

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

ISSUE 54—Nov/Dec 2021



THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE



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Hello and welcome to Issue 54!

A mixture of Covid-19 and chest infections hit the TWFM office in November which meant we once again were lacking in an issue.

Instead of just missing a month we have added to the content this month with over 150 pages of pure content!

Our new 2022 Calendar is also available for sale and they are selling like hot cakes.

A4 Wall Calendars are just £5 and will feature all your favourite women's players.

This year's theme is:

“Stars of the Future” and features all the best young players from across all the leagues.

I hope you all stay safe over the festive period, have a lovely Christmas and wishing you all a very Happy New Year.

Enjoy the issue!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks

Editor-in-Chief

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THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL MAGAZINE

CALENDAR 2022

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and packaging)**



The 1921 Football Association ban on women's football as its members' grounds



By Tony Killilea

On Boxing Day 1920 a capacity crowd of 53,000 packed into Goodison Park in Liverpool.

Such was the demand to see the biggest football match of the year that an estimated 14,000 people were locked out, disappointed that they couldn't get to watch the finest players of their era.

The sense of occasion was enhanced by the fact that the match was started by Ella Retford, one of the biggest music hall stars of the age, and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool was in attendance.

But the huge crowd hadn't shoehorned themselves into the stadium to admire

Everton or Liverpool's men's teams, rather they'd come to witness St Helens Ladies take on Dick, Kerr Ladies from Preston in what was billed as the unofficial women's cup final.

The two teams treated the Goodison crowd to a feast of attacking football, with Dick, Kerr running out 4-0 winners. Two of their outstanding players, Lily Parr and Alice Woods, had recently been transferred from St Helens. Lily, an openly gay, chain smoking left winger, was renowned for her caustic wit as well as the accuracy of her long passing and the power of her shooting.

She is reputed to have broken the arm of a goalkeeper who was unwise enough to get in the way of one of her shots and scored almost a thousand goals in an astonishing career. Dick, Kerr Ladies, was the works team of an engineering company, which had most notably manufactured trams, before turning its factory over to producing weapons to support the war effort. Encouraged by Albert Frankland who managed the team, they sought to take their game beyond the status of a pastime and put it on a par with the men's game.

Albert was empowered to offer employment to any

player who was deemed good enough to join the team and Lily moved to Preston as a Dick, Kerr worker.

Alice's mother, however, insisted that her daughter remain at home to help care for her younger siblings. Although she played for Dick, Kerr, she returned after the matches to St Helens where all her male relatives worked in the coal mines.

Women's football had started in the latter part of the nineteenth century; the first recorded women's match took place in 1888 in Inverness, but it really established itself during the first world war. With the men's leagues suspended there was an opportunity for the women's game to gain status.

In working class communities, young women and girls were employed in munitions factories to help the war effort. Bolstered by the camaraderie of the workplace, the women sought an outlet for pleasure after long hours of drudgery in the factories; and they found this in football.

At first seen as a novelty, the commitment and skill of the teams ensured that women's football soon gained credibility and

enormous popularity. But when it seemed that the women's game was building an unstoppable momentum it was dealt a devastating blow.

Just under a year after the Boxing Day match the Football Association took steps to ensure that such a huge event couldn't take place again in the women's game. On 5th December 1921 the FA issued an edict banning women's football from being played at its members' grounds.

This did not end women's football in England, but the ban did mean that women's football was now banished to recreation grounds and public parks where attendances were far more limited.

In its edict the FA gave two reasons for barring women from playing football at its grounds.

Firstly, that women were physically unsuited to such a game and, secondly, that "an inadequate percentage (of the takings were) devoted to Charitable Objects."

So, were women physically unsuited to playing football?

There was certainly a body of opinion in the early decades of the twentieth century that competitive sport and in particular,

football, could be damaging to women's health.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, said, "no matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks".

This view was echoed by an FA doctor called Eustace Miles, who said, "the kicking is too jerky a movement for women and the strain is likely to be severe."

Of course, these were male views and there was an overriding belief at the all-male FA that football was unfeminine and that a woman's place was in the home. Two female doctors also claimed that football was potentially damaging to women, in particular it could cause damage to their reproductive organs, but their approach was no more scientific than that of Dr Miles, and no actual evidence of this was ever forthcoming.

Of course, those doctors didn't make any claims for any damaging effects from doing heavy, not to mention extremely dangerous, work in munitions factories.

A medic with a different perspective was Dr Mary Lowry who, after watching Dick, Kerr Ladies play a

match said, “football is no more likely to cause injuries to women than a heavy day’s washing.”

At the same time factory welfare officers were encouraging football for women as a means of improving their physical wellbeing. As for the supposed sterilising effects of playing football on women, these were belied by the fecundity of Dick, Kerr’s players. Alice was typical of the team in going on to have four children.

What of the FA’s claim that women’s football clubs were diverting too much money by way of expenses from charity donations?

Unlike the professional men’s game, women’s matches were played for charity. During, and in the period following, the first world war, funds were raised for wounded soldiers and their families.

In part, the enthusiasm for women’s football stemmed from a patriotic desire to help the war effort by contributing to servicemen’s charities.

The Boxing Day game raised £3,115 (well over half a million pounds in today’s money) for the Unemployed Ex Servicemen’s Distress Fund.

The Derby Daily Telegraph stated that “the strongest argument in its (women’s football’s) favour appears to be the large amount of money that has been raised for charity.”

Expenses were indeed taken from match takings to pay for travel, laundry and time in lieu (players often had to miss shifts in order to play the matches).

This was done transparently, with meticulous records being kept by Dick, Kerr’s secretary, Herbert Stanley.

Figures for fixtures where his club were responsible for the finances show that between £28 and £38 of the takings for each match were used for expenses.

So, indeed, not all of the match takings went directly to the charities for which the matches were staged. But the £120,000 raised for charities by women’s football between 1918 and 1921 was £120,000 more than the FA raised for charitable causes.

A direct effect of the FA ban was to drastically reduce the amount of money that could be raised for ‘Charitable Objects’ as now the attendances for women’s matches could only be measured in hundreds rather than tens of thousands.

The FA’s ban was infinitely more effective at reducing the amount of money going to charities than the expenses extracted from the takings of matches.

Many ex-servicemen protested to the FA against the ban on behalf of their injured comrades who, in the years before the welfare state, depended hugely on these charity donations, but to no avail.

If the two reasons that the FA gave for banning women’s football from its grounds were unfounded, were there other, hidden, reasons for the ban?

It may be that the FA saw the success of women’s football as a threat to the men’s game, both in terms of its reputation as a masculine activity and in terms of the income it generated.

Perhaps the FA’s decision related to views on changing gender roles in the social upheaval following the first world war.

While some women’s sport historians have argued that sport was opened up to women following the war, men held the power and controlled the resources of sport.

And in this case, they used that power to the severe detriment of women. Jean

Williams, in her 2003 book, "A Game for Rough Girls," says that the FA wanted to reclaim football as a male domain.

She states that the FA ban 'could be interpreted as a rather clumsy attempt...to reinforce the masculine image of football.' There seems little doubt that the FA feared the impact that women's football was having on the professional men's game.

In terms of attendances women's football had become more popular than the men's game and, consequently, could generate more money.

The 67,000 who tried to get in to Goodison Park on Boxing Day 1920 compares with an average home attendance for Everton that season of 37,215.

According to Barbara Jacobs, money was the main reason for the FA ban. In her 2004 book, "The Dick, Kerr's Ladies," she argues that women were showing up the men's game by raising huge sums for charity, 'demonstrating how easy it was to make money out of the professional game.'

But why did a year pass between the high watermark of the Goodison Park game and the ban? There is a school



of thought that the government intervened to persuade the FA to take action against women's football for political reasons, and it is worth looking at what occurred in the year leading up to the ban.

In March 1921, mine owners reduced pay by 50% and when workers refused to accept this they were locked out.

Inspired by Dick, Kerr and St Helens many more teams were formed, in part to provide financial support for mining communities.

According to Jacobs the miners' lockout politicised women's football.

This was a working class game, based in industrial heartlands, and it shifted easily from patriotic support for the war wounded to politically motivated fund raising.

Fixtures were arranged to provide relief for the families of striking workers: in Swansea, where 25,000 people attended, Cardiff (18,000) and Kilmarnock (15,000).

In St Helens and other South Lancashire mining towns "pea soup" matches were played by women's teams to raise money for the soup kitchens which fed miners' children.

Alice's own family as well as her wider community was benefitting from the welfare generated by the sport that she had helped to popularise.

Did these demonstrations of solidarity with their suffering neighbours persuade the coalition government to act to end this means of supporting industrial action?

Although there is no written evidence for any government intervention, it is not hard to see that the government would have been irritated by a women's game which was now aligning itself with the Labour movement.

And there is no doubt that the FA's ban on women staging matches in large stadiums drastically reduced the amount of relief that miners and their families could receive.

The FA ban did not stop women playing football, indeed, they carried on playing with as much enthusiasm and skill as before, but without the ability to attract large crowds and the significant press coverage that playing at major stadiums brought, women's football was marginalised.

The FA ban was revoked in 1972, but it is only now that women's football is starting to recover the

level of media coverage and status that it enjoyed a century ago.

It is still not clear exactly what motivated the FA to prevent women from enjoying their chosen sport at its grounds; but it was hugely effective at diminishing the status of the women's game, as well as having a severely detrimental effect on the welfare of ex-servicemen and striking miners.

The ban was also disturbing to others who loved the game and hated to see it belittled.

Major Cecil Kent, a former football club secretary from Liverpool, wrote to the FA in 1921, asking, "Why have the FA got their knife into girls' football?"

"What have the girls done except raise large sums for charity and play the game?"

Are their feet heavier on the turf than men's feet?"



WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



Booth leaves Birmingham City



Birmingham City have announced the departure of Head Coach Scott Booth.

The statement from the Women's Super League club said:

Birmingham City can confirm that Scott Booth has been relieved of his duties as Women's Head Coach.

This follows last night's defeat to West Ham United in the FA Women's Continental Tyres League Cup but is a decision that has not been taken lightly by the Football Club.

Booth arrived in the Second City armed with one of the game's strongest CVs and spent the close season overseeing a wide-ranging recruitment process, with highly prized players being brought to St. Andrew's alongside the implementation of his renowned coaching practices in preparation for the Barclays FA Women's Super League Campaign.

However, in light of recent results, the Club has concluded that now is the appropriate time for a change of personnel to ensure the team keeps moving forward in a manner aligned with Blues' ambitions.

The Club wishes to place on record its thanks to Scott and wishes him every success in his future endeavours.

General Manager, Sarah Westwood said: "This

decision was not an easy one but has been made in the best interests of the Football Club.

"I know how determined Scott was to succeed but, unfortunately, results have fallen short of our expectations.

"With 15 games remaining, we feel now is the right time to make a change to give ourselves the best possible chance of climbing the table.

"Scott joined the Club at a difficult time and was tasked with building a squad capable of competing in the BFAWSL. We are grateful to Scott for assembling a group of players who we believe are good enough to start picking up points.

"The challenge now is to ensure that we identify the right person to lead Birmingham City Women and get the best out of our players."

Assistant Head Coach, Tony Elliott, will assume the duties of leading the team in Sunday's meeting with Chelsea as the Club undertakes the exercise of appointing Booth's successor.

The process will be conducted by senior staff, including Technical Director, Craig Gardner.

No further comment will be made at this time.

Kerr commits to Chelsea

Chelsea have announced that forward Sam Kerr has signed a contract extension with the club.

Kerr's new contract will see her stay with the Women's Super League club until Summer 2024.

Speaking to the official website, Kerr said: "It's really exciting. I'm really happy at the club. We've had good success, being at a club like Chelsea is an amazing opportunity.

"The time was just right, I feel really comfortable being here. I think the club gives me every opportunity to succeed as a player.

"I can't see myself going anywhere else in the world or leaving Europe, having what I have at Chelsea.

"The time was right, honestly, I didn't feel like I wanted to rush into anything, just like signing here the first time, it just happened naturally.'

General manager Paul Green added: "We are absolutely delighted that Sam has extended her deal with the club. Sam is quite simply one of the world's best strikers and goal scorers.

"We look to continue to build on our recent successes, and Sam will play a big role in achieving those targets in the future."

Startup recalled from loan spell

Goalkeeper Katie Startup has been recalled from her loan spell with Championship club Liverpool.

The 22-year-old, who joined Brighton & Hove Albion in 2020 from Charlton Athletic, linked up with the Championship side at the start of the season.

Brighton's head coach Hope Powell told the official website:

"Arsenal recalled Fran Stenson last month so Katie is back to challenge Meg Walsh for the goalkeeper's position.

"We're pleased to have her back and I know she will work hard in training to push Meg and challenge for a place in the team."



Jones signs first professional contract

Manchester United have announced that Carrie Jones has signed her first professional contract with the club.

The contract sees the 18-year-old stay with the club until June 2023, with the option of a further year.

Jones had been part of the U21s WSL Academy side before stepping up to the first-team last season, making her senior debut for the club in a 3-0 win over Aston Villa in the Women's Super League.

Carrie Jones said: "I'm so pleased to sign my first professional contract, it's something I've dreamt of since a young age, and to sign it with a club like Manchester United really tops it off. I'd like to thank my family for the sacrifices they have made over the years and for being with me every step of the way, and all of the coaches that have helped me on my journey, with a special mention to Charlotte [Healy] and the staff in the Under-21 Academy.

"I'm also thankful to the fans for their support and I'm really looking forward to continuing my development here for the next few years."

Graham injury update

Tottenham Hotspur have announced that forward Kit Graham will be out for the remainder of the season.

The Spurs player sustained an anterior cruciate ligament injury during their Barclays FA Women's Super League fixture against West Ham.

She has already begun her period of rehabilitation.

West Ham United announce sister club with Nutmeg East London

West Ham United have announced they have become an official sister club with local girls' football club Nutmeg East London.

The scheme will see young players at the Hackney-based club receive tickets for West Ham women's home matches at the Chigwell Construction Stadium, as well as benefiting from player appearances, coaching sessions and more.

Nutmeg East London FC is a grassroots club based in Drapers Field, Leyton, and are the fifth team to join our Sister Club scheme.

Dawid Juzaszek, Head Coach at Nutmeg East London said: "The Sister club partnership has been enthusiastically welcomed by our players and parents, building connection with West Ham will definitely motivate our players and coaches further to continue with their fantastic work."

West Ham United said: "The whole ethos of Nutmeg is based around the idea of players feeling safe to explore the game, make mistakes and enjoy the process of learning.

"West Ham United Women are currently looking to support the development of women's and girls' football in East London and Essex, as pledged in our #GetOnSide campaign with Women in Football!

"We are hoping that this alliance will help with the development of local players, providing opportunities to young players, as well as growing our existing fanbase by offering free and discounted tickets to our partner clubs."

Chambers wins Manager of the Month

Reading manager Kelly Chambers has been named the Women's Super league manager of the month for November.

Chambers told the official website:

"I think any manager would say that it's nice to pick up the reward, but it is about the team.

"Speaking of the players, they have been magnificent to put in the performances they have and pick up as many points as they did.

"So this award is for us all."





Why Arsenal can win the WSL this season



Liam Asman/Sports Press Photo

By Marissa Thomas

Arsenal are flying high at the top of the Women's Super League (WSL) table.

The Gunners have won all five of their matches so far this season, scoring 17 goals and conceding just twice.

Before the season started, Chelsea and Manchester City were seen as the favourites for the title.

However, Arsenal have started the season in superb fashion and there is a strong case to be made that they could win the WSL again for the first time in two years to stop Chelsea making it three title wins in a row.

Under new manager Jonas Eidevall who joined in the summer, Arsenal have already beaten Chelsea and Man City, their main title rivals.

Arsenal have the quality to beat all of the other teams in the league which means the matches against Chelsea and Man City often decide who wins the league.

The Gunners already have the upper hand in that aspect.

With Man City in the midst of a major injury crisis, they have struggled so far this season.

Gareth Taylor's side have just four points from five games.

Even at this early stage of the season, it would take a monumental effort for Man City to make up the 11 points they would need to be level with Arsenal and Chelsea.

Brighton and Tottenham are three points behind the leaders but will most likely fade as the campaign goes on, so it is already a two-horse race for the title.

Arsenal will be confident that they can edge their London rivals.

Defensive solidity is clearly an aspect that Eidevall is working hard to improve within the team.

Arsenal conceded two goals in their opening match against Chelsea and have kept four consecutive clean sheets since. Last season, Arsenal won their first three WSL matches but conceded a goal in each game.

They have tightened up their defence which improves the team as a unit and increases confidence at the back.

The main advantage for Arsenal compared to last season is the increased squad depth.

Being able to call on Tobin Heath, Mana Iwabuchi and Nikita Parris is a luxury that will stand the North London side in good stead throughout the course of the campaign as they go in search of glory.

Frida Maanum and Simone Boye Sorensen are also astute signings.

Arsenal played last season's FA Cup semi-final with Vivianne Miedema left out of the squad so she could rest.

A decision of that magnitude would have been unthinkable last season when the onus was mainly on Miedema to create or score the goals

that would win Arsenal matches.

Life under Jonas Eidevall has got off to the perfect start and while there will be bumps along the way, this Arsenal side have the determination and quality to overcome any obstacles they may face as they look to become WSL winners once more.



Arsenal announces partnership with Lavazza

Arsenal Women have joined forces with Italian coffee maker, Lavazza.

The company has strengthened its partnership with the club by extending their partnership to become the official coffee partner of Arsenal Women.

“We are proud to be extending our partnership with Arsenal Football Club and to welcome Arsenal Women into our family”, says Pietro Mazzà, Regional Director UK & Nordics and General Manager Lavazza UK.

“Since 2017, Lavazza has been working to support the 17 goals set by the UN. This partnership showcases our commitment to supporting goal number 5, which is focused on gender equality, working to empower all women and girls. We are committed to celebrating sporting prowess and therefore this partnership is built on our shared values of excellence and the ability to innovate and inspire. We believe this will build a strong and successful partnership that celebrates football and provides both fans and players with an authentic Italian coffee experience.”

Peter Silverstone, our chief commercial officer, added: “Lavazza has been an outstanding partner for Arsenal since 2018 and we’re delighted to extend our relationship and welcome them as a partner of Arsenal Women. This presents a wonderful opportunity at a great time for both parties with Arsenal Women top of the WSL table and making good progress in the UEFA Champions League.

“We’re exceptionally proud of our heritage in women’s football and we’re excited to continue to work together with Lavazza to foster an even brighter future through our shared values of excellence, innovation and inspiration.”



Fleming named best WSL player in November

Chelsea midfielder Jessie Fleming was awarded the Barclays FA WSL Player of the Month award for November.

The Blues' player beat off competition from Reading's Natasha Dowie, Manchester City's Lauren Hemp, Arsenal's Kim Little and Tottenham Hotspur's Ria Percival.

Chelsea won all three November fixtures, with Fleming having a key part to play in each of them. The Canadian netted the winning goal against Aston Villa and opened the scoring in the Blues' vital 4-0 win against Manchester City.



Mead is a new player for club and country this season



By Marissa Thomas

In February, England's interim manager Hege Riise left Beth Mead out of her first squad because "the player report hasn't been that great".

Mead's omission was a shock and it was a surprise to hear a manager speak so frankly about a specific player.

Mead was left disappointed once again when she was left out of the Team GB Olympic squad in the summer.

With just 18 players to pick from four countries, this exclusion was perhaps a bit more understandable.

Nonetheless, Mead still took it hard.

Nine months later, Mead is in the form of her life for both club and country.

She has three goals and assists in the Women's Super League (WSL) for Arsenal, just one goal away from last season's tally with five games played.

In 17 games so far this season, Mead has 10 goals and 15 assists.

Proving people wrong is a powerful motivational tool as Mead is showing this term.

