

# THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 50 - June 2021

#PrideMonth

**Fara Williams**

A look back on her  
legacy as England  
legend retires

**MARCO**

**FLOREALE**

On the Game of  
Two Halves

**TWFM Awards**

Winners of the  
coveted awards an-  
nounced

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GRASSROOTS*

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# **THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE**



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# Welcome

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Company number: 12839197

## Hello and welcome to Issue 50!

Well the season is officially over and already we have players moving and leaving clubs— it's going to be a busy summer!

With the Team GB squad announced for this year's Olympics in Tokyo the countdown is on to the tournament.

Over 1500 of you voted in this year's TWFM Awards with some of the winners being crowned with less than 10 votes in it. Read all about the winners later in the issue.

Ali Rampling also announces her 'Alternative Awards' for the WSL, Jamie Davies looks at the end of the season in Germany and Charlotte Stacey looks back at the career of the legend that is Fara Williams.

News came out in the last week about the Wales restructure and we look into the fallout from the changes.

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

**Editor-in-Chief**

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**THE WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL  
MAGAZINE**







# THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE *Awards*

## WSL Player of the Season 20/21

**Fran Kirby, Chelsea**



Orlagh Gardner Sports Press Photo

*Forward Fran Kirby has been a key figure in Chelsea's triumphant season. The Blues have won the WSL title and Continental Tyres Cup as well as reaching the final of the Champions League. Kirby, 27, scored 16 goals and got 11 assists in her first season back since she had a long absence due to a viral illness which threatened to end her career.*

### Runners up:

- Katie McCabe, Arsenal
- Chloe Kelly, Manchester City

## WSL Coach of the Season 20/21

**Emma Hayes, Chelsea**

*Chelsea head coach Emma Hayes has been at the heart of the WSL side since 2012. This year,*

*in which she dubbed her 'best yet' she has led her side to their fourth league title, retained the League Cup and they are still in the race for a third FA Cup win (the completion of the competition has been postponed until next season.*

### Runners up:

- Carla Ward, Birmingham City
- Gareth Taylor, Manchester City



## Championship Player of the Season 20/21

**Natasha Flint, Leicester City**

*Natasha Flint has been at the heart of Leicester City's promotion push this season.*

*With over half the votes, Flint picked up her first award of the season and has since gone on to be named Leicester City supporters' Player of the Season and won Goal of the Season.*



### Runners up:

- Bianca Baptiste, Crystal Palace
- Bridget Galoway, Durham



Paul Bonser Sports Press Photo

## Championship Coach of the Season 20/21

**Jonathan Morgan, Leicester  
City**



Paul Bonser Sports Press Photo

*Jonathan Morgan led Leicester City to promotion from the Championship this season. The Foxes were confirmed winners in April and lost only twice in the league all season. Leicester finished their season with a 4-0 win over Charlton Athletic in a record breaking season and at one point won 12 games in a row.*

### Runners up:

- Neil Redfearn, Sheffield United
- Gemma Donnelly, Blackburn Rovers

## National League Player of the Season 20/21

### Helen Ward



Pedro Soares Sports Press Photo

*Watford finished the unfinished National League South league on top having only managed to play eight games but Helen Ward made an impact on the fans during her season and saw her storm to victory with over 40% of the vote.*

### Runners up:

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

## National League Coach of the Season 20/21

**Jordan Wimpenny,  
Huddersfield Town**



*Jordan Wimpenny was named Huddersfield Town manager in March 2020 and the Northern Premier Division side finished top of the table before the season was classed null and void. Wimpenny classed the win as “one for us all after a tremendous season from all the players and staff involved.”*

### Runners up:

- Clinton Lancaster, Watford
- Joe Sheehan, Ipswich Town

The next three awards were put up to public nominations. Over 150 nominations were sent in over the three categories and the shortlist was decided by a team at The Women's Football Magazine.

## Grassroots Player of the Season 20/21

*in association with The Coaching Manual*

**Abby Chiverton, Milford Pumas**



*Abby Chiverton made the shortlist for the second year in a row and after narrowly missing out last year was crowned the winner this time round.*

*She was nominated anonymously but they said: "Abby greatly deserves to be nominated for this award as the dedication and commitment she puts in is outstanding. As well as playing for Milford Pumas, Chiverton also plays for Portsmouth and is part of the Fulham FC Foundation. Abby always has a smile on her face when she has a football at her feet, is always willing to learn new things and her confidence has grown and grown. I really believe she could be a great player if she keeps going but then I already think she is a great player now."*

### Runners up:

- Libby Whittaker
- Meghan Heron

## Grassroots Coach of the Season 20/21

*in association with The Coaching Manual*



## Brendan White, Verwood Girls

*Brendan White is a coach at Verwood Girls and had no idea he had been nominated for the award.*

*Chris Berry, who nominated White wrote: "I wish to nominate Brendan, not because of how good a coach he is, but because he doesn't realise how good a coach he is. I have not met anyone in my football journey that genuinely does everything for everyone else other than himself. He was one of a founding members of Verwood Girls FC back in 2016.*

*Brendan aimed to provide opportunities for young girls in the community to play football in a safe environment and be a place where players realise their potential, develop personal skills and build confidence. I joined in 2020 and found myself seeing the club 'run' by the girls. Youth Leaders (players from older teams) were in place for supporting training sessions. The players create their own sessions under Brendan's guidance, yet allowing player ownership. The environment I walked into, I*



allowed myself to witness to what Brendan had created. A club run by Verwood Girls by Verwood Girls. Yet, behind the scenes, is a shy and humble coach. A coach that sets up an hour before and stays to support all age groups to train from U8-U16s. I genuinely do not know of anyone who would be more surprised at being nominated let alone winning this award."

#### Runners up:

- Kevin Morris, Tupsley Girls
- Chris Barker, Walton Casuals

### Women's Football Fan of the Season 20/21

#### Isabelle O'Toole, Lincoln City



Isabelle O'Toole is an avid Lincoln City Women's fan who loves going to games and has become a well known member of the fan base along with her family. O'Toole was nominated twice, once by her dad and once by Lincoln City's media officer Beth Pritchard.

Pritchard wrote: "Izzy is truly Lincoln City Women's number one fan. Her and her family are at every home game (despite relying on trains followed by a long walk up hill). She made her own version of the team kit when they weren't available to buy and she used to stand right outside the changing rooms to get her programme signed after every game. Izzy has become part of the team due to her enthusiasm and pure love of the players. She's only nine years old but the Lincoln City Women players have motivated and inspired her in her own grassroots games."

In the second nomination by Dad, Thomas wrote: "My Daughter Isabelle is 10 years old and has followed Lincoln City women since they started in 2019 as we live in Gainsborough and we don't drive it means a train ride to Lincoln and then a walk to and from the game which is 3.2 miles and from home to train station included that's 6 miles walking every game.

Away from game day Isabelle is always tweeting to wish players happy Birthday or sending everyone at the club Christmas cards and gifts or Easter gifts sending videos of her playing piano at Xmas and New year's or DM players to make sure their ok with everything that's happening she also wears her Lincoln city women's shirt everywhere especially training with Amy Kay one of the Lincoln city women's players at the LNER stadium."

#### Runners up:

- Jessica Bennett, Chelsea
- Anastasia Hill, Manchester City

## THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE *Awards*

## THE COACHING MANUAL

# WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE





# World Cup winner signs for the Gunners



## By Jamie Davies

Arsenal have been recruiting early as they announced their first signing of the summer for Japanese International Mana Iwabuchi from Aston Villa.

The Gunners had a tough season in the Women's Super League by missing out on the league title by quite a margin but it ended on a high by beating Manchester United to the top 3 to seal Champions League football.

With Chelsea and Manchester City creating a gap away from Arsenal, this summer's recruitment to help improve their bid to come back stronger could be a busy one for everyone at the club.

## Could Iwabuchi be the first of many new faces at the London club?

The 2011 World Cup winner has been waiting a while to join Arsenal as the 28-year-old was expected to have joined the club last summer. But the Japanese FA didn't want Mana to join until after last Summer's Olympic football tournament.

But of course with Covid-19 cancelling the Olympics in 2020, the transfer move would hit a delay as Iwabuchi joined Villa in January on a six-month contract.

The Arsenal deal will see Iwabuchi join her new team mates after the Olympics have taken place later this summer.

Iwabuchi delightfully told Arsenal.com: "I'm so happy to finally be able to announce that I am an Arsenal player! I know the club has wanted to sign me for a long time now, so it's a great honour to be able to play for Arsenal. There are so many amazing players and I can't wait to get started."

## Iwabuchi's time at Villa

Iwabuchi's spell at Villa was a short one but it was a

difficult season for the team in claret and blue as they spent most of the campaign fighting to avoid relegation down to the FA Championship.

The Japanese forward made 12 appearances for Villa and scored a couple of goals. A winning goal versus Tottenham Hotspur in a 1-0 game and scored in the 2-2 draw against Reading.

She dealt with playing around a young Villa squad but her contribution certainly helped the club secure the WSL status for at least one more season.

## Iwabuchi in but Miedema out?

As this article was written before printing, there were rumours from the Guardian of Arsenal's prolific goal scorer, Vivianne Miedema, joining Lyon this summer.

The rumoured transfer could see Lyon swapping Lionesses Nikita Parris for the deadly Dutch forward. It is possible of Arsenal having two new forwards in their line-up next season without Miedema.

Losing Miedema would be a tough transition as the Dutch international has scored over 90 goals for the club so far including 60 goals in 67 WSL games, making her the current record goal scorer in the WSL.

But it is reported that the Gunners would be delighted to bring in Parris even if it includes a transfer fee to bring back the English forward to the WSL. Parris scored 11 goals in 19 games for Lyon this season while the Ballon d'Or winner of Ada Hegerberg was out due to an ACL injury suffered back in January 2020.

The delight of signing Iwabuchi could prove to be the end of the Arsenal road for Miedema despite the Euro 2017 winner tweeting her excitement for Mana joining the team.

# Fara: The fan favourite



Jordan Colborne Sports Press Photo



Jordan Colborne Sports Press Photo

## By Charlotte Stacey

England centurion and true pioneer of women's football Fara Williams has played her last game of professional football, closing the book on her illustrious 20-year pitch side career.

You would not have to delve far into the world of women's football before the name Fara Williams would crop up.

The 37-year-old has been a staple figure of the game long before the audiences, sponsorships and broadcasting deals of today caught up.

Career flutterings began at the age of twelve with Chelsea, the team she grew up supporting. Williams impressed at the Blues' trials despite arriving hours late due to a calamity with bus numbers. From there, professionally, things began to pick up. Williams remained at

Chelsea until 2001, playing for the first team for one year before she signed for Charlton Athletic.

At the time Charlton was a big player in the women's league, well regarded as one of the most fruitful teams to play for.

Williams completed a three-year spell with the Addicks, yet missed out on their eventual consecutive FA Cup victories after making the move to Everton, under coach Mo Marley, in 2004.

As with her previous stints, Williams' time with the Toffees was another tale of brilliance. Very quickly Williams certified herself an essential figure within the squad as confirmed when she was voted as FA Players' Player of the Year in 2009. She also finally managed to chase down that illusive FA Cup whilst at Everton in 2010.

From there Williams hopped over to Merseyside adversary Liverpool. A flagship signing for the club and their bid to rival North London titans Arsenal's supremacy.

Indeed, not only did Liverpool rival the Gunners, they reigned victorious, winning back-to-back league titles in 2013 and 2014. Success was short lived however as the Reds tumbled to the bottom of the table and Williams herself was out with injury. Moving once again, Williams spent one season with The Arsenal before concluding her story with a four-year term at Reading.

The enduring case of Fara Williams was as impressive internationally as it was domestically. The midfielder remained sought after from the moment she wore her first senior England shirt aged 17. Williams would then go on to



# , the fantastic, the fierce



become England's most capped player of all time. Not women's player. Just player. She has racked up a total of 172 caps for her country; she has represented Team GB in the Olympics; she has played in four European Championships and three World Cups. Unfortunately, Williams did not make the cut in the Lionesses' World Cup campaign before her retirement in what will persist as a controversial judgement by England's then head coach.

When pouring over these achievements one could be rather easily fooled into believing that for Williams it came easy. Yet this could not be further from the truth.

Whilst she quite clearly exuded an effortlessly raw footballing talent, life outside of the touchlines was far from easy. Unbeknownst her teammates

and coaches, for six years throughout early part of her career, Williams was homeless.

Family disagreements and self-confessed 'stubbornness' led to Williams' prolonged period living in and out of hostels. With little physical, emotional or psychological security back then, Williams now openly contemplates this time.

Speaking to Oliver Brown at The Telegraph, she reflects, "I probably ended up homeless a little longer than I needed to. When I was first in a hostel, I used to share a room with three other females. My belongings would get stolen, my clothes. That was what troubled me the most. I never had any friendships or relationships there. Inside, I had to remain strong."

It is this inner strength and resolute determination that

propelled Williams to such magnitude on the field. It can be rare to find an athlete of profound talent that with the hunger to tune their gift with such fortitude. It is even rarer to find that elevates so finely with age.

Williams cites former England coach and current Brighton and Hove coach Hope Powell, and former Everton and England U-21 coach Marley, as two of her greatest influences both professionally and personally. For it was Powell who eventually learned of Williams' struggles outside of training. Powell who bought her bedding and drove her to a homeless unit in London that night.

Setbacks and injuries are part and parcel of an athlete's course and Williams was no exception to this. After niggling injuries throughout her career,

her most concerning medical complaint came very late on. A few months prior to announcing her retirement, Williams revealed that she had been diagnosed with Nephrotic Syndrome, a kidney condition that is treated with steroids.

The medication Williams was taking resulted in a number of distressing side effects that partly led to her to take the decision to bow out gracefully.

As her rather fitting game final game against her beloved Chelsea was upon us, we were served with the opportunity to savour a last glimpse of a twenty-year honed creation.

To reflect on a personal evolution that has steadily budded over the years. By her own admission, Williams progressed from “a dribbling creator” to a “creative

passer” (Sarah Shephard, The Athletic) alluding to the rawness that was exorcised and the finesse that was expected. Yet here Williams sells herself short. The footballer that stands before us is far more than a creative passer. Williams is intuitively tactical, expertly navigational and a deadly set piece taker.

But further than this is her first-hand experience of the sport. Williams has lived through the gradual growth of the women’s game; she has remained an integral figure when leagues and clubs have been uprooted, restructured and reinvented. And as this continues to mature, despite her retirement, it is likely that Williams will remain as such.

With media opportunities now broadening, Williams has expressed interest in trying her

hand with punditry or commentary. Williams has called for more truthful critiques of the women’s game, specifically with the national team, who, many would agree, are still not up to par. With an honest mentality and personal knowledge of the game, Williams would certainly bring a refreshingly candid take.

Yet, an ambition that sits slightly closer is coaching, a role Williams has always seen herself taking on.

As she hangs up her boots Williams can proudly look over a job well done and take some deserved time away from the pitch. However, with her proven track record, reciprocal loyalty to football and trademark headstrong approach, one can bet, she won’t be away for too long.



Justin Parry Sports Press Photos



# Stat Attack: Fara Williams

Williams was part of the Team GB squad at the London 2012 Olympics where she made five appearances

Williams was named The Football Association (FA) Young Player of the Year in 2002, FA Players' Player of the Year in 2009 and FA International Player of the Year in both 2007 and 2009

**43:**  
The number of goals scored in domestic competitions for Reading



Everton fans nicknamed her 'Queen Fara'

Williams was 17 when she made her England debut in 2001 against Portugal

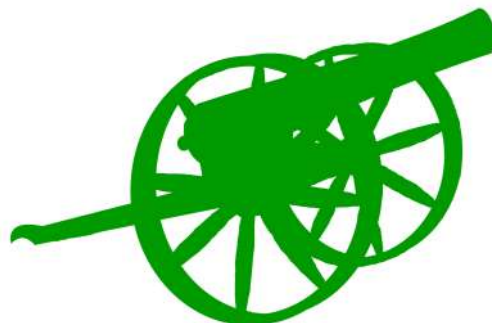


Williams joined Chelsea Ladies under-14s at the age of 12. She scored 30 goals for Chelsea's first team in 2000-01

In 2009 she was set to join Philadelphia Independence but decided to stay with Everton

**172**

Number of Lionesses caps (plus five Great Britain appearances)



As a Lionesses, Williams won three Cyprus Cups, came second in the 2009 Uefa Women's Championship and came third in the 2015 Women's World Cup

Won the FA Cup with Arsenal during the 2015/16 season

## Kelly faces extended spell on the sidelines

Manchester City and England forward Chloe Kelly faces a long recovery after suffering an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury to her right knee.

The injury was sustained in Manchester City's 4-0 win against Birmingham after she had already scored twice in the fixture.

The news ruled Kelly out of the Team GB squad for this summer's Tokyo Olympics.

A club statement said: "Chloe Kelly is set for an extended spell on the sidelines after suffering an ACL injury to her right knee in Sunday's Barclays FA Women's Super League fixture against Birmingham City.

"Everyone at City wishes Chloe all the best in her recovery and will give her all the support she requires."

Writing on Twitter, Kelly said: "Speechless and gutted but grateful for all the support in my first season at this fantastic club.

"I know this won't be easy but I am ready for the challenge ahead. I have the best people around to support me every single step of the way. I promise you I will come back stronger."



## Ludlow appointed academy technical director at Man City

Former Wales manager Jayne Ludlow has joined Manchester City as girls' academy technical director.

The 42-year-old left her post with Wales by mutual consent in January after they failed to qualify for next year's European Championships.

Speaking about her new role, Ludlow said: "I am excited and honoured to be given the opportunity to join Manchester City Football Club as Technical Director of the Girls' Academy.

"I look forward to ensuring that our Academy prioritises personal and football development so that our next generation positively impact the game and societies of the future.

"I am also committed to helping facilitate a creative, positive learning environment where both coaches and players can thrive and one that enables them to reach the highest levels of the game."



## Brett retires from football

Jodie Brett has announced her retirement from football a year after surgery following an injury.

Taking to social media Brett wrote: “With the deepest pain and heaviest of hearts, I am announcing my retirement from football. It saddens me to write this statement, but I believe it is time to shed some light on my injury and subsequent retirement from the beautiful game.

“It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have had a career in the women’s game. There have been some incredible highs, including winning the FA Cup and league with Chelsea, getting promoted with Bristol City, captaining England U19s at the European Championships and so many more.

“Towards the end of 2018, I noticed my left foot was in quite a lot of pain. By April 2019, I had undergone surgery to repair a 9mm fracture as well as a ruptured ligament.

“A week after the operation I noticed many worrying symptoms and was diagnosed with complex regional pain syndrome.

“The last two years have consisted of endless tests and many different types of treatment, I have struggled to get out of bed and lost my ability to move around independently.

“All I wanted was to get back on the pitch. In March 2020 I was told I had suffered severe nerve damage and underwent surgery. However there wasn't much the surgeon could do. This has lead me here, writing this impossible statement.

“Playing football has been my life, it’s all I have known.

“It has been taken from me and the journey to acceptance is a long and cruel path.”



## Birmingham City deducted a point

Birmingham City were deducted a point after Ruesha Littlejohn failed to serve a suspension.

The FA statement added: “In addition, an independent Regulatory Commission has fined Birmingham City £400 after admitting a breach of FA Rule E12 that occurred during the fixture against Reading on Sunday, April 25.”

# WSL alternative awards 2020/21

By **Ali Rampling**

The 2020/21 WSL campaign drew to a close in May, with Chelsea crowned league champions for a second successive season.

Sam Kerr topped the scoring charts with 21 goals, and her Blues teammate Ann-Katrin Berger scooped the Golden Glove award.

Chelsea and WSL runners up Manchester City also dominate the PFA Player and Young Player of the Year award shortlists, with players from the two sides making up nine of the 12 nominees.

But football isn't just about scoring goals, winning matches and performing well. So we present to you the alternative WSL awards for the 2020/21 season to shed light on the teams, players and moments that traditional award formats cruelly overlook.

## Most Outrageous Week of the Season



Federico Guerra/Moran/Sports Press Photo

Jill Roord had managed two WSL goals during the entirety of her maiden season with Arsenal. She had already bettered that tally 81 minutes into the 2020/21 campaign.

The Dutch international netted a hat-trick during the Gunners' 6-1 opening day hammering of Reading, and then six days later she was at it again with another treble as Arsenal dispatched West Ham 9-1.

Roord then called it a day and scored once in her remaining 17 WSL appearances in 2020/21.

## Typo of the Season



Reading supporters - and most fans in the WSL - were very excited when the Royals landed Jess Fishlock on loan. The woman's a bit of an icon; a Champions League winner, a Wales centurion and an MBE recipient.

