

# W WOMEN'S F FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

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## BUZZ ABOUT THE BEES

Ali Rampling chats exclusively to London Bees boss Lee Burch, Marissa Thomas looks at her top players from the WSL, we welcome Simon O'Neill to our columnist team and we have all the latest news from around the leagues.

# **THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE**



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# Welcome

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## Hello and welcome to Issue 35!

Hello everyone, welcome to our latest issue.

As we continue to live through the global pandemic, the most important thing is that I hope you are all keeping safe and well under the circumstances.

It has been an unusual few months but hopefully your monthly TWFM, filled with all it's usual content has been a little something to remind you of normality.

There has been a lot of news breaking with regards to women's football across the world in the last week—hopefully we have managed to some up as much of it as possible—the good, the bad and the ugly!

We have a fantastic exclusive interview for you to enjoy with Lee Burch of London Bees, Ammo is back with her latest antics and news that she has a new contract at Birmingham for the next season! We also welcome Simon O'Neill to the team who will be writing a monthly column about his love of the women's game. There is so much more including some brilliant pieces from our regular contributors so sit back with a cuppa and enjoy!

Stay safe,

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief

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# WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



# WSL and Championship season ended with immediate effect



***On Monday May 25 the FA released the following statement about the completion of the Women's Super League and Championship:***

The FA Women's Super League & Women's Championship Board has today confirmed the decision to end the 2019/20 season for the Barclays FA Women's Super League and the FA Women's Championship, with immediate effect.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the FA Women's Super League & Women's Championship Board has been in regular consultation with clubs and key stakeholders from across both leagues to identify the most suitable and appropriate way to conclude the 2019/20 season, and to give clubs and players the clarity and support they need at this time.

Following overwhelming feedback from the clubs, the decision to bring an end to the 2019/20 season was made in the best interest of the women's game. This will also enable clubs, the FA Women's Super League & Women's Championship Board and The FA to plan, prepare and focus on

next season when football returns for the 2020/21 campaign.

Supporting the welfare of the clubs and players will continue to be our primary concern throughout this process, which also involved a robust and thorough examination of the logistical, operational and financial challenges that the game currently faces.

Following full and thorough consultation with the clubs, the FA Women's Super League & Women's Championship Board has discussed various recommendations which will be sent to The FA Board to determine the most appropriate sporting outcome for the 2019/20 season. This will include identifying the entries for the 2020/21 UEFA Women's Champions League, which would be based on sporting merit from the 2019/20 Barclays FA Women's Super League season.

We are not in a position to comment further until the FA Board has had sufficient time to consider all of the recommendations and options.

## What is still to be decided?

It is yet to be decided whether:

- The WSL and Championship season will be null and voided or a team will be declared champions
- Relegation from the WSL and promotion Championship has not been decided yet
- Who will get the Champions League places for next season

Manchester City were top of the table when the season was suspended in March because of Covid-19.

Chelsea are sitting in second, one point behind with a game in hand and reigning champions Arsenal are in third.

Should the FA decided to finish the season by an unweighted points-per-game ratio, Chelsea will be named champions.

The FA said in their statement that the Champions League places “would be based on sporting merit” from the WSL season.

Liverpool sit in the relegation zone having played a game more than Birmingham, who are a point above.

In the Championship, Aston Villa sit six points clear of Sheffield United in second.

## How did the WSL teams react?

Manchester City said they "now await the outcome of discussions regarding the final standings of the league table".

On their website, the club added: "While disappointed that we are unable to complete the season, we understand the complexities of the situation and support the FA's decision.

"Our priority remains the safety and wellbeing of our players and staff, and we will now move forward with preparations for next season."

Liverpool said they believed they "would have been able to meet the operational and financial obligations associated with a return to play, once detailed drafts and accurate protocols had been shared with clubs",

However, the club said they now "await an equitable solution to those issues still to be decided in a campaign where a third of our league games were still to be played".

Manchester United were fourth in their first season at WSL level, and said they "understood" and "accepted" the decision to bring the campaign to an early conclusion.

United manager Casey Stoney said: "It's obviously disappointing not to be able complete the season, but it is the right decision for the safety of everyone involved.

"Our focus now moves to our development for next season, which we have been continuously planning for throughout the year, and we can't wait to be back on the pitch again when it is safe to do so."

West Ham United boss Matt Beard said: "While the preference was always to return to the pitch to determine the campaign if safe to do so, we completely understand the unique situation that we, and football, finds itself in.

"As always, the health and safety of our players, staff and fantastic supporters remains the priority at all times."

Bristol City manager Tanya Oxtoby added: "The safety of the players, staff and public is the most important thing and, while it's disappointing that we cannot finish our eight remaining games, we appreciate that a decision has now been made."

Crystal Palace, who were eighth in the 11-team Championship, posted on Twitter: "Obviously a disappointing end to the season but the safety of our players and staff is paramount. We can now look forward to next season with no distractions."

# WSL table

## as it stands

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Manchester City	16	13	1	2	39	9	30	40
<b>2</b>	Chelsea	15	12	3	0	47	11	36	39
<b>3</b>	Arsenal	15	12	0	3	40	13	27	36
<b>4</b>	Manchester United	14	7	2	5	24	12	12	23
<b>5</b>	Reading	14	6	3	5	21	24	-3	21
<b>6</b>	Tottenham Hotspur	15	6	2	7	15	24	-9	20
<b>7</b>	Everton	14	6	1	7	21	21	0	19
<b>8</b>	West Ham United	14	5	1	8	19	34	-15	16
<b>9</b>	Brighton & Hove Albion	16	3	4	9	11	30	-19	13
<b>10</b>	Bristol City	14	2	3	9	9	38	-29	9
<b>11</b>	Birmingham City	13	2	1	10	5	23	-18	7
<b>12</b>	Liverpool	14	1	3	10	8	20	-12	6

— Champions League spots

— Relegation zone

# Who were the standout players of the WSL the season?



*With the WSL 2019-20 season being over, Marissa Thomas has looked at who her top five players of the season are.*

## **Leah Williamson—Arsenal**

She may just be 23 years old, but Leah Williamson is an experienced member of Arsenal's team. Comfortable in both defence and midfield, her versatility is a valued asset to her game. Williamson has made over 100 appearances for the Gunners and provided three assists from defence with her superb long balls that break the lines with ease. Her calmness and composure on the ball is a necessary feature given Arsenal's style of play and desire to keep the ball.

## **Vivianne Miedema—Arsenal**

If there is one game that sums up who Vivianne Miedema is as a player and what she brings to Arsenal, the 11-1 demolition of Bristol City says it all. Miedema scored six and assisted four in a sensational individual performance which is the record for the biggest victory in Women's Super League history. The Netherlands striker is just as happy to score as she is to assist and this was illustrated as she was instrumental in 10 of the 11 goals scored. In Arsenal's title-winning campaign, Miedema was the league's top scorer with 22 goals and before the league's postponement, she was once again at the top, equal on 14 goals with Bethany England. At just 23, the sky really is the limit for Vivianne Medema.

### **Bethany England—Chelsea**

There is no doubt that Bethany England is one of the best forwards in the country. She has scored 14 goals this season, two more than the previous campaign and is going from strength to strength in Chelsea's front line, despite the increased competition. Scoring goals in key games comes easy to England who scored the only goal of the game in the season opener against newly-promoted Tottenham Hotspur in front of 24,000 fans. In Chelsea's last match before coronavirus, England scored the winner in injury time as the Blues beat rivals Arsenal to win the Continental League Cup for the first time in their history. This girl is on fire.



### **Pauline Bremer—Manchester City**

Injuries have impeded Bremer's time in the WSL but this season has been her best yet. Bremer has scored 10 goals for Man City this term, having previously managed just one goal in two seasons due to injury. Her spatial awareness and the ability to appear in space at dangerous moments show why she is a striker who has caused chaos in opposition boxes. While it seems that Bremer was just finding her feet at City, with Ellen White, Georgia Stanway and Lauren Hemp occupying the same position, she may have deemed it time to move on. Man City's top scorer for the campaign will be missed when she departs for Wolfsburg once her contract expires at the end of the campaign.



### **Lauren James—Manchester United**

Moving up from the Championship can be a challenge for the most experienced players, never mind a young starlet like Lauren James. Her physical presence and ability on the ball has improved even more since being in the top flight, she has scored six goals in her debut campaign and she is an integral part of Casey Stoney's Manchester United side. At 18 she still has room to improve but her qualities are clear to see and if she continues to develop, there is no reason why she cannot go to the very top for club and country.



# **Gareth Taylor appointed Manchester City Women head coach**



Manchester City Women have announced Gareth Taylor as their new head coach.

The 47-year-old has signed a three-year contract with the club having spent the last three seasons overseeing the Club's under-18s.

Alan Mahon, who had been temporarily in charge of the Women's side will remain on as assistant.

The appointment is similar to that of his predecessor Nick Cushing, who left the club recently to become assistant manager at New York City Women.

Cushing started his coaching career in City's Academy before being the Women's boss and winning six trophies.

Taylor is a former Wales international playing domestically for clubs including Manchester City, Bristol Rovers, Crystal Palace and Wrexham.

Following his retirement in 2021, Taylor returned to City as a coach and has spent five years overseeing the U16s before successfully securing successive Premier League U18 Cup victories in 2019 and 2020.

Speaking to the official website, Taylor said: "I'm absolutely delighted to have joined Manchester City Women and I'm extremely excited about the challenge ahead with a very talented group of players and staff who have enjoyed a lot of success in recent years.

“I’m really honoured to have been appointed to this role and I can’t wait to get started with our preparations for another thrilling and competitive Barclays FA WSL season in 2020/21.

“I’ve been very fortunate to have worked with some great people within Manchester City and the Club’s Academy so far, but I’m absolutely relishing my new role within City Football Group and I’ll be giving everything I have to continue Manchester City’s success and growth in the women’s game.”

Head of Women’s Football Gavin Makel added: “I’m delighted to welcome Gareth into the role of Manchester City Women’s Head Coach.

“Over the last few years, I have been fortunate enough to see first-hand the qualities that Gareth possesses. Not only in terms of his abilities as a coach who develops individuals, but also in the way that he leads, whilst exuberating the values and ethos that we hold dear as a Club.□

“I am looking forward to working with Gareth as we enter this new era for the women’s team in which I am confident that we can continue to build upon the successes that we have had over the last six years.

“I would also like to add my thanks to Alan Mahon who stepped up in light of Nick’s departure and who continues to be an integral part of our operation.”

Players have taken to social media to welcome the new gaffer.

Lauren Hemp wrote: “Welcome to the team Gareth Taylor!”

Captain Steph Houghton said: “Can’t wait to be back and looking forward to working with you Gareth Taylor!”

“Delighted to have Gareth on board driving us forward as a team!! Brilliant manager and coach and so much experience as a player. Looking forward to learning, developing and getting to the new season even more now,” Megan Campbell added.



We are delighted to announce that Gareth has agreed a three-year deal to become the new Head Coach of Manchester City Women!

#ManCity



# Wing Master



## By Charlotte Stacey

After suffering an injury just before the international break, the immediate future looked a little rocky for Arsenal and England forward Beth Mead. However, having just been voted as one of three forwards in BBC Sports “WSL Team of the Season”, it is clear she very much remains at the forefront of the minds of many.

Beth Mead is a player that demands your attention. Whether she starts as part of the eleven, or is substituted on later, she certainly makes an impact. With an innate hankering to get things moving, and a knack of cleverly regenerating momentum in a lull, Mead has established herself as a considerable threat to any opposition.

It should therefore come as no surprise that Mead’s career to date is rather esteemed. During her time at Sunderland, Mead was prolific on the scoresheet. Her quick feet and,

already, smart finish saw her hit the back of the net 78 times in 77 appearances. So, having to relocate to the wing upon arrival at Arsenal was perhaps not the ideal. But, in a truly spirited fashion, it was not long before she found her feet. With an unwavering perseverance, Mead focussed on modifying her game, and in doing so, has rather uniquely made the wing her own.

Mead thunders up and down the pitch, spurring little pieces of, what becomes, team creativity as she goes. A quick tempo and a ballsy attack are all a part of Mead’s game, and it is her gallant disposition that sees her push forward and spark typically threatening play. Mead has progressed into somewhat of an assist queen.