In the five-goal thriller against Chelsea in their

WSL season opener, Mead was at the heart of everything good.

She was lively throughout as she put in a complete no 9 performance, scoring twice to delight over 8,000 fans at the Emirates.

Proof of the work Mead had done over the summer was shown in her second goal which was a sensational finish curled into the top corner from the edge of the area with her weaker foot.

Chelsea's goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger was so surprised that she told Mead after the match that she didn't know she had a left foot. Mead provided an assist for Vivianne



Miedema in the 5-0 win over Manchester City.

With half over her goal involvement this season coming against Arsenal's title rivals, Mead is showing that she can be hugely influential in the season defining games.

Another explanation for Mead's upturn in form could be the competition for places that was not there last season.

Now Arsenal can call on the likes of fellow England international Nikita Parris, two-time World Cup winner Tobin Heath and Mana Iwabuchi who has also won the World Cup.

Being surrounded by world class players will only improve Mead's quality which will be beneficial for Arsenal and England.

The Lionesses have already seen a huge improvement in Mead this season.

She scored a second-half hat-trick in 14 minutes to break the deadlock against a stubborn Northern Ireland side.

The World Cup qualifier at Wembley finished 4-0 with Mead responsible for 75% of the goals.

Just three days after that superb performance, Mead scored another goal and

provided two assists for Rachel Daly against Latvia.

While it is fair to point that Latvia are bottom of the group with zero points and vastly inferior to England, Mead and the Lionesses were in no mood to go easy on their opponents in the 10-0 win.

One thing is for sure, Beth Mead's player report must look pretty good right now.

Toone signs new contract with Manchester United

Manchester United have announced that Ella Toone has signed a new contract with the club until June 2025.

The 22-year-old joined the Women's Super League club in 2018 and currently holds the record for most appearances and goals for the women's team.

Toone told the official website: "To sign a new contract at the club is really exciting for me; United has been a big part of my life growing up and I'm over the moon to continue my journey.

"The club meets my ambitions as a player, I've learnt so much already and I just want to keep working hard, keep contributing and have success here.

"I just want to also say a big thanks to everyone who has been involved in my journey so far; from family, friends, team-mates, staff and, of course, the fans, whose support I never take for granted.

"I want to make you all proud and create more memories with this club."

Marc Skinner said: "She has been an integral part of the squad.

"There is so much room to grow with Ella too, she is only 22 years old and is always learning, so we know, if she continues to work hard, she will have such a bright future."

Albion wore Rainbow Laces shirts

Brighton & Hove Albion celebrated Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign in their Women's Super League game against Manchester United.

The WSL side wore Rainbow Laces shirts for the match.

This year's Rainbow Laces campaign is encouraging people to 'Lace Up and Speak Up', emphasising the importance of holding open conversations in support of LGBTQ+ communities.

The WSL works together with clubs to celebrate and promote LGBTQ+ inclusion all year round.

This is underpinned by significant work to improve policies and practices, including reporting measures and pastoral care, as well as staff training and wide-ranging education programmes.



Bettina Weissensteiner/Sports Press Photo

Beckie up for Canada POTY Award

Janine Beckie has been nominated for the Canada Player of the Year award.

The City forward has made a 15-player shortlist in recognition for an unforgettable year, as Canada made history in 2021.

The international side clinched their first Olympic gold medal at the Summer Games in Tokyo.

Beckie featured in every game, scoring twice in a crucial win over Chile, and started in the Final as Bev Priestman's side claimed the top prize for the first time, beating Sweden in a dramatic penalty shootout.

She has been included in a star-studded shortlist, lining up alongside Kadeisha Buchanan, Allysha Chapman, Jessie Fleming, Vanessa Gilles, Julia Grosso, Stephanie Labbé, Ashley Lawrence, Adriana Leon, Nichelle Prince, Quinn, Deanne Rose, Desiree Scott, Kailen Sheridan and Christine Sinclair.

Voting will be conducted by Canadian media and coaches, selecting their first choice, second choice, and third choice.

United confirm Groenen injury

Manchester United have confirmed that Jackie Groenen sustained a hamstring injury on international duty.

There has been no time frame put on when she may return to duty for the Women's Super League club but she will now enter a period of rehabilitation under the supervision of the club's medical team.



Natalie Mincher/Sports Press Photo

Kelly and Hemp winners at the North West Football Awards

Manchester City duo Chloe Kelly and Lauren Hemp were both named as winners at the North West Football Awards.

The ceremony, hosted at The Point, Old Trafford, saw Kelly named as Women's Player of the Season, with her teammate Hemp scooping The Athletic Women's Rising Star of the Season accolade.

Speaking about her success, Kelly told the official website: "I'm very happy to win this award and really appreciate everyone's votes – there were some amazing players nominated in my category.

"I've been loving life as a Manchester City player, but I'm hungry to achieve more. I'm working hard each day to make sure I'm in a better position than before my injury and I'll be back soon fighting!"

Hemp added: "It feels amazing to be recognised by people and it's an honour to win this award.

"We've had a number of players nominated across both the men's and women's teams which speaks volumes about the talent we have here at City.

"I know I'm not the finished product yet and I know there's so much more I can do to keep improving, but that will only come with continuing to listen to the coaches and teammates I have around me here at this amazing Club."



Williamson injured in WSL match

Arsenal's statement about Leah Williamson read as follows:

Following Saturday's match against Tottenham Hotspur, Leah Williamson experienced discomfort in her hamstring.

Subsequent assessments and scans have confirmed that Leah has suffered a significant hamstring injury. Further consultations and assessments will take place, with Leah's recovery and rehabilitation programme also being determined in the coming days.

Everyone at the club will now be supporting and working hard with Leah to get her back on the pitch as soon as possible.

Women's Super League

2021/22 Table

WSL		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Arsenal	9	8	1	0	27	25
2	Chelsea	9	7	0	2	21	21
3	Tottenham Hotspur	9	5	2	2	4	17
4	Brighton & Hove Albion	9	5	0	4	3	15
5	Manchester United	9	4	3	2	1	15
6	Manchester City	9	4	1	4	1	13
7	West Ham United	9	3	4	2	1	13
8	Reading	9	4	1	4	-1	13
9	Everton	9	3	2	4	-6	11
10	Aston Villa	9	3	1	5	-11	10
11	Birmingham City	9	0	1	8	-20	1
12	Leicester City	9	0	0	9	-20	0

Top Goalscorers

1. **Sam Kerr** (Chelsea) - 9
2. **Viv Miedema** (Arsenal) - 7
3. **Fran Kirby** (Arsenal) - 6
4. **Kim Little** (Arsenal) - 6
5. **Katie McCabe** (Arsenal) - 4
6. **Beth Mead** (Arsenal) - 4
7. **Lauren Hemp** (Manchester City) - 4
8. **Rachel Williams** (Tottenham Hotspur) - 4
9. **Ella Toone** (Manchester United) - 3
10. **Jessie Fleming** (Chelsea) - 3

BBC Women's Player of the Year 2021: Winner announced



Netherlands and Arsenal striker Vivianne Miedema has been named the BBC Women's Footballer of the Year 2021.

Miedema, who came second behind Lucy Bronze for the 2020 award, beat Sam Kerr of Chelsea, Australia and Barcelona midfielder Alexia Putellas, defender Ashley Lawrence and winger Caroline Graham Hansen.

She is currently the Women's Super League all-time leading goal scorer and broke the record for most goals scored at a single Olympic Games at Tokyo 2020.

"It's a bit unexpected to be honest," Miedema told BBC Sport.

"It's pretty cool to win something like this, and with the fans voting it's extra special."

"Something like this always comes as a surprise," Miedema said.

"Having done really well at the Olympics on a personal level has brought a lot of attention to a lot of

people, so that's definitely been a standout for me and obviously I've been able to continue that form with Arsenal.

"[The other nominees] are all really good players who've had their own success at club and international level so I'm really honoured to have been awarded the player of the year and thanks to the fans.

"After coming back from lockdown the excitement was there to play football again, to be back on the pitch and back in the stadium with the fans. It's been very enjoyable."

Women's Footballer of the Year winners

2015: Asisat Oshoala (Nigeria)

2016: Kim Little (Scotland)

2017: Ada Hegerberg (Norway)

2018: Lucy Bronze (England)

2019: Ada Hegerberg (Norway)

2020: Lucy Bronze (England)

2021: Vivianne Miedema (Netherlands)



Broomfield Girls announced as West Ham United sister club

West Ham United have announced they have joined forces with local girls' football club Broomfield FC.

The scheme will see young players at the Chelmsford-based club receive tickets for West Ham women's home matches at the Chigwell Construction Stadium, as well as benefiting from player appearances, coaching sessions and more.

Broomfield FC is a grassroots club based in Broomfield, Chelmsford, and are the sixth team to join our Sister Club scheme.

Paul Goss, Head of Girls football at Broomfield FC told the official website:

"The phenomenal rise in girls football at our club means we now have sixty wildcats training and another hundred girls playing football.

"By linking up with West Ham United Women, we hope it provides us with our natural next step in providing role models and interaction with a professional WSL club.

"We are looking forward to meeting players, watching games, learning and growing the relationship between our two clubs."



Old Trafford to hold WSL game

Everton will face Manchester United at Old Trafford in the Women's Super League.

The game, scheduled to be played on Sunday, March 27, has been moved from United's regular home at Leigh Sports Village.

United beat West Ham United at Old Trafford last season, with the game being played behind closed doors due to Covid-19 protocols.

Tickets:

£6 Adults

£3 U16

£3 Over 65

Details of how to purchase tickets will be issued in due course.

Brighton & Hove Albion show respect for local grassroots side

Brighton & Hove Albion invited Hollingbury Hawks Youth Football Club team to get kitted up and support them as ball retrievers.

The invitation came to celebrate the U11s team winning the Sussex County Women & Girl's Football League Respect award last season.

"In a COVID-disrupted season, where the season's trophy events couldn't be completed, the SCWGFL U11 section presented Respect awards instead," Cameron explained.

"All clubs were asked to nominate the team which most embodied the principles of the FA Respect Code to create a positive matchday experience for all involved."

Women & Girls' general manager at Brighton & Hove Albion, Polly Bancroft, added, "We're really keen to engage with our local community. We recognise the power that role models have to girls and boys, and to be able to connect with them through mutually beneficial partnerships is something we're really keen to develop."

"We'd like to congratulate Hollingbury Hawks Youth FC on winning the Respect award and hope they all enjoy Sunday's match."

LCFC appoint Bedford as manager

Leicester City has appointed Lydia Bedford as the new First Team manager.

Bedford, currently England Women's Youth Team Head Coach, joins the Foxes on a contract to the end of the 2021/22 season and will commence her role with LCFC Women on 6 December.

Leicester City Chief Executive Susan Whelan told the official website: "Lydia is one of the rising stars of the women's game, whose technical coaching credentials are complemented by an incredible passion for and knowledge of women's football that can have an immediate impact on our squad."



The FA launches three year strategy for women's game



The Football Association (The FA) is today launching a new three - year strategy focused solely on the Women's Professional Game that will look to build on the momentum generated over the last three years.

The strategy has been led by the Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship Board in conjunction with the clubs and other key stakeholders.

It sets out a collective ambition to develop the best women's leagues in the world.

To realise this ambition it focuses on three strategic goals:

- Produce and attract world class talent
- Maximise & Engage audiences
- Grow commercial revenue and financial sustainability

The three key areas are designed to drive further growth in all aspects of the women's professional game and to ultimately make the game sustainable.

The strategy sets out some key milestones and targets that will determine the success of the strategy.

This includes:

- The implementation of an improved talent pathway and home-grown rules to support a blend of world class domestic and overseas talent.
- Investment in the workforce with an ambition that a minimum of 50% of the head coaches across the top two divisions are female.
- Attendance growth with an average of 6,000 fans per week in the Barclays FA WSL, 1,000 in the FA Women's Championship, and the goal of selling out

the Vitality Women's FA Cup Final – all by 2024.

This, along with the investment of the clubs, will continue to change the landscape of women's football in this country, increasing the opportunities on the field, and offering women and girls a genuine career path in the sport.

The continued growth of the game during the three-year plan will also provide a bigger platform that will allow our leagues and competitions to:

- Showcase female role models and their achievements
- Inspire females to take up the game and all its associated benefits
- Promote women's football as a tool for gender equality and societal change.

Dawn Airey, Chair of the Barclays FA Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship Board, said: "I am delighted to be able to launch this Women's Pro Game Strategy, which sets out our collective ambition to develop the best women's leagues and competitions in the world.

"The quality of the on-field product is fundamental to our success. We want a balance of the very best English and overseas talent showcasing dynamic, exciting and competitive football, supported by a world-class elite performance workforce, enabling the players to maximise their full potential."

Kelly Simmons, The FA's Director of the Women's Professional Game, added: "This strategy represents a critical step in the development of the women's game.

It was important to us that the plans for future growth were developed with the insight and commitment of the clubs and The FA.

"By showcasing strong, athletic, healthy role models excelling in their sport we can inspire young girls and women to take up active lifestyles and all its associated benefits.

"Now that's a powerful mission to get behind and help deliver - making a real difference for this and future generations of females."



Everton unveil new coaches

Frederic Piquionne and Franck Plaine have joined Everton Women as part of manager Jean-Luc Vasseur's backroom staff.

Piquionne has been appointed Assistant Manager and will have specific focus on coaching and tactics, with Performance Manager Plaine focusing on physical performance and sports science.

"I'm very proud and excited to begin my work with this club," Piquionne told evertonfc.com. "To be back in England with a big club like Everton, it's exciting to be part of."

"The WSL has grown very quickly over the past few years and we are all determined to get Everton competing with the best."

"I will give everything to help the players progress. I want to help bring success to this team and this club."

Plaine added: "It's a great feeling to join Everton and be a part of this ambitious and historic club."

"I feel fresh and prepared for the challenges coming in this league and ready to help the team to success."

"My target now is to make sure the players are in the best possible condition for the rest of the season and beyond."

Blues Women announce interim head coach

Birmingham City have announced Darren Carter as Interim Head Coach.

The former Blues player has agreed to lead the team and was most recently operating as First Team Coach for West Bromwich Albion Women.

Now back at St. Andrew's, Carter expressed his excitement to BCFC.com at being appointed to lead Blues Women:

"It is a great opportunity for me and the journey I am currently on, with my coaching career, and I want to make an impact and bring some positivity to the place. It is vitally important to instil some belief, confidence and enjoyment; creating an environment to excel and improve every day as individuals and as a collective. From those foundations, we can look to build some momentum."

"It has been amazing at West Brom. The opportunity that they offered me to help out with Jenny Sugarman and Liam Wall gave me everything I needed from a coaching perspective. I am hugely thankful for the opportunity which has given me some vital experience in the Women's game for moving forward."

"It is a challenge that I could not turn down in all honesty. It is a fantastic chance to prove our doubters wrong and build all the things I have talked about."

"I like to play the game on the front foot. Of course, you have to be adaptable, but my principles are for my players to be brave on the ball and play with a purpose. We have to take each game as it comes, but I want my team and players to ask questions of the opposition and try to dictate play."

Villa launch Pride Partnership Programme

Aston Villa Women is delighted to announce the launch of the Pride Partnership Programme.

The new programme aims to inspire and engage with the local community, giving schools and grassroots clubs the chance to build relationships with Aston Villa Women in a variety of ways beneficial to them.

These opportunities range from matchday experiences, player appearances, playing opportunities and Continuous Personal Development (CPD) for local workforce.

The programme will pilot through the second half of the 2021/22 season with the aim to then roll out for the full 2022/23 season.

Two packages – Clubs and Schools – are available, and you'll find all the details below...

Club Packages

Gold Package	Silver Package	Bronze Package
Requires purchase of 100 tickets to unlock four of the following benefits:	Requires purchase of 50 tickets to unlock three of the following benefits:	Requires purchase of 25 tickets to unlock two of the following benefits:
Logo in Matchday Programme	1x Online Player Appearance	1x Pre-recorded Q&A
Logo on RTC website	20% Matchday Discount	20% Matchday Discount
2x Player Appearances	2x Coach Workshops	1x Coach Workshop
20% Matchday Discount	2x Tournaments	1x Tournament
Matchday Experience		
2x Coach Workshops		
2x Tournaments		

Schools Packages

Gold Package	Silver Package	Bronze Package
Requires purchase of 80 tickets to unlock three of the following benefits:	Requires purchase of 50 tickets to unlock three of the following benefits:	Requires purchase of 25 tickets to unlock two of the following benefits:
1x Pre-recorded Q&A	1x Pre-recorded Q&A	1x Pre-recorded Q&A
20x Home game tickets	10x Home game tickets	5x Home game tickets
2x Player Appearances	1x Online Player Appearance	1x Tournament
2x Tournaments	2x Tournaments	
20% Matchday Discount		

Expressions of interest

To register your interest in the Pride Partnership Programme email josephine.cottam@avfc.co.uk for more information.

CHAMPIONSHIP



Shock as Charlton Women to be rebranded 'Charlton Ladies'



Sam Mallia/Sports Press Photo

In an exclusive by the Telegraph, it has been discovered that Charlton's owner Thomas Sandgaard intends to drop the 'Women' in favour of 'Ladies'.

The Danish-American businessman agreed to a historic takeover of the women's side in February this year.

According to the Telegraph "A senior source at the club said the decision has sparked outrage among players, who branded the move "insulting" and "derogatory" in a club meeting with Sandgaard last Friday.

"Such are the players' frustrations that they have reportedly drafted a letter to the Professional Footballers' Association in a last-ditch attempt to block the name change."

Charlton have already listed the women's team as the 'Ladies' Team' on its official club website.

There were many on Twitter who could not believe the story.

Sue Anstiss MBE wrote: "Bizarre. Is it 2021 or 1921?"

"Just as the sports world moves away from using the old fashioned, slightly patronising & belittling term 'ladies' in team names. . . the owners of Charlton Women move rebrand themselves as 'Charlton Ladies' Seriously?"

Journalist Adam Millington said: "This is an utterly baffling story. In an age where nearly all clubs have rebrand to the far more progressive 'women', reverting to 'ladies' is just completely bizarre."

Josh Bunting, who has wrote for TWFM on a number of occasions said: "My opinion of Charlton Women rebranding to Charlton Ladies is that's insulting , it's the Women's game it's that simple.

"Charlton I had high hopes for as they looked to be doing things right but the term ladies doesn't sit well with me it's Women's and the games moving forward."

Durham supporting Mission Christmas

Durham Women are supporting the Cash for Kids: Mission Christmas initiative this Christmas.

The Wildcats have a long-standing history of supporting charitable causes and are once again looking to support those less fortunate this Christmas.

And this year, we're back the Mission Christmas initiative that has been championed by Metro Radio and a host of other local and national media outlets.

The statement from the club said:

All our players and club staff will be participating in the initiative – with a collection to be held at training on Thursday, December 16.

And supporters can participate by donating gifts at our home game against Blackburn Rovers on Sunday, December 19.

If you're attending the game, please bring a gift and drop it off at the Merchandise Stall – and we'll do the rest in making sure that it goes to those less fortunate ahead of Christmas.

The gift can be of any value, shape or size, but it must be unwrapped and a new.

Gifts for all ages can be accepted, but there is a specific need for toys for those aged two and under and over nine years of age.



Palace manager Davenport named manager of the month

Crystal Palace manager Dean Davenport has been named the FA Women's Championship Manager of the Month for November.

He told the official website: "Firstly I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the LMA for being voted.

"I'm privileged to accept this award on behalf of all the staff at CPFC Women. It's important to me that everybody gets the recognition for all the hard work put in on and off the pitch.

"Everything we achieve is as a group and is a big team effort.

"Big credit must of course go to the players who have performed fantastically well week in and week out to give ourselves the opportunity to be in the position we are at present.

"The confidence is up, and the current performances are a credit to them."