How does the saying go? 'You know my name not my story'. Only half true for the person responsible for printing Reading's shirts, who gave the Welsh midfielder a German twist and printed 'Fischlock' on the back of her top for her debut against Arsenal, creating a truly unique piece of football memorabilia in the process.

## The 'How on Earth did they Pull that One Off?' Award



Orlagh Gardner/Sports Press Photo

This award could go to Birmingham for their entire campaign after the Blues survived the drop despite Carla Ward not having a senior starting XI when she took the job a matter of weeks before the season started.



Their fighting spirit ultimately saw them stay up thanks to a couple of dramatic last gasp draws - but arguably Birmingham's finest hour was their 1-0 victory over rivals Aston Villa in the WSL's first ever Second City derby, despite the Blues travelling to Villa Park with a matchday squad of just 13.

### **Funniest Injury**



Stephen Flynn/Sports Press Photo

Injuries are never funny, and they especially weren't for West Ham in March as the casualties were piling up and the relegation zone was creeping ever closer.

But the Hammers survived the drop so we can now laugh about why defender Lois Joel was sidelined in retrospect, as boss Olli Harder explained following his side's loss to Chelsea:

"Lois Joel injured her foot celebrating a goal in training trying to jump on a teammate - don't even..."

### **Most Impressive Geese Knowledge of the Season**



It's an award category that has cropped up season after season but has never previously managed to muster a nominee. Until now.

Forever a trailblazer, Emma Hayes was always going to be the inaugural winner of the Most Impressive Geese Knowledge of the Season

Award. Who needs to manage in the men's game when you've got that accolade on your CV?

Speaking ahead of her side's title decider against Reading, the Chelsea boss broke into an in-depth analogy about geese to explain the importance of her squad's ability to rotate.

"It's important different geese lead the formation at different times and take the wind resistance for the rest," Hayes said. "Changing leaders is something that's pretty normal in our environment and, as with geese, everyone's always extremely loyal to the cause."

### **Style Icon of the Season**



Karl Newton/Sports Press Photo

There was stiff competition in this category this season, with Chelsea also nominated for their pink third kit that had Jayne Ludlow pondering: "is that coral or salmon?"

But there could only be one winner.

Former Manchester United boss Casey Stoney is every bit as stylish as she is tactically astute. With her turtle necks, trench coats and suit jackets, the 2020/21 campaign was like she'd strode straight off the set of Line of Duty and into the Leigh Sports Village dugout.

A selection of eye catching bobble hats also debuted during the winter months of the season as the Red Devils saw their title challenge and then Champions League chances ultimately fall by the wayside. Stoney resigned at the end of the 2020/21 campaign following three successful seasons in Manchester, and her predecessor has big boots to fill both football wise and stylistically.

## Sullivan steps down as West Ham Women's Managing Director

West Ham United have confirmed that Jack Sullivan will step down from his role as managing director of the women's team.

The 21-year-old is the son of Hammers joint-chairman David Sullivan and departs after four years in charge.

Since taking over in May 2017, Sullivan played a key role in securing West Ham's place in the Women's Super League.

Following the appointment of experienced manager Olli Harder in December 2020 and the move to train in state of the art facilities at the Club's Chadwell Heath Academy of Football headquarters and play home matches at the 6,000 capacity Dagenham & Redbridge stadium, as well as the recent addition of Paul Konchesky to the backroom team, Sullivan leaves the women's team in an extremely healthy position for the future.

General Manager Aidan Boxall, who joined the Club in April 2020, will now take on greater responsibility in the day-to-day management of the women's set-up.

Sullivan said: "This has been a very tough decision. My time has been hugely rewarding. I will continue to be the team's biggest fan, supporting them in everything they do.

"We've seen fantastic growth in the women's game and I really do encourage more people to get behind it, whether that be following your team on social media, watching your first game on TV or coming down to a game in person."



Orlagh Gardner/Sports Press Photo

## West leaves Aston Villa

Amy West has announced that she has left Aston Villa having been with the club since she was nine-years-old.

Taking to social media, she wrote: "Sadly my time at Aston Villa has come to an end. I never thought playing football professionally was a possibility for me, but to reach the top with the club I love really was a dream come true.

"Thank you to the fans for their unwavering support during very difficult circumstances. I'd also like to send my best wishes to the players, both past and present, that absolutely grafter to help the club on its journey to where it belongs.

"Playing for this club means everything, and there were ups and downs along the way but all of my experience has taught me that if you truly believe in yourself and are passionate about what matters, you will get to where you need to be."



## **Chelsea agree deal to sign Aniek Nouwen**

Before the transfer window had even opened, Women's Super League side Chelsea announced they had agreed a deal to sign Aniek Nouwen from PSV Eindhoven.

The 22-year-old Netherlands defender has agreed pre-contract terms on a three-year deal which commits her to the club until the summer of 2024. She will join up with Emma Hayes' squad ahead of the 2021/22 campaign.

Nouwen made her professional debut in 2016 with PSV and has been a standout player for the team since with over 100 club appearances and 15 goals to her name.

On signing for Chelsea, Nouwen told the official website: "There were other clubs who were interested, but I made my decision to join Chelsea pretty fast!

"To play in the English league has always been a dream for me as it is the best competition and it provides the best opportunity for me to develop even more.

"I'm very honoured and proud to become a Blue and I can't wait to be a part of this winning team. I want to win prizes and play in the big games.

"I'm looking forward to joining up with the team, it's all going to be very new but I'm really excited."

Chelsea FC Women manager Emma Hayes added: "Aniek really is an exciting addition to our squad.

"Not only does she bring a wealth of league and international experience for her age, she is also very composed on the ball and her physicality will certainly suit the English league.

"I have no doubt Aniek is one of the best young defenders in the world and has a very bright future ahead of her with us. We cannot wait to welcome her to Cobham this summer."

Nouwen hopes to be part of the Netherlands national team in Japan this summer at the Tokyo Olympics and will join the Blues upon her return, with her first chance of selection at Chelsea's opening game of the 2021/22 season.

## **Konchesky named West Ham assistant manager**

Paul Konchesky has been appointed as West Ham assistant manager.

The former Hammers full-back, who has been part of the clubs' academy since 2017, will be number two to Olli Harder for the 2021-21 season.

Konchesky told the club's website: "I'm really happy to be joining up with West Ham United Women.

"It's been different for me because I've been helping Olli out over the last five months since his arrival. I've had the chance to get to know the environment and how everything works, and I've really enjoyed it.

"When the opportunity came through from Olli to be his assistant manager, it was a no-brainer for me to work in a top league with some great players in a first-team environment."

"This is a new and exciting opportunity for myself and I am excited to get going."

# Katie McCabe: A Se



## By Charlotte Stacey

As the domestic season draws to a close, awards season begins to heat up, with the very best of the league displayed with all of its goal laden finishers, creative assistants and all-round impressive performers.

Yet as supporters, we must be careful to not just tie these accolades to those with the largest influence across the fanbase. Of course, such players rightly deserve to reap the rewards of their efforts, however it is important to also recognise the work ethic of those who perhaps do not immediately spring to mind. Players who are so greatly impactful, resulting outcomes would simply be unachievable without their participation.

A player much like Arsenal's Katie McCabe.

Katie McCabe has been nothing short of a miracle worker for the gunners thus far. With injuries plaguing Arsenal's ranks from the offset, McCabe has once again spent the majority of her minutes in a slightly 'unnatural' fullback position.

Yet being principally placed as a left back has packed with it a box full of positional delicacies that McCabe has quite conspicuously sunk her teeth in to.

An amplified opportunity to challenge one on one, and a heightened commitment to supporting the backline as opponents root through the middle third, has meant that McCabe has to step up in

exercising her defensive legs. In true McCabe style, she has done so with a spirited conviction that has kept Arsenal out of trouble on a fair few occasions.

The Republic of Ireland captain, however, harbours an attacking grit that will not be shaken no matter where she is on the pitch. Yet it must be noted that an instinctively progressive fullback can sometimes do more damage than it does good. Typically, you would not expect, nor necessarily want, one of your most prolific attacking outlets to stem from one so deeply laid. Essentially this bares the risk of leaving the centre-backs far too stretched in times of oppositional transition. Yet in this case, it has worked. This not only



# Season to Remember



due to Arsenal's controlled organisation and the fielding a disciplined holding midfielder, but also due to McCabe's individual pitch side acumen.

After dutifully carrying out her defensive responsibilities and ensuring her closest central defender is able to 'cover', there is nothing McCabe likes more than to motor up the wing full throttle. Yet, she is wise with this. Simply, there is no use in dragging play out to a wide area unless there is the organisational means to do so and McCabe demonstrates a fine perception here. She is patient. Gradually pressing as part of a larger unit until either possession play, or a quick transition, offers the opportune time to flood the

wing with an fierce overlapping run.

Once McCabe has found her way into the final third, she comes alive. Shirt in, head up, we're in business. McCabe is able to successfully continue to operate wide or to cut inside with a slick dribble towards the box. Yet, possibly the most remarkable indicator of McCabe's skill is her ability to seamlessly plant the ball to an exact location with a single touch. With a masterful left foot, it can often times appear that her successor is charged to the current of her pinpoint pass.

This ability to create further evidenced by the stack of statistics in favour of her sharp eye to create. McCabe will end the season with the

highest number of assists, plus the highest number of key passes and crosses into the penalty area. And so, one must rather strongly argue McCabe's case to be broadly recognised for her performances throughout the season. Although the more official voting may not reflect this, there is little doubt that McCabe should very much be a heavy contender for "player of the season".

Looking forward, Arsenal are set to incur managerial changes over the coming weeks. However, one retains a genuinely positive belief in their cohort and their collective ability to retain standards.

The Gunners will be fine; they've got Katie McCabe.



# The FA Women's Super League

	Final 20/21 table	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Chelsea	22	18	3	1	59	57
2	Manchester City	22	17	4	1	52	55
3	Arsenal	22	15	3	4	48	48
4	Manchester United	22	15	2	5	24	47
5	Everton	22	9	5	8	9	32
6	Brighton & Hove Albion	22	8	3	11	-20	27
7	Reading	22	5	9	8	-16	24
8	Tottenham Hotspur	22	5	5	12	-23	20
9	West Ham United	22	3	6	13	-18	15
10	Aston Villa	22	3	6	13	-32	15
11	Birmingham City	22	3	6	13	-29	14
12	Bristol City	22	2	6	14	-54	12

## May results

### Sunday, May 2

Aston Villa 0-0 West Ham

Everton 1-2 Arsenal

Bristol City 0-1 Manchester United

Reading 3-2 Brighton & HA

Manchester City 4-0 Birmingham City

### Wednesday, May 5

Tottenham Hotspur 0-2 Chelsea

### Sunday, May 9

Arsenal 0-0 Aston Villa

Birmingham City 0-1 Tottenham Hotspur

Brighton & HA 3-1 Bristol City

Chelsea 5-0 Reading

Manchester United 2-0 Everton

West Ham United 0-1 Manchester City

## PFA Team of the Year

Ann Katrin-Berger (Chelsea), Katie McCabe (Arsenal), Leah Williamson (Arsenal), Magdalena Eriksson (Chelsea), Maren Mjelde (Chelsea), Sam Mewis (Man City), Caroline Weir (Man City), Sam Kerr (Chelsea), Chloe Kelly (Man City), Fran Kirby (Chelsea), Lauren Hemp (Man City)



# Retained/Released

## Arsenal



**In:** Mana Iwabuchi

**Out:** Jill Roord

**Released:** Leonie Maier

## Aston Villa



**Out:** Mana Iwabuchi

**Released:** Ella Franklin-Fraiture, Emma Follis, Amy West, Caroline Siems, Diana Silva, Nadine Hanssen

## Brighton & Hove Albion



**New deals:** Victoria Williams, Megan Walsh

**Contract offers:** Dani Bowman, Kayleigh Green, Inessa Kaagman, Danique Kerkdijk, Emily Simpkins, Maisie Symonds and Aileen Whelan.

**Under contract:** Ellie Brazil, Megan Connolly, Fliss Gibbons, Emma Koivisto, Maya Le Tissier, Katie Robinson and Katie Startup

**Players departing:** Lee Geum-Min (returned to parent club Manchester City)

**Released:** Kirsty Barton, Jodie Brett, Cecilie Fiskerstrand, Rianna Jarrett, Nora Heroum, Hollie Olding, Laura Rafferty, Beth Roe and Rebekah Stott



## Chelsea

**In:** Aniek Nouwen



## Everton

**Retired:** Ingrid Moe Wold



## Leicester City

**New deals:** Ashleigh Plumptre, Charlie Devlin



## Manchester City

**Out:** Sam Mewis, Rose Lavelle

## Reading



**Out:** Angharad James

**Retired:** Fara Williams

**Released:** Lauren Bruton, Molly Bartip

## Tottenham Hotspur



**Released:** Rianna Dean, Alanna Kennedy, Gemma Davison, Anna Filbey, Hannah Godfrey, Lucia Leon, Aurora Mikalsen, Chlow Peplow, Lucy Quinn, Siri Worm, Elisha Sulola

## West Ham United



### Players

### Under

**Contract:** Mackenzie Arnold, Dagny Brynjarsdottir, Hawa Cissoko, Gilly Flaherty, Alisha Lehmann, Adriana Leon, Kate

Longhurst, Nor Mustafa, Maz Pacheco, Katerina Svitkova, Tameka Yallop

**Players Departing:** Courtney Brosnan, Kenza Dali, Anouk Denton, Emily van Edmond, Leanne Kiernan, Cecilie Redisch, Martha Thomas, Laura Vetterlein

# Mia North: Becoming Mo



My journey in football started when I was around 10 years old. Due to there not being many girls' teams around I was forced to play in a boys' team which was technically 'mixed'. At the time, playing in a boys' team was more normal due to a lack of girls' teams around so the prospect of playing with boys did not really scare me, it just made me excited that I could play football properly.

There was a challenge though with the whole facade that "girls can't play football" and that I was an immediate weakness just because of my gender. As a result there was added pressure on myself to make even less mistakes because I felt like I had to prove myself and I did not want to think about how the other boys would react or feel if they saw the girl making an error. There were multiple occasions where I would have boys sit behind my goal and laugh at me for being "the girl in goal". This could have easily been a point in my life where I stopped wanting to play but instead, I used it as a motivation for me to prove them wrong.

The social aspect for the first couple of years was a lot harder as well seeing as the boys on my team were very different to me. I struggled for conversation starters and the boys were much rowdier compared to me as I was quite shy so I struggled to make real friends. However, they never made me feel inferior to them and the coaching staff and parents were also lovely so there was enough enjoyment for me to carry on.

I finally joined a girls' team when I was 12. I spent the next 3-4 years with this team where I enjoyed a really successful few years, winning our league multiple times, multiple tournament victories and multiple county cup triumphs. During these years, I also stepped into the county environment and I was selected for a training camp with Wales U19s at the age of 16.

Once I turned 16, I joined WSL team Yeovil Ladies where I spent the next 2 years of my career. The second year of being there saw me go into my first year of college in Bridgwater meaning I had to

move out and live in an accommodation whilst training every day. Moving out at 16 was a big change for me, and there was one point where I did not want to do it. I was fearful of being home sick and missing my friends at school, but I ended up embracing the new environment more than my parents or I would have ever expected it.

In my first year I never got homesick once! I still missed my friends, but I was enjoying the new independence and due to making lots of new friends at accommodation - I was always up to something and rarely on my own, so it became very easy. Alongside this, it massively helped that I went home practically every weekend due to not having any games so I was able to still see my parents and friends every week, so I was not thrown in the deep end of not coming home for prolonged periods of time straight away. Being at Yeovil was when I first experienced academy football and played the likes of Manchester City, Chelsea, Arsenal etc. I also had 2 first team bench



# re Than the 'Girl in Goal'



appearances against Arsenal and Everton Women.

After my first year of college, I decided I wanted to move on from Yeovil which saw me eventually end up where I am now which is West Ham. Soon after playing with the U21s, I was called up to the Wales U19s squad for the Euro Qualifiers where I enjoyed 10 days in Northern Ireland competing against Norway, Northern Ireland and Moldova. Following this tournament, I had another call up to the first team after which, I completed the rest of the season with the U21s before COVID-19 hit and our season unfortunately had to be null and void.

If we skip to present day, I am currently a first year at UEL and in my second year with West Ham, I came out of college with 3 distinction stars in my BTEC and have just completed my first term on Sports and Exercise Science where I achieved firsts across all my modules. I am now on loan at Dulwich Hamlet Women where I am looking to gain experience within the women's game and also

looking to develop massively as a player.

When I look at the modern women's game now, it definitely has come a long way since I first started playing. First of all I think in a way we have benefitted from less exposure. The women's game has a lot less dramatics, much less diving and dialogue on the pitch itself is definitely less violent. However, the recent WSL deal with Sky Sports is a really exciting one and one which I hope will start to give the game the exposure it needs to be more successful. Hopefully over the next few years, the game will grow exponentially and we will hopefully see more equity between the men and women's game.

Furthermore, if I think back to when I was young, there were few women's teams around my local area and across the country, there were not many professional academy setups, this is why the county route for girls was so prevalent. Nowadays however, that has changed, for instance, West Ham have the West Ham

Foundation where they coach and bring up young girls through their ranks which a lot more highly affiliated clubs are now doing.

If I was born in that generation, I think the pressure on me would have definitely been higher because I would be having been in a more professional setup playing alongside other girls. However, there are so many positives that come from academies and a more stable pathway from grassroots for young girls will do wonders not only in terms of ability but also to provide the belief that football can be more than a hobby.

Looking back now, I am glad I got to just enjoy football as a fun hobby before joining Yeovil academy because when you are so young, I think enjoyment is the most important thing and putting a child into a serious environment straight away may deter them more than it nurtures them which is why I am thankful to have had my time in the boys team as well as the early girls team I played for in my career.



# CHAMPIONSHIP





## **Redfearn signs new contract**

Sheffield United Women have announced that head coach Neil Redfearn has signed a new two-year deal.

It will see him in charge until the end of the 2022/23 season.

Adam Kennerley will join the first team coaching staff as a new strength and conditioning coach for the 2021/22 season.

Stephen Bettis, Chief Executive Officer: "After a competitive finish in his first season in charge, we are delighted that Neil has committed for two more years, the aim being to continue to progress."

## **Blades new contracts**

Midfielder Rhema Lord-Mears has signed a new two-year deal with Sheffield United.

Maddy Cusack, another midfielder has also committed to the club for the 2021/22 season.

Finally, Sophie Walton will also stay at the Blades for the next season.

### **Docherty becomes professional**

Sheffield United have given Charley Docherty her first professional contract.

Docherty turned 18 at the end of May and stepped up to the first team last summer.

Redfearn said: "She's got to take great credit for the way she has performed and developed as a player.

"We've got really high hopes for Charley and it's fantastic to sign her. She's a vital part of the group."

Docherty added: "It feels unreal. It feels like a lot of hard work is definitely starting to pay off. I think over the last year is where I've made most of my development as a player.

### **Sophie Bradley-Auckland signs for Blades**

Sheffield United have signed defender Sophie Bradley-Auckland.

The 31-year-old joins the club from Liverpool, but took a year out of the game due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Head coach Redfearn said: "Bradders is a massive signing for us. I had her at Doncaster Rovers Belles, I took her to Liverpool.

"You look at her CV, played international football for England, for Team GB, she's a really massive signing for us and a real statement of intent."

#### **Other Sheffield United news:**

**Keri Matthews departs**

**Tamara Wilcock will remain at the club**

**Ocean Rolandsen signs permanent deal with the club**

**Becky Flaherty leaves club**

## **Matt Beard**

Liverpool have announced Matt Beard has been appointed as the Championship side's new manager.

The 43-year-old returns to the club almost six years after he first departed.

Beard originally joined LFC Women in 2012 and built a squad which won back-to-back Women's Super League titles in 2013 and 2014. He also led the Reds in their first Champions League campaign.

After returning from his spell with Boston Breakers in the States, he enjoyed two years with West Ham United Women, including a run to the Women's FA Cup final in 2019, before spending the last few months with Bristol City Women.

He told the official website: "I'm delighted to be back at Liverpool Women. When the opportunity arose it was something I wanted to do. I've always followed the club since I left, it's close to my heart.

"When you're here and then you're away from the football club you realise how special and unique it is.

"I've never been in a city or worked for a football club where the football is the be all and end all to the supporters. I just can't wait to get started.

"It's a fascinating football club, it's a fascinating city. Myself and my family loved our time here and we're really looking forward to coming back."

The LFC Women board said Beard's appointment followed a rigorous and open process which saw applications from more than 160 candidates, with many more interviewed than normal.

