in the first phase of the competition - last year's finalists Birmingham City, and Yeovil Town.

The four ties provided plenty of drama for the neutral with Reading knocking out Everton on penalties and a Fran Kirby hat-trick sending Chelsea through with an emphatic 5-1 victory over Liverpool. Elsewhere, Arsenal and Manchester City secured routine victories over Sunderland and Bristol City respectively.

At the semi-finals stage, the biggest match was arguably Chelsea vs Manchester City – with the two sides battling it out at the top of the WSL. Manchester City went on to strike the



first blow, knocking the Blues out with a 1-0 away result at Kingsmeadow. The other tie proved to be just as close, with Arsenal beating Reading thanks to two late goals in a thrilling 3-2 win.

The final took place in March and was a rematch of the 2014 showpiece, which City won 1-0. Arsenal got their revenge this time as they were on the right side of a narrow 1-0 victory through Vivianne Miedema's winner at Wycombe's Adams Park. Only City and Arsenal have ever won the competition, and this victory allowed the Gunners to extend their number of overall wins to five and claim the first major silverware of the season.

In the FA Cup, the 20 FA WSL teams entered at the fourth round and produced eight all-WSL ties. The lowest-ranked of the 12 match winners from the previous rounds were



Brighouse Town, Keynsham Town, the New Saints and Plymouth Argyle, with all four teams being knocked out against the higher-ranked opposition. The biggest upset of the round was Cardiff City's 5-4 win on penalties over WSL 2 side Oxford United.

Unfortunately for Cardiff, their run came to an end in the following round as Charlton Athletic beat them 3-1 to go through to the quarter-finals as the lowest-ranked side left, with the remaining seven teams all from the WSL. The Addicks' luck soon ran out though, as they were then drawn to play against England's most successful club and record winners of the competition – Arsenal. The Gunners sailed through to the semi-finals with a commanding 5-0 victory and were joined by fellow WSL 1 teams Chelsea, Everton and Manchester City. Chelsea reached the final four at the expense of Liverpool whilst the blue half of Merseyside enjoyed a better result, winning 6-1 at WSL 2 side Durham. Manchester City were less convincing, needing extra time to knock out Sunderland.

League rivals Chelsea and Manchester City were drawn to play each other once again at the semi-finals stage of a domestic competition, but this time it was Chelsea who went through to the final thanks to a brace from Fran Kirby. Arsenal also made it through after a less comfortable tie with Everton, where a late winner from Louise Quinn saw them just edge through to Wembley and their 16th final.

Arsenal were unable to make it a 15th triumph and claim a domestic cup double though, as Chelsea clinched their second title with a 3-1 win in



front of a record crowd of 45,423 in London. This time Bachmann scored a double before Kirby restored their two-goal cushion after Miedema had got a goal back for the Gunners.

In the Champions League we saw impressive performances from the English clubs, Chelsea and Manchester City, with both teams making it to the semi-finals. After the Citizens inspiring 7-3 aggregate victory over Swedish champions Linköping in the last eight, their reward was a rematch of last year's semi-final against the holders Lyon – only this time Lucy Bronze was playing for the French giants after her transfer last summer. Lyon went into the game after a comfortable 3-1 win over Toni Duggan's Barcelona side in the quarter-finals but were shut out in the opening leg in Manchester, which

ended 0-0. However, Bronze came back to haunt her former club and scored the winner in the second leg to send the French holders through.

Chelsea had reached the semi-finals on the back of a commanding 5-1 aggregate win over Montpellier but faced tougher European opposition in former winners Wolfsburg in the final four and ended up on the wrong end of a 5-1 aggregate score themselves. As with City, Chelsea were knocked out by the same team that had defeated them in previous campaigns.

On reflection, there are certainly plenty of positives for the WSL 1 clubs and although no English side has reached the final since Arsenal won it in 2007, I don't think it will be long before we see an English club in the



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final again – although if they are up against the unstoppable force of Lyon I can't guarantee that they'll be victorious! All I do know is that I'll be back next season to provide you with all the latest on the goals, results and cupsets from next season's competitions – see you then!

2018 Finals
FA WSL Continental Cup
 Arsenal 1-0 Manchester City
 Adams Park, Wycombe March 14

SSE Women's FA Cup
 Chelsea 3-1 Arsenal
 Wembley, May, 5

Women's Champions League
 Wolfsburg 1 - 4 Lyon
 Valeriy Lobanovskyi Dynamo Stadium
 May, 24

@womensfootiemag

One to watch

FACT FILE:

Name – Aoife Mannion

Age – 22

Position- Defender

Preferred foot – Right

Strong, driven and fearless, Aoife Mannion has asserted herself as one of the hottest prospects of the Women's game. The Birmingham City Ladies defender has been at the club since 2013, but made a name for herself this season after a string of impressive performances. Below, we take a look at how the flame-haired full back helped shape the Blues season and how she can earn herself a spot on the plane to the World Cup in France next year.