London City Lionesses appoint Fluke

London City Lionesses have appointed Lizzie Fluke as Head of Performance. Fluke joins the Championship side having worked with Malmo FF men's first team as well as the Scotland Women's youth national squads and Hibernian.

In her role at London City, she'll be responsible for the performance department, with the goal of improving player performance, both on and off the pitch.

She told the official website: "I am delighted to join London City Lionesses as Head of Performance to support the team, their ambitions and vision.

"The future is now, and I am very happy to share the best of who I am with the team."

Speaking on the appointment, Sporting Director Edward Gallagher said:

"We are excited to welcome Lizzie to our performance staff at London City Lionesses. Like many of our staff she brings a wealth of experience from different cultures, and I believe her knowledge and skills will bring vast benefits to our players.

"It's always important that our staff fit into the culture and vision of the club, and I believe that we have this with Lizzie."

Liverpool vs Charlton postponed

Liverpool and Charlton Athletic's Championship clash on Sunday, December 19 has been postponed.

The league game has been called off by the FA as it is the only viable date for Charlton's FA Cup tie with Gillingham to be played.

The fixture was originally called off due to a waterlogged pitch.

The Championship game has yet to be rescheduled but will be held in late February or March.

Clarke joins Liverpool

Liverpool have announced the signing of goalkeeper Charlotte Clarke.

The 21-year-old joins the Championship side from Derby County, who are currently top of the National League North.

Her contract with the Reds will begin formally on January 1, but she joined her new teammates in training already.

LFC Women goalkeeping coach Joe Potts told Liverpoolfc.com: “For a young ‘keeper, Charlotte has a lot of playing experience, which is obviously valuable.

“With the situation we have in the goalkeeping department, it’s important we have someone who can slot into game time if we need them but also has the potential to push on – and that’s what we get with Charlotte.

“So, I’m excited to see how she develops over the next few months.”

Clarke said: “It feels absolutely surreal to be here – it’s Liverpool, the biggest club in Europe and I’m absolutely amazed and thankful to be here. To be thought of to come here is incredible and such an honour.

“My family were ecstatic for me. I started off at Derby Women, so it holds a special place in my heart. It was a tough decision to leave but I really want to push on and get to the top and I really feel that Liverpool can do this.

“It’s a great opportunity, which I’m going to take with both hands.”

Lewes announce retirement of Charley Boswell

Charley ‘Bos’ Boswell has announced her retirement from football.

Bos has been with Lewes FC since November 2018 and in the past 3 years the full back has been instrumental in our many successes both on and off the field.

Lynne Burrell, General Manager, told the website: “We are one lucky club to have had a player with the talent and drive that Bos has. She has always pushed us to raise our standards as a team and a club and should be extremely proud of everything she has achieved, not just at Lewes, but throughout her career in football.

“It’s been absolutely wonderful to have her as part of the team and we want to thank Bos for everything she’s done.”

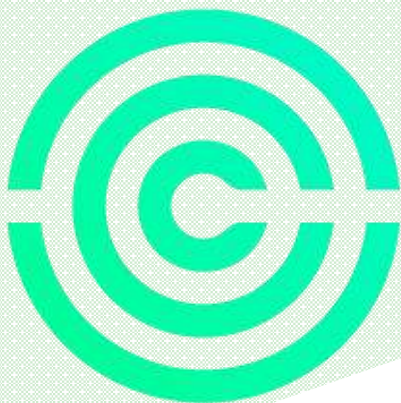
Prior to joining Lewes, Charley captained Portsmouth in 2017 and had spent 12 seasons with Brighton.

Her success included winning the league and securing promotion into the (former) WSL2 in 2106/17, something Charley considered a dream growing up.

Women's Championship

2021/22 Table

Championship		P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Liverpool	10	7	2	1	11	23
2	London City Lionesses	10	6	1	3	3	19
3	Crystal Palace	10	5	3	2	4	18
4	Durham	10	6	0	4	3	18
5	Bristol City	10	5	2	3	8	17
6	Charlton Athletic	10	5	1	4	5	16
7	Lewes	10	5	1	4	3	16
8	Sunderland	10	3	3	4	-3	12
9	Sheffield United	10	2	2	5	-3	11
10	Blackburn Rovers	10	1	1	6	-5	10
11	Coventry United	10	2	2	7	-12	5
12	Watford	10	2	2	7	-14	5



TheFA Women's
Championship

Barclays doubles investment in women's and girls' football



- New three-year sponsorship deals agreed with Premier League and The FA to cover men's and women's football with aim of driving greater equality
- Barclays to extend sponsorship of the FA Women's Super League and will become first title sponsor of the FA Women's Championship from 2022/23 season to help develop the women's pyramid
- Bank increases investment in girls' football to help deliver on The FA and Barclays' strategic ambition to offer girls equal access to football in schools by 2024
- Barclays to launch a new football community

fund in January to target those who are delivering football directly in the community

Barclays, The Football Association (The FA) and the Premier League have announced new three-year deals to extend the bank's sponsorships of the football organisations' elite competitions from the start of the 2022/23 season until the end of the 2024/25 season. The renewals come as Barclays and the Premier League celebrate 20 years since the bank first partnered with the League under the Barclaycard brand in 2001.

Barclays will invest more than £30 million in women's and girls' football over the period from 2022-2025, doubling the existing investment, and setting a new record for investment in UK women's sport. The announcement follows its

groundbreaking deal with The FA* in 2019 when the bank became the inaugural title sponsor of the FA Women's Super League.

The bank will also become the first title sponsor of the FA Women's Championship. The league will be called the Barclays FA Women's Championship from the start of the 2022-23 season, as Barclays and The FA aim to support the development of the second tier of the women's competition pyramid and encourage further investment in women's football.

Barclays will also increase its investment in girls' grassroots development, extending its sponsorship of The FA Girls' Football School Partnerships (FAGFSP) with the aim of giving girls equal access to football in schools. Since Barclays became sponsor of the FAGFSP in 2019 it has seen 9,700 new schools join the scheme taking the total to over 12,000**. The increased funding will help The FA

expand the number of people working on the programme and achieve the aim of 20,000 schools offering football to girls by 2024.

Barclays and the Premier League are this season celebrating 20 years as partners and the two organisations have agreed to extend their Banking Partner deal until 2025. Starting as the Barclaycard Premiership in 2001, the relationship between Barclays and the Premier League has been one of the most successful and enduring sponsorships in sport. The relationship has developed to see Barclays provide the Premier League and many of its clubs with financial services such as corporate banking and foreign exchange.

To encourage participation in football at every level, from January 2022 an innovative new Barclays community fund will be offering grants and support resources to grassroots groups. Barclays have partnered with UK-wide charity Sported to make small grants available for groups wishing to start offering football, or those keen to expand their existing provision to new audiences. Details will be announced at a later date, but the fund will primarily support young people in deprived or underrepresented areas through local organisations, many of whom are not yet benefitting from the wider football pyramid.

Sasha Wiggins, Group Head of Public Policy and Corporate Responsibility, Barclays said: "We are delighted to announce the agreements with The FA and Premier League at a time when we are celebrating our long

term commitment to English football. Collectively we have been through extraordinarily difficult times over the last 18 months and over that time football has done much to help raise spirits and bring people together. Yet we are also aware that this is an important time to drive equity across the game. The doubling of our investment in women's and girls' football, whilst continuing to support men's football, and providing finance to the smallest football organisations through the new community fund, is the right way to support the future of the game for everyone's benefit."

Kelly Simmons, The FA's Director of Women's Professional Game, said "Barclays have played a crucial role in the growth of women's and girls' football, so it is excellent news that they are committing to a new record investment in the women's and girls' pyramid until 2025. As part of The FA's 2020-2024 Women's and Girls' strategy, Inspiring Positive Change, we set ourselves the ambition of providing equal access for all girls at 90% of primary and secondary schools in the UK, and Barclays continued support and investment has allowed us to make great strides in achieving this ambition.

"From grassroots to the top tiers of women's football, we are also extremely excited to welcome Barclays as the new title sponsor of the FA Women's Championship. The FA Women's Championship plays a pivotal role in the ongoing development of the pyramid structure and the credible history and association

to football that Barclays has will make the league even stronger."

Will Brass, Premier League Chief Commercial Officer, said: "Barclays has always been a fantastic partner of the Premier League, and we are very pleased to be extending our long-standing association for another three years.

"Over two decades Barclays has demonstrated their support for football, both on and off the pitch. And together we share an ambition of creating opportunities at all levels and ensuring everyone is welcome to enjoy the game. We look forward to further developing our relationship over the coming years."

To mark the new partnerships, representatives from the Premier League, The FA and Barclays were joined by Barclays Football Ambassador Kelly Smith at Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub in west London. A coaching session for girls from a local school was taking place at the facility, which officially launched earlier this year following funding from the Premier League, The FA and Government's charity, the Football Foundation.

**Barclays agreed to invest in excess of £15 million over the three years from 2019-22 that included the title sponsorship of the Barclays FA Women's Super League, becoming lead partner of The FA Girls' Football School Partnerships and agreed spending on promoting the game during this period. Nielsen confirmed this as a record at the time, and believes the new investment will be the biggest investment by a brand in UK women's sport to date.*

***In 2019 the FAGFSP had 3,000 schools signed up to the initiative, by December 2021 this has reached 12,778 which is 55% of the 2024 target.*

Bull earns first start at Bristol City

Academy star Jasmine Bull has made her first team debut for Bristol Rovers in their Conti Cup victory.

Speaking to Robins TV, Bull said: “I’m really proud to make my debut, get 90 minutes and the three point to push on in the competition – happy days!

“We like to come out fighting and to get two goals before half-time put us in a good position.

“We kicked on in the second half and saw out the game well



Ashworth-Clifford named November Player of the Month

Lucy Ashworth-Clifford has been named November Player of the Month in the Women’s Championship.

She is the first Lewes player to earn the award.

The Lewes player scored three goals in her for appearances in November.

“After being out for a few months with injury, just being able to get on the pitch was good enough for me,” Ashworth-Clifford told the official website.

“Winning this award makes all the work in rehab worth it!”



Juke joins 100-club

Chelsey Jukes has become the latest player to reach 100 appearances for Rovers Ladies. The 24-year-old marked her 100th appearance with a 'Player of the Match' performance in their 1-0 win over Sheffield United in the Conti Cup.

Jukes told the official website: "It felt really good and is something I've always wanted to get to here.

"As a defender you always want to keep clean sheets and we've struggled with that recently so to keep one on my 100th appearance also made it even more special.

"You also always want to be the best you can so to be named Player of the Match on my 100th appearance was great and made it even sweeter."

Quinlan departs coaching role

Rovers Katie Quinlan has left her role with the club to start a new coaching role in the United States.

Quinlan operated as both first-team Head Coach and Regional Talent Club Technical Director after initially joining Rovers as a RTC coach.

Quinlan coached both our under-14s and under-16s teams before joining the first-team as an analyst until she took up her post as Head Coach.

Heaps recalled by Tottenham

Eleanor Heaps has been recalled from Blackburn Rovers by parent club Tottenham Hotspur.

The goalkeeper arrived on loan in the summer and made two appearances for the Championship side.

Everlast joins Rovers

Everlast Fitness Club have joined Blackburn Rovers as the side's first ever Gym Partner. Rovers will use the state-of-the-art gyms to aid in their post-match recovery, as well as to help the team prepare for upcoming fixtures.

Everlast Area Manager, Gareth Moseley told the official website: "It's great to be able to support the Ladies side this season.

"We have always looked to build close relationships with the local community, so to be able to form this relationship with the club is great."

Rovers Ladies General Manager, Jane Parker added: "We want to thank Gareth and Everlast Gyms for their support this season.

"It is key for us to have access to a gym throughout the season that we can use to help with our match recovery and preparation sessions.

"I also know the team are looking forward to being able to use the facilities at the club during the season."

Liverpool provide update on Foster

Liverpool have provided fans with an update on the condition of goalkeeper Rylee Foster.

The 23-year-old Canadian was injured in October in a road traffic incident while travelling as a passenger during a trip to visit friends abroad during the international break.

After her return to the UK, scans have confirmed that she has suffered fractures to vertebrae in her neck.

Club doctor Dr Amelia Woodhouse told the official website: "Rylee's injuries required stabilisation in an external fixation device. She will need to stay in this for a minimum of six weeks while being closely monitored by ourselves and spinal specialists.

"A number of other internal injuries have shown improvement on recent scans, while she is wearing a brace for an injury to her knee."

Foster wrote on social media: "I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone who is supporting me on my road to recovery and rehabilitation.

"To all the fans who have reached out, I really appreciate your kind best wishes and thoughts. I couldn't ask for better teammates and again prove what a great family we have at the club."

She also thanked 'the amazing staff who are helping me get back on my feet' and pledged: "There are some tough times ahead but better days coming up also."

Sunderland sign Burt

Sunderland have completed the signing of England youth international Daisy Burt.

The 16-year-old full-back has joined Mel Reay's squad having represented the club's Regional Talent Centre eight times this season.

Burt told the official website: "I'm very happy to join the senior squad and I believe the RTC is a great place to help push you on as a player.

"I feel I'm definitely ready for women's football, and that I've progressed from the RTC well enough to show what I can do.

"I believe I can bring a defensive aggression to the side, and also a creative side in that I can get forward, get the ball down and play over the top."

Bramall Lane to host Championship game

Sheffield United's upcoming Championship game against Sunderland will be held at Bramall Lane.

Neil Redfearn's side face the Black Cats on:

Sunday, December 19 at 3pm.

Tickets

Adults £5

Concessions £3

WOMEN'S NATIONAL LEAGUE



FANWL Constitution and Reserve Season teams

Constitution

Northern Premier

AFC Fylde
Brighouse Town
Burnley
Derby County
Huddersfield Town
Hull City
Loughborough Lightning
Middlesbrough
Nottingham Forest
Sheffield
Stoke City
West Bromwich Albion
Wolverhampton Wanderers

Southern Premier

Bridgewater United
Cardiff City
Chichester & Selsey
Crawley Wasps
Gillingham
Hounslow
Ipswich Town
Keynsham Town
London Bees
Milton Keynes Dons
Oxford United
Plymouth Argyle
Portsmouth
Southampton

Division One North

Alnwick Town
Barnsley
Bolton
Bradford City AFC
Chester-le-Street Town
Chorley
Durham Cestria
FC United of Manchester
Leeds United
Liverpool Feds
Newcastle United
Norton & Stockton
Stockport County

Division One Mids

Bedworth United
Boldmere St Michaels
Burton Albion
Doncaster Rovers Belles
Holwell Sports
Leafield Athletic
Leek Town
Lincoln City
Long Eaton United
Peterborough United
Solihull Moors
Sporting Khalsa
Wem Town

Division One SE

Actonians
AFC Wimbledon
Billericay Town
Cambridge City
Cambridge United
Enfield Town
Harlow Town
Hashtag United
Kent Football United
London Seaward
Norwich City
QPR
Stevenage

Division One SW

AFC Bournemouth
Buckland Athletic
Cheltenham Town
Chesham United
Exeter City
Larkhall Athletic
Maidenhead United
Poole Town
Portishead Town
Southampton Women
Swindon Town

Reserve Section

North Division

Barnsley
Bradford City
Brighouse Town
Chorley
Durham Cestria

Huddersfield Town
Hull City
Leeds United
Liverpool Feds
Middlesbrough
Sheffield
Stockport County

Midlands Division

Bedworth United
Doncaster Rovers Belles
Leicester City
Long Eaton United
Lincoln City
Loughborough Lightning
Nottingham Forest
Solihull Moors
Sporting Khalsa
Stoke City
West Bromwich Albion
Wolverhampton Wanderers

South East Division

Cambridge City
Cambridge United
Hashtag United
Ipswich Town
MK Dons
Norwich City
Stevenage
Watford
West Ham United

South Central Division

Actonians
AFC Wimbledon
Billericay Town
Charlton Athletic
Crawley Wasps
Crystal Palace
Enfield Town
London Bees
London Seaward

South West Division

Bridgewater United
Chichester & Selsey
Keynsham Town
Lewes
London City Lionesses
Oxford United
Portsmouth
Southampton



Northern Premier News

Brighthouse Town launch development centre

Brighthouse Town have launched their Girls Football Development Centre. The Academy will run every Monday starting on January, 10, 2022.

Information:

Girls aged 6-10

Lightcliffe Academy, HX3 8TL



Bee leaves Burnley

Burnley have announced the departure of first team manager Matt Bee.

The statement said: "As Burnley FC Women continue transitioning to a more professional level, Matt Bee will be leaving his post as first team manager.

We are grateful for Matt's time and achievements at Burnley and wish him the best for the future.

The Club will not be commenting further at this time but will communicate additional details in due course."

Greenhalgh re-signs for Burnley

Striker Sarah Greenhalgh has re-signed for Burnley as a dual registration with AFC Darwn.

Greenhalgh, was top goal scorer for the Clarets in their title-winning promotions in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Sarah Greenhalgh said: "I'm really excited about being back at Burnley. There are lots of new talented players who I'm looking forward to playing with.

"I'm looking forward to being back at this standard. I'm happy to pick up where I'm left off, after enjoying the promotion into this league with the girls, I'm happy to experience playing at this level and hopefully continuing to enjoy success with Burnley."

Derby and University launch scholarship

Derby County Football Club Women and the University of Derby are today launching their football journalism scholarship programme for 2022, with successful candidates having the chance to report on the UEFA Women's Euro 2022.

Three scholarships are available for students wishing to play football



for Derby County Football Club Women while studying on Europe's only dedicated Football Journalism BA (Hons) degree course.

Duncan Gibb, Chief Executive of Derby County Football Club Women, told the official website: "This is a fantastic opportunity for talented football players to join an ambitious club with facilities that are second to none while continuing their studies for a career in the media.

"There really is no offer like this anywhere else in the UK."

Punjabi Rams and Mitchell Promotions support Women's team

Derby County Football Club Women's CEO, Duncan Gibb has praised the recent support shown by long term partners, the Punjabi Rams and Mitchell Promotions, whilst also acknowledging the commitment shown by all of the clubs' partners during pre-season.

"The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the UK business sector has been widely documented and has led to companies that would normally look to invest finances on brand awareness having to cut their cloth accordingly. I've spoken to my equivalent at several National League clubs, and what has become apparent is that Derby County Football Club Women somewhat bucked the trend in reporting a record pre-season in terms of sponsorship revenues through our club partners.

"The Punjabi Rams not only held a major fundraising raffle that seemed to capture the Derby County supporter network imagination, three of their members (who also own businesses) provided added investment to help towards the final total."



Preston returns as manager of Huddersfield

Huddersfield Town have confirmed the departure of first team manager Steve Appleton.

Glen Preston, former manager of Guiseley Vixens, as he returns for his second stint in the role at Huddersfield.

Preston says he is ready to take up the challenge:

"It feels great to be back! It's been a crazy few days where everything has happened so fast. But ultimately, it's a great feeling for me and a big honour to be here.

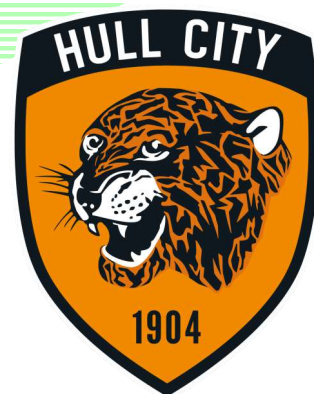
The first time I managed Huddersfield Town Ladies it was one of the best moments of my career, we had great success over two years and so it was not a difficult decision at all to come back and take on this great challenge."

Hull City ambassador inducted into Hall of Fame

Carol Thomas has been inducted into the National Football Museum Hall of Fame.

Hull City Ladies was announced in 2019 that Carol Thomas was the Tigress first club ambassador. The former England international women's defender succeeded Sheila Parker as captain in 1976, holding that position until her retirement in 1985.