"We have great pleasure in welcoming Matt back to Liverpool Women," said the board. "Of course, we know him particularly well from his highly successful previous spell with the club and have followed his progress closely."

## **Hincks announces departure from Palace**

Ashlee Hincks has announced she has left Crystal Palace at the end of the season.

Hincks took to Twitter to announce the news saying: "My time with Crystal Palace has come to an end. It's been three years of ups and downs—winning Player of the Year in my first season to rupturing my ACL in the second.

"However I leave the club in a much better place, highest points tally and league finish since we were awarded Championship status in my first season.

"Thank you to everyone involved in my recovery to get me back playing again, something I'll always be grateful for.

"For me, it's now looking for a new adventure and chapter in my career and I wish Crystal Palace all the best for the future."

Many players including Leah Nicol, Amy Goddard and Chloe Morgan responded to the post calling her a 'club legend'.

Kate Natkiel wrote: "Good luck with everything Ash, thanks for making 2020 a better year.

"An absolute unreal footballer, wherever your next steps take you, I can't wait to watch you smash it."



# Liverpool face backlash after players speak out



Former Liverpool players Kirsty Linnett and Becky Jane have hit out at the Championship club over the way they were treated.

Linnett confirmed her departure from Liverpool on May 21.

Taking to Twitter, she claimed a contract offer previously sent to her agent had been retracted without her being informed.

She wrote: "My time at Liverpool has come to an end... I have seen a lot of similar experiences to what I have experienced below in women's football recently.

"Something needs to change, people need to be treated better, it's not good enough.

"It would have been nice if someone from the club had the decency to tell me that they were retracting the contract offer they'd previously sent my agent.

"I felt that after three years the least I deserved was a face to face meeting the moment they knew they wanted to let me go.

"Instead of calling my agent, telling him and then asking him to decide whether to tell me or the club call me!

"It's also sad that this situation was only brought to light after my agent had emailed the GM to further the negotiations.

"Football is football but where does this stop? I've no hard feeling with being let go, it's part of the game.

"What upsets me is the club support campaigns for mental health yet treat their own players with such little regard and respect.

"Let's hope clubs can do better by their players during these difficult times and act with more care for the people involved as manners and morals cost nothing."

Shortly after the post went live, fellow teammate Jane wrote: "Unfortunately, similar to Kirsty Linnett.

"The club have retracted my contract offer in a similar way. As female footballers with zero security as it is; the least we deserve is to be treated better and with respect. It takes nothing to be kind. Thank you to my teammates."

In response to the comments, a Liverpool spokesperson said: "Like all professional clubs, Liverpool Women are in the process of compiling their retained and released list for the forthcoming season.

"Several clubs have already announced their list and LFCW will release their own complete list in due course.

"With the players two weeks into their off season holidays, the club has been informing all affected players of decisions as early as possible.

"With players contracted until the end of June this gives them the best possible chance of securing new clubs and making plans for next season.

"Players' agents have also been informed as is standard practice.

"We of course thank all the players who will be moving on for their service to the club and wish them nothing but success in the future."

## Little retires

Sheffield United captain Leandra Little has announced her retirement from the game.

The defender played her final game in the Women's FA Cup tie against Tottenham Hotspur.

Taking to Twitter following the match, Little wrote: "I am absolutely overwhelmed with all the lovely messages I have received today - I am so grateful, thank you so much to every single one of you - in time I will reply to everyone! So proud of my team today gave absolutely everything."

Little, who started playing basketball and representing England as a teenager, became a footballer when she joined Lincoln City in 2007.

Little then spent six years at Doncaster Belles before joining Liverpool and finally Sheffield United in 2019.

When the FA WSL era began in 2011, Little was part of the Lincoln side which was one of the eight original teams in the league, playing alongside the likes of England regulars Casey Stoney, Sue Smith and Sophie Bradley-Auckland.

Speaking to the official website, head coach Neil Redfearn said: "Lea has been a massive part of the team. She captained my side at Donny Belles, I signed her for Liverpool. She's a leader, not only is she a good player, she's a top person and good people make winning teams.

"She will be big boots to fill. I understand the circumstances of why she's retiring and I wish her well and all the best. On behalf of everyone at the club I'd like to thank her but she's been a tremendous servant to not just us but the game as a whole."



## Billard steps down as head of women's football at Bristol City

Lee Billiard has left his role as Bristol City's head of women's football after 12 months in the role.

Bristol City were relegated from the Women's Super League at the end of the 2020/21 season.

Bristol City Academy Manager Gary Probert and Assistant Academy Manager Gary Davenport will use their experience and expertise to support the process of "rebuilding in the Championship".

Bristol City Chairman Jon Lansdown said: "On behalf of Bristol City and everyone at the club I would like to thank Lee for his services over the last 12 months and wish him well in the future."

This comes after Matt Beard's position as interim manager comes to an end.

Beard arrived in mid-January as Maternity cover for Tanya Oxtoby.



## **Dykes departs from Bristol City**

Bristol City have confirmed that Loren Dykes has left the coaching staff of the new Championship club.

The Robins were relegated to the Championship at the end of the 2020/21 season.

Dykes, who has been part of the club for 12 years will now take up a full-time role with FA Wales as Assistant Coach to new Wales boss Gemma Grainger as well as overseeing the Under-17s programme.

A statement from Bristol City said: “Bristol City Women can confirm that Loren Dykes will depart from the club’s coaching staff after 12 years of service.

“The club stalwart hung up her boots in the summer of 2020 after an 11-year playing career, which saw her amass more than a century of WSL and international appearances for City and Wales respectively.

“The former full-back first joined the club during the 2008/09 campaign, formerly known as Bristol Academy and went on to have a remarkable career spanning over a decade.

“Dykes made no secret of her passion for coaching throughout her career and the start of the 2020/21 season saw the international centurion come on board as Assistant Coach at Bristol City under manager Tanya Oxtoby.

“2019 saw Loren’s contribution to the women’s game honoured by the Queen as she was awarded an MBE in the New Year’s Honours List for her services to women’s football in Wales.”

Ella Mastrantonio and Georgia Wilson have been released by the club following the expiration of their current contracts.

Mastrantonio joined the Robins in the summer of 2020 from W-League outfit Western Sydney Wanderers, making 20 appearances in all competitions and scoring once against Aston Villa in April.

Wilson, a graduate of the club’s Regional Talent Centre programme and Academy, also departs from the City Women ranks this summer after making 16 first team appearances across the last two campaigns.

## **Kitching undergoes surgery**

Fran Kitching has undergone correctional surgery, 15 months after a grue some head injury left her with a deep cut on her forehead.

In a training ground accident, the Liverpool Women’s goalkeeper was caught by a boot as she attempted to gather a ball on the ground and required stitches to repair the deep wound.

Kitching took to social media to update fans on the operation.

She wrote: “Operation: Feel Pretty. I’ve waited 15 months for this correctional surgery, something I’ve been petrified for for months and I now can’t wait to see how I develop.

“So many days have gone by where I’ve hated to look at myself or cried as to why this happened to me. But on to new beginnings and I’m ready to rest and recover to make myself look like me again.

“Time to get my mental health stronger and get back being a bad ass B.”

# Durham launch new player development centres



Durham Women have launched four new player development centres which offer young players a pathway to their Regional Talent Club.

The sessions, which will begin on 7th June, will be a fun and skills-based opportunity for players to help further their game.

Any aspiring female footballer in Year Three to Year Six (for 2021/22) are able to attend and across a six-week block they will learn from qualified and enthusiastic coaches in a local environment.

The Player Development Centres will form part of Durham Women FC's talent pathway and will offer youngsters a pathway to progress with the club – but players can combine attending the centre with playing for their current grassroots club.

As part of our continuing commitment to ensure opportunities are accessible across the region, the sessions will be held at four different venues:

Northumberland – New Fordley, NE23 7RB (Grass surface)

Newcastle College, NE4 7SA (Indoor sports hall)

Kepier, DH4 5BH (Artificial surface)

Bede Sixth Form Centre, TS23 3HB (Artificial surface)

Each venue will hold sessions on a Monday evening, from 5pm – 6pm.

Commenting on the launch of the new centres, Durham Women's pathway and development manager Maddy Wood said: "This is a great opportunity for young girls to join our pathway with fun sessions focusing on ball mastery with our club coaches, whilst encouraging players to continue to play in their grassroots teams."

Sessions will be held on the following dates: June 7, June 14, June 21, June 28, July 5, July 12.

Every session will last an hour and will begin at 5pm.

Youngsters wishing to participate in the Player Development Centre can attend all six sessions at the venue of their choice for just £10.

For more information go to: [www.durhamwfc.co.uk](http://www.durhamwfc.co.uk)



## Newton departs Lewes Women

Championship side Lewes has announced that U18s manager Kelly Newton has left the club.

Newton has spent nearly 20 years at Lewes after joining the club in the 2002/03 season as a player.

She made over 390 appearances for the Rooks, became the first team captain, and retired to become the U18s manager in 2018.

On retiring she became the first Lewes player to join the club's 'Hall of Fame'.

She will be leaving the club for a role at Worthing FC where she will be the first team assistant manager.

Newton told the official website: "I feel a mixture of pride and sadness stepping away from Lewes.

"The reaction I have had from the players since I have announced my departure has been incredibly sweet and shows that myself, Charlie and Greg have made a real impact in the short time we have worked together. I definitely underestimated the emotion we would all feel after our final game."

## Rovers get new talent centre home

The UCLan Sports Arena has been announced as the new home of Blackburn Rovers' Regional Talent Club.

Rovers Ladies manager Gemma Donnelly told the official website: "I am thrilled to officially be able to work with UCLan. They have a strong and clear vision to want to propel Women's football further forward and together we can make this happen.

"We will move all of our RTC programme, along with aspects of the Ladies operation, to the University, which will complement our current partnership with our own Jade Richards, who is UCLan's High Performance Coach within Women's Football.

## London City Lionesses to sponsor Brazil Women's National rugby team

London City Lionesses have announced they will sponsor Brasil's Amazonas in the Women's Rugby World Cup.

The groundbreaking sponsorship will see the Lionesses' logo appear on the front of Brasil's kit, and raise the profile of both teams, which boast synergies championing female participation in sport.

"When we heard Brasil had qualified for the Women's Rugby League World Cup it pricked our ears, because our charter is all about breaking new ground for female athletes and community development," Chairwoman Culligan said.

"Sponsoring a women's rugby league team is a little out-of-the-box, but that's a mindset we aren't afraid of adopting."

Prior to the start of the Women's World Cup, the Amazonas squad will be guests of the Lionesses for a tour of London and some fun cross-code challenges.

Most of the Brazil squad have never been to the UK before.



# WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE





# Doncaster Rovers Belles legend

## Julie Chipchase dies



Former Doncaster Rovers Belles boss Julie Chipchase has died aged 60.

The club announced that Chipchase had died following a short illness.

She managed Belles for six years and was their director of football, she also had spells coaching at Leeds United and England.

The statement from Doncaster said: “Everyone at the Belles is saddened to learn of the loss of Julie Chipchase, a pioneer of women’s football who passed away on Tuesday morning after a short illness.

“Julie had performed every role possible at the Belles since joining as a player in the 1970s, including managing the team, and remained director of football and a board member until her death.

“Belles founder and president Sheila Edmunds said: “It’s a huge loss to me personally but also to the women’s game - she pioneered the development of female coaches and managers and leaves behind a real legacy.” □

“Chippy and I had a very special friendship both inside and outside football, her heart was in the Belles and she did everything she possibly could for the club. It felt like we were two of the last from the old guard, and our hearts go out to her family.” □

“She was well liked, loved and respected by everyone she met in football and is an all round Belles legend. And it’s not just women’s football - she’s supported and delivered the A licence to some of the best coaches around through her role with the Football Association.” □

“Julie spent six years as Belles manager, before going on to work with Leeds United Ladies and the England Women’s teams from U15s right up to the seniors.”

A tweet from Fifa said: “At a time when the women’s game was struggling for resources and recognition, she selflessly gave her all, passing on her passion and knowledge to inspire others.”

# MARCO FLOREALE

## *on The Game of Two Halves*

**By Helen Rowe-Willcocks**

***Did you know that 40% of professional footballers became bankrupt within five years of kicking their last ball?***

*I was shocked to find out this statistic and that most players have no plans for when they retire from football. The Game of Two Halves helps footballers prepare for what happens next after the final whistle blows and as the women's game continues to grow in the UK, they believe that more women's footballers need to get representation and help to guide them through their career.*

*I spent an afternoon listening to Marco Floreale passionately talk about how he wants to change footballers lives for the better and learn from where many went wrong in the past. It is no secret that many of the best footballers have admitted to addiction problems, money worries and secrets which have plagued them both during and after their careers and Floreale and his team at The Game of Two Halves have set out to make sure the footballers of the future are better prepared and better equipped for whatever life throws at them.*

*Over the next six issues, we will be looking into the different are-*

*as of football and The Game of Two Halves brand to show how a player welfare programme can benefit women's footballers through all stages of their career.*

The Game of Two Halves was set up in 2020 when Floreale came back from six years working in Africa and wanted a change in direction for his career.

"I had been in Mauritius for three years and whilst it is a beautiful island, I was so detached from reality, that it was time to come," Floreale told me.

"I sat and thought about what I wanted to do and what I was passionate about. The one thing that kept coming back to me was my knowledge and love of for the beautiful game of football. I started looking at what I could bring to the beautiful game with my solicitor's hat on which got me traction because I didn't come across like a typical agent."

***“ I don't want our players being part of the statistic ”***

The Game of Two Halves is far from what you would expect from a typical agency. As well as helping you secure contracts and move up the football pyramid, they help players in all aspects of their lives including branding, finance and education.

Floreale added: "I soon realised that I wanted to do more than just contract negotiations because it's still just a contract. You fill the same details in, check the terms and conditions and that's that. So I started to read up more about what was wrong in football and the statistic that 40% of footballers end up bankrupt within five years of finishing their career really stood out to me.

"Most players finish before they are 35 so by 40 they could be having to start all over again. I realised I could not change the past but I knew I wanted the people who came on board with me and trusted me, didn't end up as one of those statistics.

"Whatever you have done from the ages 20 to 35, needs to sustain you. If you have not done it right then you need qualifications and knowledge to go back into the work force. You can be slightly hindered in a place of work because all you have done is play football.



“If you have a way with numbers you could become an accountant but then at 40 you will have to study again, so why not do that when you are playing football so you are as prepared as you can be?”

When looking at the Game of Two Halves it is clear to see that they stand out from any of their competitors. They offer a full service with everyone on the board “licensed, educated and regulated”.

“I think that is where we stand out from the crowd,” Floreale added.

“Anybody can be an agent if you have £500 and a clean police record but we knew we wanted to be different. We want to provide

the best. These are people’s lives and careers and they want us to represent us.

“They want to get the best out of their career and we want to be the best because we are educated to be not just because we had some spare cash and felt like becoming an agent or my best mates’ dad’s son has just become a footballer.

“We have the right people who will do right by their clients. Clients is such a key word in this whole business. They are not assets, they are not pieces of meat or pawns in a game, they are clients. My duty is to my client.”

Listening to Floreale talk, it is clear to hear his passion for

football and how much he wants to do the best for those he represents.

Whilst the Game of Two Halves initially started on the men’s side of football, they have recently signed their first two women’s players to the company.

“We treat everybody as a client. We don’t see gender, race or any other aspects which make people unique which just see a footballer.

“Women’s football is growing so much in the UK and the representation side of the game needs to grow with it.”

*You can read more about The Game of Two Halves in next month’s issue where we discuss the four stages of a footballers career.*



**GAME OF  
TWO HALVES**

# ALL ABOUT PLAYER WELFARE



## LEGAL

- Scouting network globally.
- Representation in the boardroom.
- In house solicitor with decades of experience.

## EDUCATION

- Study your way to MBA level.
- We’re investing in you, by paying for your education.
- Exclusive relationship with Johan Cruyff Institute.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE CAN HELP



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## BRAND

- Social media experts.
- Become your own brand.
- Generate income alongside football.

## FINANCE

- Domestic players advised by UK FCA Regulated Firm.
- No matter where you are in the world you have a dedicated Financial Advisor to help.
- International players advised by world’s largest Independent Financial Advisory group.

**WE KEEP YOU ONSIDE,  
ON AND OFF THE PITCH**

**OUR ONE GOAL  
IS TO ENSURE  
OUR PLAYERS  
HAVE A LIFE  
AFTER  
FOOTBALL AND  
DON’T BECOME  
ONE OF THE 40%  
THAT ARE  
BANKRUPT  
WITHIN 5 YEARS  
OF RETIRING.**

## Pompey complete Cup double

Portsmouth Ladies have retained the Portsmouth Divisional FA Cup beating Moneyfields on penalties at Westleigh Park.

The win adds to the silverware already in the cabinet from the season after they won the Hampshire Cup last month.

It was a repeat of the 2019/20 showpiece – delayed by Covid until last October – which saw the Blues triumph 4-1.

But despite creating plenty of chances inside 90 minutes, they were denied by the post and crossbar on several occasions.

**Pompey:** Haughton; Tonks (Jones 55), Younger, Ingram (Currie 69); Bridge, James (c), Rowe, Rowbotham; Adaway (Cunningham 69), Albuery, Widdows

**Subs not used:** Mason, Laidlaw



Dave Haines & Lily Moore

## Sutherland makes a move to the USA

Ipswich Town Ladies U21 captain Molly Sutherland is set to move to the University of Texas in El Paso.

She will spend the next four years playing football at the University for the Miners who are part of the NCAA Division One and play their away games across the southern states of the USA.

She previously played for Leicester City RTC, St Ives Rangers, Cambridge United and Huntingdon Town Rowdies.



# Leyton Orient severs ties with women's team



Leyton Orient have severed ties with the women's team that bears the League Two men's club name after six years.

The Brisbane Road club is to set up its own women's academy and a first team that will compete in the sixth tier of the women's football system.

The current Leyton Orient Women side, who took up the name in 2015, play in the fourth tier and will be renamed.

In a statement the current women's team said it was "intensely disappointed" by the League Two club's decision.

They said they had no prior warning of the men's team's plans, which they were first told about on Tuesday, 20 April.

"LOFC have removed the women's teams' ability to play under the Orient name and identity, and have done so in an unhelpful and damaging way, without due consideration for the impact on players and volunteers," the statement from the women's team added.

"As a club who have already proudly and successfully represented Leyton Orient, LOWFC offered them the opportunity to take

over our FA Women's National League (WNL) tier four licence and manage the current women's structure internally.

"However, LOFC declined even to consider or discuss this option.

"This would have enabled LOFC to continue to have WNL teams and provide the new girls' academy with a clear pathway into a high level of women's football."

Speaking about Leyton Orient's plans to set up their new women's team, director of football Martin Ling said: "We believe there is a huge opportunity in the local area to open doors for female players to become part of our new set-up and progress their own ambitions as footballers."

As part of the changes Leyton Orient have promised they will not approach any players currently registered with the soon to be renamed Leyton Orient Women side.

Centre-back Kate Kerr said: "It made us feel like we don't matter. It's been super disheartening as a women's footballer to feel like this is the harsh reality."

# Women's Football Pyramid u



The FA can confirm that the Upward Club Movement process within the Women's Football Pyramid, which was opened via application in April, has now been determined by the Women's Football Board following the curtailment of the 2020/2021 season in Tiers 3-6.

All clubs participating in Tiers 3 to 6 (inclusive) of the Women's Pyramid were permitted to apply for upward movement, with successful clubs moving into the league or division immediately above the Tier in which they currently operate.

As a result, FA Women's National League Northern Premier side, Sunderland, and FA Women's National League Southern Premier side, Watford, have been successful in applying for upward movement and will compete in the FA Women's Championship next season.

Wolverhampton Wanderers and Brighouse Town will move up into Tier 3 (FA WNL Northern Premier), along with Southampton FC and Ipswich Town (FA WNL Southern Premier).

Full details of upwards club movement are as follows:

## **FA Women's Championship (Tier 2)**

- Sunderland
- Watford

## **FA WNL Northern Premier (Tier 3)**

- Wolverhampton Wanderers
- Brighouse Town

## **FA WNL Southern Premier (Tier 3)**

- Ipswich Town
- Southampton

## **FA WNL Division 1 North (Tier 4)**

- Alnwick Town
- FC United of Manchester

## **FA WNL Division 1 Mids (Tier 4)**

- Peterborough United
- Leek Town

## **FA WNL Division 1 SE (Tier 4)**

- Harlow Town
- Queens Park Rangers

## **FA WNL Division 1 SW (Tier 4)**

- AFC Bournemouth
- Portishead Town

## **North West Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- AFC Darwin (only one application)

## **North East Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- Sunderland West End
- Wakefield Trinity



# upward movement confirmed



## **West Midlands Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- Tamworth
- Stourbridge

## **East Midlands Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- Lincoln City
- Notts County

## **Eastern Region Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- King's Lynn Town
- Millwall Lionesses (Millwall have also had an application for sideways movement approved so will play in the London & South East Regional Premier Division)

## **London & South East Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- New London Lionesses
- Worthing

## **Southern Region Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- Abingdon Town

## **South West Regional Premier Division (Tier 5)**

- AFC St Austell
- Sherborne Town
- Forest Green Rovers

Applications were marked against a criteria weighted 75% on-field and 25% off-field.