The relationships built with her teammates, paired with her gift to whip in a devilish cross, allow her to bring others in to play, often leading to favourable results. Yet whilst she is operative in pushing forward, she is just as

attentive in covering her own half. Mead stands her ground one on one, and has no qualms with cleaning up defensively when needed to.

Although she may no longer find herself directly in front of goal, the number nine role is still rife within her play. For both club and country, her ability to swiftly cut into the box and drive in a shot has kept her, quite comfortably, on the scoresheet. But she does not need to be in the box to sink one past the keeper. Mead's cross-shot, or "crot", as it is more popularly known, is somewhat a speciality of hers. A tight angle, or a pressing marker, is seemingly not a problem.

But this ability of hers arguably both helps and hinders. Unfortunately, Mead is a player that tends to be brought down a lot, and she has certainly endured more than her fair share of clattering tackles. Whilst this is something that perhaps needs addressing, it is in fact to her credit. Simply, the best way to dispel a threat is to eliminate it. But with a hardy resolve, and an unparalleled resilience, she usually dusts herself off and is back on her feet before long.

The show must go on for the ever undeterred Mead.

On and off the pitch, Mead is a firm fan favourite. If her playful skills were not enough to draw you in, her hospitality once the whistle has blown will grab you hook, line and sinker. Despite the outcome, Mead's affable nature always prevails. She greets her supporters with warmth and is always generous with her time. More often than not, Mead is one of the last players to leave the field long after the match is over.

So, on both sides of the fence, Mead is a fitting role model. For young children and aspiring footballers, she shows the determination and adaptability needed to succeed. And for long term supporters, or even those who are only just discovering the game, Mead wholly embodies the very characteristics that make women's football so special. Master of the wing, queen of the crot; Arsenal and Lionesses fans can surely agree.

The need for Mead is as strong as it's ever been.



# Birmingham City Women seek to furlough players



Birmingham City Women will apply to furlough players following the abandonment of the WSL 2019-20 season.

No decision has been made as to how the season's final table will be concluded but the Blues were 11th, a point above Liverpool who sit in the only relegation spot.

Birmingham have said that only players who are currently on injury rehabilitation programmes will be retained on the payroll to enable them to continue their treatment.

In a statement, Birmingham said: "It is no secret that football in general faces considerable operational and financial challenges due to Coronavirus.

"As a consequence of this and the premature end of the WSL season, the Club has opted to apply to the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in respect of Blues Women players, except those on rehabilitation

programmes.

"This is to help protect our players and ensure that when we come through this pandemic we will be in a stronger position to move forward.

"The Club's commitment to Blues Women remains.

"We will do everything we can to support our players and staff through this difficult time whilst also put plans into place to ensure we are as competitive as possible next season."

General manager Sarah Westwood said: "We welcome the decision to terminate the season.

"Firstly for the safety of our players, staff and supporters, but secondly for the long term preservation of the game and the opportunity for women's football to now look forward and to make the 2020-2021 season another record-breaking one."



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# Reading Women to play at Madejski Stadium



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Reading Women will become the first WSL team to groundshare with the men's side from next season.

The team have been playing their home fixtures at Wycombe Wanderers' Adams Park but will move to the Madejski Stadium.

The news comes as Premiership rugby side London Irish move to the new Brentford ground from next season.

With the WSL 2019-20 season coming to an end, Reading currently sit fifth in the table.

Manager Kelly Chambers told the BBC: "We have always wanted to be in Reading and the plan for next season is we will be there.

"We've played there a few times this season and in previous ones and it will be a great way to build the fanbase.

"It's a really accessible ground and I think we'd get really good support there."

# Arsenal Women fined £50,000 for 'act of discrimination'



Arsenal Women have been fined £50,000 for an "act of discrimination" in dismissing an employee "by reason of disability" in 2014.

The WSL club denied the allegation, which related to the exit of former junior coach Robin Carpenter in 2014.

Carpenter had been in charge of the club's under-15 team.

Carpenter, who had coached at the Gunners since 2007, started proceedings in an employment tribunal after his departure, alleging unfair dismissal.

That case was settled in 2015, with the club agreeing to pay Carpenter £17,200, before tax.

The FA statement said: "Arsenal Women FC has been fined £50,000 and members of its staff are required to undertake an education programme following a breach of FA Rule E4.

"The club denied an allegation that, in dismissing an employee, it carried out an act of discrimination by reason of disability that was not otherwise permitted both by law and the Rules and Regulations of The FA.

"However, it was subsequently found proven by an independent Regulatory Commission."

# What a Gem



**By Charlotte Stacey**

Having been named in The Athletics' Women's Team of the Year following an impressive performance this season, Manchester City and England defender Gemma Bonner is finally receiving the recognition she deserves.

When considering the attributes of a centre back, Gemma Bonner is a player that pretty much delivers the whole package. Defensively solid, spatially aware, and sharp with a tackle, she is, in essence, a dictionary definition of a defender. Yet, Bonner flies under the radar. She is perhaps not the first name that springs to mind when mulling over top defenders, but she absolutely should be.

Not one to make a song and dance, Bonner's collected approach, and her regard to simply get the job done, is

desirable to say the least. She is not particularly antagonistic, nor is she rash. In fact, she rather reservedly displays her skillset, and it is only when one stops to fully observe Bonner, that it becomes abundantly clear just how important she is.

With an acute awareness of all that is around her, Bonner is clever with her positioning. Having what seems to be a sixth sense when navigating the pitch, Bonner's intuition seemingly sees her conscious of both her teammates and her opposition's whereabouts at all times.

Examples of this are scattered throughout Bonner's game; a passing accuracy that is second to none, possession that is seldom lost; but her diligence is perhaps best highlighted through set pieces.

Corners are Bonner's forte. In both attacking and defending, Bonner positions

herself with an expertise that rarely falters. At both ends of the pitch Bonner's aerial abilities see her as a threat in the area. In front of her own goal, Bonner has used her head to clear the line more than once, and up the other end, she is no stranger to nodding one past the keeper. In the air and on the ground, she tends to find herself in the right place at the right time, and it is this that sets her apart from others. Bonner has scored the second highest number of goals by a defender, all the while boasting one of the best defensive records in the league.

Making up one half of City's defensive duo, Bonner has made it her business to work in tandem with her skipper. Knowing the in's and out's of each other's game have seen the pair have a huge hand in City's current pole position. Bonner's commitment to building partnerships is perhaps her most endearing quality. Quickly learning the strengths of her teammates, and being able to utilise these, has meant she has swiftly solidified herself as one of City's key players. Prior to joining City, Bonner enjoyed a string of successes with her former clubs, including leading Liverpool to two consecutive league titles. Whilst she may no

longer wear the armband, her quiet leadership can certainly sway the head, and her winning mentality shows no sign of ebbing just yet.

Bearing all of this in mind, it is somewhat interesting to note that Bonner has only a handful of senior caps for the National side.

It was perhaps even more surprising, given her recent performance, not to see Bonner's name appear on the squad list for February's SheBelieves Cup. Of course, club football and international football are arguably two different ball games, but having a player of Bonner's assiduousness, and the option of an already established partnership at the back, surely would not have hurt the Lionesses campaign.

So, perhaps overlooked, undervalued even, for England; at City Bonner is a player of the utmost standing, and deserves to be seen as such. Do not be fooled, her controlled will and temperate nature should not be underestimated.

Quite simply put, Gemma Bonner is up there with the best of them.



## **Hannah Cain leaves Everton**

England under-21 forward Hannah Cain has left Everton Women after opting not to renew her contract.

The forward joined the Toffees in the 2018 transfer window after two years at Sheffield United.

Cain's maiden season was hampered by injury but during her time with the WSL club, she helped the Blues reach the FA Cup quarter finals this season and continued to battle for a top-six place in this season's WSL before it was brought to an end.

In a statement on their website, Everton wrote: "Everton Football Club thanks Hannah for her service and wishes her the very best of luck for the future."

Cain took to Twitter after the news was announced saying: "It was a pleasure being blue while it lasted—leaving with great memories. Thanks to the fans for the love and support you've shown me over the last two years."

## **Courtney Sweetman-Kirk to leave Liverpool**

Liverpool striker Courtney Sweetman-Kirk has announced she is leaving the club following her contract expiration in May.

The striker has spent two seasons with the club who currently sit bottom of the WSL table.

On social media, Sweetman-Kirk wrote: "At the start of the year I decided to leave Liverpool Women FC at the expiration of my contract at the start of May and after two seasons with the club.

"I appreciate the support I've been given, especially from the fans but it's time for a change and a new environment that challenges me as a player and a person.

"Can't wait to have a ball at my feet, a smile on my face and be excited to train every day.

"Excited to see what the future brings!"

# Transfer updates

## **Kirstie Levell leaves Everton after 10 years**

Kirstie Levell has announced that she will be leaving Everton Women.

Taking to social media to announce the news, Levell wrote: “After 10 long enjoyable years at Everton, a place where I call ‘home’.

“My time as being Everton’s number one has come to an end... it’s time to take myself out of my comfort zone and flea the nest.

“I’ve made friends for life at this club and definitely have lots of stories and memories to share.

“Everton will always have a special place in my heart. New opportunities and new adventures now await me.

“Football works out in crazy ways as back in 2008 I trialed for Liverpool and Everton in that same year and was accepted into both academies.

“I decided not to go to an academy setup until two years later where I went and trialed again for Everton.

“Something deep down told me to go back to Everton and I have never looked back since.

“Firstly a big thanks to all my coaches over the years especially Andy Spence for believing in me and having me train with the first team when I was 16 to then make me number one at Everton for several years now.

“Thanks to ALL my goalkeeper coaches over the years (it’s no joke when I say I had a different one nearly every single year) and to every goalkeeper I’ve worked with throughout too it’s been amazing.

“Lastly to all the fans. From the ones who get my name printed on the back of your shirts to the ones who send me lovely messages after every game and parents who also send me lovely messages.

“Thank you for your support throughout my time at Everton.

“Once a blue... always a blue.”

# Transfer updates

## **Murray and Preuss leave Liverpool**

Christie Murray and Anke Preuss are both leaving WSL side Liverpool.

Midfielder Murray has left the club after two seasons with the club and having made 36 appearances for the club.

The Scotland international took to Twitter after her departure was announced to say: “As my two years at Liverpool come to an end, I just want to thank my team mates and the fans for their incredible support over both seasons.

“I’m looking forward to the next step in my career and the opportunity to be in an environment that challenges me, both as a person and as a footballer and most importantly to be able to enjoy what I love again.”

Goalkeeper Anke Preuss was the second player to announce their departure in the same amount of days.

The shot stopper arrived at Liverpool in July 2018 from Sunderland and made 31 appearances for the club during her two year spell.

The Red’s top-flight status remains unclear as relegation and promotion issues are yet to be decided after the WSL season was finished by the FA due to Covid-19.

Preuss wrote on Twitter: “It saddens me that the game against West Ham was my last game wearing the Liverpool shirt.

“A shirt that comes with great honour. Every time I walked on the pitch with the liver bird on my chest I tried to do it justice.

“Thanks to all the fans that have supported us unconditionally over the years.

“You are one of a kind and always made me feel welcome. I would have loved to say a proper goodbye on the pitch, but there are bigger worries at this point in time.

“Every chapter of life has its challenges. So did my time in Liverpool. Some people come in disguise others turn out as great friends and mentors.”

# BBC Sport's Awards Day: Viv Scoops Two



## By Charlotte Stacey

With the PFA award ceremony being postponed, and the return of football still uncertain, BBC Sport teamed up to provide us with their own awards to celebrate the standouts of the season.

After drawing up a shortlist, the public were invited to cast their votes, and the winners were announced on Thursday 7th April. The three Women's categories included were: WSL Player of Season, WSL Young Player of the Season and WSL Manager of the Season, as well as the opportunity to build the WSL Team of the Season.

Arsenal forward and Dutch international Vivianne Miedema came up trumps, winning both Player of the Season and Young Player of

the Season. Miedema faced tough competition against the likes of teammate Leah Williamson and Chelsea's top scorer Beth England, as well as Manchester United powerhouse Lauren James, and Manchester City's nuisance winger Lauren Hemp, in the two respective categories.