In her time as captain she set some exceptional milestones; she became the first England captain to surpass 50 caps and also captained her side to their inaugural trophy.





Northern Premier News



Stewart departs Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough have confirmed defender Courtney Stewart has left the club.

The former Sunderland defender joined the club in the summer but has been advised to take a break from football on medical advice.

The statement said: "Everyone at the club wants to respect that and wish her the very best in the future."

"While Courtney has sadly been unable to make an appearance for the club, we have loved having her around the club and want to wish her the very best of luck in her future."

Sheffield FC team up with Her Game Too

Sheffield FC have announced a new partnership with Her Game Too to raise awareness of sexist abuse within the realms of football.

"It's brilliant to partner up with Sheffield FC, showing that the oldest club in the World is one of the most forward-thinking," said Victoria Wood of HerGameToo. "They are a club who do so much for equality in the community already so they match the values of HerGameToo perfectly."

"Discrimination has no place in football and we can't thank Sheffield FC enough for backing our movement and for helping us to stamp sexism out of the game."

"As the World's First Football Club we support the hergametoo initiative .



Walklett signs for Albion

Albion Women have completed the signing of Kerry Walklett from Southern Premier Division side Keynsham Town.

"We are delighted to add Kerry to the squad," said Head Coach Jenny Sugarman.

"She brings bags of experience both at this level and the level above, which will no doubt help us on our journey."

"I can already see the attitude and work ethic she possesses and we hope that she can also add to our attacking threat with goals and assists but also helping to bring the best out in her team-mates."





Southern Premier News



Bridgwater United announce new partnership

Bridgwater United has announced a new partnership with Body Mechanics.

Body Mechanics are a Bridgwater based pain and movement specialists providing injury care and performance improvement training to both the general public and sporting teams.

CEO Adam Murry remarked, "This is yet another partnership with a brilliant local company that provides further support to our First Teams in reaching our collective ambitions as a club.

"I'm really excited to be working alongside Laurence, Spence and

the team."

Chichester & Selsey defender in hospital

After a collision with a player during a Southern Premier Division game with Hashtag United, Emma Alexandre was sent to hospital.

The Chichester & Selsey defender had to have a second procedure on Tuesday, December 14.

Wishing her a speedy recovery.



Crawley Wasps partner with Crawley Town

Crawley Town have formed a 'long-awaited' partnership with Crawley Wasps.

Speaking on behalf of the partnership, Revenue Manager Alex Watts said: "We want football to be accessible for both men and women of Crawley and with the support of Jack and the team at Crawley Wasps we will be able to make this happen.

"As a club we are engaging with the key stakeholders in the area through initiatives such as our Crawley Town Gratitude Scheme. It is encouraging to see the response from people like Jack who want to become involved with the club for the benefit of the community.

"We plan to reciprocate the support to be in a situation where fans are coming to watch Crawley Town on the Saturday and then Crawley Wasps on the Sunday."



Peskett to undergo surgery

Ipswich Town winger Sophie Peskett has been ruled out indefinitely.

The 19-year-old winger, who became Ipswich's first ever professional player back in the summer, suffered a knee-injury in September.

After waiting for the results, it has now been confirmed that she has torn her ACL in addition to further damage to her knee.

Speaking to the club website, Sophie said: 'After suffering a knee-injury a few weeks ago, unfortunately it has been confirmed that I have ruptured my ACL and will require surgery.

"Obviously I'm absolutely gutted as this is a massive season for me, my teammates and the club as a whole, and I didn't see my season ending like this.

"I'm so grateful for the support I've received from the girls, the staff and everyone else at Ipswich Town - it's meant the absolute world to me.

"I'm ready to work as hard as I possibly can throughout my recovery so I can be back playing alongside my teammates as soon as possible.

"Finally, I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has wished me well and supported me throughout this injury process. I honestly can't wait to be back playing in front of our incredible fans."



Bell joins London Bees

Jade Bell has joined London Bees in a new deal.

The experienced winger comes to the Bees after spending three seasons with MK Dons.

Whilst at Stadium MK, she played against the Bees as Sian Osmond's side ran out 5-1 winners last month.

Bell previously spent time at Cambridge United and also won back-to-back Championship titles whilst playing for Texas A&M University Commerce FC.

During her time in the States, the 28-year-old also turned out for FC Dallas.

Jade will wear the No. 20 shirt.

Oxford United call up women's player

Oxford United men currently have 13 first team players unavailable which has left an opening for one of the women's team.

Manager Karl Robinson asked Beth Lumsden, from the women's team, to train with the men's side.

The midfielder has been taking part in training sessions for the past few weeks.

"It's been such a good experience. I've done it for about three or four weeks now, once a week, there's a session in the morning, followed by a gym session and an evening training session with the women as well," Lumsden told The Mirror.

"We were talking and Karl was there and he was really encouraging, he's been brilliant. The men are a lot quicker, it's not so much physically but it pushes you mentally to make decisions quicker and then I take that into games."





Division One News



Walker earns 100 appearances

Chorley Women captain Laura Walker has made 100 appearances for the Division One North side.

The achievement came in their league game against Liverpool Feds on Sunday, November 7.

Debuting on August 6th 2017 in the away Friendly at Bury Development, these figures do not include 30 Friendly Appearances, with 6 Goals scored.

A statement from the club read: "Well Done to Laura, who works so hard for our club, both on and off the football field."

Surgery for Durham Cestria player

Durham Cestria reserve team player Cassie Donald has undergone knee surgery.

Donald ruptured her ACL in a recent game.

The statement from the club read: "Everyone at the club wishes you all the best of luck with your recovery, we're with you every step of the way."

Double knee fracture for Kennerley

FC United of Manchester's Eve Kennerley suffered a double leg fracture in their Vitality Women's FA Cup first round match against Brighouse Town.

Eve had successful surgery on the 16th November and is now beginning her recovery period.

She will be out for the rest of the season.



Nelson joins Newcastle United

Newcastle United have announced the signing of Erin Nelson from Durham Cestria.

The 20-year-old winger started her career at the Magpies and told the official website that she was happy to be back.

"I was in the academy when I was very young. It feels good to be back. I am excited to get started.

"I will bring pace to the side, and get at players and try to take them on. I will try to link up well with my other forwards."



Belles RTC sign Powell

Alexis Powell has joined Doncaster Rovers Belles Regional talent centre after a successful period in the Belles training centre.

Powell is the first player to make the switch from the Training Centre to the RTC after being identified as having elite potential.

RTC club manager Chantelle Haigh added: "Alexis has settled in really well and we're delighted to have her with us. We hope she's the first of many young players from across the borough that are able to find their way to Doncaster Rovers Belles via the Training Centre."



Vacancies at Leek Town

Leek Town Ladies are looking for a first team coach and a reserve team manager/coach.

Both roles require a certain level of qualification.

For more information contact leektownfcgirls@yahoo.co.uk

Bournemouth sign Bradley



Bournemouth have announced the signing of Jade Bradley to the club.

The experienced midfielder joins the Cherries from Portsmouth, having spent four years with the club.

Bradley told afcb.co.uk: "I had a good chat with Steve and he wants to see the club progress. The players have brought in to that and they know what we want as a club.

"Steve knows what we want, as do the backroom staff, so it's nice for all of us to be aligned with our goals and ambitions."





FANWNL

2021/22 Tables

Northern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Derby County	11	8	2	1	17	26
2 Fylde	11	7	2	2	15	23
3 Wolverhampton Wanderers	9	7	2	0	12	23
4 Huddersfield Town	11	6	2	3	14	20
5 Nottingham Forest	10	6	2	2	14	20
6 Burnley	11	5	1	5	8	16
7 Brighouse Town	9	4	3	2	5	15
8 West Bromwich Albion	11	3	4	4	-4	13
9 Stoke City	10	3	1	6	-5	10
10 Middlesbrough	10	3	0	7	-11	9
11 Sheffield	9	2	0	7	-18	6
12 Loughborough Lightning	10	1	1	8	-22	4
13 Hull City	10	0	2	8	-25	2

Southern Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Ipswich Town	11	11	0	0	37	33
2 Oxford United	11	8	1	2	25	25
3 Southampton	9	8	0	1	40	24
4 Bridgewater United	11	7	2	2	20	23
5 Gillingham	12	7	1	4	-5	22
6 Crawley Wasps	12	7	0	5	8	21
7 Portsmouth	10	6	1	3	20	16
8 London Bees	12	5	1	6	-4	16
9 Keynsham Town	13	5	0	8	-38	15
10 Cardiff City	11	4	1	6	0	12
11 Chichester & Selsey	10	1	1	8	-21	4
12 Plymouth Argle	9	1	0	8	-24	3
13 Milton Keynes Dons	10	0	2	8	-18	2
14 Hounslow	9	0	0	9	-40	0



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL

2021/22 Tables

Division One North

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Liverpool Feds	10	9	0	1	23	27
2 Newcastle United	8	6	1	1	23	19
3 Leeds United	9	6	1	2	13	19
4 Norton & Stockton Ancients	9	4	1	4	3	13
5 Stockport County	9	3	3	3	3	12
6 Chorley	7	3	3	1	0	12
7 FC United of Manchester	10	4	0	6	-10	12
8 Durham Cestria	8	3	2	3	0	11
9 Barnsley	7	2	1	4	-3	7
10 Bradford City	8	2	1	5	-6	7
11 Chester-le-Street	9	1	2	6	-16	5
12 Alnwick Town	8	0	1	7	-30	1

Division One Midlands

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Doncaster Rovers Belles	12	9	1	2	13	28
2 Lincoln City	9	8	0	1	18	24
3 Boldmere St Michaels	10	7	1	2	13	22
4 Long Eaton United	10	6	3	1	18	21
5 Sporting Khalsa	11	4	3	4	0	15
6 Solihull Moors	11	4	1	6	1	13
7 Leek Town	12	4	1	7	-16	13
8 Peterborough United	10	3	2	5	-6	11
9 Burton Albion	11	3	2	6	-6	11
10 Wem Town	8	3	2	3	-6	11
11 Leafield Athletic	7	3	1	3	-4	10
12 Holwell Sports	12	3	1	8	-5	10
13 Bedworth United	11	1	0	10	-20	3



TheFA Women's
National League

FANWNL

2021/22 Tables

Division One South East

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Hashtag United	11	10	1	0	41	31
2 Billericay Town	11	10	1	0	30	31
3 Actonians	13	6	5	2	17	23
4 Cambridge United	13	6	1	6	-4	19
5 London Seaward	12	4	6	2	2	18
6 AFC Wimbledon	9	5	2	2	15	17
7 Queens Park Rangers	8	4	1	3	4	13
8 Cambridge City	11	3	2	6	-2	11
9 Enfield Town	12	2	4	6	-5	10
10 Harlow Town	11	3	1	7	-27	10
11 Norwich City	11	2	1	8	-18	7
12 Stevenage	11	2	1	8	-35	7
13 Kent Football United	9	0	2	7	-18	2

Division One South West

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1 Cheltenham Town	9	6	2	1	16	20
2 AFC Bournemouth	8	5	3	0	19	18
3 Southampton	9	5	2	2	13	17
4 Exeter City	6	3	2	1	10	11
5 Maidenhead United	8	3	2	3	5	11
6 Chesham United	6	3	2	1	1	11
7 Portishead	10	2	4	4	-8	10
8 Swindon Town	9	2	3	4	1	9
9 Larkhill Athletic	9	1	3	5	-17	6
10 Poole Town	10	0	1	9	-40	1



TheFA Women's
National League

GRASSROOTS



MARCO FLOREALE

on The Game of Two Halves

Mental health has become a really important talking point in recent years with more and more players and people involved in sport talking about it.

In May 2017, Everton winger Aaron Lennon was detained under the Mental Health Act and underwent treatment for a “stress-related illness”. He has since spoken out about what he went through hoping to help an inspire others who could be suffering in silence.

In the women’s game Karen Bardsley openly discussed with TWFM about her struggles with mental illness which came on due to injury.

Speaking to TWFM, she said: “I found it personally really difficult to admit to myself that I was struggling sometimes but once I had the feelings and I knew I could not sit with them any longer, I sought the help I needed.

“I went for guidance. I am fortunate that I have a good support network who I felt I could say, “hey I need to find out why I am feeling like this”

and they could find out who I needed to speak to.

“It was really hard, I went through some really rough patches over the last three or four months – physically, mentally.

“It was very hard but I had help to focus on the positive things, I took some backwards steps a few times but I had people around me telling me that you have to listen to your body and take each day as it comes.”

Speaking to a Game of Two Halves co-founder Marco Floreale, you can tell how important mental health is to himself personally and the company.

Despite not being a player, just from speaking to him you know he is a person that if he asks

“ It’s okay
not to be
okay—there is
still a long way
to go ”

“Are you okay?” you know he wants to hear the real answer.

Speaking about the mental health of his players, Floreale said: “Any player or member of staff can phone me when they are struggling and whilst I will always be happy to listen, I am not trained in looking after a person’s mental health so we make sure we have people in place that can help.

“It’s great to see so many people coming out and talking but there is still a long way to go. Young players and players who have not been used to being in the spotlight are not necessarily prepared for what football can bring and it’s about educating them to be prepared and to know that it’s okay to not be okay.”

Since England lost to Italy in the men’s Euros on July 11, the three players who missed their penalties – Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka – have received racist abuse on social media.

“Social media has allowed players to interact with fans, they have a following already and they already have a profile

The Game of Two Halves

online,” Floreale said.

“We knew that with the growth of social media we had to have a division of The Game of Two Halves which was about brand.

“A section of this which organically came about was around mental health and addiction.

“The division is really important for checking in on players and checking they are okay not just physically but mentally.

“It does not matter to me what league you play in, if you are fully professional or part but you cannot go to work and have things wrong in your head and expect to perform.

“For footballers it is even harder, you have two or three games every week and if you are not in the right head space you will not perform and then when you don’t perform, people come for you on your social media channels.

“It’s a vicious circle. From an outsiders point of view you see it as players who have gone off form, you see it as players who look like they are ‘going off the rails’.

Mental health due to injuries is something which is not that well discussed at the moment. When a player gets an injury which sees them on the sidelines for a long period of time, it can often

In lower divisions and the women’s game, it is often harder to find resources. Below the top two divisions in the women’s game, most clubs are part-time, semi-professional or voluntary meaning there are not the resources available. You see players take to social media who are struggling due to injuries and having to wait for NHS appointments.

Floreale added: ““Clubs have a duty of care but we thought that as an agency, checking in on our players mentally should automatically come under the services which we provide.

“It’s part of my commitment and duty to a player to ask the difficult questions and say: “Are you alright, are you okay?””





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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.**



I'm the Coin for Respect winner!

Chloe, 12



Football's 'Respect' Campaign receives further backing across the Capital from Utilita Energy

Utilita Energy, London FA (LFA) and Team Grassroots have teamed up for a second year to help the capital city's leagues tackle respect to referees and volunteers across the grassroots game.

As a reminder to all players, Utilita Energy's 'Grassroots Fund' which is administered by Team Grassroots each month, has funded the creation and distribution of thousands of cards, posters and bibs that carry the message 'No Ref, No Game'. The packs will be distributed by London FA to all leagues- both adult and youth. Last year, Utilita Energy funded the Covid-19 packs for all leagues.

Allocating the monthly grassroots fund, which is powered by Utilita's Energy High 5, is Team Grassroots' Paul Kirton - the founder of the largest online grassroots football community, which offers support, resources and advocacy on behalf of the millions of people that play the game or support the game. He comments on why the packs are so important:

"The Respect campaign has been very effective in reminding players that without a referee, there is no game. The regular reminders are necessary, as passionate players can sometimes be quick to forget, so these packs will go a long way in spreading the message and making sure we all remember to respect the referee's decision each and every game."

Aquila Burgess, London FA's Football Development Manager added:

"We are delighted to support our leagues again to help support with the respect which should be shown to volunteers and referees across the game, with the offering thanks to

Team Grassroots Utilita's Energy High 5 Grassroots Fund. As an organisation, we continually look to work with companies that can offer our members valuable, insightful and essential services. We hope the packs provided will help leagues to tackle abuse suffered towards match officials.

James Heyes, Partnerships Manager at Utilita Energy comments on the important investment:

"Our long-term investment in football, from grassroots to the Premier League, has become ever more important today - the sport needs as much support as it can get to recover from the devastating effects caused by the pandemic.

"Respect, not only for the ref, but for everyone who makes the effort to muck-in is so important - it's what motivates volunteers to continue. Utilita's State of Play report revealed that two in every five parents help their kids' club in some way (41%) - whether that's coaching, refereeing matches, on the touchline, ferrying kids to matches, washing kits, or making tea in the clubhouse - football exists through community involvement."

The Grassroots Fund is powered by Utilita's Energy High 5 campaign, which helps households to save up to £163 on their home energy bills. Through Utilita's investment in football, the pro-pocket, pro-planet campaign has reached almost four million households in the UK since December 2019.

Individuals, teams and leagues can apply for the fund here: <https://www.teamgrassroots.co.uk/grassroots-fund-powered-by-utilita-energy-high-5/>

New CU Scarborough course offers students potential route into pro sports coaching



Aspiring professional sports coaches can now access a fresh potential route into the industry thanks to a new BSc Sports Performance and Coaching course at CU Scarborough.

The new undergraduate degree will combine expertise with industry knowledge and encourage students to be proactive in seeking opportunities to gain hands-on experience, as well as offering them the chance to access additional qualifications in areas such as coaching and scouting.

The aim is to produce graduates with the skills and know-how needed to

work in the sports industry or to continue their educational journey.

Students can start the course in January, March, May or July of 2022. The Access to Sports Education foundation programme, which launched in January 2021 at CU Scarborough, will also offer students an additional path to progress onto the new course.

Both the BSc and foundation programmes cover a wide range of areas including anatomy and physiology, sport coaching, sport performance and

academic/professional skills for sport.

Mathew Butterworth, Head of Academic Studies at CU Scarborough, said: “We’re absolutely delighted to be opening up opportunities for the people of Scarborough and beyond to develop their knowledge and skills around sports performance and coaching, as well as really exciting potential for professional development.

“We look forward with excitement to continuing to help students in their bid to secure career opportunities within

the developing sports industry.”

CU Scarborough has developed strong links with local sports clubs including Scarborough RUFC and Scarborough Yacht Club, as well as semi-professional football club Scarborough Athletic FC, whose stadium is next door to the campus, creating opportunities to use the stadium’s facilities and gain further insight into the industry.

CU Scarborough also held a community event earlier this year in a bid to promote sport and wellbeing, which saw young people and families come together to engage in sporting activities.

Sir Paul Grant, Visiting Professor of Education and Premier League Education Advisor, said: “The atmosphere generated by the young people and families who came along reminded me of what we missed as a society through lockdown.

“I have no doubt that the launch of CU Scarborough’s new sports-themed degrees will have a huge impact on the local community given the huge interest around the campus on the day.”

CU Scarborough, part of the Coventry University Group, offers a range of career-focused courses in supportive environments, with

flexible entry requirements and pathways onto courses providing access to higher education for students from a wider range of backgrounds.

With campuses in Scarborough, Coventry, Dagenham and Greenwich, CU runs a range of programmes timetabled to allow students to fit classes around other commitments such as work or childcare, with most CU programmes also offering students the flexibility to start their studies at one of six entry points across each year.



Simon Says

By Simon O'Neill

This month I spoke to Libby Jo Stokes, a Boldmere St Michaels U18 player about her career so far and what her dreams are for the future.

How old were you when you first played football?

I was four.

Why did you choose your playing position?

I wanted to be an attacking midfielder because I'm good at reading the game, which I feel is key when you play central position.

When did you first become involved in organised football?

When I was around seven.

Are your family supportive of your football?

Yes, they have always been there for me and supported me ever since they knew how much I loved it.

What do you like about playing for Boldmere?

The people around are all really supportive, we're like one big family no matter what age or gender group you play in.