If you saw Birmingham City play last year, you'll know two things. The first is that every member of that squad seems hungry for success – the second is that Aoife Mannion is an absolute powerhouse. At just 22 years old she has five years of professional football under her belt, having joined the Blues after progressing through the youth set up of bitter rivals Aston Villa.

At just 5'5, you could be forgiven for thinking you could push Mannion off the ball, but her aerial dominance has been key part of Birmingham's success in recent years. The Solihull native credits her background in Gaelic football for her physical prowess, but she also shares the same desire to win the ball that served Manchester United manager Casey Stoney so well during her playing career.

As well as beating you to the ball with her head, Mannion makes tackles look like child's-play. Traditionally, technical and pacey attackers such as Beth England, Jodie Taylor and Rachel Yankee making the difference in WSL, skipping their way past defenders or chasing after lofted balls before firing into the back of the net. With Mannion on the pitch, you just can't do that. The future Lioness times her tackles to perfection, only going to ground when needed and often retaining possession, allowing her side to start a counter attack. At such a young age she has a wealth of experience, making her calm and decisive when on the ball.

Since joining the Midlands club back in 2013, the England U23 international has been a stalwart of Birmingham's defence, reaching half a century of appearances for the side before her 23rd birthday. Regular games have ensured her fitness levels stay high, but her technical ability has also developed as a result. Much like Chelsea defender Millie Bright, Mannion can pass the ball superbly, often starting attacks even when the Blues looked to be on the back foot.

Having been awarded Birmingham City's Young Player award for the 17/18 season, you'd be mad not to consider Mannion for a place in next years World Cup Squad. With England skipper Steph Houghton plagued by injury and Casey Stoney's recent retirement, Phil Neville's pool of suitable defenders has been depleted.

During the Euro's in 2017, the Lionesses only conceded one goal en-route to their semi-final, thanks in part to their impenetrable back line. If Mannion can continue her fantastic form into the 18/19 season, she could be a real contender to join the likes of Bright and Bronze on the plane to France.



Ammo's Antics

Hi, I'm Ammo. I'm 11 years old and I play for Birmingham City Ladies U12's in the Junior Premier League. I'm really excited to share my story with you and I thought I'd start by getting you up to speed on my playing career so far.

I've only been playing football for about 3 years. I remember seeing a leaflet for a free FA taster session at school and I asked my parents to take me.

After that I knew football was the game for me. I soon started playing for a local girls team on a Sunday which I loved and it led to me joining Ross Juniors. They were already a top team but in my first full season we won every game in the league scoring over 200 goals and conceding just 1. We won the cup and every tournament we entered without conceding a goal. We also won the Regional Futsal tournament.

That was around the point I signed for Aston Villa U10 girls. Someone spotted me at an FA session and recommended that I trialled. I wasn't totally sure what that even meant but I went along anyway.

Ross Juniors went on to become National Futsal Champions and I went on to successfully trial and play my first season with Aston Villa U10's. Plus my Ross Juniors team mate Eva got signed by Bristol City U12's RTC. I was sad to leave my old team mates but I knew it was an opportunity too good to miss. Plus I figured we'd all end up playing together again for England one day!

I remember clearly my first game for Villa. It was against Leicester City girls. I've never seen my Mum so nervous as she paced up and down the touch line. When I scored though I think it settled her nerves.
Mums eh?

I enjoyed my time at Villa but at the end of the season I decided to trial for Birmingham City Ladies. They are a tier one RTC and also have a top class first team.

By this point I decided I was definitely going to be a footballer when I'm older so trialling for the Blues seemed right. There were over 70 girls at the open trials, they were all good footballers and it felt like every one of them towered over me.

The trials were intense and the standard of football was really high so I just promised myself I would have fun and keep smiling. To be honest I was a little surprised when I was offered a contract after my second trial. Surprised but very happy.

I know June is trials month in the RTC's and there will be lots of girls feeling worried about it like I was. My advice is to try not to think about it too much. Just relax, enjoy yourself and be the best you can be. It's easy to become overwhelmed by it all. (Parents, I mean you!)

That just about leads me to now. I've played my first full season with a fantastic Birmingham team and have been offered another contract to stay. I also won Coaches Player of the Year at our end of season awards.

It's been a great first season, great but tough. I've laughed, I've cried. We've won and lost. I've scored goals and made mistakes.. but I've loved every minute of it and I definitely wouldn't change a thing.

In the coming months I'll be reporting on my training, matches and anything else football related (including the promise I made to Fran Kirby) Basically covering all the highs and lows of an RTC girl footballer.

There's a saying that I think best describes my approach to football.

I can, I will.. watch me.