Often regarded as one of the most talented players in the game, Miedema has enjoyed another fruitful season with Arsenal. Miedema has scored a total of sixteen goals in fourteen appearances this season, achieving six of these, along with three assists, in a single game. Unsurprisingly, Miedema also featured as one of the three forwards that made up the WSL Team of the Season.

Chelsea Manager Emma Hayes bagged the title of Manager of the Season. Hayes has been vocal in her intent to take the blues to the top, and has most recently led them to victory in Continental Cup. Chelsea have gone from strength to strength and are currently laying second in the table. With a game in hand, depending on decisions regarding how the season will ultimately finish, Hayes' side could potentially take the league title.

Votes in for the Team of the Season had the ultimate eleven consisting solely of the top three teams of the table, featuring no less than six Arsenal players.

With a whopping 33% of the vote, Manchester City's Ellie Roebuck was the clear favourite in goal. Roebuck has delivered time after time throughout the season, and has certainly made her mark in the absence of usual keeper Karen Bardsey. Roebuck took pole position above Chelsea's Ann-Katrin Berger, Arsenal's Manuela Zinsberger and Manchester United's Mary Earps.

The back four was made up of a fifty-fifty split between the two London Teams. Arsenal's ever-versatile Lisa Evans placed at right-back, and gunner royalty Leah Williamson made up one half of the central duo. Alongside Williamson was Chelsea's rock-solid Millie Bright and captain Magda Eriksson snatched the left-back role. The defensive line won their spots ahead of Chelsea's Maren Mjelde, Arsenal's Katie McCabe and Manchester City's Demi Stokes, as well as City's Gemma Bonner, who surprisingly, did not make the shortlist.

Opting for a 4-3-3 formation, the competition for the midfield was fierce. Arsenal's feisty Danielle van de Donk, and the always astute captain Kim Little, joined Manchester City legend Jill Scott to create the middle three. These beat out Manchester City's dynamic duo Keira Walsh and Caroline Weir, Chelsea's Sophie Ingle and their WSL debutant Guro Reiten, as well as Liverpool's Rachel Furness and Reading's Fara Williams.

Up front, Vivianne Miedema was flanked by fellow gunner and assist expert Beth Mead, as



well as Chelsea talent Beth England. The top trio won the votes over Manchester United's Lauren James, Manchester City's Ellen White as well as Everton favourite Chloe Kelly, who just narrowly missed out.

## Results

### WSL Player of the Season:

1st – Vivianne Miedema - Arsenal (21%)

2nd – Beth England – Chelsea (19%)

3rd - Danielle Van de Donk – Arsenal (15%)

### WSL Young Player of the Season:

1st – Vivianne Miedema - Arsenal (18%)

2nd – Leah Williamson - Arsenal (14%)

3rd – Lauren James – Manchester United (11%)

### WSL Manager of the Season:

1st – Emma Hayes – Chelsea (27%)

2nd – Joe Montemurro – Arsenal (25%)

3rd – Casey Stoney – Manchester United (20%)

### WSL Team of the Season, as voted for in the BBC Sport poll:

#### GK

Ellie Roebuck

#### DF

Lisa Evans

Leah Williamson

Millie Bright

Madga Eriksson

#### MF

Kim Little

Jill Scott

Danielle van de Donk

#### FW

Beth England

Vivianne Miedema

Beth Mead



# CHAMPIONSHIP



# LEE BURCH

***Without secondary school work experience, former England international Sue Lopez and a broken leg, Lee Burch may not be London Bees manager today.***

***Ali Rampling has a virtual chat with the London Bees boss.***

The 35-year-old is on course to guide his side to a best ever finish in the Championship this season, having won the WSL Two Manager of the Year Award with Millwall Lionesses in 2018, before experiencing his first foray into the top flight with Yeovil the following campaign.

This journey into management in the top two tiers of women's football may not have unfolded were it not for chance encounters at a young age, and a serious injury further down the line.

Burch was given his first taste of coaching during his secondary school work experience at Hampshire FA, aged 14. Here, he met Lopez - eight time FA Cup winner with Southampton, top scorer at the 1969 European Championships and the first Englishwoman to play full-time

when she signed for Roma in 1971 - who was in charge of the Hampshire FA coaching department.

After completing his coaching badges, Lopez offered Burch a role with the Southampton Centre of Excellence. Usually when a fresh, youthful coach enters a new set up, they would be put in charge with one of the younger age groups, but such was Lopez's faith and trust in Burch's ability, she thrust him straight in at the deep end with Southampton's under 16 side.

"I think maybe she saw that I had something to give as far as the bigger game was concerned," Burch said.

"I think in everyone's career someone needs to open the gates for you, someone needs to give you opportunity and someone needs to see maybe what you don't see in yourself.

"It's not until you reflect back

***“Having fun underpins everything for me”***

on it in the future that you kind of see what people have done for you, and that was certainly what Sue did for me. She saw maybe a hidden talent that I didn't know I had."

Burch's Southampton under 16 squad boasted the likes of Danielle Ackerman and Molly Clark, who would both go on to play for Bristol City. His side went on to beat Chelsea and Arsenal to the league title.

"The big thing for me was it was the first time I'd worked with elite minded players," Burch explained.

"I remember we played a little 20 minute seven aside tournament. We played the first game, and we absolutely dominated possession but we drew the game 0-0. I just said to the girls afterwards, as we've only got 20 minutes, you maybe need to play a bit more direct at times instead of just keeping the ball, maybe just pop it over the top.

"The next game Danielle Ackerman literally did exactly what I said with popping the ball over the top and we went on to score, and in that moment I went 'oh wow, she really took on board what I said'.

"I hadn't really worked with a player who had crossed that white line and tried to do exactly what I'd asked and that was the first thing for me that really stuck out."

When the Southampton men's side were relegated from the Premier League in 2005, the Centre of Excellence closed and moved to Hampshire. Burch following the program there, where he balanced coaching and playing semi-professionally.

This typically involved "travelling to London in the morning to play against Chelsea for a 10 o'clock kick off and then finishing that game and smashing it across to the West Country to play against Taunton away".

Wondering if he had gone as far as he could in the women's game and seeking a new challenge, Burch took up the reins at non-League Hythe and Dibden, before moving to AFC Totton. He continued to keep one eye on the women's game and follow the career trajectories of those he had coached at Southampton and Hampshire.

However, he was unsure whether he would ever return to the female setup, until a nasty injury coincided with the Millwall Lionesses job becoming available.

"I'd watch games on TV, but I didn't think I'd come back into it until the chance presented itself," Burch admitted.

"I broke my leg and while I broke my leg I was looking around at other jobs and just seeing what was out there. Breaking my leg was a horrible moment but it's funny how people say 'things happen for a reason'.

"If I hadn't have broken my leg I wouldn't have been in this position. I probably wouldn't have ended up coming back this way and I'm so pleased I have."

Burch has enjoyed a varied career across the game, bouncing from coaching young children as an FA skills coach, to teenagers at Centre of Excellence level, from men's non-League right through to the WSL. Despite working with such an array of footballers, his philosophy has always remained the same.

"Having fun really underpins everything for me because I think we sometimes can move away from remembering that it is a game. The reason we all fell in love with football was probably because we were kicking about on a park somewhere as five, six, seven-year-old with our mates, and that's really the purest form of the game.

"It's underpinned everything I've done, even at Yeovil last year when we were professional, right the way down. I've always made sure that the fun and enjoyment underpins everything because I really believe that if players

enjoy what they're doing, you'll get the best out of them.

"I think the players who can enjoy themselves and relax more play better. So I'm not just doing it because I want everyone to have a laugh, I do it because I actually genuinely believe that that also produces performance."

In working with such a range of sides, the 35-year-old has seen multiple players go on to achieve success in the game. Burch coached Reading striker Millie Farrow and Brighton defender Laura Rafferty as teenagers at the Hampshire Centre of Excellence. Leighanne Robe earned a move to Liverpool after working with Burch at Millwall, and he also briefly coached future Lioness Grace Fisk prior to her moving out to the States.



© Lee Burch Twitter

# The Big Interview

Burch revealed his biggest promotion from the Championship 'proud parent' moment was seeing Megan Wynne grab her maiden international goal for Wales in March of this year.

"I had Wynne at Millwall and she was absolutely brilliant day to day and she was my player of the year in my last year there," he added.

"She'd been on the fringes of the Welsh side and she broke back in at Tottenham and it was probably just that all that hard work she'd done to get there and for her to then pick up her goal... When I saw that on Twitter and I was following it and saw she'd scored, I genuinely was buzzing. For her and her family, because she's got a really good support network around her."

Having got a flavour for the WSL with Yeovil last season, Burch is hoping to one day get another shot at the top flight - preferably with London Bees. However, he concedes

the Championship will be no mean feat, such is the competitiveness of the league.

"I think the Championship is the hardest division in the country because of players with their jobs and work, playing pro sides, playing non-pro sides, playing sides that aren't maybe professional but have so many more resources than what you do, bigger budgets.

"What the players go through to get there to play: where they live and the travel. The demands on the payers; you've got to train three times, your game as well and you've got the gym work, all on top of their normal lives. Their work; they're in the NHS, they're police officers, they work in offices.

"It's such a tough league, and then on top of all of that - because tier three has that - you're then travelling the length and breadth of the

country. The Championship is such a tough division for players and coaches and that's why it's so close.

"I loved it at Yeovil, I loved being in the league (the WSL), the people were great and the competition was superb. What was hard is you just want another go at it. I want to be competing against the Chelsea's and the Man City's of the world.

"I want that challenge, I want to show people how good I am at what I'm doing and how much better I'm going to be because I'm learning all the time. I hope by the time I get another shot and if I do get another shot that I'll be better equipped for the experience I had there.

"Eventually I'd like to have another real good go at the WSL and if that's through promotion with London Bees that would be unbelievable."



# How the Championship reacted to the conclusion of the 2020-21 season

## Aston Villa



We're not able to finish what we started, but we will always remember the 2019/20 season.

14 @fawc\_ games  
13 wins  
1 draw  
0 losses  
1st place

What a season it has been 🙌

## Sheffield United



Season 19/20 ✅ Disappointing to not be able to finish the season off, but it's the right decision everyone's safety comes first! Focus now turns to next seasons- Stay safe everyone! ←→ BACK SOON

## Durham

Lee Sanders wrote a message for Durham fans:

“It's obviously disappointing that the season has now come to a close, but under the current circumstances it's understandable.

“It's the right thing to do and has been carried out in a professional manner with input from all clubs and The FA.

“We now look towards preparing for next season and the players are looking forward to getting back to training when it is safe to do so.

“Throughout the season the players and staff have worked incredibly hard and once again I believe we have seen improvements from previous seasons, despite the challenges with injuries we've unfortunately suffered.

“Since lockdown the players have been nothing short of incredible in their approach to training and should be applauded for their desire to be in the best shape possible for any return that may have presented itself.

“To all of our sponsors and partners that have supported the club, we look forward to working with you all again next season.

“And finally, a huge thank you to all of our fans for turning out to get behind the players home and away in all weathers. We really are looking forward to seeing you all again as soon as we can.”

## London City Lionesses



Looking forward to the future 💪🏆

## Blackburn Rovers

Rovers boss Gemma Donnelly took to their official website to discuss her feelings on the decision:

“There was disappointment when I heard the news, but with the phone calls that were taking place over the last few weeks, it was almost becoming inevitable that the decision was going to be made to end the

season," she said.

"Unfortunately for us in the women's game, in both the Championship and the Super League, we just don't have that disposable income to start finding £250,000 for player testing.

"Who has those sort of funds available? From us as a club, that was never an option. We were never prepared to put the players and staff at risk because we weren't in a position to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

"Let's hope that we're never in this situation again. Am I disappointed? Yes, but it's also given us an opportunity.

"When the 2020-21 season does come around, it's almost given us a second bite of the cherry."