Can you progress through the age groups into the women's first team?

Yes. My ambition is to join the first team as soon as I am of the right age.

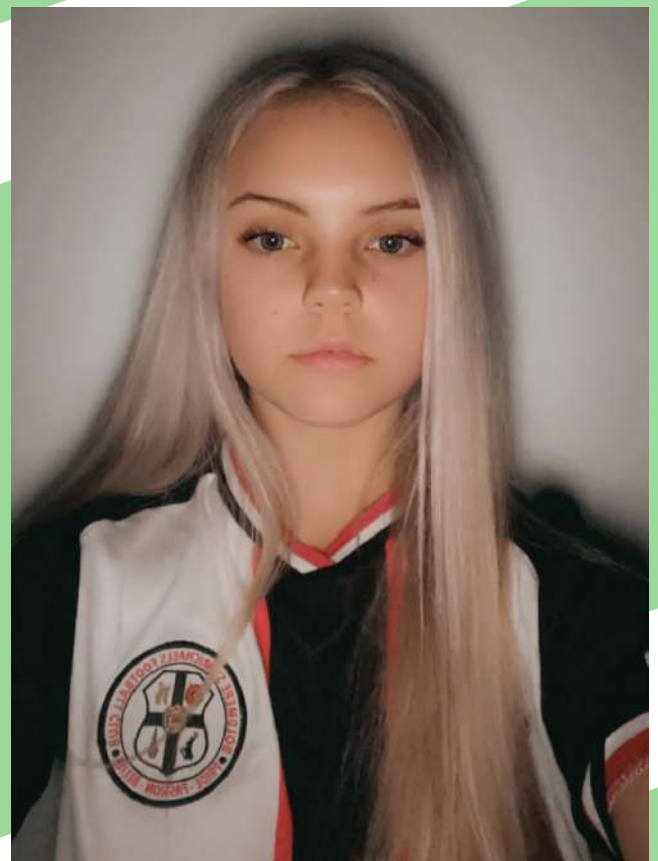
Do you support any particular women's pro team?

I've always liked Birmingham city women's team.

Do you have any ambitions in football?

I do yes. Ever since i was little, up until now, I've always aspired to play for England Ladies. This is my ultimate dream, to be a professional footballer.

I couldn't imagine my life without football in it.



Mitre to back Shelter

#NoHomeKit campaign

mitre ➤



This Christmas, British football brand Mitre is backing Shelter's call to clubs up and down the country to ditch their home shirts for the Boxing Day fixtures to highlight the scale of homelessness and raise much needed funds for the charity's frontline work.

To support Shelter's #NoHomeKit campaign, Mitre is launching a bespoke ball on Friday 10th December to help fundraise. On sale for £12 (RRP) on mitre.com the specially designed Mitre x Shelter football will see £5 from each sale donated to Shelter.

Simon Breckon, Mitre Brand Director said: "We're really honoured to join forces with Shelter and be a supporter of the #NoHomeKit campaign - raising awareness and funds to help combat a growing national crisis.

"Christmas is a poignant and difficult time of year for many and this gives fans and football communities the chance to come together and hopefully help make a difference."

Osama Bhutta, Director of Campaigns

at Shelter, adds: "Mitre is the one of the most iconic and loved names in football, so we are delighted to have their support for our #NoHomeKit campaign. They join the growing number of teams, fans and partners from every level of the game, who have already signed up to help us fight homelessness this Christmas.

"Right now, 91 families are made homeless every day in England. Every penny raised through this partnership will help Shelter to continue being there for all those without a safe home this winter and beyond. Everyone involved in #NoHomeKit is doing something special by bringing the entire football community together to fight the housing emergency."

As well as wearing their away shirts on Boxing Day, fans can also show their support and donate by visiting www.shelter.org.uk/nohomekit or can donate £5 to the campaign by texting 'HOME' to 70455. (Texts cost your standard network rate + £5, and Shelter receive 100% of your donation).

The EFL and Utilita launch Utilita Kids and Girls Cup



Jack Wilshere and Karen Carney MBE joined 25 young football hopefuls at Charlton Athletic FC today, to officially kick-off the Utilita Kids and Girls Cup, two of England's biggest national football tournaments for junior schoolchildren culminating in four Wembley finals.

The annual football tournament gives 22,000 boys and girls to take to the pitch to represent the 72 EFL Clubs across England and Wales, helping to forge even stronger ties between Clubs and their local communities.

Inspiring children to be active, healthy and develop a strong sense of

teamwork, both the Utilita Kids Cup and Girls Cup are six-a-side competitions offering schools the chance to earn the right to represent their local EFL Club on a regional basis, before culminating in four national finals which will take place prior to the Papa John's Trophy, Sky Bet Championship, League One and League Two Play-Off Finals on the hallowed turf of Wembley Stadium.

The Kids and Girls Cup has engaged over 250,000 children since its inception in 2007 and has previously inspired the likes of Manchester United midfielder and Scotland international Scott McTominay and Crystal Palace midfielder Will

Hughes who both represented their schools and got their first taste of Wembley success in the competition.

Ben Wright, Chief Commercial Officer of the EFL, said:

“The positive impact of EFL Clubs in their communities goes far beyond 90 minutes on the pitch and the Utilita Kids and Girls Cup is testament to that. EFL Clubs are in the heart of their communities and with 80% of people in England and Wales living within a 15 mile area of an EFL Club, they have the platform to inspire and make real positive and lasting change in society.

“We are looking forward to seeing thousands of girls and boys engage with their local EFL Club, play football, build friendships and have fun, and see the finalists enjoy the once in a lifetime experience of playing at Wembley Stadium ahead of one of our prestigious finals.”

Jem Maidment, Chief Marketing Officer at Utilita Energy said: “The EFL Kids and Girls Cup tournaments are one of the many ways that Utilita Energy supports British Football. Our State of Play report revealed the impact the pandemic had on football families, with 70 percent of parents saying their child’s physical and mental health had been affected without access to the game.

These two all-important schools tournaments will also be supported by our latest ‘Football Rebooted’ campaign, our mission to get one million pairs of good quality football boots

back onto the pitch, whilst improving access for one in five families who struggle to afford all the kit needed for their children to play.”

The competition was launched with current and former professional footballers Jack Wilshere and Karen Carney at Charlton Athletic FC’s stadium, The Valley. The England Men’s and Lionesses’ stars ran a training session for a group of 25 children with an array of warm ups, drills, and games at the EFL League One team’s ground. Helping coach the kids, the former Arsenal Mens & Ladies pair also got involved in the games, offering an unforgettable experience for the future stars of the game.

Professional footballer Jack Wilshere commented: “It’s amazing to be a part of this launch, which I hope inspires young players all around the country to get out and

play the beautiful game. It’s important that football clubs give back to their local communities and it’s great to see EFL Clubs running these type of competitions for children of all abilities. It was a pleasure to help coach some of the players at The Valley and set them on their footballing paths.”

Former England Lionesses player Karen Carney added: “The talent on show today was incredible to see and I was honoured to help take a training session with the kids and Jack. Projects like this from the EFL and Utilita are so important for inspiring the next generation of talent and engaging fans & families in the world of football.”

To find out more, visit:
<https://www.efl.com/utilitakidscup/> / <https://football.utilita.co.uk/kids-cup>



Slough youngsters warm-up for winter



Youngsters at a Berkshire football club have netted a funding boost to ensure they will be winter ready.

Slough FC under-8s girls' team has received a £250 Team Sport award from UK Power Networks, the company which distributes electricity across the East of England.

The money will be put towards hoodies and rain jackets to keep them warm during the colder months of the season with any remaining funds to be spent on new training equipment.

Employee Aaron Wells, who works as an engineer for the connections team in Borehamwood and

Eastcote, applied for the award.

Aaron, who has FA badges, has coached the team since it was formed and it features his daughter Heidi Alba Wells who is the side's goalkeeper.

He said: "I feel proud my company is supporting the growth of girls' and women's football at grassroots level in this way and the money will really help the players.

"The girls were initially involved in the Weetabix Wildcats coaching scheme and, because of the level of interest, Slough FC decided to form an under-8s girls' team which I manage.

"The team currently plays in the Berkshire County Girls' football league and also play in friendly tournaments as well as training every week. Everyone is really enjoying the chance to develop their game."

The Team Sport Award scheme encourages UK Power Networks staff to volunteer in the community and is aimed at promoting healthy living, teamwork and developing sporting opportunities.

Hundreds of community and sports groups have benefited from grants since the scheme was set up. During 2020, more than 60 teams benefitted to a combined sum of £15,500.





AMMO'S ANTICS

Hi Ammo here,

Lots to tell you this month. Starting with a long away trip to play Sheffield United with my team Birmingham City.

The road north seemed to take forever for this pre-season friendly and our squad has been severely hit with injuries. Mostly to our older players. So just like our car journey it was always going to be an uphill struggle.

Sheffield United we're very well organised and had a clear game plan. We struggled to get going and ended up falling to a 2-0 defeat.

We went on a long unbeaten run last season so losing this first game was a bit of a setback.

The following week I had to pack my bags for my four day Wales U15 National camp.

This was my first residential camp and I was excited to join up with the squad. It was a hard four days, full of intense training sessions

working on all types of skills and drills.

It culminated in a game against an U15 boys team. Which was a tough end to what was a full on international camp.

Playing against boys our own age is always challenging but we put in a decent performance and I believe the gap between boys and girls football continues to close.

The week I got home I went straight back into training with Birmingham city as we prepared to welcome Chelsea in another pre-season friendly.

I had never played against Chelsea before but unsurprisingly they are known for being an extremely talented group.

They were fast, strong and were all top class technical footballers. They quickly went 2-0 up but we fought back to go into half time at 2-2.

When they came out for the second half they moved up another couple of gears and we Blues seemed to tire as the half went on. The final

score was 9-3 to Chelsea and we'd fallen to our second pre-season defeat.

Following the Chelsea game I attended a three day England U15 international camp. Just like the Wales camp I had attended previously this was an intensive few days of training and matches. Coaches observed the sessions and made notes on all the players.

I feel like I performed well during the time I was there. The next camp is in October and I will find out soon if I have been selected for it. There should be a fixture included in the next one.

The thing about international camp selection is, you never really know if you've done enough to get selected. The pool of talent, especially in England is huge so just the fact I was selected to attend one is seen as an excellent achievement. I'm pleased i had the experience and I think I did my best in each session.

Once the England camp was out of the way I was back with Birmingham in our final pre-season friendly, against Leicester at the women's training ground. Leicester have fantastic facilities, I was impressed with the training centre.

But after two straight defeats we needed to bounce back.

Again we were short on numbers and had two U14s playing up with us and we only had one sub. All due to injuries and holidays. I'm happy to say we put in a decent performance and I got 3 assists in a 7-1 win.

The following week we were facing a local derby against Aston Villa in our first league game of the season.

A lot of talented players have moved to Aston Villa from local RTCs recently and we knew it was going to be a very tough game. Once again blighted by injuries to some of our most experienced players we were beaten 4-0.

Although I don't think the score was an accurate reflection on the game. We had a number of chances that on any other day we would put away. But nevertheless they got the result. It was obviously a game they really wanted to win because at the end they, and their parents reacted like they had won the World Cup. I

would add some sort of quote about winning with dignity.. if I knew one.

So, not the start to the season we wanted. I'm not going to talk much about my own individual performances as much this year. We win and we lose as a team.

Next up we have a league game against Derby and after that I'm playing for Gloucestershire in the National cup final at the Aldershot ground. Gloucestershire have never reached the final so I'm going to give my best to help get the win.

I'll tell you all about it next time, as well as anything else that comes up at training.

The thought I want to leave you with is this. "Life isn't about never falling down, it's about picking yourself up and moving forward every time you fall."



CUPS



Ella Henderson 'wows' fans as 50th anniversary celebrations get under way



English singer-songwriter Ella Henderson performed a number of her chart-topping singles to kick start the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Vitality Women's FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium connected by EE on Sunday 5 December.

In addition, Henderson also had the honour of singing the national anthem ahead of kick-off.

Performing tracks such as This Is Real and Ghost, the X Factor star took to the pitch to get the crowd pumping ahead of a fierce London derby between Arsenal and Chelsea.

Ella's performance was one of several events taking place on the day to celebrate the historic 50th year of the biggest domestic cup competition in women's football.

Ahead of the day, Ella said: "It's an honour to be playing at Wembley Stadium ahead of this year's Vitality

Women's FA Cup Final, it's the biggest day in the diary for the teams and their fans alike, and so special given the 50th anniversary. I can't wait to be on the pitch to get the occasion, and a real celebration of women's football, started".

Kelly Simmons The FA's Director of the Women's Professional Game added: "The 50th anniversary of the Women's FA Cup is a true celebration of the game, and an opportunity to reflect on its remarkable growth as we near the end of another remarkable year for the women's game that has seen increased visibility and interest.

"To have issued over 40,000 tickets is a wonderful illustration of the growth of the women's fan base and the dedicated following the women's teams now have. Ella's performance will ensure the matchday starts on a high, and we are thrilled to have her play at Wembley Stadium."

Arsenal's road to the final



By Charlotte Stacey

**Fourth Round:
Arsenal 10-0 Gillingham**

**Fifth Round:
Arsenal 9-0 Crystal Palace**

**Quarter-Final:
Arsenal 5-1 Tottenham**

**Semi-Final:
Arsenal 3-0 Brighton &
Hove Albion**

Arsenal clinch a convincing 3-0 win over Brighton and progress to the FA Cup final to take on Chelsea.

As has become their adopted style under Jonas Eidevall, Arsenal kicked off the semi-final with high intensity and high press, immediately punching home positional fluidity and thrusting balls cross field to catch the visitors off guard. Yet, a resolutely defensive Brighton held firm in the first half denying the hosts at every turn.

Relentless attempts from the Gunners front line, made up of Beth Mead, Nikita Parris and Caitlin Foord, successively threatened to break the deadlock. Foord's chance at the 20-minute mark in particular, proved frustrating for Arsenal as an open goal was missed after the ball ricocheted from beneath Brighton defender and captain Victoria Williams' feet.

The next near-miss, and possibly Arsenal's best chance of the first half, came 37 minutes in as Parris managed to get a head to Mead's rebounded shot. Goalkeeper Megan Walsh managed to force Mead's strike back into the box only for it fall to Parris. Parris nodded a strong ball toward goal that was subsequently cleared off the line by Williams.

It was noted in the first half that the Seagull's slipped into a 4-5-1 formation in an effort to resist Arsenal's press whilst retaining a forward option to play to in transition.

This system proved effective against Arsenal's 4-3-3 and allowed Brighton moments on the break. Centre forward Danielle Carter took an encouraging run early on, racing toward goal before being cut out by Jen Beattie.

After Williams' goal-line clearance, Brighton seized the opportunity to counter the now out of shape Arsenal. Once again, it was Carter driving the attack as the Seagulls flooded forward. The striker was able to navigate space in the box to clip in a shot, yet Arsenal were able to avert the danger.

The Gunners drove one last hurrah before the half time whistle when Mead and Foord rushed on to a long ball. Both used their pace to steam past Brighton's back line, yet a watchful Walsh opted to meet them head on and collected her ball without hesitation.

The opening goal came just four minutes into the second

half after a slight tactical amendment to the Arsenal. The Gunners 4-3-3 remained; however, one midfielder pushed slightly higher, occupying the breadth of space behind the front three. Captain Kim Little filled this role of central nucleus, pivoting quick one-two-balls with the forward line.

Stand-in left-back Katie McCabe acted as the third point in a triangle alongside Mead and Little, and the three worked in tandem to create the first goal. At 49 minutes, the opener was manifested from McCabe's fine touch. McCabe passed to Mead who, with a shift of direction, cut around Megan Connolly and dinked it across to Little. As ever, the captain made no mistake and tipped the ball over the head of Walsh, putting the hosts one ahead.

At 54 minutes Arsenal scored their second goal in a similar fashion to the first. Little passed the ball to Mead in their own half and the winger

progressed forward 15 yards without much resistance. Mead squared it to Jordan Nobbs and continued her run. Nobbs threaded the ball back to Mead, who was now drifting inward, unmarked, on the edge of the box. Mead eyed up the angle before releasing the shot on her right foot, sending the ball into the bottom right corner.

Firmly in the driving seat now, the Gunners third goal came with just under ten minutes to go when defender Leah Williamson sent in a signature bullet header from a corner to seal the deal.

A valiant game was played by the Seagulls and definite moments of threat came from counters in both halves and some promising goalkeeping was displayed, yet Arsenal's intense pressure ultimately proved too much to handle.

Arsenal: Manuela Zinsberger, Noelle Maritz (82'), Leah Williamson (90+1'), Jen Beattie (82'), Katie McCabe, Lia Wälti (64'), Kim Little (c), Jordan Nobbs, Nikita Parris, Caitlin Foord (64'), Beth Mead

Substitutes: Lydia Williams (GK), Hermione Cull (GK), Teyah Goldie (90+1'), Anna Patten (82'), Simone Boye (82'), Mana Iwabuchi (64'), Frida Maanum (64'), Halle Houssein, Alex Hennessy

Goals: Kim Little (49'), Beth Mead (54'), Leah Williamson (76')

Brighton and Hove Albion: Megan Walsh, Fliss Gibbons, Victoria Williams (62') (c), Danique Kerkdijk, Maya Le Tissier, Aileen Whelan, Megan Connolly, Inessa Kaagman (78'), Kayleigh Green (50'), Danielle Carter, Emily Simpkins (50')

Substitutes: Frankie Angel (GK), Emma Koivisto (50'), Lee Geum-min (50'), Rinsola Babajide, Libby Bance, Ellie Brazil (62'), Katie Robinson, Maisie Symonds (78')



Chelsea's road to the final



Fourth Round:
Chelsea 5-0 London City
Lionesses

Fifth Round:
Chelsea 3-0 Everton

Quarter-Final:
Birmingham City 0-4
Chelsea

Semi-Final:
Manchester City 0-3
Chelsea

In their final game before Wembley, Chelsea managed to knock out current FA Cup champions Manchester City.

City were forced to start their third-string goalkeeper Karima Taieb at the Academy Stadium, as their run of bad luck continued.

Jill Scott prevented an early opener with a deft sliding challenge on prolific striker Sam Kerr inside the area.

Moment's later, Erin Cuthbert opened the scoring with a half-valley which flew straight through Taieb's hands.

City's goalkeeper struggled after that, looking nervous and lacking in confidence.

Shortly after the opening goal, Emma Hayes' side doubled their lead after Taib took too long to react to the movement of Melanie Leupolz. She was unable to stretch far enough to complete the save.

Taylor made just one change to start the second half, swapping in Jess Park for Bunny Shaw and later switching Keira Walsh for Vicky Losada, herself returning from injury.

Bethany England secured the result with just a minute so spare, adding a third goal to the back of the net.

Speaking to the FA after the game, Manchester City head coach Gareth Taylor said: "For me I think the first half is where we ultimately lost the game.

"I think we were in decent control. The first 20 minutes were quite good for us and as soon as we conceded in quick succession it affected us.

"We obviously had a good conversation at half-time, changed things around a bit.

"The second half was okay in that respect and we showed spirit to come back but I think those first couple of goals ultimately decided the tie.

"I've had a quick glance [at the first two goals] and you'd expect them to be saved. It's easy from the side-lines, I think when you're in that moment, you don't know when

it's come through legs – especially the second goal.

“I was probably a bit more concerned with the first one where we switched off defensively and you can't do that against a team like Chelsea.”

Chelsea manager Emma Hayes told the FA: I'm delighted to be there [at Wembley].

“It's the one day of the week I've only got to go down the road, to a football stadium, so I'm over the moon it just happens to be the biggest and the home of national football, and as a kid I always wanted to be there in some capacity, whether as a fan - I never thought I'd do it as a coach.

“Now I've been there a few times, I just want to go and win.