Thanks for reading

Ammo



Never stop dreaming

‘Dad, I wish you were here to see this. It’s amazing. So incredibly cold, I think my toes are about to freeze off, but it’s so amazing.’ I anxiously hopped from one foot to the other, trying to stay warm as I waited in line for the bathrooms during the halftime break of a football match in a Stockholm suburb. Did I know it, at that moment, that my life had just been changed forever? Not really. I was just trying to get back to my seat in time for the second half without losing any limbs to frostbite.

At age 20, I had been playing football for most of my life. When I was younger, I had dreams of making the national teams, but when puberty kicked in, my priorities changed. I was an insecure and rebellious teenager, who made a name for herself in high school by skipping classes, being suspended, and on one occasion, during a school trip to Spain, spending the night in a Barcelona hospital with alcohol poisoning. Football was nothing more than a good excuse to drink a lot of beer on Sundays, and since I had never shown any particular talent in the sport, the fact that I had never played higher than the lowest amateur level in the Netherlands was perfectly fine. Until that one, cold November evening in Sweden.

That day, when I saw the Champions League

match between star-packed Tyresö FF and Danish side Fortuna Hjørring, I knew what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to become a professional football player. The fact that I was a 20-year old partying chain-smoker, who had not once in her life shown any above average aptitude at the sport? Just minor speedbumps along the road, of course...

And what a road it has been so far. As I’m writing this, roughly 4.5 years after my life-changing decision, I am preparing to go into my first season at KSK Heist in the Belgian Super-League, the country’s pro league. It has been a rollercoaster adventure with some of the happiest and saddest moments of my life, and I’m extremely excited to take the step I had been working towards all these years: becoming a professional football player.

I’ve been blogging about my adventures on and off the pitch on my own website for a while now, and I’m really grateful that The Women’s Football Magazine has given me the opportunity to share my stories from the world of football through them as well. Every month, I’m going to be giving an insight into my life as a professional player, and all the challenges that come along with it. I hope you’ll join me on the ride!

The FA Women's National League

Northern Premier

**Blackburn Rovers
Bradford City
Derby County
Fylde Ladies
Guiseley Vixens
Huddersfield Tn
Hull City
Loughbrough Foxes
Middlesbrough W
Nottingham Forest
Stoke City
Sunderland**

Southern Premier

**C&K Basildon
Cardiff City
Chichester City
Coventry United
Crystal Palace
Gillingham Ladies
MK Dons
Oxford United
Portsmouth FC
Ladies
Plymouth Argyle
Queens Park
Rangers
Watford Ladies**



**The FA Women's
National League**

Divison One North

**Barnsley Ladies
Brighouse Town
Bolton Wanderers
Burnley FC
Women
Chester Le Street
Chorley Ladies
Crewe Alexandra
Leeds United
Liverpool Feds
Morecambe Ladies
Newcastle United
Norton and
Stockton**

Division One Midlands

**Bedworth United
Birmingham &
WM
Burton Albion
Long Eaton
United
Nettleham Ladies
Radcliffe Olympic
Solihull Moors
Sporting Khalsa
Steel City
Wanderers
The New Saints
West Brom
Wolves Women**

Division One South East

**Actonians Ladies
AFC Wimbledon
Billericay Town
Cambridge United
Crawley Wasps
Denham United
Enfield Town
Ipswich Town
Leyton Orient
Luton Town
Norwich City
Stevenage Ladies**

Division One South West

**Brislington Ladies
Buckland Athletic
Cheltenham
Town
Chesham United
Keynsham Town
Larkhall Athletic
Maidenhead
United
Poole Town
St Nicholas
Southampton
Saints G&L
Southampton
Women
Swindon Town**



Grassroots Girls: Cambridge Rangers



Faye Colgate tells us about her journey into playing football with Cambridge Rangers

I began playing football at 9 years old back in the day when we could play in mixed teams; this was the only reason I got into the sport as I don't think there were other football opportunities in my area for my girls my age. I would play with the boys but distinctively remember being left on the sideline with the other girls while we watched the boys play the matches – probably because they had played from an earlier age and were much better! Instead of deterring me like it did all the other girls, it only made me more determined to be involved and I stuck it out through every tournament we were taken on until I was played a whole game which I remember delighted me!

At aged 10, I could no longer play with the boys and subscribed to a girls team which had been recently set up – I stayed with them for about 5 years until the team sadly folded (lots of the girls discovered they wanted their weekends instead of playing football in the cold!); All wasn't lost however as my childhood football coaches are now great friends of the family after my dad helped a lot with training.

I moved to a team nearer Cambridge, Milton Colts, which was a lot more structured and results-driven than I was used to; if we didn't make training, we may not have been given a team place in that week's match for example which was a really good learning curve for me. It definitely worked as we were



the U15 Double winners (league and cup)!