## Crystal Palace



**Crystal Palace F.C. Women** @cpfc\_w · May 25  
Obviously a disappointing end to the season but the safety of our players and staff is paramount. We can now look forward to next season with no distractions #cpfc

## Lewes

Lewes FC Women Retweeted



**Faye** @fibakes · May 25

Disappointed the season has officially come to an end but so grateful & proud @LewesFCWomen to have led my team out this season! 19/20 over and out



## Coventry United



**Coventry United LFC** @CovUnitedLFC · May 25

That's all folks!! as the @fa confirm the @FAWC\_ season is over.

We support the decision and welcome the chance to begin preparations for the 20/21 season.

@CovUnitedLFC thank staff, players, and fans for their undying support this past season

***Charlton Athletic, Leceister City and London Bees made no further comment except sharing the FA statement.***



# Championship table

## as it stands

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Aston Villa	14	13	1	0	39	11	28	40
<b>2</b>	Sheffield United	14	11	1	2	46	16	30	34
<b>3</b>	Durham	14	10	2	2	33	10	23	32
<b>4</b>	London City Lionesses	15	8	2	5	25	24	1	26
<b>5</b>	London Bees	12	4	3	5	16	19	-3	15
<b>6</b>	Leicester City	15	4	3	8	22	35	-13	15
<b>7</b>	Blackburn	12	3	1	8	13	25	-12	10
<b>8</b>	Crystal Palace	14	2	4	8	15	33	-18	10
<b>9</b>	Lewes	12	2	3	7	10	18	-8	9
<b>10</b>	Coventry United	14	2	3	9	19	35	-16	9
<b>11</b>	Charlton Athletic	12	0	7	5	9	21	-12	7

— Promotion

— Relegation zone

# Fallon and Phillips announced as new London City Lionesses coaching team



London City Lionesses have confirmed that Lisa Fallon is to become the club's new First Team Head Coach.

Fallon will be joined by Melissa Phillips who takes the role of Assistant Coach.

Fallon is a UEFA Pro Licence holder and a graduate of the League Managers Association's Diploma in Football Management. Formerly of Chelsea FC, Fallon was part of their women's team's technical coaching staff.

Before Fallon joined Chelsea she was an integral part of the senior coaching set-up at Cork City FC, where she helped the men's first-team to win the Irish Premier Division and FAI Cup.

Fallon also worked for the Northern Ireland men's national team and was integral to Dublin's 2018 All-Ireland winning Gaelic football team.

She said: "This is a seminal moment in my career and an extremely proud day for me and everyone who has helped me through my career to-date.

"I would like to thank Diane and the Board for giving me this opportunity.

"I was drawn to the ambition of the club and Board – together I am sure that we will take this club forward. The squad is exciting with lots of potential and we are all looking forward to getting back out on the grass and back to training.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to talk directly to the supporters – we’ll be a hard-working, attacking team that will continue to make you proud.”

Chairwoman Diane Culligan said: “Following an extremely thorough search for our new Head Coach it was obvious to us that Lisa was the outstanding choice – we are absolutely thrilled that she is joining us.

“Lisa has an excellent pedigree in football, not only in the women’s game but the men’s too and I consider the Lionesses very fortunate to have someone with her knowledge, experience and integrity leading us. We all have high hopes for a wonderful season ahead, when it returns.”

Melissa Phillips makes the move from the University of Pennsylvania coaching programme in the US.

At Penn, Phillips was the Women’s Team Assistant Coach – a role she held for the last five years. This same period was one of Penn’s most successful in their history, with Phillips’ young team winning plaudits for their high-scoring, defensively resolute performances.

This culminated in them being crowned the 2018 Ivy League Champions. Before Penn, Phillips was Assistant Women’s Coach at the University of San Francisco and Head Women’s Coach at California State University Bakersfield. She holds a United States Soccer Federation (USSF) A Senior Licence.

Phillips said: “I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be joining the London City Lionesses. I watched their progress from afar last season and can see that the team is a very talented one.

“The vision, values and culture of the club are compelling to me. The club’s outlook, coupled with a sustained growth in the women’s game in the UK over several years now, is what drew me



across the pond! I am looking forward to supporting Lisa and the Lionesses squad in fulfilling our ambitions.”

Culligan said: “The club is delighted that Melissa has agreed to join us.

“She is one of the most highly regarded young female coaches in America, so this is a real coup for us. This is a very exciting point in the Lionesses’ story.

“Melissa will bring a huge amount of energy and enthusiasm to her role in supporting Lisa.”

John Bayer has left the Lionesses following the conclusion of his interim role as First Team Head Coach.

Bayer said: “As my interim role as caretaker manager has come to its natural conclusion, I would like to wish the London City Lionesses every success in the future.

“I will be following the club’s fortunes with great interest and specifically would like to place on record my support for the new coaching team – who I hope have a long and successful career with the club.”

Culligan added: “First and foremost, John is a gentleman and consummate professional who will always be welcomed back warmly at our club. John has been an excellent caretaker manager and someone that I would always seek counsel from, such is his huge experience in the game.

“On behalf of everyone at the club, I would like to wish John well for the future and look forward to seeing him at our games at Prince’s Park next season.”



# Lewes release “Raise Us Up” song



Lewes have announced the launch of “Raise Us Up”, a song about women trying to break free and be heard & respected in a man’s world.

The song starts out as a rap by Lewes FC footballer Jess King as she expresses her personal history, frustration and hopes around for women in football.

King, who has played in many places around Europe, has seen the struggle for recognition and fair treatment on a number of occasion.

According to her story, when playing in Switzerland, she was told she could not have a pair of football boots because they were only for the men’s team.

The song pays tribute to some of the greats in the women’s game who have inspired King to keep going.

Alongside King, Max Mezzowave, a women’s football fan, was responsible for writing the music for the track.

In 2017, Lewes FC became the first (and still only) club side in the world to fully equalise its men's/women's playing budgets, as well as both teams playing in the same stadium (a rarity), the same training facilities and having the same marketing backing.

A sizeable part of the proceeds for Raise Us Up will go towards supporting Lewes FC and its campaigning work as the club is 100% fan-owned and not-for-profit.

You can listen to the song on YouTube or follow the links on the Lewes FC website and social media channels.

# NATIONAL PREMIER LEAGUE



THE **WOMEN'S**  
**FOOTBALL**  
MAGAZINE

# Trimming the fat:

## Why women's teams are the first to go



**By Allie Coker**

Trimming the fat, thinning the herd or chopping the deadwood. Call it what you will but once a business is in trouble cuts have to be made and in the world of football, more than often it's their women's team that is the first to go.

The most recent casualty is AFC Fylde whose director announced due to Covid-19 it was no longer feasible for the women's team to continue.

In this West Lancashire club it was due to a depletion of funds from their chairman. Ah yes the pesky virus claims another. Let's be honest in the world of women's football, this global pandemic is going to be a great get out clause for a lot of boards who have been trying to work out a way to get rid of

them without looking like a 1970's throwback. Of course never were the men's team going to be asked sacrifice so we say goodbye to a fierce competitor team. *\*since writing these scathing words they seem to have back tracked on this. Must of heard from there, my venom as it dripped with every word tapped.*

*Fylde are not the first and as long as Covid goes on I doubt they will be the last.*

Famous cases being Charlton, Notts County and Fulham all winding up their teams due to shortcomings in their male counterparts. Be it regulation, failed business deals or the over inflation in the perceived value of certain players. Either way the women's team are the ones to be

hurt by a sword forged in the mistakes of others. Famously it was rumoured that after the Notts county chairman had folded their rather successful team. That cars were bought to sweeten the male players who were threatening to walk. The lady pies as they are known are FA Cup runners up and the second place in the league. The last time the men's team managed to this feat was 1891.

The main argument for all of these teams being collapsed is cost. Women's football doesn't make any money. In fact they are forever use resources without bringing in the bacon. Either through the gate or sponsorship or profile. It's an undeniable fact that in the UK at least women's football runs at a loss.

So it screams that to cut the deadwood. No need to spiral into debt for the sake of political correctness. I counter this with me clear argument. When has women's football ever been given the chance to even attempt to make money.

Women's football as any fan knows was huge during the First World War. A compelling competitive game that gave the masses something else to think about apart from the depravity that was going on in mainland Europe. A spark of joy in the bleakness that was unfolding.

Then the War was over and the men came back and because we couldn't have lasses showing the menfolk up it stopped. Not only wasn't it stopped it was banned for being too dangerous. But working in an ammunitions factory was perfectly acceptable.

The ban didn't shift until 1971, which means that for 50 odd years women's football spent years went underground and became secretive. Even when they were so graciously allowed to officially play again, it was still a case non professional part time leagues. If we look comparatively at the men's game it was 8 years after this we had the first million pound player in Trevor Francis.



It has been a given that the Men's game will make money. As time has gone on wages have become inflated to ridiculous levels.

The domino effect of one player gets astronomical wage other players including mediocre ones push their price. We saw this only recently with West Ham and a young academy player. Asking for full time premiership wages despite only playing in four first team matches.

Surely there is enough fat in this market, to plug the gap on the shortfall in a clubs pay packet. How much difference can the peanuts you pay your women's team really make on the books. Half the time I mean actually peanuts as only a handful of clubs pay their players to pay.

Women's football can get bigger, we saw at the last World Cup the appetite is there , stadiums are filling up for derbies. Our girls have got this with the same spirt as their predecessors did all them years ago. Unfortunately coming up against the same Bernard manning throwbacks.

Thing is it's going to be a vicious circle as women's football isn't going to be given the chance to grew financially if it's constantly seen as something to that is viewed as politically correct disposable entity. To be got rid of when the going gets tough and supporters have got going.



# AFC Fylde u-turn



AFC Fylde have reversed their decision to disband their women's team.

The news comes four weeks after the initial news that the team would disband because of Covid-19.

Fylde will now carry on next season in the third tier (the National League Northern Premier Division).

As part of the restructure, Conrad Prendergast will no longer be in charge but work with the academy with Kim Turner and player Danielle Young stepping up to become managers.

He took to Twitter to say: "Alongside the fantastic news that AFC Fylde have continued to back Fylde Women for the foreseeable future, I have made the personal decision to step down as Manager.

"The team will continue to compete and thrive going forward and it was an extremely difficult decision to no longer be apart of that journey.

"I've had a brilliant 3+ years leading the team, working with players and staff, many of whom have become great friends. I took the role at 24 to challenge and improve myself as a manager/coach, working with ex-professional and international players, and I have certainly experienced plenty of opportunities to improve me in that aspect.

"I would like to wish the squad the very best of luck for the upcoming season and in particular, my captain—Danielle Young and Assistant Manager—Kim Turner, who will now both take the role as Manager."

The women's team will now play their home

games at Kellamergh Park, not Mill Farm.

In a video interview with the club website, Fylde chairman David Haythornthwaite said: "It's fantastic news and something I'm delighted about.

"Right from the very beginning when I started to try to build a Fylde brand, it's always been my aim to make it more than just men's football here."

Northern Ireland international Turner said: "I was an attacking midfielder who enjoyed the flair and excitement of the game, so I want to play attacking football. Hopefully I can bring my qualities as a player into my coaching style.

"I think I'll take more of a lead in the coaching aspects because I've had a bit more experience in that role but everything will be a joint-decision. Dan and I will talk about selections and style, philosophy and values.

"We have a great connection on and off the pitch."

Forward Young said: "I'll still be registered as a player but my primary role will be to manage and I'll look after the admin side.

"Being on the pitch gives you a different picture and it will be good to be able to influence the game once the players step over the white line."

Turner added: "I'd like to pick Dan every week but she won't let me.

"She has told me it will only be when she's needed but we'll see how that pans out throughout the season.

"I'm sure that will be the only thing we argue about!"



# Tom Davies announced as new Cheltenham Town Ladies boss



Tom Davies has been appointed as the new manager of Cheltenham Town Ladies.

The 28-year-old succeeds Alex Cheal at the Women's National League Division One South West club.

Davies, who holds a Uefa B licence has previously worked at Stoke City Ladies and Wolverhampton Wanderers Women.

Speaking to Gloucester Live, Davies said: "I'm delighted to have been trusted with the role and I can't wait to get started.

"It's a fantastic opportunity, within a club that's developing season on season, both with its on and off field operations and for me personally it's a proud moment to be appointed.