“I just wanted to win the game and we haven't won the game up here in ninety minutes before.

“I just wanted to get that off of our back and I think we did that convincingly. I thought the players that started the game did the job we needed them to do and I think the players from the bench were fantastic.

“The impact they made, the energy they brought from the charisma to the performance, I thought it was a team that once again showed their manager that they want to keep improving.”

Manchester City: (4-3-3):

34 Karima Taieb; 11 Janine Beekie; 8 Jill Scott; 5 Alex Greenwood, 3 Demi Stokes; 15 Lauren Hemp; 24 Keira Walsh; 7 Laura Coombs; 19 Caroline

Weir; 21 Khadija Shaw, 18 Ellen White (c)

Substitutes: Jess Park for Shaw 45, Vicky Losada for Walsh 67

Bookings: Stokes 17

Chelsea: (4-4-1-1):

30 Ann-Katrin Berger; 3 Aniek Nouwen; 4 Millie Bright; 5 Sophie Ingle; 7 Jess Carter; 8 Melanie Leupolz; 11 Guro Reiten; 14 Fran Kirby; 16 Magdalena Eriksson (c); 20 Sam Kerr; 22 Erin Cuthbert

Substitutes: Beth England for Kerr 58, Jessie Fleming for Reiten 74, Drew Spence for Leupolz 74, Niamh Charles for Kirby 79': Zecira Musovic, Ji So -Yun, Lauren James, Jonna Andersson, Jorja Fox

Goals: Cuthbert 23, Leupolz 28, England 89



Chelsea win the FA Cup



By Jamie Davies

A brace from Sam Kerr secured Chelsea their 3rd FA Cup in history as they thumped Arsenal 3-0 at Wembley Stadium.

A 2nd half double from Kerr and an early goal from Fran Kirby was enough for Emma Hayes' side to receive their 3rd and final trophy of the year by comfortably turning up on the big occasion and beating their London rivals.

The first Sunday of December 2021 marked a very special day on the women's football calendar as the FA celebrated the 50th edition of the Women's FA Cup at Wembley Stadium.

It was one of the most exciting FA Cup finals we had seen for years as the Women's Super League's top two went head to

head in front of a Wembley crowd of over 40,000.

Despite Arsenal winning in their last clash on the opening of the league season at the Emirates Stadium, Chelsea clearly learnt from it and came back stronger with a very convincing win over their rivals.

The FA Cup for Chelsea would wrap up a very successful 2021 for them after they won the WSL earlier this year along with the League Cup from last season.

A treble winning year with a runner-up appearance in the Women's Champions League against Barcelona.

The Match

It only took 2 minutes for the 50th Women's FA Cup final to

have a goal as Chelsea drew first blood with Fran Kirby scoring after Arsenal's defence made a terrible error trying to play from the back and losing the ball out of nowhere.

The first half in general was Chelsea's from the get go as the Gunners didn't get firing at all.

Four minutes after Chelsea drew first blood, the Blues were close to doubling the lead as Arsenal's defence get pressurised again as Fran Kirby plays a through ball to Kerr who didn't get her shot past the goalkeeper.

Despite the start not going well for Arsenal, Miedema made her opponents aware when the Dutch international had her shot blocked from outside the penalty area.

Chelsea knew keeping Miedema quiet would be key to avoiding any goals being conceded.

On the 17th minute, Sam Kerr struck a shot at goal but was well saved by Manuela Zinsberger at close range but would end up seeing the Australian offside.

But Hayes' team wouldn't stop there, as Kirby was causing Arsenal problems again just before the match reached the 20th minute as the England forward picked up a free ball in the box but Zinsberger denied the shot as it came off the goalkeeper to then hit the post.

The first half was a half to forget for Arsenal especially for Miedema as she had another attempt outside the penalty area with a shot that went off target and hit row Z.

Zinsberger was the first half hero for Arsenal as she made a handful of saves to keep her side in the cup.

The 25th minute involved another Kirby chance with Guro Reiten who made a good run towards the edge of the Arsenal box and sets up Kirby as the England forward takes a shot at goal but Zinsberger with an important fingertip save.

Kirby was having a field day for Chelsea and her influence continued on the 29th minute with Leupolz picking up a long ball into the box and lays it for Kirby to strike but it deflected behind for a corner.



Nine minutes before half time, Chelsea looked eager to create a gap in the score line. Kerr rattled the cross bar after she found herself one on one with Zinsberger with some great strength to outmuscle Lotte Wubben-Moy in the box.

Moments before the referee whistled the game for half time, Kerr was scaring Arsenal again as Kirby runs with the ball into the Arsenal box and picks out Kerr to her left but Zinsberger jumps down and grabs the loose ball before the Australian got there.

The second half didn't see any substitutions from either side especially Arsenal who needed a wakeup call during the break.

Chelsea simply continued their threats from what they produced in the first half as Kerr struck a header straight into the hands of Zinsberger 10 minutes into the 2nd period.

A couple of minutes later had Chelsea two up as Kerr finally got on the scoresheet after she was onside and was up against Wubben-Moy but that wasn't a problem for the Chelsea forward as she slotted the ball through the legs of the Arsenal defender and past Zinsberger.

The game looked to be dead and buried as Arsenal's fight looked very well beaten. Chelsea had the game in full control.

The blues weren't done yet as they continued to push and pinpoint a 3rd goal if they could.

18 minutes from time, Kirby nearly had a 2nd goal when she

struck the post that left Zinsberger completely still. It simply summed up Kirby's day, she was a big game changer from the moment the match had kicked off.

Sadly, for Kirby, her match would end a little earlier than expected on the 76th minute as she went off limping as Pernille Harder replaced her. Harder herself was close to finding the net moments later as Harder made a fine run into the Arsenal box then launches her left foot at goal but straight into the hands of the Arsenal goalkeeper.

If there was any chance of Arsenal somehow coming back from 2-0 down, those possibilities were made impossible on the 78th minute when Kerr chipped in the 3rd and final goal for the blues.

Kerr's 2nd goal was no doubt the goal of the match and cemented her name as a Player of the Match in a women's FA Cup final.

Overall

From what we saw in that 90 minutes, despite it being a big occasion, it felt like a simple routine win for Emma Hayes and her squad as they clearly prepared well for this one and wanted to remind Arsenal that they will be going all the way in the title battle for the Women's Super League.

For Arsenal, it's their first defeat in England this season having won all of their matches in the WSL so far. This defeat for the Gunners will be a hard one to take but it will all be

about how they bounce back from this.

Who knows, they might meet each other again in May for this season's FA Cup final, a chance for revenge if so for the Arsenal.

Line-Ups

Arsenal Women: Zinsberger (GK); Wubben-Moy (87' Boye), Beattie (71' Foord), Catley, Mead (YC 7'), Little (C), Miedema, Maanum (80' Parris), Walti (61' Iwabuchi), McCabe (YC 65'), Maritz.

Substitutes: Williams (GK), Patten, Nobbs, Parris (YC 81'), Foord, Boye, Schnaderbeck, Iwabuchi, Goldie.

Chelsea Women: Berger (GK); Bright, Ingle (90+4' Nouwen), Carter, Leupolz (86' Ji), Reiten (86' Spence), Kirby, Eriksson (C), Fleming, Kerr (86' England), Cuthbert.

Substitutes: Musovic (GK), Nouwen, England, Ji, Charles, Harder, Spence, Andersson, Fox.

Goals: Kirby 3', Kerr 57', 78'

Referee:
Helen Conley (Durham FA)

Attendance: 40,942

Player of the Match:
Sam Kerr (Chelsea)



FA Cup final: Player Ratings



The Women's FA Cup final of 2021 was a dominant match for Chelsea in order to win the 50th edition of the cup.

The main stars of the Wembley final were the faces of Sam Kerr and Fran Kirby but how did the other players get on?

Are there any players from the Arsenal camp that had anything to shout about at full time?

Here are your player ratings for the 2021 Women's FA Cup final...

Arsenal

Manuela Zinsberger (GK) - 7/10

The Arsenal goalkeeper was arguably the team's best player which is not a good thing if it's your goal stopper.

Zinsberger made some important saves in the first half to keep Arsenal in it, without the Austrian - it could have been a bigger score line.

Lotte Wubben-Moy - 3/10

The week of the FA Cup final was a big week for Lotte as she got her first England start against Latvia but the match that followed at Wembley was a forgettable one.

The Arsenal defender couldn't deal with the early pressure and costed the team a conceded goal.

Jennifer Beattie - 4/10

Beattie alongside her centre half pairing of Wubben-Moy had a long shift dealing with the likes of Sam Kerr and Fran Kirby.

It proved too difficult for the both of them.

Steph Catley - 3/10

Catley was one of a few Arsenal players that didn't have much existent on that Wembley pitch.

Beth Mead - 4/10

Beth Mead has had a great season for Arsenal so far but that Sunday just wasn't going to happen for her.

Chelsea kept her well hidden along with the other forwards.

Kim Little (C) - 5/10

One of Arsenal's brightest midfielders who has been exceptional in 2021.

There were moments where she tried to get the attack going for Arsenal but the ball was never going in her direction.

Vivianne Miedema - 3/10

All that can be remembered from Miedema's final performance is her two ambitious shots from outside the Chelsea box which flew way over the target.

The blues knew keeping Miedema quiet was key to winning and getting a clean sheet.

Frida Maanum - 2/10

In all honesty, the moment Maanum was subbed off deep into the second half, it was hard to remember what was provided by the Arsenal midfielder.

Lia Walti - 2/10

Walti is on the same step as Maanum after that FA Cup final performance.

Really not much contribution provided.

Katie McCabe - 3/10

McCabe has so far had a season of scoring a couple of memorable long range goals but sadly nothing spectacular in this cup final.

McCabe and Miedema up front hardly had a moment inside the Chelsea penalty area.

Noelle Maritz - 3/10

Again Maritz had a similar shift like her team mates.

Chelsea

Ann-Katrin Berger (GK) - 6/10

An FA Cup final clean sheet for the German goalkeeper. Not much was needed to achieve that clean sheet apart from punching away a dangerous free kick at the face of goal.

Millie Bright - 6/10

Bright and Sophie Ingle provided a steel wall in defence at Wembley making sure Miedema and McCabe showed little involvement in the Chelsea box.

Sophie Ingle - 6/10

As mentioned, Ingle and Bright's partnership was very solid at the back and do not recall any mistakes from the two centre backs.

Jess Carter - 6/10

Carter was part of the defensive three line-up along with Ingle and Bright.

There were moments late on when Arsenal's Parris used her pace against Carter but the Chelsea defender tracked back well to keep the clean sheet alive.

Melanie Leupolz - 7/10

The German international has played a big part in midfield this season and having her in the starting line-up made it tricky for Arsenal to deal with.

Guro Reiten - 7/10

Reiten alongside Leupolz in midfield were incredibly strong against Arsenal and controlled the game.

Reiten's pace as well was very impressive to watch.

Fran Kirby - 9/10

Manager Emma Hayes said after the game that Fran Kirby just played her best ever game of her career so far.

It's hard to disagree when Kirby scored early on followed by creating chances and making the goalie make some superb saves.

Magdalena Eriksson (C) - 7/10

The Chelsea captain lifted the FA Cup I'm front of the Wembley crowd and certainly had a very good game leading her team on the field.

Jessie Fleming - 7/10

The Canadian was played up front on the left with Kerr and Kirby.

Fleming's main efforts was pushing the ball to the edge and inside the box that helped Kerr and Kirby with their attempts at goal.

Sam Kerr - 8/10

Sam Kerr was named the official Player of the Match from the competition's sponsors of Vitality.

But it's hard to oversee Kirby as the best player on the day.

The brace in a cup final is what Kerr has been looking for in a Chelsea shirt and that chip to make it 3-0 was the cherry on top.

Erin Cuthbert - 8/10

Cuthbert played in behind of Kirby on the right wing of a 4 player midfield.

She was highly praised by Hayes in the post-match press conference and said that Cuthbert needs to avoid hiding in the shadows.

The History of the Women's FA Cup:

Celebrating the 50th anniversary



The Women's FA Cup has come a long way since the first final over 50 years ago.

Southampton beat Scottish side Stewarton Thistle 4-1 on an uneven pitch at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre.

Flash forward 50 years and this year's finalists are once again walking out with pride in front of over 40,000 fans with the game live on television.

Looking at the competition with rose-tinted spectacles could be easy if you get carried away with the occasion, but for all the positive changes, there is still a lot that needs to change.

Just this week there were more comments about the prize money available for the winners and losers throughout the rounds of the competition.

After the third round, the losers were awarded just £350—

not much money, but even less when you have fees such as referees, transport and everything else to include as well.

This year's winners, Chelsea, received £25,000 for winning the competition— just slightly more than the winners of the men's first round are given (£22,629).

But instead of being completely negative, there is still a lot to celebrate in the 50 years of the competition.

There have been some fantastic goals, records set and broken and an ever growing fan base which has meant the final at Wembley is becoming a must-attend event in the women's football calendar even if your team have not made it.

The competition was founded in 1970 and was called the Mitre Challenge Trophy until April 1976.

The name of the tournament has changed a number of times with names including the WFA Cup, the FA Women's Cup and finally the Women's FA Cup which came into play in June 2015.

The original Mitre Challenge Trophy “disappeared” according the records and was replaced in 1979 for the tenth anniversary. It is long suspected that a player “tucked it away somewhere in a trophy cabinet.”

Coverage of the competition has been shared by a number of outlets. In the late 1980s and early 1990s it was provided by Channel before moving to BBC and Sky Sports in more recent years.

The first final to be held at Wembley was in 2015 and since then the game has grown from strength to strength— here is to 50 more amazing years!



No other side has played in more finals or won the trophy as many times as Arsenal (17). They have won 14.

Most consecutive appearances in the final: Southampton appeared in the first 9 finals in a row – a record not equalled since



Most losses in the final: Doncaster Belles with seven final defeats, having won it six times previously

Most successful manager: Arsenal founder Vic Akers won the cup 10 times over 16 years.

The trophy was won by a London-based side only three times in the first 22 years of the competition, then following Arsenal's first triumph in 1993 (the last run by the WFA), the winners have come from outside of the capital on only six occasions since.

Father/Daughter: • Albert (Howbury Grange 1984) and Debbie Bampton (Croydon 1996/2000) are the only father and daughter pair who have both won the cup as managers.



Rachel Yankey is the most successful individual player in the competition having enjoyed 11 victories with two different clubs; nine with Arsenal and two with Fulham.

8-2

Highest scoring final: 1978: Southampton 8–2 Queens Park Rangers.

USA's Carli Lloyd is, to date, the only Olympic champion and World Cup winner to have scored in a final (for Manchester City in 2017)

The first final to be played at a Football League ground was in 1982 on Loftus Road's artificial pitch. The 2-0 win for Lowestoft over Cleveland took place before QPR's 7-1 victory over Bolton Wanderers in the men's Second Division.

Latest recorded goal in a final: • 2020: Janine Beckie for Manchester City v Everton in the 122nd minute.

When Arsenal Ladies defeated full-time Fulham in 2001 they were still only training on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 8-10pm (and received financial support from The Daily Star).



45,423

2018 - The current record attendance of 45,423 was set at Wembley for the last final between Chelsea v Arsenal.



Prize money was offered for the first time, in 1977, with £100 going to the winners.

There have been nine all-London finals, involving seven different clubs: Millwall Lionesses, Wembley, Arsenal, Croydon, Fulham, Charlton Athletic and Chelsea.

Karen Walker set a record for scoring a hat-trick in every round of the cup, including the final, in 1992

2021/22 Vitality Women's FA Cup fixtures, key dates & information

Third Round Results

Stourbridge	0-3	Sheffield United	Burnley	0-4	Liverpool
Plymouth Argyle	5-0	Clapton Comm.	Brighouse Town	0-1	Sunderland
Stoke City	1-2	Nottingham Forest	West Bromwich Albion	5-1	Long Eaton United
Leeds	0-6	Durham	Huddersfield Town	3-1	Loughborough Lightning
Chesham United	0-10	Billericay Town	Nettleham	4-2	Northampton
Chorley	0-3	Newcastle	Bridgwater United	1-0	Crystal Palace
AFC Wimbledon	0-2	Ipswich Town	Liverpool Feds	0-1	Blackburn Rovers
Portsmouth	1-2	Southampton	Ashford Town	1--6	London City Lionesses
Bristol City	5-0	Lewes	Watford	0-4	Coventry United
Gillingham	TBC	Charlton	Southampton	TBC	Exeter City





The 2021/22 Vitality Women's FA Cup Fourth Round draw was made on talkSPORT2's Women's Football Weekly show earlier this evening and it can be seen in full below:

Southampton v. Bristol City

Newcastle United v. Ipswich Town

Plymouth Argyle v. Gillingham or Charlton Athletic

Liverpool v. Lincoln City

Brighton & Hove Albion v. Reading

Nottingham Forest v. Manchester City

Aston Villa v. Chelsea

Billerica Town v. Coventry United

Durham v. Blackburn Rovers

West Bromwich Albion v. Southampton Women's or Exeter City

Sheffield United v. West Ham United

Birmingham City v. Sunderland

Bridgwater United v. Manchester United

Huddersfield Town v. Everton

Tottenham Hotspur v. Leicester City

Arsenal v. London City Lionesses

All 16 ties in the Fourth Round will be played on Sunday 30 January 2022 and further details will be announced at the earliest opportunity.

Women's Continental Tyres Cup:

The group stages

Group Stage Matches

Crystal Palace	0-0 (4-5)	Bristol City
Coventry United	2-3	Tottenham Hotspur
Aston Villa	0-1	Blackburn Rovers
West Ham United	3-0	Brighton & Hove Albion
Lewes	1-1 (6-5)	Reading
Watford	0-5	Charlton Athletic
Sunderland	0-0 (4-2)	Liverpool
London City Lionesses	2-2 (5-4)	Birmingham City
Leicester City	P-P	Manchester City
Everton	0-2	Manchester United



GROUP A		MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	4	1	3	0	1	8
2	Sunderland	4	1	2	1	-6	7
3	Blackburn Rovers	4	2	0	2	0	6
4	Sheffield United	4	1	2	1	0	5
5	Aston Villa	4	1	1	2	5	4

GROUP B		MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Manchester United	4	2	2	0	3	9
2	Manchester City	3	2	0	1	6	6
3	Everton	4	2	0	2	-3	6
4	Leicester City	3	1	1	1	-1	5
5	Durham	4	0	1	3	-5	1

GROUP C		MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Tottenham	3	3	0	0	13	9
2	Charlton	3	2	0	1	6	6
3	Coventry United	3	1	0	2	0	3
4	Watford	3	0	0	3	-19	0

GROUP D		MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Bristol City	3	2	1	0	3	8
2	Reading	3	1	1	1	1	4
3	Lewes	3	0	2	1	-2	3
4	Crystal Palace	3	0	2	1	-2	3

GROUP E		MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	West Ham	3	3	0	0	8	9
2	London City Lionesses	3	1	1	1	0	5
3	Brighton & Hove Albion	3	1	0	2	-3	3
4	Birmingham City	3	0	1	2	-5	1



Women's Champions League

Group Stage Results and Tables

Group Stage Match Five

Zhytlobud-1	0-6	PSG
Servette FCCF	0-3	Wolfsburg
Breidablik	0-3	Real Madrid
Chelsea	0-0	Juventus
HB Koge	1-2	Hoffenheim
hacken	1-5	Bayern
Arsenal	0-4	Barcelona
Benfica	0-5	Lyon

Group Stage Match Six

Lyon	4-0	Hacken
Bayern	4-0	Benfica
Barcelona	5-0	HB Koge
Hoffenheim	4-1	Arsenal
PSG	6-0	Breidablik
Real Madrid	3-0	Zhytlobud-1
Juventus	4-0	Servette FCCF
Wolfsburg	4-0	Cheslea

Quarter-Finalists:

Group winners: Barcelona (ESP, holders), Lyon (FRA), Paris Saint-Germain (FRA), Wolfsburg (GER)

Group runners-up: **Arsenal (ENG)**, Bayern München (GER), Juventus (ITA), Real Madrid (ESP)

	GROUP A	MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Wolfsburg	6	3	2	1	10	11
2	Juventus	6	3	2	1	8	11
3	Chelsea	6	3	2	1	5	11
4	Servette	6	0	0	6	-23	0

	GROUP B	MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Paris	6	6	0	0	25	18
2	Real Madrid	6	4	0	2	12	12
3	Zhytlobud-1	6	1	1	4	2	4
4	Breidabilk	6	0	1	5	0	1

	GROUP C	MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	6	6	0	0	23	18
2	Arsenal	6	3	0	3	1	9
3	Hoffenheim	6	3	0	3	-4	9
4	HB Koge	6	0	0	6	-20	0

	GROUP D	MP	W	D	L	GD	PTS
1	Lyon	6	5	1	1	17	15
2	Bayern	6	4	1	1	21	13
3	Benfica	6	1	4	4	-14	4
4	Hacken	6	1	5	5	-15	3



HOME NATIONS



Tournament unveiled as Arnold Clark Cup



The Arnold Clark Cup will see four of the world's top 10 teams clash this February, with Canada, joining England, Germany and Spain in the inaugural tournament.