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

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

Clubs applying to move into the FA Women's Championship, also had to demonstrate that they would be able to meet the required licence criteria.

Clubs were recently informed of the outcome of their applications and successful clubs will now be preparing during the off-season ahead of the 2021/2022 season.

The FA would like to thank all clubs who applied following an impressive set of applications; and congratulate all those clubs who made successful applications as well as thank Leagues and County FAs for their support.

Decisions on Promotion Pool applications (movement from Tier 7 to Tier 6) and other movements within the Women's Football Pyramid will be made shortly and confirmed to clubs, allowing full league allocations to be confirmed in due course.



# GRASSROOTS





# Goal Power! Women and Football



A new exhibition exploring the power of women's football will coincide with the UK hosting the Women's European Football Championship with Brighton & Hove as one of the nine host cities.

The tournament will build on the success of the 2019 Women's World Cup, which FIFA estimated had over one billion viewers worldwide.

The exhibition will highlight the close link between football and feminism and share stories of those who have fought for equal rights through football from the suffragettes to women and girls today.

From the first pioneers who fought established stereotypes, early football stars who drew huge crowds to games, to the Football Association's historic ban of women's football 100 years ago, and the game's recovery following the FA's gradual lifting of the ban from 1970 onwards – football is never just a game.

Curator Jody East of the Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust said: "Public and media attention and awareness of women's football both nationally and locally will be higher than ever in 2022.

"It is an opportunity for the Royal Pavilion &

Museums Trust to be part of a city-wide celebration and inspire fans and non-fans alike with historic and contemporary stories of football as a vehicle for social activism and the fight for women's rights and equality. "

"Football is a fiercely passionate subject that transcends simply being a 'sport' and can offer opportunities for social change, self-empowerment and connection, from a grassroots level. "

The show is supported by football clubs representing all levels of the women's game from the Women's Super League to local programmes such as those offered by Brighton Galaxy Football Academy.

The exhibition will highlight the untold stories, experiences and history of early Brighton & Hove teams including the importance of trailblazing players, managers, supporters and other passionate individuals instrumental in the resurgence of women's football in Sussex in the 70s, 80s and 90s.

As part of the exhibition museum teams will work with local schools and young people, fans, football historians and local communities. Their personal stories of how football changed their lives and how they changed the direction of football have never been told before.

# ABBY CHIVERTON

## *'Grassroots Player of the Year'*

**By Helen Rowe-Willcocks**

Abby Chiverton is a football fanatic.

To say she loves the game is an understatement.

From following Portsmouth men and women home and away, to playing for three different teams and producing a vlog with her Dad Ian, it's hard to see how she fits anything else in.

After being nominated in our first awards but narrowly losing out to sisters Keisha and Jessica Lean in 2019, it was brilliant to see she had made it back on to the shortlist again.

We travelled down to Godalming one Saturday morning to watch her in a tournament with Milford Pumas. We had been there for less than five minutes before Abby had put in a key challenge and was covered head to toe in mud.

Milford Pumas had a fantastic tournament and

were crowned Waverley Cup champions, not conceding a goal across six games. Abby also won Tackle of the Tournament for a brilliant slide challenge in the Cup final – and that just sums her up.

During a break in play we chatted to Abby and Ian about her love for the game.

**When did you find out you had been nominated?**

**AC:** Dad was scrolling through Twitter and he saw me tagged in the tweet to say I had been nominated. I was really excited when he showed me. It was a massive shock, I was not expecting it. When I found out, I was really excited and really hoping I would win.

*“The boys respect me now, I am one of the team”*

**IC:** We don't know who nominated her. I did the first time and she was shortlisted but we were so surprised to see her name on the shortlist again this year. It was a brilliant honour the first time but then to see she had been nominated and we had not done it this year was amazing.

**How did you get into football in the first place?**

**AC:** It's actually quite a long story! My dad always supported football and Portsmouth in particular. One day, he asked if I wanted to have a kick around in the park and ever since then I have just loved it. I have kept up the practice, kept improving and just love being out with a ball. It's the thing I love the most.

**IC:** When Abby first got into it I knew nothing about women's football. I dismissed it, like a lot of men do. I gave it no attention and joined in the jokes. Having a daughter who plays football and being immersed into that world has completely changed my views. I am a massive advocate for women's football. It has been a



real eye-opener and you become a bit of a justice warrior when you realise how much it is not appreciated. I am ashamed I used to have that attitude but I am very proud of Abby and what she has done.

**I understand you play A LOT of football, what do you love most about playing?**

**AC:** I love the atmosphere. When you do a good tackle or a goal-line clearance, the atmosphere is just amazing. A lot of things I love about football.

**How did you find the boys react when you started playing?**

**AC:** When I started playing they were a bit unsure and wondering why I was here. As I started to improve and get better the more I played with them, they started to respect me. Now I am just part of the team and just one of the players.

**What are you plans for next season?**

**AC:** I will be leaving Milford Pumas and going full time to Portsmouth. I have been training with Portsmouth Girls and I have definitely started to fit in a bit more. It was difficult to start with being the new person but now I am really part of the team and now I am really enjoying it. I have a bit more confidence. I scored eight goals in training the other day from



Martin Rowe-Willcocks



Martin Rowe-Willcocks



Martin Rowe-Willcocks

## Grassroots Player of the Year

defence and I can see how much I am progressing.

**You are a massive Portsmouth fan like your Dad, how often do you go to games?**

**AC:** We are season ticket holders for both the men's and women's teams. It's amazing watching the women play. The Pompey women are why I play football. They have inspired me, they are my heroes, they are the people who I look up to. I watch the defenders and I watch how they play and then I try and recreate it. They work so hard and it's so inspiring. The women have literally turned into my family. They always come and talk to us and wave hello. We also love doing our Vlogs for the women's team.

**IC:** That was Abby's idea. Vlogging was a big thing about four years ago so during a pre-season friendly we decided to give it a go with my mobile phone.

For the following season we got a couple of cameras and we started filming games and doing highlights. We have really enjoyed doing it, it's given us some great memories but it has also helped us promote the team. Tier three women's football is so under-appreciated, it is so good.

It's given us an opportunity to not just promote Portsmouth but all the other teams in the league. We are pretty fair on

them, we don't criticise the other teams and we show the other teams goals as well.

We won a local award and we were nominated twice at the Football Content awards for 'Best Women's Content Creators'.

We are really proud of it. The first time we went it was pre-Covid and we went to the Eithad Stadium. It was an unbelievable experience, Abby was in a dress and I was in a tux and it is such a special memory for us.

**What is your dream goal?**

**AC:** I would love to play for England or any Women's Super League team but if I don't get there then I would love to go into physio or management.

**How has Abby been without football during the pandemic?**

**IC:** The pandemic has been really hard on Abby's mental health. Football is what she loves to do

and she went from playing four/five times a week to not playing at all. We tried to keep her spirits up by doing drills and mixing school work with kickabouts but the change in her mood since she has been back has been unbelievable. She always gives 110% and is always after advice and notes to improve her game.

The pandemic has been so hard on all the children, they have gone from being able to be out with their friends, having fun to being stuck on their own in the house. It's hard because they literally have only seen their immediate family.

**The whole family was at the match to watch Abby, you are clearly all massively supportive of her playing, what are your hopes for her?**

**IC:** My only wish for her is to play with a smile on her face. The moment she stops doing that is the time I will tell her to walk away.

Because she plays at so many clubs, people presume we are pushy parents but we are actually the opposite. She got the chance recently to try out for an academy but we decided it was too early in her career to put her under that much strain.

We want her to be happy and enjoy what she does. That is the most important thing for us.

“  
*The Pompey women are why I play football—they inspire me*  
”









# AMMO'S ANTICS

Hi Ammo here,

So this weeks Ammos antics begins with me earning my first international cap for Wales. I played for the U15s against England at Colliers Park in Wrexham.

Although England won the game we put in a decent performance and as a team I'm sure we will continue to grow and get better.

Overall it was a very proud moment for me and my family and yet another milestone along my football journey.

I then had a league game for Birmingham against Stoke. I was asked to play up an age group with the U16s. We won 5-0 and I got a decent assist, considering I was the youngest player on the pitch I was happy with my performance. Stoke had a strong, physical team. The following week all the girls at Birmingham RTC had an amazing opportunity to play at St Andrew's, Birmingham city's stadium. It was a

fantastic evening, right up until about five minutes to go. I'd done a few headers during the game, probably a few more than I normally would, then just before the final whistle I clashed heads with an opponent.

I instantly felt really dizzy and struggled to stay on my feet. Luckily the club physio was on hand quickly to help me off the pitch. He diagnosed I was suffering from an accumulative concussion. Apparently it is very common, particularly with young female footballers. Sadly it brought an end to my season. We only had two weeks left and the FA guidelines on concussion advises a two week lay off with no activity.

It was a disappointing end to what has obviously been a frustrating season all round.

I've recently completed a staged return to playing without any symptoms so I'm really happy to be able to take part in the football I have planned in the off season.

First up I have the Ross Junior boys tournament, I'll be part of the Ross Juniors all



girls team that has entered and it will be interesting to see how we match up with boys teams our own age.

Ross juniors is my old grass roots team and I always like to go back during the summer to play in a few tournaments. They are a fantastic club that has produced many excellent footballers over the years.

Then I have a National Cup quarter final with my County Gloucestershire. We have a strong team and I'm confident we can go far in the competition.

As well as that we have a couple of other tournaments and I'll let you know next time how we got on.

Finally I'm happy to say I've just signed a new contract with Birmingham City. This will be my fifth season with the Blues and I can't wait to get started with the U16s.

Blues women had a tough season in the WSL but they are an excellent club with a great history and my plan to hit the first team in three years is still on track.

I also still have an outstanding agreement with Fran Kirby to send her my first professional shirt. It was an agreement we made when Fran gave me her Chelsea shirt after a game against Blues when I was 9.

I turned 14 in April... but I won't forget about it.

So overall it's been an up and down season.. but that's life isn't it. A series of mountains and ditches. I think the goal is to make sure you just keep going.. and never stop.

Sometimes things will go your way, sometimes they won't.

Regardless of how your season has ended, please take it from me.

If your dream is to be a footballer.

Never give up.

Ammo out.



# TikTok creators go h

## first ever commun



As we build up to EURO 2020, #footballfever is alive and kicking on TikTok. What better place to celebrate the goals, near misses, drama and love of the beautiful game than on the new home for football - TikTok. The platform has become a destination for creators to play, and professionals, emerging talent and fans to all come together to find moments of joy and inspiration.

On 6th June 2021, we are excited to be supporting TikTok's first ever creator-led football match. The event will bring together some of the biggest and brightest stars in the TikTok football scene and help to raise money for Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY), which helps to prevent young sudden cardiac deaths through awareness, screening and research, and support for affected families.

The match has been driven by three creators who connected on TikTok - jesswatkins, luke\_solvecollectibles and ashfreestyle, and decided to bring the football community on TikTok together to pitches in the real world, as the North & South teams go head to head!

The event will see 30 creators from across the UK battle it out with no doubt some epic tackles, great saves, and even better goals. These freestyle footballers and players have been absolutely dominating TikTok with over 18 million followers between them and we can't wait to see them style it out on the pitch in real life!

Commenting on the event, Jess, Luke and Ash said:

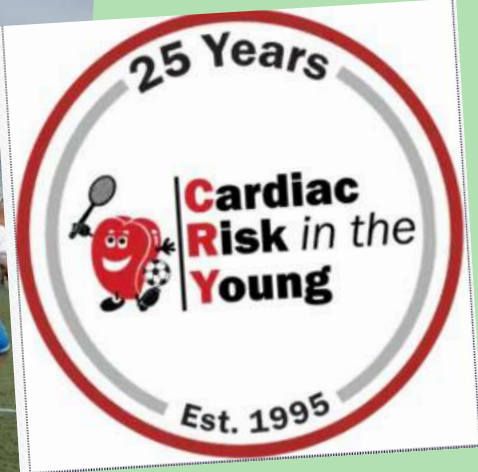
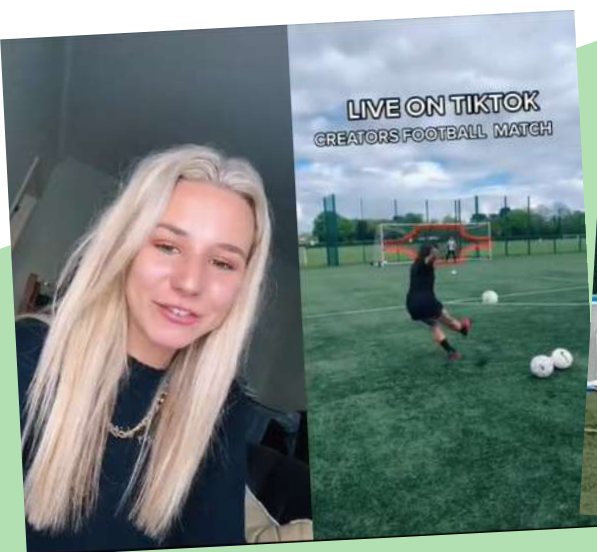
"I'm super proud of what we've managed to organise! What a great idea this was from Jess. I can't wait to meet everyone and play in the match" - Luke

"I am so excited for the match and feel incredibly lucky that Luke, Ash and all the amazing creators have helped to make this idea possible. I never imagined that this would be possible stemming from one TikTok video I made 7 weeks ago. I hope that this will be the start of a great TikTok football community" - Jess

"I saw huge potential in Jess' idea - when I shared it with TikTok, they absolutely loved the concept of creators from the app coming together for this event and have been supporting us with it all ever since. With Luke sponsoring the event and TikTok being involved the ball started rolling, soon enough we had fantastic creators reaching out every day to get involved. It's incredible seeing everything coming together and I can't wait for June 6th to come around so we can all meet up and host what's going to be a very exciting match!" - Ash



# Head-to-head in the Community football match



Other creators in the fantastic footballing line-up include:

## North Team

- **Jamil & Jamel Neffati (13M followers)** - the Neffati brothers have already been practising for the big match and are definitely staying true to their go hard or go home motto...
- **Ben (3.2M)** - one of our top performing male football freestylers with 50 million likes on his videos. Ben's a Nike Football Ambassador and has shared videos teaching others how to learn tricks like the stars - from Neymar to Cristiano Ronaldo
- **Oliviaraeweedall (71k)** - Olivia featured in our Football League Table as one of the top female footballers highlighting sporting excellence and

inspiring others on the platform. She posts everything from tips for beginners to her experience as a female footballer

- **Noah Olaoye (184k)** - starting every video with 'Wagwan Lads N' Lasses!', we love the energy Noah brings to TikTok - evident in his recent video celebrating Chelsea winning the Champions League. He's also already been posting his training for the charity match!

## South Team

- **Street\_Panna (1.2M)** - Jack Downer, AKA Street Panna, is the Superball World Panna Champion and has serious tekkerz on the ball! How many players do you think he will nutmeg in the TikTok match?

- **Zayn Farooqui (713k)** - Zayn loves giving his followers new shooting challenges to try and imitating different players you find at school - from the cry baby to the teacher who joins in!
- **keeley.dancex (104.9k)** - is a freestyle dancer and footballer. She doesn't just show off her football tricks but score predictions for the Premier League. Can you tell she's a big Chelsea fan too?!
- **Harriettefreestyle (5.6m)** - an ex-Arsenal player turned football freestyler and Streetfootball Champion who's amassed an incredible 69 million likes on her TikTok content. Check out her 1-1 with Neymar!



# Grassroots Gossip



## Hinkley Ladies announce new team

Hinkley Ladies have announced they will have two women's teams next season.

A statement read: "I am delighted to announce on behalf of the committee and management that following on from the tremendous success of this season and the superb numbers, dedication and support from all involved that next season there will be two teams at Hinkley Ladies.

"This is a fantastic achievement by all involved from a few girls kicking a ball on the park to two full league teams.

"This will give everybody the opportunity to play games and attract more players."

## Herts Vipers earn promotion

Herts Vipers first team have been promoted to the Eastern Region Women's Football League.

They have also announced that there is a vacancy for a women's 1st team coach and players interested in playing for the club can get in touch.



## Goddard moves to Bridgewater United

Amy Goddard returns to the club following a short term deal at the end of 20/21 season.

The commanding centre half returns following 2 seasons in the FA Women's Championship with Crystal Palace where she was at the heart of their defence.

Goddard shared why she was keen to continue with the club, "Jamie and his staff made me feel really welcome during my short spell in April. The vision of the club is one that can change the face of the Women's game and I want to play my part in it."

Manager Jamie Sherwood shared Goddard's enthusiasm and remarked, "Amy is a leader, has high standards and is exactly the sort of player we want to take forward on our journey. She is a winner and will drive this team forward."





## Introducing the Girls Super League

Emma Hayes the first female coach to reach the Champions League final in 12 years, Leyton Orient severing ties with the Women's Team, Leicester City Women playing the first ever game at the King Power Stadium, the game-changing WSL TV deal and Birmingham City Women calling out their unjust treatment.

The conversation on the women's game deservedly continues to get louder and louder.

In the FA's 2017-2020 strategy for women's and girl's football, they aimed to double participation.

With 12,640 registered teams, they achieved this goal; having unveiled their new four-year strategy: 'Inspiring Positive Change', one of their eight objectives outlines development participation where they aim for every girl to have equal access to participate for fun, for competition and for excellence.

So let me introduce you to the Girls Super League (GSL).

It's a project not only backed by Nike, but one that received investment from the University Campus of Football Business Board as Maria Hasler (Bloomsbury Football's Partnership Lead and creator of the GSL) won the 2021 Sports Entrepreneur Award.

Partnered with former Liverpool and Manchester City player, Grace Vella's brand Miss Kick, the GSL aims to ensure that every player has the opportunity to compete in a high-quality league. Providing an experience and environment that is professional, competitive and enjoyable for all players, coaches and parents.

Bloomsbury Football are powering girls football in London. Creating a hub for girls football resolves the difficulty of girls not being able to find competitive games easily.

Running on Saturdays from a centralised venue in London, it combats the problems facing the women's game around pitch availability, refereeing quality and standardisation of games, and is an unbelievable opportunity for girls aged 7-15 and undoubtedly benefits those from minority groups and low socio-economic backgrounds.

Young aspiring female footballers now have the platform and opportunity of the capital to use the power of football and showcase their talent. We're looking for media partners to help elevate this amazing project and support us in driving female participation in football.

On June 12th, we have official ambassador and Manchester City forward Chloe Kelly joining us, as well as number 4 in the freestyling world, Lia Lewis.

Find out more at: <https://www.superleagueldn.com/girls>





# CUPS





# Chelsea fall at the final hurdle



Mia Eriksson/Sports Press Photo



Orlagh Gardner Sports Press Photo

## By Marissa Thomas

Chelsea had a great season but losing the Champions League final will act as motivation for further improvement

Chelsea were without doubt the best team in the Women's Super League last season as they won the league on the final day, losing one match all season. However, when they came up against Barcelona in the Champions League final, their hopes and dreams were categorically over after 36 minutes.

An experienced Barcelona side who had similarly been blown apart by Lyon in their first Champions League final appearance took that blueprint and implemented it against a shellshocked Chelsea side. Against Lyon in 2019, Barcelona were 4-0 down after 30 minutes. They took just six minutes longer to record the exact same score line as they dismantled Chelsea. While Barcelona got a goal back to make it 4-1, Chelsea were not capable of getting on the scoresheet.

Emma Hayes' side had swept all before them throughout the season and reached the final after a thrilling 4-1 win over Bayern Munich in the semi-final second leg (5-3 on aggregate). There was confidence going into the final that Chelsea would be more than up for the

challenge. However, a Melanie Leupolz own goal after 33 seconds and a contentious Alexia Putellas penalty after 14 minutes left Chelsea under the cosh.

Chelsea were not allowed to settle in the game and for once, they experienced the difficulties that fellow WSL sides face when they play them. The shoe was on the other foot and Chelsea didn't have any answers. Regardless of their brilliant season, such an underwhelming performance in the biggest game of their campaign will hurt for quite some time.