It was announced on May 13 that Cheal was stepping down from his role because of personal reasons, after being in the role since December 2017.

Davies added: "Alex is one of the true gents within the game.

"He's been brilliant since my arrival, introducing me to the club and I've been able to see first-hand his passion for women's football, player development and Cheltenham Town Ladies FC.

"Alex has been a key instigator in the fortunes of the club and how much it has evolved in the last couple of seasons and I'm glad that he will continue to be around in a new role."

# Birmingham & West Midlands rebrands as Boldmere St Michaels



Birmingham & West Midlands, who compete in the FA Women's National League, will play under the banner of Boldmere St Michaels FC as of the 2020-21 season.

The two clubs entered a partnership at the start of the 2019-20 season which was B&WM change training and home games to the Trevor Brown Memorial Ground.

The merging of the two clubs will have provide stability and see more player benefits including free gym access and match recording for analysis.

Helen Carver, who was general manager of B&WM since it was established in 1998 said: "Our club has always prided ourselves on our professionalism, honesty, and integrity, and a determination to progress and evolve both on and off the pitch.

"As a single entity club, we have always achieved and that's through sheer hard work, and thousands of volunteering hours spent

developing and growing the club, as well as maintaining a community spirit and a welcoming professional approach to training and match days.

"As the game evolves, and to ensure our club survives and evolves with the FA, it's absolutely vital that this name change occurred."

Marcus Webber, Manager of Boldmere St Michaels Women, added: "The successful merging of Birmingham & West Midlands Ladies FC and Boldmere St Michaels FC, is a hugely positive forwards step for both clubs.

"Both parties have a real drive to be successful in the women's game, at both first team level, and youth levels.

"As a club, we now have a really strong platform to improve our first team, develop the players at our club, and ultimately, grow the club as whole."

# Stockport County Ladies announce new coaching staff



Stockport County Ladies have announced the signing of three new staff members.

Damon Carroll will join the team as development goalkeeper coach.

He has previously worked with New Mills Reserves, West Didsbuty and Chorlton and Cheadle Heath Nomads.

Laura Garraway, who joined the SCLFC U16s team in January 2020, will be working with the U19s for the upcoming season.

Garraway started her coaching career at Urmston Meadowside and has been coaching in the women's game since 2011.

She currently holds her level 2 certificate and is working towards her Uefa B qualifications this year.

Finally, County have announced that Tommy Richardson will join to work with the development squad.

Speaking to the official website, Richardson

said: "I have spent the last two seasons at Brighthouse Town Ladies with their development team having gained promotion to Division One in my first season whilst also building a squad for the future to hopefully represent the first team.

County are getting ready for their trial dates for the 2020-21 seasons.

All current junior players can register interest for trials at:

[development@stockportcountyfc.com](mailto:development@stockportcountyfc.com)

Please state: name, current team, school year for September 2020 (if applicable) and date of birth.

Senior Players (16yrs+) please register at:  
[rjgfootballcoaching@gmail.com](mailto:rjgfootballcoaching@gmail.com)

# How the tables finished

## Division One North

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Barnsley	14	12	2	0	39	14	25	38
<b>2</b>	Leeds United	17	12	2	3	37	16	21	38
<b>3</b>	Brighouse Town	12	8	4	0	25	10	15	28
<b>4</b>	Liverpool Feds	15	8	2	5	29	16	13	26
<b>5</b>	Durham Cestria	14	6	4	4	33	17	16	22
<b>6</b>	Newcastle United	15	6	2	7	19	23	-4	20
<b>7</b>	Chester le Street Town	14	5	3	6	26	29	-3	18
<b>8</b>	Norton & Stockton Ancients	13	3	4	6	25	33	-8	13
<b>9</b>	Chorley	14	3	2	9	13	19	-6	11
<b>10</b>	Bolton Wanderers	15	3	2	10	16	33	-17	11
<b>11</b>	Stockport County	15	3	2	10	25	41	-16	10
<b>12</b>	Bradford City	14	2	1	11	9	45	-36	7

## Division One Midlands

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Wolverhampton Wanderers	15	14	0	1	83	10	73	42
<b>2</b>	Birmingham & West Midlands	16	10	3	3	52	23	29	33
<b>3</b>	Bedworth United	16	9	3	4	50	34	16	30
<b>4</b>	The New Saints	16	9	3	4	46	33	13	30
<b>5</b>	Lincoln City	14	8	0	6	44	25	19	24
<b>6</b>	Long Eaton United	15	7	1	7	25	23	2	22
<b>7</b>	Leicester United	13	6	1	6	28	41	-13	19
<b>8</b>	Leafield Athletic	14	5	1	8	30	35	-5	16
<b>9</b>	Sporting Khalsa	15	5	1	9	30	36	-6	16
<b>10</b>	Doncaster Belles	16	5	1	10	24	39	-15	16
<b>11</b>	Solihull Moors	14	3	0	11	18	53	-35	9
<b>12</b>	Burton Albion	12	0	0	12	10	88	-78	0

*\*\*Please note the decision to end the season means no teams will be promoted or relegated from these tables.*

# How the tables finished

## Division One South East

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Ipswich Town	14	11	1	2	53	11	42	34
<b>2</b>	AFC Wimbledon	14	10	3	1	30	12	18	33
<b>3</b>	AFC Basildon	14	9	2	3	44	31	13	29
<b>4</b>	Billericay Town	12	9	1	2	39	12	27	28
<b>5</b>	Leyton Orient	12	8	1	3	27	14	13	25
<b>6</b>	Enfield Town	13	7	3	3	32	17	15	24
<b>7</b>	Actonians	12	5	1	6	20	25	-5	16
<b>8</b>	Cambridge United	15	4	2	9	16	31	-15	14
<b>9</b>	Norwich City	16	3	2	11	34	69	-35	11
<b>10</b>	Stevenage	15	3	1	11	32	56	-24	10
<b>11</b>	Cambridge City	13	2	3	8	16	33	-17	9
<b>12</b>	Kent Football United	14	1	0	13	18	50	-32	3

## Division One South West

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Southampton FC	11	10	1	0	53	5	48	31
<b>2</b>	Southampton Women's	12	9	2	1	39	13	26	29
<b>3</b>	Exeter City	12	8	1	3	38	27	11	25
<b>4</b>	Cheltenham Town	11	9	1	1	19	10	9	25
<b>5</b>	Chesham United	12	6	2	4	39	31	8	20
<b>6</b>	Larkhall Athletic	8	5	1	2	19	15	4	16
<b>7</b>	Buckland Athletic	12	3	2	7	22	26	-4	11
<b>8</b>	Brislington	11	2	2	7	22	35	-13	8
<b>9</b>	Maidenhead United	12	2	0	10	8	42	-34	6
<b>10</b>	Poole Town	11	1	0	10	11	37	-26	3
<b>11</b>	Swindon Town	12	1	0	11	15	44	-29	3

*\*\*Please note the decision to end the season means no teams will be promoted or relegated from these tables.*



# Hitting between the Stix

with Georgia Stevens

@Stix\_Official\_9

May came and went didn't it! Days are starting to slowly merge into one during this lockdown and May somehow simultaneously felt like the longest and the shortest month. I think if I didn't have our squad training sessions, I'd lose track of the day!

Speaking of which, at Huddersfield we've been doing squad zoom sessions almost every day now, alternating between HIIT sessions, strength training and recovery / flexibility walkthroughs. They've been super beneficial, helping us to keep together as a team but also maintain our focus and motivation for the new season. If anything, this period away from kicking a ball together has made us even more hungry to get back onto the pitch.

Away from the squad, I've been keeping on top of my own fitness training, going between endurance and tempo runs, as well as shuttles. Personally, exercise has been vital to keeping a sense of normality and has been really beneficial for my mental wellbeing.

Kick It Out held a digital event which I was lucky enough to attend over the past month. The Raise Your Game conference was cancelled earlier in the year, but the team at Kick

It Out did an amazing job at delivering it via zoom! I was fortunate enough to have a mentoring session with Sky Sports News' Bela Shah, as well as a later one with the SSN legend Dharmesh Sheth. Both sessions were brilliant and I encourage anyone who's interested in entering the football industry to keep an eye out on socials for anymore upcoming events.

Sadly, another part of Kick It Out's work is highlighting and fighting the discrimination that goes on in the sport.

You'd like to believe that with football being halted, discrimination would also take a break, but that isn't the case, with Ian Wright showing the social media abuse he received from a teenager. Discrimination and inequality, on any level, is inherently wrong and as a society we should not tolerate it. I can't believe that this needs to be reiterated in this day and age, but events worldwide shows how prevalent and vicious racism is today.

To move to a more positive note around social media, some design work that I produced, that can be seen on my media account @gstevensmedia, gained a lot of attention on

Twitter and Instagram. It was brilliant to see people's responses to work that I had produced and it has definitely opened a door that I never thought I'd be interested in.

Like many, during this lockdown, I have been spending a lot (probably too much) time watching Netflix. And, like many, I have been absolutely captivated by *The Last Dance*.

It is a brilliant series that I'd highly recommend to any sports fan out there. If you've already watched it (let me know your thoughts!), I'd recommend the following series' for an equally enjoyable watch: *Formula One: Drive to Survive*; *Last Chance U* and *All or Nothing*. All are brilliant series that will be sure to keep you entertained.

Finally, to just touch on some fairly recent news regarding the WSL. As I'm writing, we don't know what the outcome of the leagues will be, just that there are three options on the table. I believe that the fairest option would be promotion and relegation. However, I do understand the issues that many clubs have regarding this decision, with questions around "fairness" and "sporting outcomes" being raised. It will be interesting to see the outcome of the league and what the factors are to how it's been decided, hopefully it will all be shared with the fans in a transparent manner.

By the time you're reading this, possibly on the day (1st June), it will be my 20th birthday! It won't by no means be celebrated the way I had planned or expected, but it will be spent being safe and healthy with family, which is more than I could ever ask for.

As always, a massive thank you to all our key workers and NHS staff who are working tirelessly during this pandemic.

Stay Safe!



# GRASSROOTS



# Ammo's Antics



Hi everyone, Ammo here.

It's been a while since the last Ammos antics but as we reach the end of my third year with Birmingham City RTC I thought I'd do a bit of a review of the season and share some thoughts about the coming year.

So overall it was a really up and down season. It was my first year in the Under 14s for Birmingham. It meant a much bigger pitch and going to eleven aside for the first time. It's taken a bit of adjustment and the game becomes much more physical as you move up the age groups.

The year started well at the Oakham RTC tournament and I managed to grab my first two goals of the season in a match against a very good Leicester City team.

I've mostly played in Centre Midfield since I started playing football but I'm pretty comfortable playing in any position. Except in goal.

My favourite player is Fran Kirby and as a small player who can beat dribble past the opposition I think I have a few things in common with her.

I still have an outstanding agreement that I will send her my first professional shirt after she gave me hers at the end of a game. She has also suffered a few injuries which has also

impacted me this year.

As well as playing my club football for Birmingham City I attend a monthly Wales training camp. It was during a couple of friendlies for Wales that I tore my meniscus which is a tendon in my knee.

It meant nine weeks of carefully planned physiotherapy from the Blues physios. Who are amazing. They always prioritise our recovery and never rush us back.

No matter how hard we pester them. But having nine weeks with no football can be a bit depressing.

It was a real low point for me this year.

I'd love to say the time went quickly but it didn't. Each week felt like a month as I watched my team mates train and play matches.

It's been a funny season.

A few of the squad have had lengthy injuries. It meant I played most of the games as right back. Plus a lot of our games were cancelled due to weather. Then to top it off Corona Virus struck and the season came to an abrupt end.

But during the season I did get back to playing for Wales and I was lucky enough to be invited to an international camp.

There was a match at the end of the two day camp and I scored my first goal in a Wales shirt. If you want to see the goal it's on my Twitter.

@anmocurtis it's had over 11000 views.



That was the high point of the season for me. I'm hoping to go on to bigger and better things with Wales next season.

Hopefully leading to an U15 appearance. That would be awesome.

Since the season ended we've maintained training where we can over Zoom calls and I'm working hard while not being at school to keep up my fitness.