Each team will play a round-robin match in Middlesbrough, Norwich, and Wolverhampton.

England begin their tournament on February 17 at Riverside Stadium against reigning Olympic champions, Canada, before taking on Spain three days later at Carrow Road.

The home side's final fixture will be world number three Germany at Molineux on February 23.

Speaking about the tournament Fran Kirby said, "As a team, you want to test yourself against the best in the world and win trophies. That's our clear goal for the tournament."

"Canada are reigning Olympic Champions, Spain have some outstanding players in their squad, and obviously it doesn't get much bigger an occasion than England v Germany.

"It's a special opportunity to play world-class opposition in front of our supporters, so we'll be determined to be firing on all cylinders."

With over half of the tickets priced at £10 or less and the opportunity to see competitive, elite football at its very best, tournament organisers are expecting bumper crowds at each of the venues.

One of the sides looking to spoil England's ambitions is Spain. Spain Coach, Jorge Vilda, said it was a challenge his side would be up for, "For Spain it is a great honour to participate in the first edition of the Arnold Clark Cup alongside world-class teams such as England, Germany and Canada."

"In addition, visiting England in the year of the EURO will give us the opportunity to better prepare our participation in the tournament."

Throwing their support behind the tournament is Arnold Clark, who have agreed to a multi-year title partnership.

Eddie Hawthorne, Arnold Clark Chief Executive and Group Managing Director, said: "We're delighted to launch the inaugural Arnold Clark Cup, and it's been a real pleasure to work with Pitch International on this project. It's a bold and exciting event and we believe that this will become a highlight of the sporting calendar for years to come.

"Football is something that brings the whole community together. We're delighted to give fans the opportunity to see these great international players and inspire future stars live in their hometowns for a great price."

England fans will be able to watch every match live on ITV, and can follow tournament updates at: @arnoldclarkcup / #arnoldclarkcup

Tickets are now available to purchase via www.arnoldclarkcup.com.

Marvelous Mead Hat-Trick



By Jamie Davies

A 14-minute hat-trick from substitute Beth Mead made sure England kept their 100% record in the World Cup qualifying alive with a 4-0 win against Northern Ireland at Wembley.

Beth England also added to the scoring as she too proved to be a game changing substitute by Sarina Wiegman.

The win for England keeps them joint top in the group while Northern Ireland concede their first defeat of the qualifying campaign so far.

Saturday October 23rd was England's first match at Wembley since their sell-out crowd against Germany two years ago in October 2019.

Their latest trip to the capital would host less fans but around 30,000 spectators were still expected in this World Cup

qualifier against Northern Ireland.

The encounter with Northern Ireland would be England Manager's Sarina Wiegman's 3rd game after a very convincing opening two matches with big score line wins of 10-0 against Luxembourg and 8-0 over North Macedonia.

Meanwhile for the visitors, they were off to a dream start in the World Cup qualifiers with 2 wins out of 2 against Luxembourg (4-0) and Latvia (4-0).

The player's entrances onto the Wembley pitch was very stylish for the fans to witness as they were spoilt with a lightning display of the stadium lights in-sync with the music's beat.

It certainly got the England players pumped up for this one as the opening half was simply

dominated by Wiegman's ladies.

A total of 17 shots were created by the hosts and 3 of those finding the target but none of those separated the scoring come the interval.

The main highlights of the first half were mainly towards England's skipper, Leah Williamson, as she had a handful of chances to get the Lionesses ahead.

The first seven minutes in saw Arsenal's Nikita Parris nearly find a way through Northern Ireland's back line but would eventually lose the ball to her opponents. Already England were knocking on the visitor's door.

The night was always going to be a jam packed defensive showing for Northern Ireland especially when you look at the front line trio of Lauren Hemp, Nikita Parris and the deadly Ellen White who has scored 15

goals on her last 15 appearances for her country.

If the match was going to finish at half time, you would give star of the match to Northern Ireland's goalkeeper of Jacqueline Burns who made some crucial saves to keep the game at 0-0.

Just a minute shy of the game only being a quarter of an hour old, Man City's Hemp struck the cross bar with her left foot after a run into the box.

As mentioned before, Williamson would start her reel of goal scoring chances. The first attempt being on the 18th minute as she headered a corner opportunity straight at Burns.

Seven minutes later and Williamson would then hit her shot just past the corner of the net. Williamson's hunger continued three minutes on with another header but started to become a routine save for Burns.

The fans were then treated to one hell of a shot from 30 yards that would again be denied by the bar, Alex Greenwood this time being so close.

England's defender Millie Bright also had a crack at goal but couldn't get her head down as the ball flew over the bar. The busy activity for Burns left her feeling an injury 5 minutes before the break in what was an heroic first half display.

2nd half

The beginning of the 2nd period was expected to start off just like the first half did with

England's dominance being too much for Northern Ireland to handle.

But instead there was little sparky moments from the team in green as four minutes after the interval saw them have a rare chance at England's goal. A dangerous low ball across the face of goal by Lauren Wade was nearly tapped in from Caragh Hamilton but the pass was just a little too quick for her to finish it.

But after Northern Ireland's only chance of the game, England got back in control of the game.

The second half saw Lauren Hemp help guide England into the lead but this was after she had two similar low footed shots at goal be denied by Burns.

It felt like it would take a lot for England to get a goal past the Northern Ireland goal stopper.

A little inspiration felt like was needed if England were going to keep their 100% record going in the World Cup qualifying campaign.

Wiegman would put on in-form Beth Mead on the 64th minute and that would prove the difference.

Just seconds after coming on to replace Rachel Daly, Mead broke the deadlock by volleying home the opener after picking up Burns' punched ball clearance.

The opening goal led to a goal fest as substitute Beth England would score a tap in from what was a dangerous cross from Hemp.

Two minutes later and England had no doubt sealed the three points when Mead found the net again with another volley thanks to another Hemp cross. Hemp and Mead were on a role!

Then 12 minutes from time and Mead sealed her dream hat trick by scoring from a loose ball that saw one of the England forwards collide with the goalkeeper, her easiest goal of the three.

It took just Beth Mead 14 minutes from coming off the bench to seal a hat-trick for her country.

The 3rd win in a row would put England joint top of their qualifying group with Austria, both teams on nine points.



Team Line-ups

England (4-3-3): Earps (GK); Daly (64' Mead), Bright, Greenwood (80' Staniforth), Stokes (45' Walsh); Kirby (80' Wubben-Moy), Toone, Williamson (C); Hemp, White, Parris (63' England).

Subs: McIver (GK), Hampton (GK), Charles, Walsh, Stanway, Wubben-Moy, Mead, Staniforth, England, Scott, Russo, Carter.

Goal Scorers: Beth Mead 64', 74', 78' & Beth England 72'.

Northern Ireland (4-4-2): Burns (GK); Vance, McFadden, Nelson, McKenna; Callaghan (81' Wilson), McCarron, Hamilton (64' McGuinness), Burrows [73' Watling] (YC 60'); Furness (74' Furness), Wade (81' Beattie).

Subs: Flaherty, Clifford, McLaren, McGuinness, Caldwell, Rafferty, McDaniel, Wilson, Andrews, Beattie, Waitling.

Attendance: 23,225

Player of the Match: Beth Mead

Referee: Ivana Martincic (Croatia)

Player Ratings – England 4-0 Northern Ireland (Oct 23rd)

It was a night to remember for England's Beth Mead as her 14-minute hat-trick secured 3 wins in 3 for Sarina Wiegman's team in the World Cup Qualifiers.

The entire 90 minutes were in a nutshell completely dominated by the Lionesses in

front of a Wembley crowd of over 23,000 spectators.

Even though it took the hosts a little while to finally find the net, they put both hands on the momentum and cruised the game home – eventually.

So as well as Mead, who shined for England on that Saturday night in the capital?

Here are your player ratings from that game...

Starting 11

Mary Earps (GK) – 4/10

England's number one goalkeeper on the night but had very little to do while her defenders pushed up into Northern Ireland's half for most of the game.

Less than a handful of times that Earps had even touched the ball.

Rachel Daly – 5/10

Rachel Daly started the game in a right back position and showed some moments of pushing the ball forward on the right wing. Defensively she didn't have much to worry about when it came to the tracking back role as a full back.

Millie Bright – 5/10

England's main centre half was solid in defence when needed but there was a scary moment near the start of the second half when Northern Ireland had a rare chance to tap in the opening goal of the game.

Alex Greenwood – 7/10

Greenwood started the game as Bright's centre back partner and she had a standard game which was terrific.

She nearly scored herself with a lightning strike from 30 yards but unfortunately the crossbar denied what would have been the goal of the match.

Demi Stokes – 6/10

Just like the other defenders in her team, Demi Stokes spent more time attacking instead of having to defend to prevent a Northern Ireland goal.

Fran Kirby – 7/10

One of the players of the year from the Women's Super League started for England at Wembley who has recently been getting used to being a bench player under Emma Hayes at Chelsea.

But Kirby played very well under the Wembley lights by finding those tight spaces and slotting the ball forward into the box for Ellen White to pick up.

Leah Williamson – 7/10

It was a special night for Arsenal's Leah Williamson as she wore the captain's armband but somehow as I write this, I'm still wondering how the midfielder didn't put the ball away.

Williamson had so many chances to put England ahead especially in the first half. It would have been a fitting moment for her.

Ella Toone – 6/10

Becoming a regular name in the England squad and doing her club Manchester United proud. The early stages of the game saw Ella Toone look a little quiet on that pitch but starting to get going in the second half.

Nikita Parris – 6/10

The opening minutes of the match saw Nikita Parris nearly find a way past the Northern Ireland defence not once but twice.

Parris' pace and ball control on the wings were some challenge for her opponent's defenders.

Ellen White – 6/10

Going into this game, Ellen White was on fine form for the Lionesses as she had scored 15 goals in her last 15 matches.

But a rare occurrence came at full time as White failed to score at Wembley.

She had a golden chance in the first half from close range but her side footed shot was blocked by one of the Northern Ireland defenders.

Lauren Hemp – 8/10

Lauren Hemp was no doubt in the top two for best performances of this match as the Man City forward bagged herself two assists in the second half.

There was at least three goal opportunities that Hemp had for England with one of her attempts rattling the crossbar after a great run into the box.

Hemp is still young but she has a very exciting career ahead of her.

Substitutes

Beth Mead – 9/10

This was no doubt going to be the player of the match as Beth Mead wowed the crowd by scoring three goals in the space of 14 minutes coming off from the bench.

Mead proved to be the game changer and her season so far at Arsenal is proving to be a very special time for the Gunners forward.

Could this performance lead

Mead to a starting spot under Wiegman?

Beth England – 6/10

Beth England made it 2-0 just minutes after coming on at the same time as Mead with a tap in from a Lauren Hemp cross.

The goal will do England's confidence the world of good as she hasn't had it easy in 2021 at Chelsea in terms of goals.

Keira Walsh – 5/10

Demi Stokes was replaced by Keira Walsh at the start of the second half, not sure if Stokes was carrying a knock or an injury.

Lucy Staniforth – 4/10

The Manchester United midfielder came onto the pitch 10 minutes from time so not much contribution from Staniforth in the short time that she had.

Lotte Wubben-Moy – 4/10

Came on at the same time as Staniforth on the 80th minute with not much to deal with as the game was already put to bed.



England October Round-Up



By Charlotte Stacey

Sarina Wiegman's second camp in charge of the Lionesses has drawn to a close, but what have we learned so far?

England have now played four of their World Cup qualifying games for the 2023 tournament and find themselves top of the group with four clean sheets and a mammoth 32 goal difference.

In September, Sarina Wiegman's Lionesses took on North Macedonia at St. Mary's Stadium in which they enjoyed the first of their large scorelines with an eight-nil victory. They then travelled to Luxembourg and earned a similar success with a thumping ten-nil win, which included two goals apiece from centre backs Alex Greenwood and Millie Bright.

October's international break arrived and the Lionesses went on to host Northern Ireland in a historic night at Wembley Stadium. Beth Mead became the first women to score a hat-trick at the infamous ground, which was made even more impressive as she achieved this feat within a fourteen-minute period. Bethany England took the total to four and the Lionesses first competitive fixture at Wembley wrapped up favourably.

In their most recent game against Latvia, England once again reigned supreme, concluding their international break with another ten-nil triumph with goals from Ellen White, Rachel Daly, Beth Mead, Leah Williamson and Georgia Stanway. Ella Toone also secured her first international hat-trick, taking her tally to five

goals in six appearances for her country.

On the surface, it appears as though England could not have asked for a better start to this new chapter. However, those of us who follow the Lionesses a little more closely will incur that this 'early dominance' is not quite the best-case scenario it may be perceived to be.

Firstly, this is not to deny the Lionesses of their recent endeavours, outcomes have indeed been positive and there is plenty to suggest this can continue. Further to this, there is a definite sense of anticipation shared from the players on the field to the supporters in their seats that Wiegman's tenure will bring something more liberal than her predecessors dared to try.

Already we have seen selections and starting elevens

based on form as opposed to previous international experience. Examples of this include Bethany England's and Beth Mead's starts against Latvia after both made remarkable impact from the bench at Wembley, and the naming of five Manchester United players in October's camp following the Red Devil's respectable start to the season.

Wiegman has also switched things up on the pitch which has served as a refreshing change compared with the static approach of the management of years prior. After Northern Ireland's compact defending proved difficult for England to break down, Wiegman opted for a tactical change by replacing left back Demi Stokes with midfielder Keira Walsh at half time. This converted the formation from a 4-3-3 to more of a 3-2-2-3, which at times appeared almost as a 2-1-7 as Rachel Daly played high as the right sided defender, and Keira Walsh and Leah Williamson interchangeably pushed forward to flood areas in and around the box whilst the other covered the two remaining centre backs.

A similar tactic was adopted for Latvia's match. Much more so than with Northern Ireland, Wiegman expected to face a deep-set defensive side and formed her team accordingly, this time choosing a 3-5-2. This fluidity in formation is encouraging and is the mark of a manager unafraid to work to turns of the game in hand.



Yet, it is when we delve further into these fixtures that we find areas in which Wiegman's side will need to tighten up.

The first thing to be considered is the gulf that separates the Lionesses and their opponents thus far. England are currently ranked 8th in FIFA's World Rankings. This is compared to North Macedonia ranked at 131st, Luxembourg at 122nd, Latvia at 102nd and Northern Ireland at 48th. The Lionesses were expected to win by a large margin, and they achieved that, so what is the problem?

Well, there isn't one, there are many.

The largest issue is the difficulty gauging a true impression of how well a team performs or how cohesively they are working when the opposition does not pose an adequate test. Playing lower ranked sides also runs the risk of complacency, lapse positioning and unconventional pot shots, the latter of which was seen prominently against Latvia.

When studying the numbers, it can be assumed that the reason for these shots was down to the amount of time England had on the ball. With 78% of possession against both sides, England were allowed to press the final third without much resistance. This sounds gift-like in theory, but the reality is that the game becomes overthought, attacking phases are overplayed and the dominant side runs themselves into trouble.

Against Northern Ireland the Lionesses registered 34 shots, 11 shots on target and scored four goals. With Latvia, they produced 58 shots, 21 shots on target and ten goals.

A conversion rate that, by and large, needs some work.

However, these numbers must be interpreted relatively.

Typically, one would expect far fewer shots, yet a much finer margin between this and the number of shots on target and goals scored. This is where time on the ball, plus, the allowance of space on the peripheral of the final third comes into play.

Particularly in the game against Latvia, several times England were allowed to advance upon the box in large numbers at their leisure.

Yet due to almost every player from the opposition also situated within this area and holding firm, the play was either overrun, blocked, intercepted and cleared.

When the cleared ball was ultimately claimed by another England player outside of the area, rather than quickly switching the direction of play or passing out to the wing to force their opponents to reposition, the receiving player, with ample time, took a shot.

The opportunity to score wasted on both occasions.

The final issue with the fixtures played so far is the lack of defensive work and goalkeeping.

This, of course, is no fault of the Lionesses, yet it is unhelpful that defensive structure has not been competitively trialled, nor has a phase of transition, something that, in recent times, has been England's niggling shortcoming.

The Lionesses have progressed positively and Wiegman's management already feels as if it is taking England in the right direction, yet there are still these familiar lurking deficiencies to be addressed.

These recent games have required patience and England have had to persevere when the door did not open as expected which will serve them well in their upcoming games.

Confidence should be high, yet personnel should be mindful that far tougher challenges will soon be on their way.



White scores in her 100th match



By Jamie Davies

It was a day to remember for Ellen White as she helped England beat a tough Austria team by scoring on her 100th appearance.

The Lionesses trip to Sunderland's Stadium of Light on November 27th had a host of stories to tell and a walk down memory lane for some of England's players.

Before match day, it was suggested that over 13,000 tickets were sold for England's home game with Austria but with Storm Avern approaching the North East with very high wind speed the night before the game – the numbers were expected to be a little less than the original prediction.

Even our own reporter, Jamie Davies, had to cancel his train travel to the game the night before as all trains and metros

were cancelled in the Sunderland area.

But despite the efforts of the storms, the match still went ahead under the sun at a Saturday lunchtime slot.

There were a few stories to tell ahead of the kick-off from the England camp as the main headline was Ellen White receiving her 100th cap for her country while Millie Bright was given the captain armband as Leah Williamson was out due to injury.

A majority of the England players travelling to the North East were going back in time as a lot of the players have history at Sunderland AFC.

The likes of Jill Scott, Lucy Bronze, Steph Houghton and Jordan Nobbs came from the Sunderland setup so the Lionesses visiting the Stadium of Light was a fitting trip.

The highlight of them all though is probably Beth Mead who scored 77 goals in 78 appearances for the club before she moved to Arsenal in 2017.

The Match

Austria out of all the teams England had in their group was expected to be the toughest opponents out of the lot as they were 21st in the FIFA world rankings and recently reached the semi-finals of the Euros in 2017, same stages as England.

If there was an expectancy of a goal fest in this qualifier then some had not done their homework in preparation.

Just before the kick-off, Ellen White was applauded by her team mates and the fans as she was given an England shirt with 'White 100' printed on the back.



It was a very special day for the England forward with the manager of Sarina Wiegman adding that her 100th cap marked just how 'consistent' it takes just to reach that number.

Despite the train cancellations and the weather causing problems, over 10,000 still attended the match.

The start of the game was a fairly balanced one as both teams went all out which even saw England themselves look rattled from the back just five minutes in – possibly the first time in their qualifying campaign that the Lionesses showed any sign of struggle.