However, opponents Barcelona provide the perfect example to show Chelsea how to recover from such a heavy Champions League final defeat. The West London side must lick their wounds and come back stronger than before, learning from this final and being able to draw on the experience when they reach the same stage again.

The Blues have an incredibly talented squad at their disposal which is more than capable of winning the biggest prize in club football. A summer of reflection and some key additions will recharge Chelsea and give them renewed enthusiasm to come back even stronger. Emma Hayes will make sure of that.

# Stat Attack: Chelsea

Chelsea	Bayern Munich
<b>30</b> Ann Katrin Berger	<b>1</b> Sandra Panos
<b>7</b> Jess Carter	<b>8</b> Marta Torrejon
<b>4</b> Millie Bright	<b>12</b> Patricia Guijarro
<b>16</b> Magdalena Eriksson	<b>4</b> Maria Pilar Leon
<b>21</b> Niamh Charles	<b>15</b> Leila Ouahabi
<b>8</b> Melanie Leupolz	<b>14</b> Aitana Bonmati
<b>5</b> Sophie Ingle	<b>10</b> Kheira Hamraoui
<b>10</b> Ji So-yun	<b>11</b> Alexia Putellas
<b>14</b> Fran Kirby	<b>16</b> Caroline Graham Hansen
<b>23</b> Pernille Harder	<b>7</b> Jennifer Hermoso
<b>20</b> Sam Kerr	<b>22</b> Lieke Martens
Substitutes	
<b>1</b> Zecira Musovic	<b>3</b> Laia Codina
<b>3</b> Hannah Blundell	<b>5</b> Melanie Serrano
<b>9</b> Bethany England	<b>6</b> Vicky Losada
<b>11</b> Guro Reiten	<b>9</b> Mariona Caldentey
<b>17</b> Jessie Fleming	<b>13</b> Catalina Thomas Coll Lluch
<b>22</b> Erin Cuthbert	<b>18</b> Ana-Maria Crnogorcevic
<b>24</b> Drew Spence	<b>20</b> Asisat Oshoala
<b>25</b> Jonna Andersson	<b>23</b> Jana Fernandez Velasco
<b>28</b> Carly Telford	<b>24</b> Bruna Vilamala Costa
<b>29</b> Jorja Fox	<b>25</b> Gemma Font Oliveras
<b>33</b> Agnes Beever-Jones	



# Chelsea 0-4 Barcelona

Chelsea

Barcelona

Possession

45%

55%

Shots

17

12

Shots on target

4

4

Corners

4

5

Fouls

9

7



# Uefa Together #WePlayStrong League final with exclusive



As FC Barcelona made history as the first Spanish team to win the UEFA Women's Champions League on Sunday May 16, Uefa Together #WePlayStrong hosted a first-of-its-kind digital event, uniting fans, players and prominent female athletes in celebration of the Women's Champions League (UWCL) final.

Due to fans being unable to attend the final at Gamla Ullevi in Gothenburg, Sweden, Uefa together with PixelMax created the online space to bring together super fans from across Europe to show their support for the women's game and inspire a new generation of female footballers.

The free sold-out virtual meet up welcomed 1,000 lucky ticket holders, treating them to an exclusive preview of the new UWCL anthem, engaging live interview broadcasts, surprise

appearances and a completely gamified environment featuring a virtual stadium, competitions and interactive content.

Hosted by Dutch street football legend Rocky Hehakaija, Uefa's pan-European women's football podcast, 'The Football Podcast' kicked off the event with a special live UWCL episode. The show welcomed Bayern Munich's Sarah Zadrazil, who shared several exciting stories from her career including scoring her first European goal with Bayern during the UWCL semi-final against Chelsea. Wolfsburg and UWCL winner Shanice van de Sanden and teammate Lena Oberdorf also joined the conversation, discussing their UWCL experiences as well as the new 2021/2022 UWCL format.

Shanice van de Sanden, who won the UWCL in 2019 with

Lyon after defeating Barcelona 4-1, said: "I spoke a lot with Lieke Martens in the lead up to this game and she told me how the Barcelona team learned a lot from that final. It was their first time reaching that stage of the competition, and you need to have that experience. They worked on those learning and you can see how much they want to win it now. Barcelona have always been good – but now they are almost perfect.

"The increased coverage and new format of the UWCL is so important for the growth of the women's game. Having more games on TV and online is what we need and it's what we have missed. The game is not just improving on the pitch, but also off the pitch and that's great to see."

Lena Oberdorf added: "This was my first UWCL experience where I played in the starting 11, and these are definitely the



# celebrates Women's Champions ve digital super fan event



games where you can get better and better as a player. When you're playing against these top teams, that's when you have to prove that you're good enough to be there. There are so many emotions you experience from playing these games, and I can't wait until next season."

During a live episode of the exclusive 'In Conversation with...' series, some of the biggest names in women's sports were brought together for the first time to discuss some of the biggest topics affecting the women's sporting landscape. The one-on-one interviews paired top female athletes engaging in in-depth conversations about their lived experience as women in sports.

Olympic athlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson spoke with Manchester City's Alex Greenwood about their shared experience growing up in Liverpool and how that

impacted their love of football. The last conversation between Atletico Madrid's Toni Duggan and Real Madrid's Kosovare Asllani focused on their similar backgrounds of playing in both England and Spain, as well as how they envision the women's game growing.

Toni Duggan, who played with FC Barcelona in the 2019 UWCL final, said: "I think the main football attribute in Spain is their technique and they are so good in possession, and in England it's definitely more physical. I've played in the Women's Super League and Liga and they are two absolutely amazing leagues and are up there with the best in the world.

"The talent and investment that we are seeing from some of these clubs is brilliant. When I was in the final two years ago playing with Barcelona, the

club knew that was just the start for them. This year in the final we've seen such a different Barcelona side."

During a takeover of the UEFA Women's Champions League Instagram channel, UK presenters Rosie and Mollie Kmita were joined by former UEFA Women's Champions League winner Jess Fishlock to breakdown all the in-game action during the half-time analysis.

Throughout the event, #WePlayStrong ambassadors Arsenal's Vivianne Miedema, Lisa Evans and Beth Mead, Eintracht Frankfurt's Laura Feiersinger, FC Köln's Eunice Beckmann and Bella Linden, as well as World Champion Freestyler Liv Cooke took part in live Q&A sessions with their fans.

*To join the conversation, follow @weplaystrong*

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

## Vitality Women's FA Cup third round proper

Manchester United	2-3	Leicester City
Brighton & Hove Albion	6-0	Huddersfield Town
Blackburn Rovers	0-1	Charlton
Birmingham City	3-2	Southampton
Tottenham Hotspur	2-1	Sheffield United
Manchester City	5-1	West Ham United
Arsenal	9-0	Crystal Palace
Chelsea	3-0	Everton



## Quarter-Final draw

The draw took place live on talkSPORT 2.

Ties will be played on Wednesday 29 September 2021.

The draw is as follows:

- Manchester City v Leicester City
- Birmingham City v Chelsea
- Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur
- Brighton & Hove Albion v Charlton Athletic



# **Vitality Women's FA Cup final celebrates 50th anniversary as dates for 2020/21 completion announced**



The FA have confirmed the dates for the remaining rounds of the 2020/2021 Vitality Women's FA Cup, with the Final at Wembley Stadium connected by EE celebrating 50 years of the competition.

Following the pausing of this season's campaign over the winter due to government guidelines, dates for each round have had to be pushed back, meaning the final three rounds will be played on the following dates and go into next season. These follow the already confirmed Fifth Round, which takes place 16-20 May:

- Quarter-Finals: Wednesday, September 29
- Semi-Finals: Sunday, October 31
- Final: Sunday December 5

All four Quarter-Finals will be available to watch across the BBC and FA Player, while both Semi-Finals will be live on the BBC. The Final at Wembley Stadium will kick-off at 3pm and will be broadcast live on BBC One.

The 2021 Vitality Women's FA Cup Final will be the climax of the 50th anniversary celebrations and will take place at Wembley

Stadium on Sunday 5 December, the date when 100 years ago The FA made the decision to ban women's football.

Kelly Simmons, Director of Women's Professional Game at The FA said: "To mark the competition's 50th anniversary, we felt it was fitting to schedule the 2021 Vitality Women's FA Cup Final on 5 December, a date for many which represents the game's lowest ebb.

"We want to use the Cup Final day, always one of the most special in the calendar, as a platform to celebrate the game's historic trailblazers who we remain forever indebted to, whilst also acknowledging the growth and development in the modern era.

"Watching our best players at one of the best stadiums in the world, will hopefully continue to inspire a new generation to fall in love with women's football."

More details of the celebrations to be held and ticket details will be released in due course.

# HOME NATIONS





# Riise names Lionesses squad for June camp



England head coach Hege Riise has named a 21-player squad for the forthcoming June international camp.

Riise has opted for a pared-back England squad consisting predominantly of those England players who have been selected to represent Team GB Football at this summer's Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The 19 English players whose Olympics selection was confirmed last week will be further boosted by call-ups for goalkeepers Carly Telford and Hannah Hampton.

Olympique Lyonnais's Nikita Parris will be fully integrated into the majority of the squad's activities but will be rested from travelling to Bisham Abbey for the training camp in order to manage her load after a long and demanding season.

The squad will meet up at Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre on Sunday 6 June.

During the six-day training camp there will be a keen focus on managing players' individual development plans

and training loads as well as preparing the Tokyo-bound players for the physical conditions they will experience in Japan.

Last week's Team GB squad announcement saw players selected on the basis of a rigorous independent assessment of ability, mentality, physical fitness and versatility; crucial to successfully managing the demands of a major tournament.

The England cohort will be further challenged against these criteria to ensure they are optimally prepared in readiness for Team GB Football's Olympic campaign.

England head coach Hege Riise said: "Whilst this is purely an England camp, it felt sensible to really focus in now on preparations for the Olympics with the English players who have been selected for Team GB.

"Scotland's Kim Little and Caroline Weir and Wales' Sophie Ingle will potentially be in action when the two nations meet in this international window.

“We will watch that match with great interest as well as ensuring we keep in regular touch with them before we meet for the first GB Football camp on 17 June.

“Whilst England men begin their Uefa Euro campaign at St. George’s Park, we are excited to be basing ourselves at Bisham Abbey and look forward to making full use of their acclimation chambers as part of our work to prepare players for the hot and humid conditions we will face in Japan.

“I also look forward to seeing Carly Telford and Hannah Hampton on this camp. They narrowly missed out on selection for Team GB but they both have a very exciting future with England as we look ahead to the home UEFA Women’s EURO next summer and the FIFA Women’s World Cup beyond that.”

## England results since the end of the 2019 Women’s World Cup

Belgium	<b>3-3</b>	England
Norway	<b>2-1</b>	England
England	<b>1-2</b>	Brazil
Portugal	<b>0-1</b>	England
England	<b>1-2</b>	Germany
Czech Republic	<b>2-3</b>	England
USA	<b>2-0</b>	England
SheBelieves Cup		
Japan	<b>0-1</b>	England
SheBelieves Cup		
England	<b>0-1</b>	Spain
SheBelieves Cup		
Germany	CANCELLED	England
England	CANCELLED	Norway
England	<b>6-0</b>	Northern Ireland
France	<b>3-1</b>	England
England	<b>0-2</b>	Canada

## FIFA June International Window - Squad

### Goalkeepers

Karen Bardsley - OL Reign (on loan from Manchester City)

Ellie Roebuck - Manchester City

Sandy MacIver - Everton

Carly Telford - Chelsea

Hannah Hampton - Birmingham City

### Defenders

Millie Bright - Chelsea

Lucy Bronze - Manchester

City

Rachel Daly - Houston Dash

Steph Houghton - Defender - Manchester City

Demi Stokes - Manchester City

Leah Williamson - Arsenal

Lotte Wubben-Moy - Arsenal

### Midfielders

Jill Scott—Manchester City

Keira Walsh - Manchester

City

Niamh Charles - Chelsea

Lauren Hemp - Manchester

City

### Forwards

Fran Kirby - Chelsea

Nikita Parris - Olympique Lyonnais

Georgia Stanway - Manchester City

Ellen White - Manchester City

Ella Toone - Manchester United



**ENGLAND**



# McLaren names Scotland



Scotland Women's National Team Interim Head Coach Stuart McLaren has named his squad for the upcoming international friendlies in Northern Ireland and Wales.

The squad includes four uncapped players. Eartha Cummings, Brianna Westrup, Leah Eddie and Christy Grimshaw have all been included for the two matches which will act as preparation matches for the World Cup 2023 Qualifiers that will begin in September against Hungary and Faroe Islands.

21-year-old Charlton Athletic goalkeeper Eartha Cummings has been included having impressed through the youth squads along with Leah Eddie who has followed a similar path and was recently named as Hibernian Player of the Year.

Brianna Westrup is one of five Rangers players involved and will be aiming for her first Scotland cap during June. The American born defender qualifies for Scotland through

her Mother and joined Rangers last October from Newcastle United.

25-year-old Christy Grimshaw will join the squad fresh from competing in the Women's Coppa Italia Final last night where AC Milan lost out on penalties to Roma.

Born in Kircaldy, Grimshaw broke into the Aberdeen first team at the age of 16 before spending five years at Barry University in Miami and playing in Metz.

Lisa Evans, Martha Thomas, Jen Beattie are all ruled out the squad due to injury and Emma Mitchell is also not included after recently announcing her pregnancy.

Leanne Ross will once again be Stuart McLaren's assistant and they'll be joined by Bristol City head coach Tanya Oxtoby. The Australian played for a number of clubs in her home country including Perth Glory before moving to England and playing with Doncaster Rovers Belles.

She has since managed England Under-19s and Nottingham Forest as well as being assistant at Birmingham City and Perth Glory

## Fixtures

**Thursday, June 10: 7pm**  
**Northern Ireland v Scotland**  
Seaview Stadium, Belfast, Northern Ireland

**Tuesday, June 15: 7:15pm**  
**Wales v Scotland**  
Parc y Scarlets, Llanelli, Wales

## Scotland Squad

### Goalkeepers

Lee Alexander—Glasgow City

Jenna Fife—Rangers

Eartha Cummings—Charlton Athletic

### Defenders

Rachel McLauchlan—Rangers

Kirsty Smith—Manchester United

Nicola Docherty—Rangers

Brianna Westrup—Rangers



# squad for June friendlies



Rachel Corsie—Kansas City  
Sophie Howard—Leicester City  
Leah Eddie (Hibernian)

## Midfielders

Lucy Graham—Everton  
Kim Little—Arsenal  
Caroline Weir—Manchester City  
Christie Murray—Birmingham City  
Chloe Arthur—Aston Villa  
Lisa Robertson—Celtic

## Forwards

Christy Grimshaw—AC Milan  
Fiona Brown—Rosengard  
Claire Emslie—Everton  
Erin Cuthbert—Chelsea  
Lana Clelland—Fiorentina  
Kirsty Hanson—Manchester United  
Lizzie Arnot—Rangers

## SPAR continue commitment to women's football in Scotland

Spar Scotland has extended its partnership with the Scottish FA and will continue to sponsor the Scotland Women's National Team until 2023.

SPAR Scotland originally launched its sponsorship with the Scottish FA in 2019 and throughout 2020 continued to raise the profile of the Scotland Women's National Team, committing to investing in girls' and women's grassroots football across Scotland until 2021.

A key element of the partnership was the introduction of the SPAR Future Stars Football Cup which is a nationwide Girls Football competition stretching across all six Scottish FA Regions. This presented an opportunity for girls aged 12-16 years to participate in a competitive, fun and inclusive competition for their school.

Fiona McIntyre, Head of Girls' and Women's Football at the Scottish FA told the official website: "SPAR Scotland's partnership with the association has been hugely valuable and beneficial in the growth of the women's game since the World Cup in 2019.

"The start of their partnership coincided in a real upsurge of interest in the national team and women's football as a whole. The SPAR Future Stars Cup allowed young girls across the country to enjoy playing football in a friendly, competitive tournament against other schools as well as hone their skills.

"SPAR Scotland have demonstrated a real commitment to support the growth of the women's game across the board from grassroots to the national team and their backing is invaluable as we aim to increase participation numbers, with girls and women across the country now back on pitches following the difficult year we've all experienced."

# 2021 SWFL fixtures announced & SWFL Cup 1st round draw



SCOTTISH WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL LEAGUE

The 2021 Scottish Women's Football League (SWFL) season kicks-off on Sunday 6th June.

In the North/East League, teams will face each other three times and the West/South West and Central/South East Leagues will face each other twice to decide the three league champions.

As announced in 2019, the three SWFL divisions form part of the new 'Regional Pathway' and provide an enjoyable and competitive environment for senior teams with a recreational centred philosophy.

The SWFL sits separate from the 'Performance Pathway' meaning there is no promotion or relegation from these leagues.

There is however an opportunity for more flexible rules and formats to be

used as the pathway aims to attract new/returning senior players to the game and regional youth players making a step up to senior football.

The draw for the 1st Round of the 2021 SWFL Cup was also conducted on Tuesday May 18.

This new competition will give SWFL teams the opportunity to participate nationally against teams at a similar level.

The 1st Round, which is regionalised, will be played on Sunday, July 4.

The dates for the 2021 SWFL Cup are as follows:

1st Round – 4th July

Last 16 – 25th July

QF – 29th August

SF – 26th September

Final – 21st November



# Scottish Women's Football League Cup



## 1st Round fixtures

Bayside	vs	Leven
Blackburn United	vs	Central Girls Football Academy
Clark Drive Girls	vs	Ayr United Football Academy
Falkirk	vs	Murrayfield Ladies
Harmony Row	vs	West Park United
Kilwinning	vs	Bishopton
Linlithgow Rose	vs	Murieston United
Lothian Ladies	vs	Musselburgh Windsor
Millenium	vs	Mid Annandale Ladies
Queen of the South Ladies	vs	Annan Athletic Women
Raith Rovers WGFC	vs	East Fife Development
Rutherglen Girls	vs	Motherwell
Westdyke Thistle	vs	Buchan
Dryburgh Athletic	vs	Jeanfield Swifts WFC

## **Scottish Championship North & South Games programme confirmed**

Following a consultation process with Championship clubs, a games programme was the preferred playing format over June and July to conclude the 20/21 season.

As a result, the Championship North and South has been provided a schedule of fixtures to the clubs who opted to take part in this programme.

The programme will give teams seven rounds of fixtures commencing on Sunday 6th June and concluding on Sunday 18th July.

There will then be a break before the start of the 2021/22 Championship season.

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) Chair, Vivienne MacLaren, said: "We are pleased to be able to outline a structured programme for the Championship North and South teams.

"This is off the back of working with the clubs and stakeholders, the results showing a majority preference to participate in a games programme before the new season.

"For the majority of teams, it has been a very long time since their last matches and I'm sure today's news will be met with excitement.

"I want to wish everyone all the best for the games ahead and for their preparation ahead of the 2021/22 season."



## **2021 Highlands and Islands League schedule and fixtures confirmed**

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) have announced the 2021 SWF Highlands & Islands League will start on Sunday 20th June and conclude on Sunday 10th October.

The start of the season follows contact adult training having been permitted from 17th May.

A condensed League and League Cup schedule has been agreed, providing regular competition for the nine affiliated teams in the Highlands & Islands.

The first weekend of the season will see reigning 2019 champions, Clachnacuddin, travel away to Caithness who finished third that season.

Inverness Caledonian Thistle Development, who were runners-up, and Nairn, who finished bottom in 2019, are both at home to new sides in the form of Orkney and Sutherland respectively.

The final tie is Brora Rangers hosting Buckie, two sides who were separated by just one point last season.

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) Chair, Vivienne MacLaren said: "We are delighted to outline the plans for the Highlands and Islands League to return on Sunday 20th June.

"One of our key goals is to get more girls and women playing and this league epitomises this. Girls and women should have the opportunity to participate in structured football regardless of their geography – the creation and success of this league is one of our proudest achievements.

"I'd like to thank everyone involved for their patience and to the various stakeholders for their hard work during these complex times. I wish all these teams involved the very best for the season ahead."

A full list of fixtures can be found on  
[www.scotwomensfootball.com](http://www.scotwomensfootball.com)

## **Scottish Women's Football announce CEO update**

Scottish Women's Football (SWF) can confirm that the process to appoint our new CEO has been concluded and that a successful candidate has been selected within the last fortnight.

This individual will be announced in the near future.

Chair of SWF, Vivienne MacLaren, said: "We had a number of suitable applications for the position and it was an extremely competitive selection process. On behalf of SWF, I'd like to thank everyone who applied.

"This is a very important role for the future of SWF and the game as a whole.

"We therefore invested significant time and effort into the process to ensure we found the right person to lead SWF into the future.

"We appreciate that there is excitement to know who our new CEO is but we cannot announce this at this time. We hope to be able to provide an update in the near future and proudly introduce our new CEO."