Last week though I was offered a new contract with Birmingham city by Karen

Carney on a video call. It certainly cheered me up and I can't wait to get started again.

Until then, I'm staying fit. Working hard on new skills and next season I am going to smash it!

For anyone who is in an RTC that didn't get a new contract. It's really tough. Each season I see good footballers losing their place and it's always a sad time of the year.

But please never ever give up.

Someone once told me "the road to success is never a straight line"

Everyone has ups and downs but if you believe in yourself and work hard you'll get the rewards in the end.. but even if you don't you'll know you have it your best.

Hopefully football will be back soon and I'll keep you updated as the season progresses.

Until then please stay safe and look after each other.

Ammo



# Hereford FC to have no women's team for 2020-21 season



Hereford FC have announced the decision to not run a women's team for the 2020-21 season.

The club made the "difficult decision to not run the Hereford FC Academy, including the Women's teams."

The news was met by disappointment and anger on social media with some accusing the club of not telling the players before it was announced.

One wrote: "A shame you and the club didn't have the nuts behind you to tell the players personally. Thank god for social media!"

The official statement read: "Following the suspension of activities on March 23rd, after the Government's closure of schools, a full review of the Academy structure and operations has taken place, taking into account the likely social distancing guidance that will be expected over the coming months, and the possibility of limited football activity for the 2020/21 season.

"Limitations on travel, the need for households to remain apart, and the social

distancing in public spaces means that the methods of training and playing matches will have to change substantially from previous seasons.

"Unfortunately this will come at a substantially increased cost due to the additional space and time required.

"The costs of running the Academy came through subscriptions from the parents, sponsorship, and fundraising from a variety of sources. It is already clear to us that commercial sponsorship will be limited for the coming season, with the whole economy suffering a sharp downturn.

"This downturn will also affect parents and the fundraising the Academy does to achieve a break-even status.

"The Board hopes to revive the Academy in future seasons, but it must take the opportunity to thank all the players, parents, coaches, staff, volunteers, and supporters that have made the last two seasons memorable."

# Simon Says

Being a Mancunian but now living in Birmingham I am often asked if I am a red or a blue. This question is directed towards searching if I am a Man United or Man City fan in the men's game. However, I don't support either.

But in the women's game I do support the blue of Curzon Ashton who now compete in the North West Women's Regional League Division One South.

The first women's match I attended was when I watched Oldham Curzon Ladies who were previously known as Oldham Athletic but when they moved to Ashton Under Lyne to play at the home of Curzon Ashton, a men's semi pro club in 1998 they became Oldham Curzon Ladies FC.

Although back then women's football wasn't such a huge pull being a staunch Curzon Ashton fan, I decided one Sunday to go along and see the 'new' team. The team played in blue, the colours of Curzon Ashton. The ground in that period was the old Curzon Ashton ground called National Park which was just behind Ashton Under Lyne Police station. The team played in the Northern Combination which pre WSL was sat at the third level of English Women's football.

The ground has and a seating stand full of wooden tip up style seating running alongside the pitch opposite the clubhouse.

There was a covered standing area running alongside the pitch next to the changing rooms.

As for the game itself it was attended in the main by family members of the players and one thing that I always remember was that as a fan base it was a small but committed group.

I became a regular watching the team on a Sunday afternoon from the 1998/1999 where they were playing some great football and ended the season in a third place and was impressed by the standard the camaraderie between the players and few fans who did attend. My first taste of success in supporting them came the following season when the club gained promotion to the Premier League Northern Division. Some of the players who stood out for me during the time I watched them in the years of my support were the strike partnership of Nicky Maylett and Kelly Dean (who regularly scored 20 plus goals) supported by players such as Claire Harrop and Stacey Marsden.

Following a mix of results in the following season the club in 2005 dropped the Oldham title and became known as Curzon Ashton Ladies FC and also moved into the newly built Tameside Stadium.

Simon O'Neill



Curzon Ashton Ladies former ground, National Park (Photo from footballgroundmap.com)

# Gillingham Regional Talent Centre closing due to cuts



News broke on Twitter at the end of May that Gillingham's Regional Talent Centre will be closing due to cuts.

The centre which gives young girls a stepping stone and pathway into senior football, including with Gillingham Ladies will no longer be run.

Young players and families took to social media to share their disappointment and West Ham player Gilly Flaherty tried to get a petition going to reverse the decision.

Flaherty wrote: "Come on now Kent FA. Now is the time to really step up for women's football in our country. How can we as a county not have an RTC? Women's and girls football has come so far, this is a step backwards for the game."

One young player wrote: "Can't believe me and my teammates have had our dreams taken away in the blink of an eye. Gillingham RTC is closing and we need all the help we can get!"

Another added: "SO sad to hear Gillingham RTC has been cut. I was at the RTC for four years and it helped me so much to be the

players I am today and helped many other girls where they are today too. There's no other RTC clubs do girls in our county, another step back for women's football."

Since the announcement, Kent FA have issued the following statement:

"Kent FA has been made aware of the decision by Gillingham FC not to renew the licence for the Girls Regional Talent Club for the 2020-21 season.

"We understand how disappointing this will be for the players and we will be investigating, alongside Kent Schools FA and Kent Girls' & Ladies League, alternative opportunities for those currently involved in the programme."

It seems that Kent FA is hopeful of providing an alternative but, as Kent Schools FA has already pointed out, there are "many challenges involved in setting up an RTC to replace the Gillingham RTC—finance, staffing, venue for training, venue for matches etc.

"Focus must be on the needs of the players and finding solutions to the challenges that are in their best interests."

# Home Nations



**THE WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL  
MAGAZINE**

# England

## Phil Neville speaks for the first time after news he will step down from England role



England Women's boss Phil Neville has spoken to the press for the first time since the FA announced he will be leaving his position at the end of his contract next summer.

The departing boss says he always planned to give up coaching England Women after three years.

Speaking on the beIN Sport's Keys and Gray Show, Neville says he is ready to "cut his teeth" in club management—not commentating on whether he would remain in the women's game or move into the men's.

Neville said: "My plan was always just to go for the three years and then get into day-to-day running of a club job, which would be what I wanted to do.

"It's been brilliant and I've loved every minute of it, but ultimately you don't get to see the players. You don't get to impact them every

single day, which is now what I feel I need to do.

"The plan was always to do the three years. I had a World Cup, I had the Olympics — which [would have been] this summer — and then there's the Euros in England next summer. That was my three-year stint at international football.

"I think international football for a 41, 42-year-old can get quite frustrating — so I thought, get some managerial experience, which is unbelievable in terms of going to major tournaments, and then cut my teeth in day-to-day running with the energy that I've got.

"With the coronavirus, there has obviously been no Olympic Games, no Euros — which meant that obviously I had to make the decision early."



# FA post England role advertisement

## England Women's Senior Head Coach (NFCSGP0055)

Division: Technical Directorate

Location: National Football Centre, St George's Park

Closing Date: 30 June 2020

Vacancy Type: Full-time, Permanent

FA have put up the application forms for the next England women's manager.

Applicants have until June 30 to fill in their applications.

The application reads:

### Role Description

As England Women's Senior Head Coach you will be expected to build a winning England Women's Senior Team, which respects and lives the philosophy and values of The FA.

You will create and optimise a winning, high-performance culture for the players and wider team at St. George's Park.

### Key Accountabilities

- Prepare the England Women's Senior Team to win the UEFA Women's European Championships and FIFA Women's World Cup
- Create a team culture focused on confidence, cohesion and positive spirit, in which players and staff understand what is expected of them
- Lead the creation of an outstanding performance environment for players and staff including establishing a strong team identity
- Overall responsibility for squad selection, working closely with the Head of Women's Technical and multidisciplinary teams to use objective data to make informed decisions including attending appropriate fixtures for scouting and reporting purposes
- Develop and maintain outstanding club relationships, including collaboration on Individual Player Development Plans which support England winning
- Work closely with the Head of Women's Technical to develop a European Championships and World Cup plan that supports England winning
- Collaborate with the Technical Director and Head of Women's Technical in order to develop and be accountable for an agreed playing style which delivers short term wins and long-term sustainability
- Be an advocate and ambassador for The FA and St. George's Park, upholding the highest standards of values and morals, fully appreciative of the standards expected in such a high-profile role

## What we are looking for:

### Essential

- UEFA A Licence
- Consistent, successful experience of coaching, management and development of elite players and multi-disciplinary staff
- Ability to demonstrate inspirational leadership on and off the pitch using a variety of methods and approaches
- Significant experience of working with senior players with a track record of high performance
- Understand the different demands of club and international football
- Experience of working in high performing environments
- Deep knowledge of technical and tactical components of the game including strategies and tactics
- Ability to create and implement Individual Player Development Plans
- Growth mind-set and strong evidence of continued professional development
- Explicit knowledge and understanding of the England DNA

### Desirable

- UEFA Pro Licence
- Experience of being a head coach within the women's game
- Experience of coaching women
- Experience of working in the women's professional game
- Understand the demands of international women's football
- Playing experience







# Scottish Building Society confirm continued sponsorship of SPWL in lockdown

Scottish Building Society have confirmed they will continue their sponsorship of the SWPL for 2020, irrespective of the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown.

The 2020 SWPL season kicked off in February with a media launch attended by all 18 clubs at Hampden Park but was halted after one game.

It is still hoped that the women's season will resume, but no decisions or plans have been made as of yet as to when that may be.

No comments have been made on the Scottish Cup either, or with what impact this could have for the Women's Champions League places.

Kerra McKinnie, Marketing Director at Scottish Building Society, said: "We have supported women's and girls' football in Scotland for three years and recognise the challenges players and teams face in these difficult times.

"We are determined to maintain that relationship to ensure the SWPL are ready to go when the season resumes."

Vivienne MacLaren, chair of Scottish Women's Football, said: "We are delighted Scottish Building Society are continuing to support us through lockdown.

"At a time of uncertainty, this is a major boost in helping ensure the continued growth of the women's and girls' game in Scotland."



# How the tables stand

## SWPL 1

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Rangers	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
<b>2</b>	Celtic	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
<b>3</b>	Hibernian	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
<b>4</b>	Motherwell	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
<b>5</b>	Glasgow City	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
<b>6</b>	Forfar Farmington	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
<b>7</b>	Spartans	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
<b>8</b>	Hearts	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0

— Relegation play-off

— Relegation

## SWPL 2

		P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	P
<b>1</b>	Hamilton Academical	1	1	0	0	5	0	5	3
<b>2</b>	Dundee United	1	1	0	0	8	4	4	3
<b>3</b>	St Johnstone	1	1	0	0	4	2	2	3
<b>4</b>	Partick Thistle	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
<b>5</b>	Kilmarnock	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
<b>6</b>	Aberdeen	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
<b>7</b>	Queens Park	1	0	0	1	2	4	-2	0
<b>8</b>	Glasgow Women	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
<b>9</b>	Boroughmuir Thistle	1	0	0	1	4	8	-4	0
<b>10</b>	Stirling University	1	0	0	1	0	5	-5	0

— Promotion play-off

— Relegation play-off

— Relegated to SWF Championship





# Wales Euro rescheduled dates

Uefa has released the rescheduled fixture dates for the Women's Euro 2021 qualifying.

The aim is to get games back underway in September.

Jayne Ludlow's side are currently sitting second in Group C, four points behind Norway who would be their first opponents in the new schedule.

The new fixtures are as follows.

- 22 September 2020 - Norway v Wales
- 22 October 2020 - Wales v Faroe Islands
- 27 October 2020 - Wales v Norway
- 01 December 2020 - Wales v Belarus

Kick off times and venues are yet to be confirmed.



# FAW board decide to 'curtail' 2019-20 season for top four tiers.



The FAW announced on May 19 that a decision had been agreed with the National League board to “curtail the 2019-20 season for tiers 1-4.”

In an official statement they said: “The decision has been taken as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with Welsh Government’s lockdown guidelines and measures.

“The FAW Board took into consideration the health and safety of all those involved with these leagues. Furthermore, the FAW Board also considered the specific economic and financial impact of attempting to finish the season during the pandemic and therefore felt it was imperative not to risk the long-term financial stability of the leagues and their clubs.