When I reached my late teens, girls & women's football was being given a big push in terms of funding and Cambs FA provided a whole host of opportunities meaning I was able to expand my love of football into many other areas often for free. I was sent to the FA Young Leadership camp which was a residential camp which included short coaching courses, fun competitions/activities and of course, plenty of playing football! I was also able to complete my FA coaching qualification fully funded as well as a refereeing course. As well as looking great on the CV, each of these opportunities taught me independence, commitment and gave me new perspectives in how I looked at football rather than just as a player.

My experience as a young female working as a coach and referee was mixed and I found both really challenging; the sheer amount of

sexism (ranging from innocent comments to abusive parents) was something that shocked me but didn't knock me, just gave me more grit and something to prove!

After coming to the end of playing for youth teams and not feeling ready to take the step into the womens league, I took a bit of break from coaching, refereeing and playing football while I spent a few years travelling, working and going to University. At University, I studied Sociology and one of my courses was 'Football and Society' – my particular class was completely devoid of females apart from myself and a friend that I had to beg to sign up with me! It was taught by Mr John Williams, who has researched into and written a number of books regarding football and it's relationship with sociological factors including gender, race etc.

This module really opened up my eyes to looking at football and the wider impact it has on the world rather than just my little County; I really saw it as just a game before but I began to see all it's flaws as well as how the sport positively impacts lives. So much so that I ended up writing my dissertation on stereotypes of women within football and the issues that are blocking it from becoming as big as the men's game.

Post-University, and so very unfit after a solid few years of drinking too much and mainly eating cheesy pasta (a strong student diet!), I googled a local women's football team and joined them for training one Tuesday evening. This was the beginning of my time as a player for Cambridge Rangers WFC who I still play for now! They were struggling for a coach at the



time and my dad ended up filling the role as he did before for my first team! In case you're wondering, your dad coaching your team doesn't result in any favouritism, you just end up being the person that gets shouted at most from the sideline and you'll never win the Manager's player trophy! My dad has since left the team to enjoy his weekends but I have stayed with them and it has been a great constant in my life for the last four years!

The beauty of a good women's football team is that it is something that is always there whatever you may be going through in other aspects of your life. Many players have called it their 'rock' and I think a team of people is such an important positive influence to have in your life!

As a team, we have an ethos of Football For All and have so many success stories of women joining us having not played before and finding themselves a little spot of happiness and exercise within a busy life. As we are located within Cambridge, we also get a lot of students from around the country and further afar who join us while they study here. I've been so lucky to have made friends with team players from around the world but saying goodbye when their studies finish never get any easier!

Our socials are a huge part of the team – not naming any names but we have players who attended more socials than matches last season! Having been without a coach for a couple of seasons now, between us, we have ran the team together, taken turns coaching and it



GET IN TOUCH!

Cambridge Rangers website -

www.cambridgerangers.com

Cambridge Rangers Twitter -

@CambsRangers

Cambridge Rangers FB -

**Cambridge Rangers Women's
Football Club**

has only made the team stronger!

Next season, we hope to have a coach so cross your fingers; this will really take the pressure off some players in our team and allow us to 'turn up and enjoy' rather than planning and taking training, choosing the team ourselves etc! We also have plans to tour together next year which will be very fun!

Outside of my own team, football has also impacted my life in other ways. A player from my time at Milton Colts and who I have known for over 10 years was diagnosed with advanced bowel cancer in 2015; she is a huge part of football within Cambs FA and set up the Kick Cancer Cup to raise money for the oncology unit at Addenbrookes Hospital. I was honoured to be asked to play in the first Cup in 2015 and it has taken place every year since, getting bigger every time! It's a fantastic example of the positive influence the sport can have and the bond and positive impact

and the bond and positive impact football can have! If you're interested in this, you can find information about it at kickcancercup.co.uk.

Playing football for over 15 years now, I have learnt the invaluable skill of commitment (much needed on a drizzly cold Sunday morning when you would much rather be in bed than play football). I have also gained one broken collarbone, belonging within a team and whole load of amazing friends.

However, it's not all sunshine and rainbows, we still face a number of challenges as a women's team in a 'male sport'. Firstly, we still get a huge number of our games being cancelled over winter for fear of ruining the pitch for the local men's team that also play on that pitch. Another thing I really notice is that watching local men's teams play, you see a lot of body strength, contact and some bad language that refs of our game completely don't stand for with us. We are regularly told 'watch your mouth' and 'calm it down' if we're seen to be using a lot of body strength which I rarely hear said to men!

And away from grassroots issues, like many, I'm watching the World Cup and am amazed that the camera men are STILL zooming in on attractive women in the stands – I mean, are we still doing that? Women's football, whatever the challenges it still faces, is so much more than just a game. I'm lucky to live in such a supported county and had such great experiences with it. And if you live in the Cambridge area and fancy trying the game out, Cambridge Rangers would love to hear from you!

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