# Scottish Women's Premier League 1

	Correct up to May 3	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Glasgow City	21	18	2	1	61	56
2	Celtic	21	17	2	2	64	53
3	Rangers	21	16	0	5	66	48
4	Hibernian	21	9	2	10	15	29
5	Spartans	21	9	2	10	-13	29
6	Motherwell	21	4	0	17	-60	12
7	Forfar Farmington	21	3	2	16	-73	11
8	Hearts	21	2	2	17	-60	8

## Results

### Sunday, May 9

Celtic 3-0 Motherwell (14:00)  
 Spartans 3-0 Hearts (14:00)  
 Forfar Farmington 0-5 Hibernian (14:00)  
 Rangers 0-2 Glasgow City (16:10)

### Wednesday, May 12

Rangers 4-0 Hearts (19:00)  
 Celtic 0-0 Glasgow City (19:00)  
 Hibernian 1-1 Spartans (19:00)  
 Forfar Farmington 0-1 Motherwell (19:00)

### Sunday, May 16

Motherwell 0-1 Hibernian (14:00)  
 Hearts 0-3 Celtic (14:00)  
 Spartans 0-5 Rangers (14:00)  
 Glasgow City 8-0 Forfar Farmington (16:00)

### Wednesday, May 19

Forfar Farmington 1-2 Hearts (19:00)  
 Celtic 4-0 Spartans (19:00)  
 Hibernian 0-3 Rangers (19:00)  
 Motherwell 2-4 Glasgow City (19:00)

### Sunday, May 23

Hearts 0-1 Motherwell (13:00)  
 Rangers 1-2 Celtic (14:00)  
 Spartans 3-0 Forfar Farmington (14:00)  
 Glasgow City 0-0 Hibernian (16:00)

### Wednesday, May 26

Glasgow City 4-1 Hearts (19:00)  
 Motherwell 2-3 Spartans (19:00)  
 Forfar Farmington 0-4 Rangers (19:00)  
 Hibernian 0-1 Celtic (19:00)

### Sunday, May 30

Spartans 2-6 Glasgow City (14:00)  
 Hearts 0-2 Hibernian (14:00)  
 Rangers 6-0 Motherwell (14:00)  
 Celtic 10-0 Forfar Farmington (14:00)

### Sunday, June 6

Glasgow City 2-0 Rangers  
 Hearts 1-1 Spartans  
 Hibernian 7-0 Forfar Farmington  
 Motherwell 0-8 Celtic



# Glasgow City retain SWPL 1 title



It all came down to the final day of the season as Glasgow City secured their 14th Scottish Women's Premier League 1 title in a row.

The defending champions knew that a slip up on the final day of the season would open the door for Celtic to succeed.

City needed only a point to finish top of SWPL1 and goals by Hayley Lauder and Niamh Farrelly sealed a 2-0 win.

Glasgow City manager Scott Booth on BBC Alba: "It feels amazing. I'm so proud.

"Today was a tough game, Rangers have come on so much and we knew it was going to be difficult, but the players were excellent.

"It's been so tough for them.

"To be in the middle of a pandemic and still be able to keep your quality and resolve high when you're hit with so many obstacles... they've done that as a group, worked hard together, and had a goal in mind with the title."

Celtic claimed the second Champions League spot.

The Hoops beat Motherwell 8-0 despite being without seven players following a positive Covid-10 test.

Kate Nicolson, Sara Ewens, Anna Filbey twice, Chloe Craig, London Pollard, Kelly Clark and Lisa Robertson scored.

Rangers were hoping a win combined with a slip-up by Celtic would hand them second place, but they finish five points off Celtic and eight behind Glasgow City.

Elsewhere in the division, Hibernian overtook Spartans into fourth place by beating Forfar Farmington 7-0.

Amy Gallacher, Eilidh Adams, Ellis Notley, Siobhan Hunter, Carla Boyce, Rosie Livingstone and Kirsty Morrison were all on target.

Spartans were held 1-1 by bottom side Hearts, with both goals coming in stoppage time. Murron Cunningham put Hearts ahead but Rebecca Galbraith quickly levelled.

# Wales squad announced for



Gemma Grainger has announced a 26-player squad as Cymru prepare to face Scotland at Parc y Scarlets on Tuesday June 15 (KO time TBC).

Grainger has an almost full-strength squad available, including Jess Fishlock and Angharad James who will both be returning from their clubs in the USA.

Hayley Ladd returns to the squad after missing last month's matches against Canada and Denmark, whilst Megan Wynne also returns to the squad after an ACL injury.

However, after impressing on her debut at last month's camp, Ceri Holland misses out on a place in the squad due to injury.

Cymru and Scotland last met in the 2017 Cyprus Cup, where Scotland won 6-5 on penalties after a goalless draw.

The Scots, ranked 23rd in the world, qualified for the 2019

FIFA Women's World Cup where they narrowly missed out on a spot in the last 16.

The match will be Cymru's final chance to prepare for the FIFA 2023 Women's World Cup qualifying campaign which begins in September.

Wales have been drawn alongside France, Slovenia, Greece, Kazakhstan and Estonia in Group I.

The fixture will be played behind closed doors due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

## Wales Squad

### Goalkeepers

Laura O'Sullivan—Cardiff City Ladies

Olivia Clark—Coventry United

Poppy Soper—Plymouth Argyle

### Defenders

Rhiannon Roberts - Liverpool

Gemma Evans—Bristol City

Lily Woodham—Reading

Ffion Morgan—Crystal Palace

Esther Morgan—Tottenham Hotspur

Bethan Roberts—Reading

### Midfielders

Charlie Estcourt—London Bees

Hayley Ladd—Manchester United

Josie Green—Tottenham Hotspur

Anna Filbey—Celtic

Sophie Ingle—Chelsea

Angharad James—North Carolina

Jess Fishlock—OL Reign

Carrie Jones—Manchester United

Natasha Harding—Reading

Rachel Rowe—Reading

Megan Wynne—Bristol City

Chloe Williams—Manchester United



# or friendly against Scotland



## Forwards

Maria Francis-Jones— Cardiff City Ladies

Elise Hughes - Blackburn Rovers- On loan from Everton

Kayleigh Green—Brighton & Hove Albion

Helen Ward— Watford

Georgia Walters—Blackburn Rovers

## Granger confirms backroom staff

Wales manager Gemma Grainger has confirmed her backroom staff as they begin preparations for the 2023 Fifa Women's World Cup qualifying campaign.

Each of the appointments were involved in last month's matches against Canada and Denmark, and are part of the FAW's commitment to increase resources and support for the National Women's Team in order to reach a major

tournament for the first time in the side's history.

Speaking to the official website, Grainger said: "I'm very excited to finalise and announce our new staff structure.

"The staff are key to the success of any team and I'm confident that we have the best people that will continue the progress of our national team.

"We had a successful camp in April where all of the staff settled into their roles instantly and I'm looking forward to see their work develop further in the Cymru setup."

## Loren Dykes: Assistant Coach

Former Wales international Loren Dykes is a well-known name amongst Wales fans with over 100 caps to her name.

She is currently undertaking her Uefa A licence coaching qualification and will also be working with the U17s national squad and overseeing the

performance programme.

squad

## Richard Thomas: Assistant Coach

Thomas has spent the last two years in the men's game as the academy manager at Watford FC and was formerly an assistant coach at Notts County.

## Jen Herst: Goalkeeper Coach

Herst is a Uefa A licence goalkeeper coach and will also oversee the goalkeeper development across the pathway. She has previously worked at Everton, Manchester City, Liverpool and across England's youth teams.

## Luke Taylor: Head of Physical Performance

Taylor is a lecturer in sport and coaching sciences at Oxford Brookes University and has worked with the England women's youth teams since 2013.

# Wales U17 & U19 teams meet for training camps



The Cymru WU19 and WU17 teams took part in training camps at Colliers Park, Wrexham in May ahead of the restart of UEFA competitions in the 2021/22 season.

Former Cymru international Loren Dykes lead both camps, assisted by Nicola Anderson and Jen Herst for the WU19s and Nia Davies and Pete Wilson for the WU17s.

The WU19 camp took place from Monday 10 until Friday 14 May. The 28 player squad included Cymru international Maria Francis-Jones along with Bethan Roberts and Bethan McGowan, who have both been involved in senior team camps in the last twelve months.

The WU17 training camp will then meet up later (Monday 24 – Friday 28 May) and featured several players that were due to take part in the 2019/20 WU17 EURO Elite Round prior to the tournament being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Cymru WU19 squad

Safia Middleton-Patel, Elen Valentine, Ruby Burnell, Kate Young, Maria Francis-Jones, Bethan Roberts, Grace Morris, Isabella Reidford, Jessica Smith, Kate Ward, Seren Watkins, Zoe Collyer, Ffion Spence, Bethan McGowan, Ella Hilliard, Ella Humphrey, Hollie Smith, Jessie Taylor, Mary Mcaateer, Phoebe Poole, Ruby Jones, Scarlett Williams, Sophie Phillips, Taylor Reynolds, Zoe Smith, Lauren Purchase, Emily Fletcher, Megan Curran

## Cymru WU17 squad

Emily Roberts, Catrin Thomas, Molly Anersen, Ameliah Yarwood, Megan Bowen, Beth Thomas, Lili Jones, Maisie Miller, Tia Lickley, Manon Pearce, Claudia Jones, Olivia Dalzell, Faye Hillier-Knox, Amy Hare, Niamh Duggan, Jessica Collyer, Tianna Teisar, Lily Billingham, Evie Hughes, Evie Williams, Sophie Corns, Bethan Marriot, Amy Richardson, Mayzee Davies, Sophie Rawlings, Chloe McMahon, Ruby Hamed-Jones, Olivia Francis



# Welsh Premier Women's Football League

Final table 20/21 season		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Swansea	16	13	3	0	52	42
2	Cardiff Met	16	13	2	1	52	41
3	Cardiff City	16	10	2	4	12	32
4	Abergavenny	16	7	4	5	12	25
5	Port Talbot Town	16	7	4	5	-2	25
6	Cyncoed Ladies	16	4	4	8	-17	16
7	Briton Ferry Llanaswell Ladies	16	3	2	11	-34	11
8	Cascade YC	16	2	1	13	-44	7
9	Aberystwyth Town	16	1	2	13	-31	5

## Results

### Sunday, May 2

Cardiff City 3-0 Port Talbot Town  
 Swansea 5-0 Cascade YC  
 Briton Ferry LL 1-0 Cyncoed Ladies  
 Aberystwyth Town 0-2 Abergavenny

### Thursday, May 6

Cyncoed Ladies 1-3 Cardiff City  
 Cardiff Met 4-0 Port Talbot Town

### Sunday, May 9

Cascade 2-1 Aberystwyth Town  
 Cardiff City 6-0 Briton Ferry LL

### Sunday, May 16

Cascade YC 0-3 Abergavenny  
 Cardiff Met 6-1 Briton Ferry LL  
 Port Talbot 3-3 Cyncoed Ladies

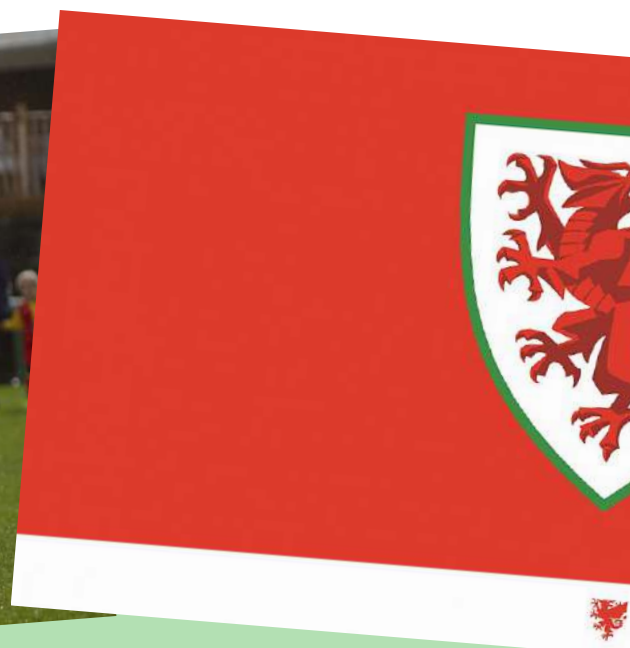
### Sunday, May 23

Cascade YC 0-3 Cyncoed Ladies  
 Abergavenny 2-2 Port Talbot Town  
 Aberystwyth Town 0-4 Cardiff Met  
 Swansea 6-0 Cardiff City

### Sunday, May 30

Swansea 0-0 Abergavenny

# Welsh Tier 1 & Tier 2 clubs confirmed



The Football Association of Wales confirmed on Monday, May 31 which teams would be in Tier 1 and Tier 2 as part of a major re-structure of the women's domestic game.

The re-structure was implemented following a full review of the pyramid in 2020, which included consultation with clubs, players, leagues and officials at all levels.

The outcome highlighted key changes required in the top two tiers of the pyramid whilst also addressing the significant gap between U16s and senior football.

The new pyramid structure includes eight teams in Tier 1 and the introduction of a new regional Tier 2 league in the North and South, also with eight in each league and a new U19s league in north and south Wales.

To determine which clubs would take their place in these new leagues, the FAW oversaw

an open application process that involved two stages.

The first was the initial licence award where clubs provided evidence to show that they met the minimum criteria for each level.

Successful Clubs progressed to Phase 2, presenting their club development plan to a panel of FAW, FAW Trust and FIFA experts who assessed clubs across seven key areas; three of these were 'core', awarding double marks for Sporting (factoring in previous performance in the League), Financial Sustainability and Human Resources.

37 clubs signed up to the process with 33 progressing to Phase 2, 13 at Tier 1 and 20 at Tier 2, meaning that the competition for the 24 available places was extremely high.

Following this thorough review, Tiers 1 and 2 were determined as follows:

## Tier 1

- Aberystwyth Town
- Barry Town United
- Cardiff City
- Cardiff Met University
- Pontypridd Town
- Port Talbot Town
- Swansea City
- The New Saints

## Tier 2 North

- Airbus UK Broughton
- Bethel
- Connah's Quay Nomads
- Denbigh Town
- Llandudno
- Llanfair United
- Pwllheli
- Wrexham

## Tier 2 South

- Abergavenny
- Briton Ferry Llansawel
- Caldicot Town



# Confirmed in major restructure



- Cardiff Bluebellies
- Cascade YC
- Merthyr Town
- Talcopa
- Swansea University

Lowri Roberts, FAW's Head of Women's Football, said: "It's been inspiring to see the level of work clubs have put into their application.

"We've seen a real shift in mindset from the clubs in how they are developing elite environments for players and how they are building for a sustainable future.

"Through implementing an open application process for entry into the new leagues, a club's place was not solely down to sporting merit but also robust club structures.

"It has made clubs review their entire structure, playing pathways and the provision they provide players.

"As a result, all clubs will be collectively striving to

continuously improve standards in a competitive environment."

Andrew Howard, FAW Head of Competitions, added: "Throughout this process we have seen clubs securing significant investment into their women's programmes and strong commitments in terms of resources being made available within the clubs, from appointing full time staff to long term partnership agreements.

"Clubs should be very proud of what they have achieved off the field over the last year and we look forward to this exciting new chapter for women's domestic football in Wales."

In August, ahead of the 2021/22 season, the FAW will unveil a new visual identity and name for the top two tiers and the U19s leagues, signalling a new era of domestic women's football in Wales.

WPWL Club Representative on FAW Council, Gail Powell,

said: "The new structure will have a major impact on development and sustainability - we are looking forward to the new season in 2021/22 with a new look Tier 1, Tier 2 and U19s divisions."

The decision sees Abergavenny Women, Cascade Ladies and Briton Ferry Llansawel Ladies removed from the top division.

A statement from Abergavenny said: "After participating in the top tier of Welsh women's football since its inception, Abergavenny has statistically been the fourth most successful club in the competition's history.

"This season, even with all the stress and unjustified decisions in the last month or so, we finished in fourth position.

"We believe this should automatically cement our place in the upcoming top tier of Welsh women's football. Unfortunately, the FAW do not agree."

# BRITON FERRY LLANSAWELL

***The announcement of the new tier one and two teams in the Welsh restructure was met with disappointment, heartbreak and shock as three major teams were relegated from the top tier of the game.***

***Abergavenny Women, Cascade Ladies and Briton Ferry Llansawel Ladies have all been from the top division despite not finishing bottom of the Covid-19 fraught league.***

We asked Briton Ferry Llanswell for their reaction and there response was:

“As part of the restructure of the women’s game in Wales, the FAW have seen fit to relegate three teams; Abergavenny, Cascade and Briton Ferry Llansawel respectively in favour of two new teams.

“In a detailed letter to the National Game Board, we have highlighted several reasons why we have found the decision to relegate all three teams both unjust, ethically wrong and, in our opinion,

discriminatory in favour of the other clubs. We remain perplexed by the reasons for the decision and find it difficult to comprehend how the FAW could come to the judgment it has.

“A leading priority from the FAW’s restructure of the women’s game in Wales was their criteria to improve the competitiveness within the League. As a forward thinking, progressive club, Briton Ferry Llansawel AFC have invested in a planned development of our ladies’ pathway and infrastructure over the last eight years. This strategy helped ensure our ladies finished outside of the relegation places in tier one for the third consecutive season.

***“What is the future of ladies’ football in Wales?”***

“We do not wish to castigate those clubs taking our place in next season’s Ladies Welsh Premier League. We will leave those involved within the ladies’ game in Wales to come to their own conclusion about the fairness and legitimacy of how these places were gained.

“However, we do believe their success in gaining a place undeniably, raises serious questions about the levels of due diligence and fairness undertaken by the FAW during the application process. It’s our opinion that decisions to exclude certain clubs have been made based on perceived assumptions that are superficial at best and derogatory at worst.

From the outside looking in, the whole process lacks credibility and is a consequence of a dated proposal created by the previous regime. Surely, it would have been prudent to suspend the restructure until the current FAW members implement their own strategy.

Sport is about level playing fields. What is the future of ladies’ football in Wales?



## Briton Ferry Llansawel Ladies

"If success is determined by decisions made in the boardroom of the FAW and not on playing fields across Wales?

All we ask of the FAW is for transparency. Justification both factual and ethically to help make the decision to exclude all three clubs more comprehensible. There is disillusionment, anger, and frustration within our club.

"Since being informed of their decision, the FAW has shown a distinct lack of empathy and arrogant disrespect for the emotional and physical impact on our club.

"The implications of our enforced relegation reach far wider than the gates of the Old Road Ground. It will have, in some cases, an irreparable impact on our community and our ability to provide opportunities to young players and coaches via our links to local clubs. Is this the legacy FAW envisaged with the restructure?

"In the short time since the decision, the devastating impact it has had on the mental health and wellness of some of our players is heart-breaking to witness.

"Thankfully, we are fortunate that we already have in place the support network and experience to help players impacted by our exclusion.

"Even with the embargo in place, it was evident and clear from the correspondence we

have received that there is and will be continued negative public opinion towards the restructure. We would like to thank all the clubs, both ladies and men across Wales who have shown amazing support since the news broke of our ladies enforced relegation.

"So, what should the FAW do now? Well, we believe the FAW should be scrupulously honest with themselves and acknowledge that on this occasion they have made a mistake. The important thing now is to move on, reconnect with clubs, rebuild unity, and acknowledge that the restructure in its current format will undoubtedly fail to move the ladies' game in Wales forward.

"Finally, in football we all face moments of great disappointment, but it is how we react that will define us. Rest assured, we will do everything in our power to return our ladies team to their rightful place in the Ladies Welsh Premier League."

Following their initial statement, we spoke once again to Briton Ferry Llansawel to ask a couple of follow up questions.

Did you have any idea that you may be relegated when the announcement of the reshuffle was initially announced?

"We found out on 3rd May that we were not being

recommended as one of the eight teams.

"Following this announcement we were embargoed until the 28th May this was then moved to 31st May.

"We were given the opportunity to appeal but were unsuccessful as we could only appeal the proses not the ruling.

"The appeals panel gave us a report but unfortunately the FAW have stated that this is:

'Private & Confidential – Do not share outside of the Club or with Players'"

Did the players and staff involved find out about the decision before it was made public?

"We did let our staff know and the player as we only felt this was the right thing to do.

"Some of our players where visibly and mentally distort from this and we had to support them this had a major impact on our final two games of the season as the players felt there was no point in fighting any more as the FAW were going to do what they wanted anyway."



# Shiels chooses 22-strong panel for training camp and friendly



Northern Ireland manager Kenny Shiels has named his squad for the friendly against Scotland.