“It was also recognised that the JD Cymru Premier could not be concluded prior to the deadline set by UEFA for European competition entry.

“Clubs in the JD Cymru Premier, JD Cymru

North, JD Cymru South and the Orchard Welsh Premier Women’s League were consulted on how the season should be concluded. The views and information provided by the clubs were communicated to the FAW National League Board and the FAW Board of Directors.

“The FAW Board agreed that Tier 1 to 4 leagues would be curtailed and that an unweighted points per game method be applied to determine the final standings. As a consequence, the European Play-Offs in the JD Cymru Premier will not take place. “

The decision means that Swansea City Ladies have been awarded the Women’s Champions League place.

The FAW Board also decided that the prize money for the JD Cymru Premier, JD Cymru North, JD Cymru South and the Orchard Welsh Premier Women’s League would be distributed in accordance to the final league positions after the points per game method was applied.

The FAW Board are yet to decide on promotion and relegation between leagues with a decision to be made in due course, taking into account full consideration of the FAW's Pyramid Regulations.

**FAW National Cup Board recommendation—JD Welsh Cup**

“Due to the specific economic and financial justifications which would make continuing the JD Welsh Cup to its conclusion by the UEFA deadline for European competition nominations on 20 July unfeasible, the FAW National Cup Board recommended to the FAW Board that the competition be postponed. The recommendation was ratified by the FAW Board.

“The Cup Board felt it would be financially imprudent to conclude prior to the UEFA deadline, as doing so could place the long-term financial stability of the competition and the clubs at risk

“The Cup Board hope that the remainder of the competition can resume prior to the start of the next football season, whenever that may be and when it is safe and economically viable to do so, however, this is not possible before the UEFA deadline.

“In accordance with the UEFA guidelines, as the FAW is not able to determine a domestic cup winner on sporting merit, the highest ranked non-qualified club from the JD Cymru Premier will qualify for the 2020/21 UEFA Europa League at the stage initially reserved for the lowest ranking top domestic league representative. This representative has been determined as Barry Town United. Consequently, each representative of the JD Cymru Premier then enters the UEL at the stage initially reserved for the domestic league representative ranked immediately above.”

**Welsh Premier Women's League**

	<b>Played</b>	<b>Goal Difference</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>PPG</b>
1 Swansea City	11	+29	31	2.82
2 Cardiff Met	11	+21	27	2.45
3 Cardiff City	10	+16	22	2.20
4 Port Talbot Town	12	+6	21	1.75
5 Cyncoed	11	-14	11	1.00
6 Briton Ferry Llansawel	8	-11	4	0.50
7 Abergavenny	9	-19	4	0.44
8 Aberystwyth Town	10	-28	-3	-0.30

# Sport Park Parc Chwaraeod



# Major restructure announced in Wales



The Football Association of Wales has announced a major restructure of the women's game in Wales which will be in place from the 2021-22 season.

A new pyramid league structure will be defined in order to provide "competitive women's football appropriate to playing standards, economic means, geographical location, facilities and club structure."

## How will it work?

### Tier 1

- Remains a National League administrated by the FAW
- Champions will qualify for the Uefa Women's Champions League

- The Uefa and FAW club licensing regulations introduced for the 2020-21 season will ensure a competitive national league

### Tier 2

- Tier 2 will be regionalised with new northern and southern leagues, affiliated to the FAW
- They will be administrated by independent management committees

The licence application process for Tier 1 and 2 will be open to all clubs in Wales for the 2021/22 season. Details of licence criteria for Tier 1 and 2 and the application process will be announced in due course.

## EXISTING DOMESTIC STRUCTURE



## PYRAMID STRUCTURE 2021/22



As well as an overhaul to the top two tiers, a new U19s development league will be introduced.

Divided into a northern and southern league, they will be operated by the same independent management committees responsible for Tier 2 and shall be introduced for the 2021/22 season.

An U19 Development Team will also be a mandatory condition of obtaining a Licence to participate in Tier 1.

### Tiers 3 & 4

- These will be looked after by the area associations
- They have an aim to increase participation in the women's game in Wales

- They will be allowed more flexibility in the rules and regulations to achieve the objectives

On the major restructure to the pyramid, Lowri Roberts, the FAW's Head of Womens' and Girls' Football, said: "By introducing set criteria and providing additional support to Tier 2 leagues and clubs, it will provide a stronger platform for clubs to prepare to step into the Tier 1 and therefore create a more sustainable domestic pyramid and a more competitive national league.

"During the consultation period, it became very clear that there was a need to introduce a transitional step between U16s girls' football and senior women's football as the current structure was not supporting player retention."





# Northern Ireland get new dates for Euro 2021 qualifiers

Northern Ireland Women have been given rescheduled dates for the Euro 2021 qualifiers.

Kenny Shiels' side will return to competitive action away to Faroe Islands on September 18—a date originally scheduled in.

The finals have been moved to summer of 2022 due to Covid-19.

They will play Belarus away on 27 October and at home on 27 November before finishing at home to the Faroese on 1 December.

The home and away meetings with Belarus and the home fixture against Faroe Islands were initially set to be played in April and June.

Venues and kick-off times are yet to be confirmed with all fixtures subject to more changes due to 'Uefa, government and health guidelines in relation to Covid-19'.

Northern Ireland currently sit fourth in the five-team Group C, 10 points behind leaders Norway.

The group winners will automatically qualify for the Women's European Championship finals in England, with the second-placed team set for a play-off.

## **Euro 2021 qualifying fixtures:**

- **Faroe Islands v Northern Ireland—September 18**
- **Belarus v Northern Ireland—October 27**
- **Northern Ireland v Belarus—November 27**
- **Northern Ireland v Faroe Islands—December 1**

# County Antrim Challenge Cup cancelled due to Covid-19



The 2019-20 Women's County Antrim Challenge Cup has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The competition was in the quarter-finals stages, were were originally scheduled to take place on May 18.

Last season Glentoran won the trophy, beating Crusaders 2-1 in the final.

The side were due to continue their title defence against St Oliver Plunkett, where as current Danske Bank Women's Premiership champions Linfield were to play Roasario.

The Danske Bank Women's Premiership , which was due to start on April 22 has been postponed until further notice.

A statement from the County Antrim FA read: "Given the current situation and particularly restrictions relating to football, the Committee have determined that the competition cannot be completed this season and the cancellation of such will allow teams further capacity to complete league fixtures, should the current restrictions be lifted."

# Tokyo 2020:

## Latest qualifying updates



With Covid-19 causing many cancellations over the world, here is all the latest in the qualifying for the women's football event at Tokyo 2020 (now in 2021).

- **The final Asian qualifying place will be decided in February**

The Asian Football Confederation has confirmed the postponed two-leg series between China and South Korea will be played on February 19 and February 24.

No venues have been announced as of yet.

- **CAF-CONMEBOL play-off**

The two teams who qualified for the CAF-CONMEBOL play-off are Cameroon (2020 CAF Women's Olympic Qualifying tournament second place) and Chile (2018 Copa America Femenina second place).

The play-off will be played as a home and away two-legged tie.

The draw for the order of the legs was held on January 31 with the first leg to be held in Cameroon and the second in Chile.

The matches were originally scheduled to be played on April 9 and April 15 but were postponed.

No re-arranged date has been announced as of yet.

### **Current qualified teams:**

- Japan (hosts)
- Brazil (2018 Copa America winners)
- New Zealand (2018 OFC Nations Cup)
- Great Britain (England placement in 2019 WWC)
- Netherlands (2019 WWC)
- Sweden (2019 WWC)
- Canada (2020 CONCACAF Olympic qualifying)
- USA (2020 CONCACAF Olympic qualifying)
- Zambia (2020 CAF Olympic qualifying)
- Australia (2020 AFC Olympic qualifying)

# 2023 Women's World Cup venue decision



The 2023 Women's World Cup host will be picked on June 25 but FIFA's ruling council.

An open vote of the 37-member FIFA council will be made public including the result of each round of balloting.

The countries up for the honour are Brazil, Japan, Colombia and a joint bid from Australia and New Zealand.

FIFA inspection teams visited the four bid candidates in January and February.

A statement from FIFA read: "FIFA is now finalizing the evaluation report, which will be published in early June .

The 2023 edition of the Women's World Cup will be the first to feature 32 teams.

At the 2019 event in France, which was one by the United States, there were 24 teams.

# FIFA U20 & U17 Women's World Cup: Tournament moved



FIFA have confirmed the Women's U20s World Cup, originally planned for August, have been rescheduled for January 2021.

The competition, which is hosted jointly by Costa Rica and Panama was due to take place in August and September but was postponed in April due to the global Covid-19 pandemic.

FIFA has now confirmed that the tournament will run from January 20 to February 6, with the same eligibility rules in place in terms of player ages.

The 2020 U17 Women's World Cup in India will now take place between February 17 and March 7.

“Following a thorough assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent recommendations made by the FIFA-Confederations COVID-19 Working Group, the Bureau of the FIFA Council has taken the decision to confirm the proposed new tournament dates, subject to further monitoring,” FIFA said

# Euro 2021 (2022) qualifying: How it stands



Uefa Women's Euro qualifying was put on hold, along with most football across the world, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The finals of the tournament have also now been moved to the summer of 2022.

47 teams are currently competing for 15 places alongside hosts England in the finals from July 6 to July 31 2022.

With such a gap since qualifiers were taking place, here is a look at where the groups currently stand.

## Group A

- Netherlands (holders), Russia, Slovenia, Kosovo, Estonia, Turkey
- Netherlands have six wins out of six
- Russia's 5-0 March win against competition debutants Kosovo closed the gap on the holders to nine points, with two games in hand.
- Slovenia's 3-0 win at Kosovo the following week moved them level with Russia, though having played two games more, with Kosovo three points back

## Group B

- Italy, Denmark, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Malta, Georgia

Italy have a maximum 18 points and Denmark have five wins out of five after both kept up perfect starts in November

Bosnia and Herzegovina, beaten by the leading pair in October, are level with Denmark (though having played two games more) following March wins against Israel and Malta

A few days before their loss to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malta scored a first-ever top-level qualifying win, 2-1 against Georgia

## Group C

- Norway, Wales, Belarus, Northern Ireland, Faroe Islands
- Norway have four wins out of four, and in their 6-0 victory against Northern Ireland in front of a home qualifying record crowd of 6,709, Caroline Graham Hansen got two to take her qualifying tally to a competition-leading ten goals, one ahead of the Netherlands' Sherida Spitse
- Wales are four points behind after being held to a draw for the second time in the group by Northern Ireland

## Group D

- Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, Moldova, Azerbaijan

- Poland were the last team to open qualifying on 12 November and showed their intent in front of a record 7,528 crowd in Lublin with a 0-0 draw against a Spain side that had won their previous 22 qualifiers including their first two games in this group
- Among those was a 5-1 victory in the Czech Republic, who are one point off the lead following a 4-0 defeat of Azerbaijan
- Poland beat Moldova and Azerbaijan in March to move level with Spain and a point ahead of the Czech Republic
- Moldova got their first point in November with a 3-1 defeat of Azerbaijan courtesy of two penalties by goalkeeper Natalia Munteanu

### Group E

- Finland, Scotland, Portugal, Albania, Cyprus
- Before the last game in the group of 2019, three teams were still perfect, but just one remain after Portugal drew 1-1 with Finland, who levelled in added time through Sällström
- Finland have ten points from four games but Scotland have won both their matches, leaving them two points ahead of Portugal

### Group F

- Sweden, Iceland, Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia
- Sweden and Iceland both have a maximum nine points from three games
- Behind them both Hungary and Slovakia have lost to the leading pair, drawn 0-0 with each other in Senec and beaten Latvia to each have four points

### Group G

- Austria, Serbia, France, North Macedonia, Kazakhstan

- Austria have four wins out of four after beating North Macedonia and Kazakhstan while France have two perfect victories, Amel Majri's hat-trick helping them win 6-0 against Serbia (whose March win against North Macedonia actually moved them three points ahead of Les Bleues, who have three games in hand). Neither Austria nor France have conceded a goal

### Group H

- Belgium, Switzerland, Romania, Croatia, Lithuania
- Belgium and Switzerland both have four perfect wins, lifting them nine points clear of Romania (who have a game in hand) and Croatia

### Group I

- Republic of Ireland, Germany, Greece, Montenegro, Ukraine
- Germany are on four wins out of four but are a point behind the Republic of Ireland, who beat Greece and Montenegro in March
- However, Germany have a game in hand. Both Montenegro and Ukraine (who have faced Germany twice) are yet to get off the mark, with Greece on four points

### The new calendar for qualification

#### Remaining qualifying games:

- 16–22 September
- 21–27 October
- 26 November–1 December 2020

**Play-off draw:** tbc

**Play-offs:** April 2021

**Finals draw:** tbc, England

**Finals:** 6–31 July 2022, England

# Around the World



# NWSL to return with Utah-based tournament



The National Women's Soccer League have announced that it has finalised plans to play a 25-game tournament in Utah for all nine of its teams, beginning in June.