The squad features one debutant in the form of midfielder Fi Morgan who makes the step up from the U19s.

Returning after not featuring in the last squad are Lisburn Rangers defender Ella Haughey, Glentoran Women forwards Casey Howe and Lauren Wade plus Glentoran Women midfielder Joely Andrews.

Experienced defender Ashley Hutton is not available for the camp after rupturing an anterior cruciate ligament in her knee while playing for Linfield Ladies last week, while Everton Women striker Simone Magill is also unavailable.

And Shiels is still without a handful of players who are recovering from long term injuries, including Rachel Furness, Demi Vance, Megan Bell, Caragh Hamilton and Abbie Magee.

The camp and game marks the start of preparations for Northern Ireland's FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 qualification campaign, which begins with two home games in September.

## Squad

### Goalkeepers

Jackie Burns, Becky Flaherty

### Defenders

Julie Nelson, Rebecca McKenna, Rebecca Holloway, Laura Rafferty, Toni-Leigh Finnegan, Ella Haughey

### Midfielders

Marissa Callaghan, Louise McDaniel, Fi Morgan, Nadene Caldwell, Joely Andrews, Sam Kelly, Chloe McCarron, Sarah McFadden, Ciara Watling

### Forwards

Kerry Beattie, Casey Howe, Lauren Wade, Kirsty McGuinness, Emily Wilson



# Electric Ireland Women's Challenge Cup draw made



The draw has been made for this year's Electric Ireland Women's Challenge Cup.

A total of 19 teams received byes in the preliminary round of the cup, which had to be cancelled last year due to Covid restrictions, and they will now enter at the first round stage of the top club cup competition.

Clare McAllister of Electric Ireland said "We are delighted to see the Electric Ireland Women's Challenge Cup get under way in 2021. There is a wealth of talent across the game and we look forward to the excitement of competitive matches and following the teams progress through the competition.

"The growth in the local women's game illustrates the dedication and commitment of local players, clubs and volunteers and we are proud of all the Game Changers involved."

The first round ties are scheduled to be played on 25 June.

The six NIFL Women's Premiership clubs will enter the competition at the second round stage, which is scheduled for 9 July.

The quarter-finals will then take place on 23 July, followed by the semi-finals on 27 August and the final on 8 October.

## **Preliminary round**

Bangor vs Lisburn

## **First round**

Ballymena United v Lisburn Rangers

Craigavon City vs Bangor  
or Lisburn

Belfast Celtic vs St Oliver Plunkett

Killen Rangers vs Belfast Ravens

St James' Swifts v Comber Rec

Carnmoney v Foyle Belles

Belfast Swifts v Camlough Rovers

Rosario YC v Mid-Ulster

East Belfast v Larne



# INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS







# Fifa awards Women's World Cup media rights in Australia

Fifa has announced that it has awarded the exclusive rights in Australia for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 to Optus Sport.

As part of the agreement, Optus will show all 64 matches of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, the biggest event in the international women's game, on its Optus Sport platform in Australia.

One match per day, including the key matches of the tournament and all Matildas' matches, will be made available nationwide with free access. The Optus coverage of the tournament will reach fans across all platforms with highlights, support programming and other digital content.

Optus Sport was a Media Rights Licensee (MRL) in Australia for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 and will extend its coverage for the 2023 edition of the tournament.

Women's football is a core element of Optus Sport's elite football offering and Optus aims to bring the sport to the widest possible audience in Australia. Optus is one of the leading consumer brands in Australia through its telecommunications business with 11 million customers, which will provide a unique opportunity to engage with fans across Australia and promote the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023.

Sarai Bareman, Chief Women's Football Officer, FIFA said: "FIFA is excited to welcome Optus Sport as our official broadcaster of

the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 for Australia.

"Optus has shown a strong commitment to broadcasting women's football and this deal will provide unprecedented coverage in Australia for the tournament, as well as bringing women's football to more fans and new audiences.

"We look forward to working with Optus to promote the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 to accelerate the growth of the women's game in Australia in the lead up to 2023."

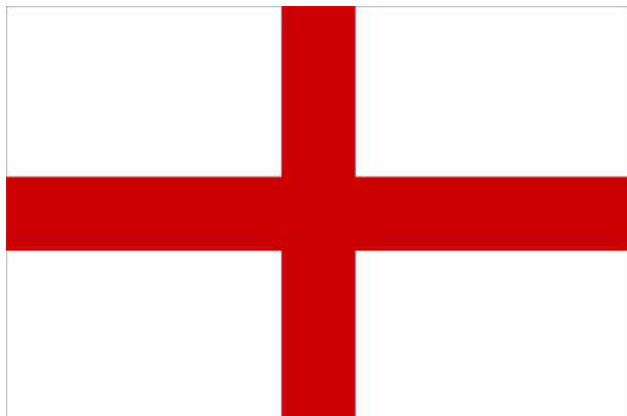
Commenting on the tournament, Optus Chief Executive Kelly Bayer Rosmarin said: "We are delighted to not only support the most exciting women's sporting event in the world, hosted right here on our home soil, but also to demonstrate our unwavering commitment to growing women's sport in this country."

The FIFA Women's World Cup will take place from 20 July to 20 August 2023. Earlier this year, FIFA announced the 9 Host Cities and 10 stadiums in Australia and New Zealand where matches will be played during the tournament. Eden Park in Auckland will host the opening match of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023™, with Stadium Australia in Sydney selected to host the Final.

*For more information on the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 and women's football, visit [FIFA.com](https://www.fifa.com) or use the hashtag #FIFAWWC*

# Women's World Cup qualify

## Northern Ireland, Scotland and



The European qualifying draw for the 2023 Fifa Women's World Cup has been made.

The record 51 contenders have been split into nine groups—six groups of six and three of five.

The games will be played between September 2021 and September 2022.

### What happens with qualifying?

- The winners of the nine qualifying groups will progress directly to the finals in Australia and New Zealand from 20 July to 20 August 2023
- The group runners-up take part in the UEFA play-offs in October 2022
- In the play-offs, the three best runners-up will be seeded directly to round 2 of the play-offs. The six remaining runners-up contest three single-leg play-offs in round 1
- The three winners from round 1 and the three

teams seeded directly to round 2 will then compete in single-leg play-offs determined by a draw

- The two play-off winners with the highest ranking (based on results in the qualifying group stage and round 2 play-offs) will qualify for the finals
- The remaining play-off winner will compete in the inter-confederation play-offs from 17 to 23 February 2023 in Australia and New Zealand

### Qualifying groups

#### Group A

Sweden  
Finland  
Republic of Ireland  
Slovakia  
Georgia

#### Group B

Spain  
Scotland  
Ukraine

Hungary  
Faroe Islands

#### Group C

Netherlands  
Iceland  
Czech Republic  
Belarus  
Cyprus

#### Group D

England  
Austria  
Northern Ireland  
North Macedonia  
Latvia  
Luxembourg

#### Group E

Denmark  
Russia  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Azerbaijan  
Malta  
Montenegro

#### Group F

Norway  
Belgium  
Poland  
Albania  
Kosovo  
Armenia



# ving draw made as England, Wales find out their pathway



## Group G

Italy  
Switzerland  
Romania  
Croatia  
Moldova  
Lithuania

## Group H

Germany  
Portugal  
Serbia  
Israel  
WTurkey  
Bulgaria

## Group I

France  
Wales  
Slovenia  
Greece  
Kazakhstan  
Estonia

## Home Nations fixtures

### England

**2021**

Sept, 17: Eng vs N. Macedonia

Sept, 21: Luxembourg vs Eng

Oct, 23: Eng vs NI

Oct, 26: Latvia vs Eng

Nov, 27: Eng vs Austria

Nov, 30: Eng vs Latvia

**2022**

Apr, 8: N. vs Eng

Apr, 12: NI vs Eng

### Northern Ireland

**2021**

Sept, 17: NI vs Luxembourg

Sept, 21: NI vs Latvia

Oct, 23: Eng vs NI

Oct, 26: NI vs Austria

Nov, 25: N. Macedonia vs NI

Nov, 30: NI vs N. Macedonia

**2022**

Apr, 8: Austria vs NI

Apr, 12: NI vs Eng

Sept, 2: Luxembourg vs NI

Sept, 6: Latvia vs NI

### Scotland

**2021**

Sept, 17: Hungary vs Scotland

Sept, 21: Scotland vs Faroe Islands

Oct, 22: Scotland vs Hungary

Nov, 26: Scotland vs Ukraine

Nov, 30: Spain vs Scotland

**2022**

Apr, 8: Ukraine vs Scotland

Apr, 12: Scotland vs Spain

Wales

**2021**

Sept, 17: Wales vs Kazakhstan

Sept, 21: Estonia vs Wales

Oct, 22: Slovenia vs Wales

Oct, 26: Wales vs Estonia

Nov, 26: Wales vs Greece

Nov, 30: France vs Wales

**2022**

Apr, 8: Wales vs France

Apr, 12: Kazakhstan vs Wales

# Riise names Great Britain



The British Olympic Association (BOA) has confirmed the selection of 18 players who will represent Team GB at the Tokyo 2020 (2021) Olympic Games.

It is only the second time that Team GB have entered a women's football team since its induction in 1996.

Among the squad are five Olympians who competed for Team GB at the London 2012 Olympic Games: England's Karen Bardsley, Steph Houghton, Jill Scott and Ellen White and Scotland's Kim Little.

Team GB fielded a women's football team for the first time in the London 2012 Olympic Games.

The team reached the quarter-finals, with the United States the eventual winners after beating Japan 2-1 to win a third consecutive gold.

It is believed that 'the inclusion of a Great Britain women's football team for Tokyo could result in there being more female athletes than male representing Team GB at a summer Olympic Games for the first time in history.'

Team GB, who have been drawn in Group E, will face Chile in the opening game of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games in Sapporo on 21 July, followed by hosts Japan on 24 July before travelling to Kashima to take on Canada on 27 July.

Mark England, Team GB Chef de Mission for Tokyo 2020, commented: "Having an opportunity to field a women's football team in Tokyo, for only the second time in our Olympic history, is incredibly exciting.

"I am delighted to welcome the players selected today to

Team GB for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

"It is fantastic to see five returning Olympians named and I am sure they, along with the 13 debutants, will relish the opportunity to represent Team GB this summer.

"Team GB is on the cusp of making history this summer as we are on track to qualify more female than male athletes for the Games for the very first time and I am sure that as we saw at London 2012 the team selected today will help to inspire a new generation of girls and young women wanting to play the sport."

Hege Riise, Head Coach of Team GB Football for Tokyo, said: "I know first-hand as a former player just how proud my players will feel today at having been selected to represent Great Britain.



# ain squad for Olympics



“There is no greater sporting occasion in the world and I am honoured to lead this hugely talented team into the Games.

“We will go there aiming to win and we will give everything we have to achieve success.

“I hope that Great Britain’s inclusion once more in the Olympic Football Tournament can inspire the next generation of young girls to play the sport we love.”

## **Selected Team GB footballers for Tokyo 2020:**

Karen Bardsley - Goalkeeper - OL Reign and England

Ellie Roebuck - Goalkeeper - Manchester City and England

Millie Bright - Defender - Chelsea and England

Lucy Bronze - Defender - Manchester City and England

Rachel Daly - Defender - Houston Dash and England

Steph Houghton - Defender - Manchester City and England

Demi Stokes - Defender - Manchester City and England

Leah Williamson - Defender - Arsenal and England

Sophie Ingle - Midfielder - Chelsea and Wales

Kim Little - Midfielder - Arsenal and Scotland

Jill Scott - Midfielder - Manchester City and England

Keira Walsh - Midfielder - Manchester City and England

Caroline Weir - Midfielder - Manchester City and Scotland

Lauren Hemp - Forward - Manchester City and England

Fran Kirby - Forward - Chelsea and England

Nikita Parris - Forward - Olympique Lyonnais and England

Georgia Stanway - Forward - Manchester City and England

Ellen White - Forward - Manchester City and England

## **Reserve players:**

Sandy MacIver - Goalkeeper - Everton and England

Lotte Wubben-Moy - Defender - Arsenal and England

Niamh Charles - Midfielder - Chelsea and England

Ella Toone - Forward - Manchester United and England



2021! ~~2020~~

# Euro 2022 ticketing in as FA aims for full st



UEFA  
WOMEN'S  
EURO 2022  
ENGLAND



With all 16 teams now confirmed for UEFA Women's EURO 2022, a major ticketing roadmap and legacy programme has been unveiled to illustrate how a record-breaking tournament that has the power to inspire the next generation of players and fans, will be delivered on home soil.

With over 700,000 tickets available across the 10 venues in nine host cities, an unprecedented number of fans will be able to experience the biggest women's European sport event ever from 6 - 31 July 2022.

The ambition is to set a record attendance for a Uefa Women's Euro fixture [currently 41,301, 2013 Final] at the tournament's opening game at Old Trafford. It is then the aim to break this record once again for the Final at Wembley Stadium, where it is hoped a sell-out crowd will fill the national stadium, surpassing the current European record

for a women's game of 80,203 set at London 2012.

Next summer's celebration of football sees tickets ranging from £5 to £50, with over half a million tickets available for £25 or less, ensuring the Uefa Women's Euro 2022 is an accessible event for all.

The tournament will see a family of four [two adults and two children] able to watch some of the World's best players from just £30. With over 90% of England's population within two hours of a game, the tournament will truly belong to everyone and allow fans from all areas the chance to play their part in what will hopefully be a record-breaking summer for the women's game.

The first chance supporters will have to apply for tickets is on 13 July 2021, via the Pre-Sale, presented by Visa.

To ensure this priority access, fans can register their interest

now at [UEFA.com/womenseuro/ticketing](https://UEFA.com/womenseuro/ticketing).

Together with UEFA, as a nation and host a clear ambition is held to deliver the biggest women's football event in UEFA history, which is used to inspire long-term, sustainable positive change in women's and girls' football.

Host cities are developing local strategies to make transformational changes in their communities which are designed to create a blueprint for the rest of the country and Europe.

The legacy programme shared today sets out the plans across the nine host Cities to deliver 500,000 new football opportunities to engage women and girls by 2024. Nationally, The FA are committing to several measures, such as ensuring that 75% of schools provide equal access for girls to play football within PE lessons and 75% of all grassroots football clubs offer at least one girls' team with 1,000 clubs



# Information announced stadiums



offering a complete accredited pathway for girls.

Across the nine host Cities these measures will result in 120,000 more girls playing in schools and clubs and 20,000 more women playing for fun and friendship by 2024. In addition, 300 newly FA-qualified female coaches will double the number currently involved across the host cities, with 350 new FA-qualified female referees officiating to ensure increased female participation in all areas of the game.

Baroness Sue Campbell, Euro 2022 Board Member and Director of Women's Football, The FA, said: "It has been a challenging year in so many ways, with mental and physical wellbeing hugely affected by the pandemic. The tournament and the city legacy programmes are a very real opportunity to positively change the impact restrictions have had on our activity levels and to bring us together through football regardless of

our role we play within the game.

"The long-term legacy ambitions will unlock the game for more women and girls across host cities and beyond with equal access for all girls to play football in school and clubs. We will also be working to create a more diverse workforce of coaches, referees and local leaders to deliver and organise football for their communities. Our vision will ensure inclusive, safe and welcoming environments for every woman and girl to play competitive or recreational grassroots football - irrespective of ability, age or ambition.

"This ambitious legacy programme could not be possible without the ongoing commitment to the development of the women's game from UEFA, The FA, our host cities, councils and supporting organisations and I would like to thank them for all their hard work to date."

Chris Bryant, Head of Tournament Delivery, The FA, added: "We are aware of the huge opportunity we have to grow the women's game here and across Europe.

"To have that legacy, we must ensure we first deliver a record-breaking tournament that captures the imagination, to provide those vital foundations.

"It is an exciting time as Uefa Women's Euro 2022 really starts to take shape now, with the Pre-Sale, presented by Visa for tickets in July 2021.

"With 10 venues, nine host cities and over 700,000 tickets available there is a real opportunity for people to play their part in creating a special tournament with incredible footballing talent on display.

"With 16 of the best European Nations competing across 31 matches, we want to see full stadiums, generating an incredible atmosphere, so be sure to register for the Pre-

Sale, presented by Visa so you don't miss out on getting tickets."

Nadine Kessler, UEFA Chief of Women's Football, said: "Today marks another important moment in the build-up to what will be the biggest UEFA Women's EURO ever and ground-breaking from start to finish.

"A moment that is there to draw attention to two strategically fundamental topics, ticketing and legacy.

"Priorities we need to get right, and we will get right. We are going to fill stadia, sell out matches, fans are going to come from all over England, the whole UK, Europe and beyond.

And when we have achieved this, we have left the impression that was needed to amplify the efforts that have already gone into leaving a legacy in England and beyond. The legacy, for all of us, won't stop with the final whistle at

Wembley stadium on 31 July 2022.

"I am delighted to see that The FA has found great partners for their legacy programme and are treating this topic with a long-term vision to bring women into the game and provide environments they can thrive in.

"This Women's EURO needs to become a benchmark and we all have our role to play in it. There is a unique chance to make a difference to our sport, at a critical time. So, let's make it happen."

The opening match of the tournament takes place at Old Trafford on 6 July 2022. The Semi-Finals will be held at Sheffield's Bramall Lane and Milton Keynes' Stadium MK ahead of the showcase Final at Wembley Stadium on 31 July 2022. Each venue, other than Old Trafford and Wembley, will host a minimum of three games each during the tournament.

The Pre-Sale, presented by Visa will run from 13 July until 10 August 2021. As part of the Pre-Sale, Visa cardholders will be given the opportunity to be among the first to purchase their tickets for the tournament, alongside fans that pre-register now at [UEFA.com/womenseuro/ticketing](https://UEFA.com/womenseuro/ticketing).

The public ballot will open following the draw which takes place on 28 October 2021 live on BBC, with tickets going on general sale from mid-February 2022.

Although, all are planning for full stadiums in summer 2022, a robust refund policy will be in place if fixtures are postponed, cancelled, have reduced capacity or a change of venue is introduced due to COVID.

A ticket resale platform will be available in 2022 for ticket holders to use and re-sell their tickets at face value pre-tournament to another fan. More will be communicated in the coming months.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**FROM  
13 JULY 2021**  
Pre-Sale, presented  
by VISA

**28 OCTOBER  
2021**  
Final draw

**POST  
FINAL DRAW**  
Ballot  
Ticket applications open

**FROM  
FEBRUARY 2022**  
General public sale



 OVER 

**500,000**  
**TICKETS**  
AVAILABLE FOR  
**£25** OR  
LESS



**Adults**  
**£10-£50**



**Aged 16 and under**  
**£5-£25**



**Bring the family**  
**From £30**



# Around the World





# MIT Sloan publishes study on how the NWSL thrived in the pandemic

The challenges women's sports face have drawn national attention in recent months, particularly when it comes to the inequities they encounter.

A new MIT Sloan School of Management case study examines the past, present, and future of the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) and how it successfully navigated the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the leadership of the league's new commissioner Lisa Baird, the NWSL was the first professional sports league to return to action during the pandemic and the first to crown a champion. It also succeeded in reaching larger audiences and expanding to new markets. Authors of the case study, MIT Sloan Associate Director of Curriculum Development Cate Reavis, journalist and Boston University Lecturer Shira Springer, and MIT Sloan Senior Lecturer Ben Shields, highlight learnings from Baird and the NWSL about leadership, strategy, and innovation.

"This is a remarkable story about a business navigating the uncertainty of the pandemic and emerging in an even stronger position," says Shields. "There is so much to learn from studying how Commissioner Baird and her team are charting a growth path for women's professional soccer in a more equitable and sustainable way."

Springer notes that the case tells the story of how difficult it is to grow a business while simultaneously trying to change a culture to enable growth. "It can be a 'Catch-22' and that presents interesting questions for students to consider. Also, the case is unique in that it features a female protagonist."

Reavis agrees. "A striking feature of this case is that in addition to featuring Baird's

leadership, her business is based on some of the best women athletes in the world. It's a story about women leading women."

The case study was taught in Shields's and Prof. Ray Reagan's class on Sports Strategy and Analytics on May 18, with Baird as guest speaker.

The authors point to several takeaways for students and listeners, including:

- an appreciation for Baird's collaborative leadership strategy during the uncertainty of the pandemic;
- an awareness of the strategic and cultural challenges facing women's professional sports and the new strategies and innovations required to address those challenges;
- an understanding of how the lessons from this case apply to other industries.

Springer adds, "The NWSL had been without a commissioner for three years, and Baird took the job just days after COVID-19 hit the U.S. Her first leadership challenge involved dealing with a pandemic and creating some semblance of a season when there was no playbook. Her ability to not only navigate that crisis, but also to be the first sports commissioner to lead a league back to action – and the first to finish the season – was nothing short of amazing."

The MIT Sloan School of Management is where smart, independent leaders come together to solve problems, create new organizations, and improve the world.

*Learn more at [mitsloan.mit.edu](https://mitsloan.mit.edu).*

# Magnificent seven



On the final Sunday in May, it was VfL Wolfsburg that lifted the German Cup for the seventh year in a row after a close and nervy win over Eintracht Frankfurt.

An extra time winner from Ewa Pajor, just two minutes from reaching a penalty shootout, proved to be the only goal of the DFB Pokal final between Wolfsburg and Frankfurt.

The She-wolves had to work for it in this year's final as their goalkeeper, Almuth Schult, was sent off in the sixth minute of extra time. It was for Schult rushing out of her 18-yard box in an attempt to stop a counter attack but ended up straight in

for Frankfurt's Lara Prasnikar.

Despite going down to 10 players, the Bundesliga champions did not let the push back derail the team.

Wolfsburg continued to take control of the game by dominating the field with only a goal that was missing. Their sheer determination to go home with a trophy was rewarded when Pajor scored from Svenja Huth, who placed her opponent's defense wide on a counter attack and laid the ball towards the Polish striker to seal the deal.

This wasn't the only time Pajor had scored for Wolfsburg in a final as the 24-year-old had decided

the 2019 German Cup final in a 1-0 win over Freiburg in 2019.

This year's Pokal win moves Wolfsburg tally of German Cups to eight just one behind of FFC Frankfurt before they emerged with Eintracht last year.

As we write this before this month's magazine goes out for print, this would be the start of Wolfsburg's 1st of two trophy bids in the space of a week.

Though the 2nd bid looks to be unlikely going into the final round of this season's Frauen-Bundesliga.

Bayern Munich will go into the title showdown two



# en for Wolfsburg



points ahead of Wolfsburg with a much higher goal difference. Wolfsburg will welcome Werder Bremen on Sunday June 6th while the Bavarians will host the DFB Pokal's runner's up.

A Bayern win will seal the German title and will also end Wolfsburg's dominance in the German top flight after four league victories in a row.

However, a Frankfurt win over Bayern while Wolfsburg win their match against Werder Bremen would stretch the league winning run to another year.

Over the past decade, the team in green have been one of the most competitive women's

group in European football.

Their highlights were winning the UEFA Women's Champions League two years in a row in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 seasons followed by a tough run of coming 2nd in 2016, 2018 and 2020 – all of them coming short to Lyon.

There is a little hint of dominance slowly fading away for Wolfsburg with their German title run looking to be ended by Bayern and not getting as close to the European cup compared to other years. But their latest Pokal celebrations was a reminder to us that they still know how to win.

## Wolfsburg's DFB Pokal Women Cup results

1st round: Bye

2nd round:  
Vfl Bochum 0-11  
Wolfsburg

Round of 16:  
Wolfsburg 3-1 Duisburg

Quarter-final:  
Wolfsburg 7-0 Werner  
Bremen

Semi-final:  
Wolfsburg 2-0 Bayern  
Munich

Final:  
Eintracht Frankfurt 0-1  
Wolfsburg

# Dubai: Women's Football

***“THIS PLACE IS A HIVE FOR PLAYERS” – LOOKING FORWARD TO THE GROWTH OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL POST-PANDEMIC***



The founder of a Dubai-based football club has opened up about the tough period the women's teams have faced – though he looks forward to the bounce back after the pandemic.

Mehran Rowshan, who runs Alliance Football Club, has explained how COVID-19 measures have caused many limitations to the girl's team and their operations – but training has continued throughout.

“There's certainly been a lot of safety protocols we have had to stick to,” he explains.

“Authorities like FIFA and the CDC have been strict on ensuring our facilities aren't adding to the spread.”

The club, which started in 2015, has provided a hub for discovering and developing both male and female play-

ers –their girls and women's teams have seen incredible success after years of having no outlet for aspiring female players in the Middle East.

“Even throughout the pandemic, the desire from the girls to play is there,” Mehran adds.

“This place is a hive for players - we're adding more and more training sessions for ladies so they can develop to the best of their potential and play at the highest level.”

The club strives to give girls and women the best chance to experience everything football can offer beyond the sport itself – teaching them to lead and compete in an environment where girls have historically been told football is not for them.

Providing training and teams for



# ball and the pandemic

## DUBAI FOOTBALL CLUB FOUNDER LOOKS WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN THE MIDDLE EAST



female players aged eight and above, the club is run by all-female coaches who inspire the players to become part of one of the world's most adored sporting games.

During the pandemic, they've ensured that all of their coaching and administration staff are vaccinated, with at least one health and safety officer (UK Level 3) always present during the training sessions.

Mehran adds that they've been adhering to rules throughout restrictions: "We've been training since last May and the limitations have certainly been tough – as a youth organization the safety of our players is the top priority.

"We change the bibs every session and ensure that there's temperature

screening every day – it's all paid off so far as there's not been a single case inside the club."

While things in the UAE aren't looking to get better anytime soon, as COVID restrictions remain firmly in place, Mehran and the staff at Alliance look forward to getting entirely back on track when restrictions do ease: "The obvious challenge is to overcome this phase – and it will be tough.

"But we've proved that we can still thrive under these conditions and we're excited for the long run."

Follow Alliance FC on Twitter:

@DubaiAlliance

# Simon Says

***This month Simon O'Neill chats to head coach of Antigua & Barbuda Women, Lisa Cole.***

**How did you get involved with soccer first? Did you start as a player and what level did you reach at the height of your playing career?**

I played in college at Pacific Lutheran University for Dr. Colleen Hacker. Of course, I also played as a kid. I just loved the game from a very early age. I'll date myself here but coming out of college I was considering going over to Japan to play with a teammate from college in the J-League but ended up getting a college coaching job at Ole Miss after my internship at SoccerPlus and decided to head in that direction. I really wish I had kept playing and jumped into coaching when I was done but there just weren't the same opportunities to play post college at the time. Getting into college coaching seemed like a smarter choice.

**You have a degree in PE Teaching. Is education a big influence on your career?**

Education has been important in my career. I feel like coaches are teachers, our classroom is just the field and we are lucky that our students love our subject, FOOTBALL. I actually was not a great student in school, but I have always loved learning. That seems odd but it is true. I think it is important we are always looking for ways to improve ourselves, teams and players.

**How did you get into your first coaching position?**

I actually start coaching when I was in the 9th grade. I was out training on my own and a poor dad was on the field with a u6 or u7 team and he had now ideal about the game. His wife had volunteered him to coach the team because they were short coaches. He came over and asked if I would be willing to show the players some moves and that was it, I fell in love with coaching. It was a lot of fun. I ended up coaching all through high school and college at the youth, Middle School and

High School levels. I even got paid, it was great. My first full time coaching job was at Ole Miss. I was finishing up an Internship with SoccerPlus and Tony DiCicco asked me what my plans where afterwards. I told him about maybe playing but really didn't know. Next day he's tells "Hey I just recommended you for a job. They are going to call you later" and that was it. I packed up everything and took it to the interview at Ole Miss, I figured I'd stay or head back home to figure things out. Ended up staying...it was actually the college job I enjoyed the most.

**Did you find it hard to take theory and concepts from degree into the coaching?**

Sometimes I felt what was being taught didn't really reflect the environment in schools or with teams. I think theories are not always evolving as quickly as the environment demands when you are living it, doing it. The best way to improve as a coach is to get out and coach. You need experience coaching just like players need to experience playing.

I feel like I am always evolving as a coach and that is because you have to adapt as things change. Also remember, I was coaching in a middle school while I was in college so some things, right away, I was like that is not going to work with the group I have. Maybe it worked 5 years ago but kids are not going to respond to that. Knowing the players, understanding their motivation, the challenges they had was really important to me early on. Soccer was a lot of time the best part of my players day, so I wanted it to be fun but challenging. I wanted them to feel proud of the effort they put in every day.

Having said that I do think some of the concepts really helped me organize my approach to coaching. I had a season plan (curriculum) to make sure we covered certain things over the course of the season. I wanted the sessions to build on each other and not just be a reaction to what happened in the last game. I think that came from having studied education and development vs just coaching.



**In what way has women's soccer evolved over the time you have been involved?**

Well, we have professional clubs and opportunities in and around the game that just didn't exist when I was a player. The popularity of the sport, especially for women, has certainly grown. The technical quality and athleticism of female players is impressive today, the game is really entertaining to watch at the highest levels. I still think we have a long way to go in many areas, but I think this last World Cup has shown that if we give the game support and equal billing in the media people will watch and want to engage.

**During your coaching career have you looked at other coaching methods or had mentors to help you progress?**

I was really fortunate when it comes to mentors. I grew up in Washington State and I am of course biased, but I think we had/have a hot bed there of good coaches. I started coaching early and growing up I worked camps all summer for Tony Waiters and Greg Ion. In my youth career I played for good coaches, even women coaches and that was not common. Then one of the biggest influences on my life, Dr. Colleen Hacker, was my college coach. Who continues to have an impact on me as a coach and person. She also introduced me to Tony DiCicco and he really invested in me and provided me with opportunities to develop as a coach. I literally was mentored by one of the best in the game and just a truly remarkable person. I could not have asked for a better environment or person to learn from.

**You began your work as a camp director and education director in the late 1990's was that a move that interested you?**

I decided the college game was just not for me. I want to be on the field, every day if possible. So, this was a move to figure how I could make a living and do what I loved as much as possible. I also wanted to continue to learn and develop my coaching and this allowed me the opportunity to work closely with Tony. Through the SoccerPlus Education Center we developed a leadership program, we ran afterschool programs, we created an amateur team, the SoccerPlus CT Reds, that provide female college players with a place to train and play during the summer, and many other really cool projects that impacted lives in a positive way.

**Going from coaching at Universities to U20 coach for a national team must have been a big step. How did that come about?**

I went from coaching professionally to the U20 job. It was just such a unique challenge and opportunity with Papua New Guinea hosting the U20 World Cup that I couldn't pass it up. To this day it remains one of my top coaching experiences. It was not just about football but actually changing culture, changing how women are viewed and how they see themselves. To see themselves as leaders, and not just wives. Just thinking of it now gives me goosebumps, the amount of growth in those young women in a year was remarkable. We lost every game, but we accomplished all of our goals, it was a great success for them and the country. They now are running a women's league in PNG and it is cool to see these players still leading and being great examples of what women can do.

**You have covered other roles in soccer including being a scout, Technical Director - what would be your career highlight?**

Hands down Papua New Guinea for all the reasons above. I also loved my time in Boston with Tony, that time really shaped me as a coach. I wouldn't be the coach or person I am today without that experience and his guidance.

I was at Florida State for Mark Krikorian's first year as Head Coach, with Erika Walsh, Mick Stat-ham, Pauliina Miettinen. I learned a ton from that group and how Mark managed a talented staff to get the best out of each of us. I think that helped me as I started to lead larger groups of people.

I am excited about what is possible with Antigua and Barbuda. The FA has been great. We kicked off a women's league in 2020 that ended early due to COVID but we charged a gate and people paid to watch, the environment was professional and feel supported. I can't wait to see what we can do here.

**If you could offer one piece of advice to a girl, what would it be?**

Enjoy the journey. There will be lots of good times but there will also be setbacks. Stay positive, know your WHY? And stay true to that. I would have stayed in the college game if I had listened to others. What became really important to me was not just coaching the game but finding ways to make lasting impact on the players, coaches, communities I was a part of through the game.



# News from around the world



## Lazio promoted to Serie A

Lazio Women have been promoted to Serie A with two games to spare.

The Biancocelesti join Pomigliano as the promoted sides after a 2-1 win over Roma Calcio Femminile.

Lazio set a goal early in the season to secure promotion but after a rocky start it looked unlikely.

However, as the season progressed form improved and they secured promotion before the season finished.

## Salmon joins Racing Louisville

Ebony Salmon has been announced as Racing Louisville's newest signing as she heads over to the NWSL.

The 20-year-old English striker has signed a two-year contract with the club.

Salmon made her England debut in February and was named Bristol City's player of the season and was top goal scorer for the last two seasons.

Speaking in a press conference after the announcement, Salmon said: "Before (coach) Christy (Holly) reached out to me, I literally hadn't heard anything about the city or the team, but when Christy did reach out, I did my research, I spoke to my agent, I spoke to my family, who were obviously doing their research, too, and after conversations I had with Christy, the ambitions of the club became clearer and they're similar to the ambitions I have for myself."

Salmon posted a picture on Twitter on June 2 showing her at the airport, ready to head to her new club.







# News from around the world

## Duggan to leave Atletico Madrid

England forward Toni Duggan is set to leave Atletico Madrid when her deal runs out this summer.

It is thought she will be coming back to the Women's Super League with Everton, the club she rose through the youth ranks of, reportedly interested.

Duggan has not been in the England squad for some time and talking to Sky Sports, she believes coming back to England is the best way of getting back into the Lionesses.

She told them: "I think if I'm in the WSL, back in England, and in front of the new manager's eyes, that is my motivation - to get back in the England team, come back in England and hopefully people can remember me."

She has spent the past two years at Atletico, and two years at Barcelona on her arrival in Spain in 2017 as she helped the team reach the Women's Champions League final.



## Moe Wold retires

Norway and Everton defender Ingrid Moe Wold has announced her retirement from football.

The 31-year-old has decided to pursue a career in physiotherapy back in Norway.

She told Everton's official website: "There's been some really tough few weeks but I think it's the right decision for me and that I'm ready to start the next chapter in life.

"I'm a physiotherapist so I want to work with young athletes doing injury prevention.

"That's my dream job so I'm really lucky to get that opportunity to have something to do after my [playing] career."

Manager Willie Kirk commented: "I'm obviously disappointed to see Moe leave but she leaves with our best wishes.

"I feel privileged to have played a part in her career and to have worked with her in these past 12 months. She's been so consistent and professional everyday she's been in."





# News from around the world



## Aluko appointed sporting director at Angel City

Eni Aluko has been announced as the new sporting director at new Los Angeles-based side Angel City FC.

The 34-year-old left her post at Aston Villa before announcing the move.

Angel City are preparing for their first season in the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) which will be in 2022.

Aluko said: "I'm thrilled to join Angel City. This is an incredible opportunity to help write the club's first chapter and to build a team that is people-focused and admired all over the world.

"I can't wait to get started and join a fantastic female led ownership group."

Natalie Portman is one of the club's co-founders with investors including Serena Williams, Billie Jean King, Mia Hamm, Abby Wambach, Eva Longoria and James Cordon.

Aluko said in a statement on Angel City's official website: "This is an incredible opportunity to help write Angel City's first chapter and to build a team that is people-focused and admired by players and fans all over the world.

"I have no doubt the club will be a trailblazer, not just in the NWSL and women's soccer, but for sports clubs globally.

"As a former player, the club's determination to make an impact both on the field and in the community is something that I fully support, and I can't wait to get started. I am thrilled to join a fantastic female led ownership group, many of whom I have admired and been inspired by from a young age."

## PSG win French League, ending Lyon's run

Paris Saint Germain have won France's Division 1 for the first time.

The win ends Lyon's run of 14 consecutive titles.

PSG topped the table by one point, with Lyon finishing second and Bordeaux third.

At the other end, Le Havre finished bottom of the table, only winning two games during the season.







# News from around the world



## Houston Dash qualifies for 2021 Women's International Champions Cup

Houston Dash have announced they will compete in the 2021 Women's International Champions Cup (WICC) against three FC Barcelona Femeni, Olympique Lyonnais and Portland Thorns.

The four top champions from around the world will participate in the premier women's international club tournament for the chance to be called the world's best club team.

Last summer, the Dash brought home the club's first league title when they defeated the Chicago Red Stars in the 2020 NWSL Challenge Cup Final on

July 26, 2-0.

The Thorns, who will host the tournament, qualify as winners of the 2020 NWSL Fall Series, Olympique Lyonnais as winners of the 2020 Champions League and 2020 D1 Feminine and FC Barcelona as 2020 Primera Division champions and the most current Champions League champions.

The tournament will take place from August 18-21 in Portland, Oregon at Providence Park, the home of the Thorns. The tournament will consist of four matches played as two doubleheaders. In the first doubleheader, Olympique Lyonnais will face off against FC Barcelona in an all-European clash and the Portland Thorns will play against the Houston Dash in an All-American battle. This will set up a European vs. US final on August 21, as the winners of the first doubleheader meet, while the clubs that lose in the first doubleheader will play in the third-place match on the same day.

## Vande Velde makes Iceland move

Chloe Vande Velde has left KAA Gent on loan for Icelandic side Breidablik.

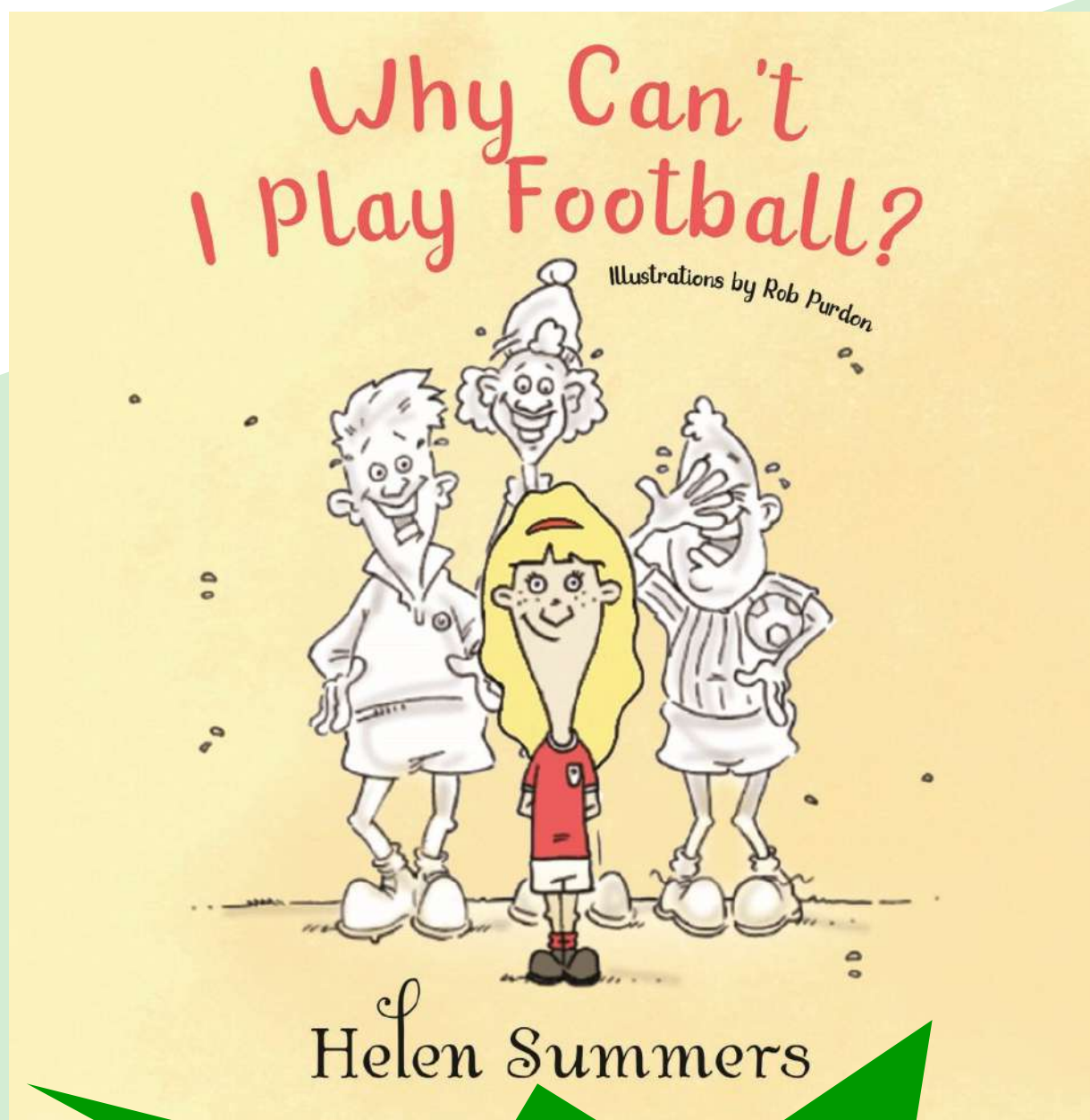
Vande Velde will spend the summer playing for the Icelandic side before returning to Ghent for the start of the season.

The 23-year-old midfielder will be eligible to play from July 1 which will include two Champions League ties.

She will travel to Iceland after meeting up with Belgium for two friendlies against Spain and Luxembourg.



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