The 2020 NWSL Challenge Cup will not have fans, but all games will be streamed live in the US.

The tournament opener June 27 will be held at Zions Bank Stadium in Herriman, Utah, and the final July 26 at Rio Tinto Stadium in Sandy, Utah.

So what do we know about the tournament?

## **What is the Challenge Cup?**

A 25-game tournament featuring nine teams. Each of the nine clubs will play four games at three Utah venues in the preliminary rounds to determine seeding, with the top eight teams advancing to the knockout round. Both the semi-finals and final will be played in Sandy.

## **Are players required to play?**

No. Participation is optional with many players are still undecided. All player contracts, housing, insurance and benefits

are guaranteed by the league regardless of participation in the tournament.

## **Are players going to be quarantined?**

It is unclear yet of the ins and outs but we know there will be an athlete village for players, staff and administrators to minimise exposure to the outside world.

## **Will players have their families with them?**

Players who are mums will be allowed to have their children and their caregiver with them but each player will have their own room.

## **Can fans attend games?**

No.

## **Why has Utah been chosen?**

Utah was chosen because it has a relatively low number of Covid-19 cases.

## **Any rule changes?**

Teams can make up to five substitutions per match but only at three different times. Gameday squads will also increase from 18 to 20.

# Barcelona crowned Primera Division Femenina Champions



Barcelona have been crowned winners of the women's Primera Division after the remaining fixtures were cancelled due to Covid-19.

The Royal Spanish Football Federation ratified the decision with Barca, who were unbeaten, sitting nine-points clear of Atletico Madrid.

The title is Barca's first since 2015 and they will compete, alongside second place Atletico, in next season's Women's Champions League.

Barcelona released a statement which said: "Of course, the team would have much preferred to have won the title under different circumstances, but fully appreciates that the battle to contain COVID-19 is

the most important matter right now.

The league also announced that there would be no relegation.

Bottom club Espanyol, who have only managed to get five points in 21 games, and Valencia were spared of the drop.

Furthermore, Santa Teresa and Eibar were promoted from the second division, meaning there will be 18 teams in the top tier for 2020-21.

It was also agreed that the Copa de la Reina will be completed next season, with Barca facing Sevilla and EDF Logrono taking on Athletic Club in the two semi-finals.

# Lyon crowned champions



The French Football Federation (FFF) have confirmed that Lyon have been crowned champions after the league was cancelled due to Covid-19.

Lyon were three points clear of Paris St-Germain with six matches left, but no games have been played since March.

It gives the Champions League holders and six-time European champions a 14th consecutive domestic crown.

England internationals Lucy Bronze, Nikita Parris and Alex Greenwood were among the squad to secure the title.

The league title is Bronze's third with Lyon, while Parris and Greenwood are in their first season with the club.

The FFF relegated the bottom two clubs, Marseille and Metz.

Assistant coach Camille Abily told the official website: "This title shows that we were in the right position at the right time.

"We would all have liked to finish the season, for fairness. Nothing was taken for granted because it would have been

necessary to earn a result against PSG, at least a draw.

"But it shows the consistency of the team and it is a continuation of what OL has been doing for many years. This title is obviously different.

"The trophies received on the pitch are very special moments. There is of course a feeling of frustration.

"In March, the best matches are played. These are the fateful moments, with the big matches that we want to play like the Champions League or against PSG that were on the horizon.

"We are preparing to play these kinds of matches. We deprive the girls of these moments, it's a shame ... There is still a possibility of playing in the Champions League. It's great, we keep that as a goal. But it's still special.

"It will not be the same atmosphere with matches behind closed doors. The motivation to seek a new European title will be there. The Coupe de France has not yet been cancelled. It's another title to go after."

# Primera Division table

	Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
1	Barcelona	21	19	2	0	59
2	Atletico Madrid	21	15	5	1	50
3	Levante	21	14	3	4	45
4	La Coruna	21	11	4	6	37
5	Athletic Bilbao	21	10	5	6	35
6	Real Sociedad	21	9	6	6	33
7	EDF Logrono	21	8	5	8	29
8	Vallecano	21	7	7	7	28
9	Tenerife	21	6	6	9	24
10	CD Tacon	21	6	5	10	23
11	Sevilla	21	6	4	11	22
12	Betis	21	4	8	9	20
13	Madrid C	21	5	4	12	19
14	Huelva	21	5	3	13	18
15	Valencia	21	3	8	10	17
16	Espanyol	21	0	5	16	5

# Feminine Division 1 table

	Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
1	Olympique Lyonnais	16	14	2	0	44
2	PSG	16	13	2	1	41
3	Bordeaux	16	12	1	3	37
4	Montpellier	16	9	3	4	30
5	Paris FC	16	7	3	6	24
6	Guingamp	16	6	5	5	23
7	Fleury 91	16	6	2	8	20
8	Stade de Reims	16	4	3	9	15
9	Dijon	16	3	5	8	14
10	Soyaux	16	4	4	8	13
11	Olympique Marseille	16	2	0	14	6
12	Metz	16	0	2	14	2



# News from around the world

## Netflix secure rights to develop Girls of Summer

Netflix has secured the rights to develop Jere Longman's book 'The Girls of Summer: The US Women's Soccer Team and How It Changed The World' into a feature film.

The movie will follow the 1999 U.S. women's national team on its journey to winning the Women's World Cup.



## Formiga signs new contract

Brazilian midfielder Formiga has signed a new one-year contract extension with Paris St-Germain.

The 42-year-old hopes to finish her career with a seventh appearance at the Olympics, which have now been moved to 2021.

She has made a record of 198 appearances for Brazil and is the first footballer to appear at seven World Cups.

Formiga has been with PSG since joining from Sao Jose in 2017.

## NWSL seals Verizon deal

The National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) has announced a multi-year sponsorship deal with telecommunications giant Verizon.

According to the Equalizer, the Verizon deal runs through to 2021, with an option to extend.

Verizon join a long list of NWSL partners which includes Budweiser, Nike and Thorne.

Marissa Weseloh, director of strategic sponsorships at Verizon said: "Sports are such a huge part of our culture and give us a sense of connection – something we're all craving right now.

"Partnering with the National Women's Soccer League allows us to connect with the soccer community in a meaningful way as the sport continues to grow."



**NATIONAL WOMEN'S SOCCER LEAGUE**



# News from around the world

## Brianna Visalli joins Houston Dash

Birmingham City midfielder Brianna Visalli has left the Women's Super League side to join NWSL's Houston Dash on a two-year deal.

The midfielder leaves the Blues as a free agent after just one season.

She joined the club from West Ham in July 2019 and made 13 appearances in all competitions.

She moves to a Dash side which will kick off its campaign behind closed doors in June with the National Women's Soccer League Challenge Cup.

She wrote on Twitter: "Two seasons in the WSL and a season with BCFC Women—what an amazing experience both as a footballer and person, so thank you.

"Very excited about the journey that lies ahead in the NWSL with the Houston Dash #holditdown"

## BBC Alba to show Women's Bundesliga games

BBC Alba and BBC Sport have announced they will be showing the remainder of the women's Bundesliga season on free-to-air TV in the UK.

The coverage, which started in the last weekend of May, can be watched on both BBC Alba television and the BBC sport website.

The current schedule is:

### BBC ALBA MATCHES



30/05 - Bayern Munich v Hoffenheim (12:00)

05/06 - Hoffenheim v Bayer Leverkusen (18:15)

13/06 - Essen v Wolfsburg (12:00)

14/06 - Bayern Munich v USV Jena (13:00)

17/06 - Wolfsburg v Freiburg (13:00)

More games could follow





# News from around the world

## OL Reign announce departure of Steph Catley

OL Reign have announced that defender Steph Catley will not return to the club for the 2020 season.

After leading Melbourne City to W-League victory in March, Catley opted to remain in Australia instead of travel back to the US.

Catley played for Reign in the 2018 and 2019 seasons.

Catley took to Twitter after the news was announced: "It is with a heavy heart that today I announce my departure from OL Reign. In saying that, my heart is full from the memories I have made over the past 2-3 years in Seattle and Tacoma.

"I am beyond thankful for the entire organization, but in particular Bill and Teresa Predmore who have cared for and molded the club into the family that it is today.

"Every day I spent as an OL Reign player, I felt supported and cared for as a footballer but more importantly as a person.

"Most significantly, I will never forget the support that the club showed me when I went through the toughest period of my life in 2018 with the passing of my father.

"They stood by me through every step with patience and understanding, and made returning to America feel like I was coming home to a second family.

"I've been challenged and grown as a player and a person, I've had fun, and made memories and lifelong friendships that I will always cherish."



## Brazil's World Cup boss passes away

Oswaldo Alvarez, also known as Vadao, has died at the age of 63.

The long-time coach of the Brazil women's football team died following a severe illness.

Brazilian women's football star Marta Vieira da Silva paid tribute to her former coach in an Instagram post.

She wrote: "I am so proud to have lived wonderful moments by your side and to have had the opportunity to learn a lot from you. Thank you for everything and rest in peace!"

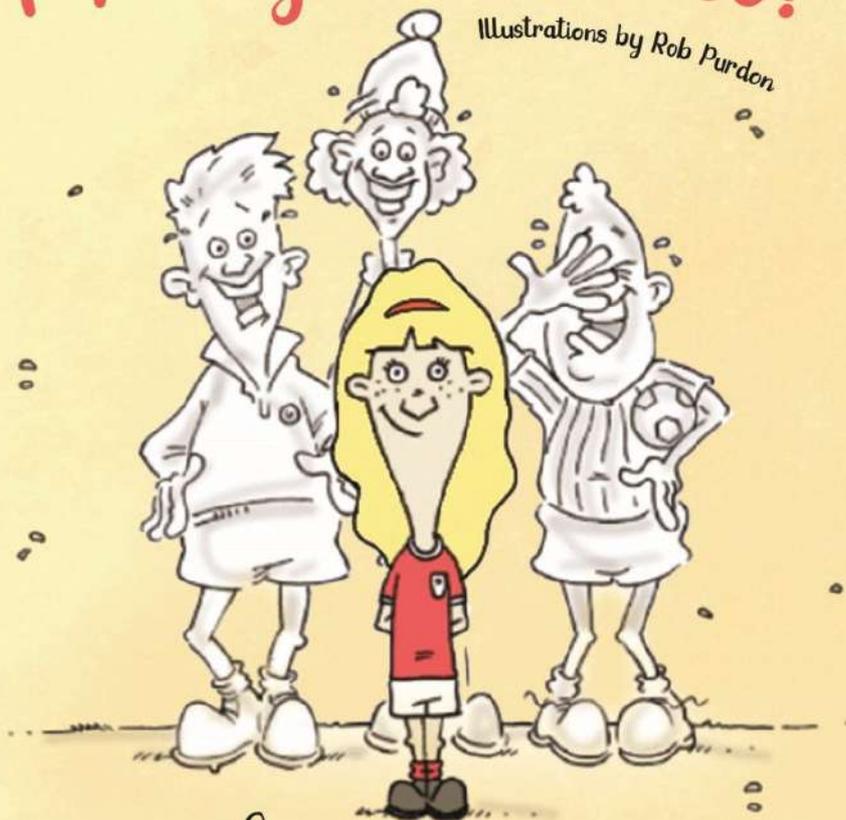
In a tweet, Brazil's football association praised Vadao as a "loyal professional."



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