The visitors after 13 minutes in attempted to break from their own half until Daly pulled one of the Austria players back which could have easily been a yellow card very early on.

But once the England players got warmed up against the cold wind of Storm Awern they started to dominate the match with similar styles and approaches of their previous qualifying matches.

Chelsea's Fran Kirby was one of the key players from the game and she started it off with a terrific ball into the box for Lauren Hemp to convert the ball home but was instead cleared for a corner.

A couple of minutes later and Beth Mead came very close to head in the opening goal but would instead face a high foot from her opponent and miss the target.

You could tell just after the first 20 minutes that Austria were a much stronger opponent when you compare them to the likes of Northern Ireland, Latvia and Luxembourg.

As the match reached the half hour mark, Mead and Kirby were clearly ordered to deliver the deadly balls to White in the box. Mead put in a fine ball into the box from the right for White to head in but couldn't make the connection in time.

It was getting to the point where a goal was coming for the hosts.

A 35 yard effort from England's temporary captain of Millie Bright flew over the bar but the defender does have a track record of scoring some worldy's, you didn't blame her for trying and a goal as captain would have been some scene for the Chelsea player.

After already a handful of chances from the team in white, England broke the deadlock 6 minutes before the interval as White scored a classic poacher's goal by tapping in from Kirby's pass in the box.

The goal for White would put her one behind the England goal scoring record of Kelly Smith's 46 goals.

The first 5 minutes of the 2nd half saw Austria get more involved up front as England's goalkeeper of Mary Earps was getting cold just standing around. But she did make a big save when Dunst had a crack at goal from about 18 yards out.



But that proved to be Earps' main involvement in the entire match.

As the game reached an hour of game time, Mead was dragged down in the Austria box but the referee bizarrely didn't see it as a foul.

Mead's hunt for a goal was looking to be a difficult one despite the hat-trick she recently got at Wembley against Northern Ireland.

With the game closing, there were nerves in the stadium as England were fighting hard to keep the lead and to keep their 100% record in the qualifiers.

It was nearly the cherry on top for White as she just missed the target from the edge of the box in an attempt to go level with Kelly Smith's goal tally for the Lionesses.

England held on at the end as their dominance in the group showed that it is going to take a lot for them to even lose a single game in this campaign.

Line-Ups

England (4-3-3): Earps (GK); Daly, Bright, Greenwood, Stokes (Carter 90+2'); Kirby, Walsh, Toone (Stanway 63'); Mead (Parris 70'), White, Hemp.

Substitutes: Charles,

MacIver, Stanway, Carter, Wubben-Moy, Parris, Nobbs, England, Scott, Hampton, Russo, Zelem

Goals: Ellen White 39'

Austria (4-3-3): Zinsberger; Wienroither, Wenninger, Kirchberger, Hanshaw; Zadrazil, Puntigam, Plattner (Hobinger 89'); Dunst, Billa (Enzinger 87'), Naschenweng (Wienerroither 60').

Substitutes: Horvat, Fuchs, Schiechtl, Triendl, Georgieva, Hobinger, Eder, Wienerroither, Schasching, El Sherif, Enzinger, Pal.

Player of the Match: Fran Kirby (England)







White & Lionesses make England history



By Jamie Davies

November 30th, 2021 – will be a day to remember as Ellen White became England's top goal scorer by breaking Kelly Smith's tally of 46 goals.

It took White 101 caps to break the record after her first international goal was scored 11 years ago in a 3-0 win over Austria.

But not only was it all about White, the whole team developed the women's England side's biggest ever win by getting 20 goals past Latvia, yes you read that correctly – 20 goals!

Their previous biggest scoreline win was 13-0 against Hungary in a qualifier for the 2007 FIFA Women's World Cup.

The very comfortable win had the Lionesses top of Group D

going into the New Year by being 5 points clear of Austria, who are England's main group contenders. England look certain to be heading to Australia and New Zealand for the 2023 World Cup.

England's final match of 2021 took place in Doncaster on the final day of November as the Women's World Cup qualifier was under the lights at the Keepmoat Stadium (the home of Doncaster Rovers).

Just four days after the Lionesses braved Storm Arwen and defeated Austria 1-0 at a very windy and cold Stadium of Light, all eyes were on Ellen White as the Manchester City forward was one goal away from levelling the nation's top goal scorer of Kelly Smith with 46 goals.

Latvia were the visitors which

was no doubt seen as the perfect opportunity for White to break the record as when these two sides last met earlier this year, England thumped them 0-10 away from home.

The Match

If England can get 10 past Latvia away from home, just how many can they get on home soil with thousands of England supporters making some noise.

It would be a special night for Arsenal defender Lotte Wubben-Moy who was in Sarina Wiegman's starting line-up to announce it as her first full debut for England.

From the get go a very determined Ellen White was hungry to get the record under her belt as soon as possible and all it took was under 10 minutes to do it.

After Beth Mead made it 1-0 in less than 3 minutes, White got herself a couple of goals before the match was even 10 minutes old. The big moment was created by Georgia Stanway as she delivered a fantastic low ball cross in front of White to tap in the record goal.

As soon as White and her team mates celebrated, the stadium announcer confirmed to the crowd that England had a new record goal scorer. History was made!

White may have broken the record, but how many could she get before the final whistle?

After White's glorious moment, Mead found the net again to make it 4-0 after just 12 minutes.

The hosts were clearly not having any sympathy for their opponents as they kept pushing forward, making it a very long night for Latvia – you could only feel sorry for them.

Man City's Lauren Hemp got the score line up to 5-0 as she headed in from a cross.

There was a race of which England player were going to get the hat-trick first between White and Mead but it was the Arsenal winger who secured her 3rd goal of the night.

England were 6-0 after only 23 minutes were clocked on the scoreboard.

The game was of course already competitively over, but just how many can they get in the back of Latvia's net?



After the 6th goal, England started to calm down with their goal tally for most of the remainder of the first half.

Beth England was working hard to get on the scoresheet including a fantastic run with the ball into the penalty area but the ball was clipped away for a corner after some good defending from Gergeleziu.

Just when Latvia looked to have sort of settled into the game, a goal each from Ella Toone and another header into the net from Hemp made it 8-0 once the game reached half time.

When the 2nd half arrived, it proved for England to only take 52 minutes to get the same 10-0 score line as their away tie in Latvia.

White secured her hat-trick along with team mate Mead while Stanway scored from the penalty spot.

3 goals on the night for White as she was substituted off on the hour mark with massive applause all-round the Keepmoat atmosphere and a pat on the back from the boss Wiegman. She'll remember that night for a long time.

More goals kept on coming for England as substitutes Jess Carter and Jill Scott found the net in-between Beth England's goal.

The substitutes were just having as much fun as their starters with Alessia Russo also finding the net with less than 20 minutes left to play after a header at goal.

When it got to 14-0, it was found out on Wikipedia that England Women's biggest win was back in 2007 when they recorded a 13-0 win over Hungary. Another record broken on the same night.

It's simply became a game of humiliation for Latvia and they were no doubt keeping an eye on the clock for when they could go home.

Alessia Russo secured a hat-trick with 8 minutes left to play to make it a third different hat-trick goal scorer for England on the night.

During the tweet reporting on our Twitter account (@womensfootiemag), we completely lost count and found it difficult just to report on every goal that was scored.

Never in my very few years of match reporting, have I seen a score line or even a match like this. It was like watching a game of FIFA on amateur level.

What now for Latvia?

Overall, questions need to be asked of Latvia's standard and what can FIFA and UEFA do to avoid score lines like this to be repeated? Surely something has to be done.

It was good to see England so hungry for goals but most of the time when watching that match, you felt very embarrassed for the visitors and you wonder if they can ever recover from this mentally.

An early Christmas present for Wiegman and her side and with 2022 around the corner,

it's looking very promising for the new England manager.

No points dropped and wins in every game so far, the 100% qualifying campaign is very well alive for the Lionesses.

Line-Ups

England Women (3-5-2): Earps (GK); Bright © (45' Carter), Wubben-Moy, Walsh (71' Zelem), Greenwood, Toone (45' Nobbs), Mead, Stanway (60' Scott), White (60' Russo), England, Hemp.

Substitutes: MacIver, Hampton, Charles, Kirby, Carter, Daly, Nobbs, Stokes, Scott, Russo, Zelem.

Goals: Mead (3', 12', 23'), White (6', 9', 49'), Hemp (18', 44', 76', 88'), Toone (42'), Stanway (52' pen), Carter (56'), England (61', 84'), Scott (67'), Russo (71', 81', 82'), Nobbs (80')

Latvia (4-2-3-1): Sinutkina (GK) (45' Sklemenova); Voitane ©, Gergeleziu, Lubina, Tumane, Gaike (45' Vitmore), Gornela, Zaicikova, Baliceva (85' Gricijenko), Senberga (68' Vengrevica), Freidenfelde (Skribina 56').

Substitutes: Lindermane (GK), Sklemenova (GK), Lodzina, Rozascenoka, Smirnova, Vingrevica, Vitmore, Gricijenko, Skribina, Brahmane.

Player of the Match: Ellen White (Writer's choice)



White feels proud and lucky with record breaker



By Jamie Davies

Ellen White said after becoming the Lionesses' top goal scorer that she felt proud and lucky with the achievement and playing for England.

The Manchester City forward was the one player every reporter wanted to get quotes from at the final whistle of England thrashing Latvia 20-0.

As White was sat by her manager of Sarina Wiegman, the 32-year-old straight away was selfless and thought about her team mates help her get to 48 goals for her country.

White said: "It feels very nice [to become England's top goal scorer]. I don't know if you can see it but it was very emotional on the pitch.

"I feel very proud to represent my country and to score goals. But for me it was all about the team's performance tonight."

As well as the goal scoring record, it was also seeing her team mates get their share of finding the net as England had 10 different goal scorers on the score sheet.

White added: "I don't know if you can see it on my face as well when Alessia (Russo) scored, when Lauren (Hemp) scored and when Jess (Carter) scored. We've got some incredible players coming through and I feel very lucky to be surrounded by them.

"The team know how much it means to me and how much it means to me playing for England and it's a dream to be playing alongside supremely talented players."

Even with her track record and how important she has been leading the front line for the Lionesses, White still comes across as a competitor that always feels as though she always has a point to prove by hoping that she'll continue getting selected by Wiegman and her coaching staff.

"I hope to get selected for England and I love playing for England, I don't want to stop here. I want to keep playing for England," said the England striker.

With the match being a special occasion, White was able to share the night with her family who attended the game. She tried to throw her match ball to her mother in the stands at full time just so she doesn't have to carry it back to the changing rooms.

White shared how good it felt to have family witness her big moment, she said: "Having my family supporting me is amazing, the goals are for them. They come to the games and support England. Not just supporting me but the squad as well, they love watching the team."

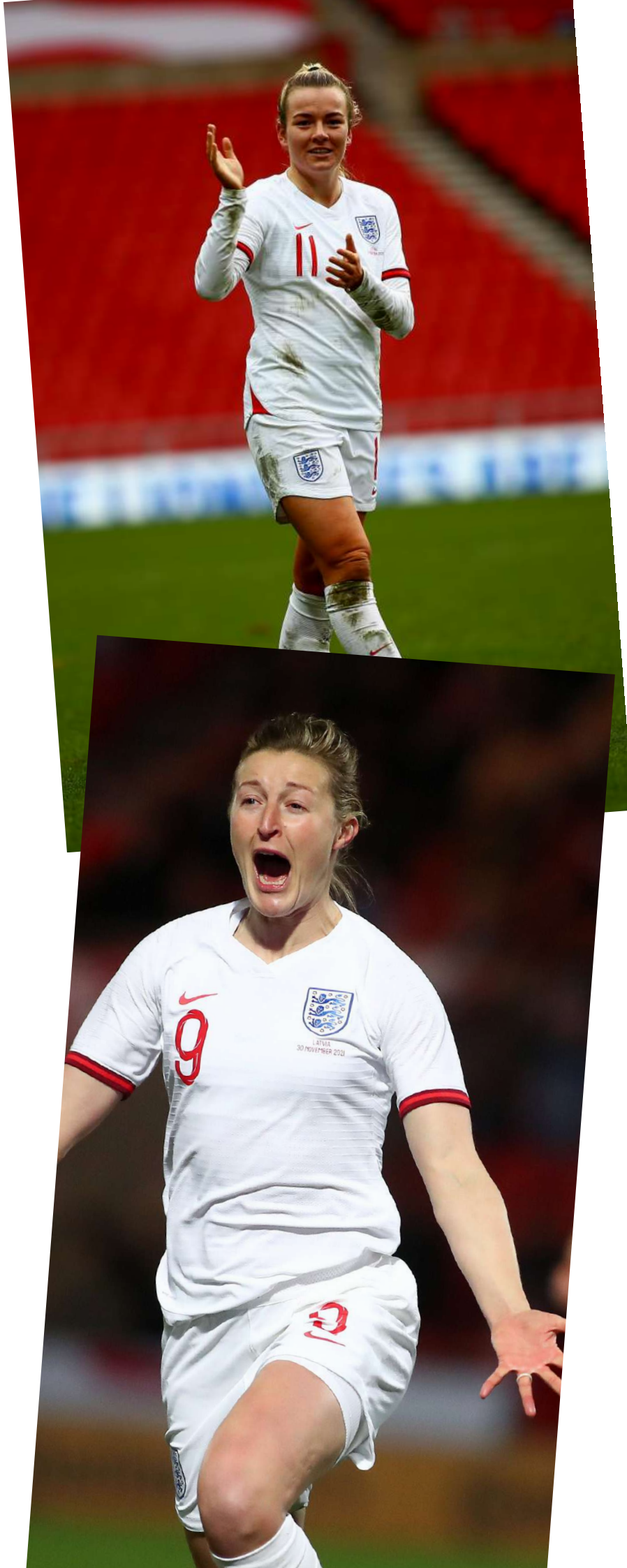
"I did feel emotional but it was very nice to celebrate the goal and have the support of my team mates and I'm not going to lie that it wasn't an emotional moment. I feel very lucky."

When asked about what's next for White, nothing has changed for her future plans as there is still a lot of gas left in the tank: "I'm just focusing on what I can control and do whatever I can to help the team, I don't want to talk about the other records (she laughs when asked about Sir Bobby Charlton & Wayne Rooney's goal scoring records)."

We also got reaction from her team mates especially her club counterpart, Lauren Hemp, at Man City who scored the most goals on the night with a quadruple.

Hemp praised White and couldn't have been more proud of her: "She's unbelievable, I'm so lucky I get to train with her day in and day out and she is just a true professional."

"We all aspire to be like her one day to break a record and to score as many goals as she has done and I'm so pleased for her."



SPAR Scotland to continue partnership with Scottish FA



SPAR Scotland have pledged their commitment to continue to support the women's and girls' game for the next two years.

The partnership, which began in 2019 with the launch of the SPAR Future Stars Cup, has grown since it's inaugural year in Scotland.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "Our continued partnership with the Scottish FA and our sponsorship of the Scotland Women's National Team allows us to encourage more girls to play football and increase participation numbers.

"The tournament gained momentum prior to the pandemic and we were experiencing a lot of promising engagement.

"It was frustrating to see it come to an abrupt halt but to have the tournament return will hopefully give all of the participants a great lift and we are looking forward to seeing the 2021/22 Future Stars Tournament begin early next year."

Fiona McIntyre, Scottish FA Head of Girls' and Women's Football said: "As part of the Scottish FA's Girls' and Women's Strategy

which was launched earlier this year, we want to increase participation in Scotland and inspire the next generation.

"The Future Stars Tournament allows us to help facilitate these goals by providing a platform for young girls to compete in a safe, competitive and enjoyable environment.

"We are extremely grateful to SPAR for their support following the disappointment of last year's competition being cancelled due to the pandemic.

"We are now looking forward to seeing the competition become a springboard for the girls' and women's game in not only increasing participation but also improving their awareness of women's football in the country.

"Our national team are aiming to return to their second consecutive World Cup and we hope they can act as inspiration for everyone who takes part in the competition."

New exhibition celebrates trailblazers

**SCOTTISH
FOOTBALL
MUSEUM**
HAMPDEN



A new major exhibition celebrating a major part of women's football history in Scotland has opened at the Scottish Football Museum.

Celebrating the interwar team, Rutherglen Ladies, who defied the ban on women's football to inspire future generations.

The new exhibition, which will be at the Hampden museum for six months, opens to the public ahead of the 100th anniversary of The FA's ban on women's football.

Funded by Museums Galleries Scotland, it is based on research by women's sports historian Dr Fiona Skillen, of Glasgow Caledonian University, and football historian Steve Bolton.

The ban, which was enforced on December 5, 1921, was brought in because it was deemed the game 'quite unsuitable for females.'

Rutherglen Ladies chose to tour Ireland and played in exhibition games in front of thousands as well as raising money for charity.

Dr Skillen, senior lecturer in history at Glasgow Caledonian University, said: "There's a perception that women's football didn't happen in Scotland between the Victorian period and the mid-1950s. This research shows that it did. We are rewriting the history books with our discoveries.

"Rutherglen Ladies showed incredible resolve and resilience and had to overcome significant barriers just to play the game. They deserve recognition for their unique place in history."

Steve Bolton added: "In many ways the 1920s were the darkest decade for women's football and yet this pioneering team of Scottish women footballers toured England, Scotland and Ireland.

"They survived the pernicious effects of the 1921 English F.A. ban and prospered; beating the 'World Champion' Dick Kerr Ladies and securing their place in history. They were magnificent."

Rose Reilly MBE, a Scottish Sports Hall of Fame inductee and a World Cup winner, who attended the exhibition preview, said: "Rutherglen Ladies are the true pioneers of women's football, hats off to them.

"I am so proud of them. They paved the way but their story got buried."

Richard McBrearty, Curator of the Scottish Football Museum, said: "To host this fantastic exhibition is a real coup for the Museum, we're delighted to be open after the pandemic and we look forward to welcoming visitors to find out more about the trailblazing ladies of Rutherglen F.C.

"The national stadium is now the rightful home of the Scotland Women's National Team, and the female players of the 1920s and 30s paved the way for the progress we've seen since then."

To book your visit to the Scottish Football Museum to see the Rutherglen Ladies F.C. exhibition, visit:

scottishfootballmuseum.org.uk

SHAAP and Scottish women's football announce renewed partnership during awareness week on alcohol related harm

The Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) and Scottish Women's Football (SWF) have announced a further season of partnership as SHAAP confirmed sponsorship of the SWF National Performance League for season 21/22. With SHAAP's support, the league enables youth players to aim towards senior and elite performance.

The partnership has come about because SWF wanted to create a positive environment for girls' football using alternatives to alcohol sponsorship. SHAAP endorses SWF's stance and is encouraging others to do likewise. The announcement is being made during the Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm which promotes action to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm and deaths and took place with the Hearts U19 girls squad.

There are currently no legislative restrictions on alcohol sports sponsorship in the UK and alcohol marketing is self-regulated by the alcohol industry. Research has shown that children exposed to alcohol advertising are more likely to start drinking at a younger age, and drink more heavily in later life. There is also evidence to suggest that people in recovery from alcohol dependence find the easy availability and regular marketing of alcohol a risk to their recovery. The current approach to self-regulation does not do enough to protect children and young people and other vulnerable people from the influence of the alcohol industry.

Dr Alastair MacGilchrist, Chair of SHAAP, said: "We applaud the stance SWF has taken. Sport is part of a healthy lifestyle – and in this case can lead to elite levels of performance – so there is no role for what is an intrinsically unhealthy product in the sporting arena. Indeed, it is counter-intuitive, yet alcohol sponsorship of our favourite clubs, teams and tournaments has sadly become ever-present. We would encourage other sports organisations, clubs and tournaments to reject the alcohol industry and promote a healthy lifestyle by finding other sponsors."

Vivienne MacLaren, Chair of SWF, said: "We are delighted to continue our partnership with SHAAP, an organisation that shares our values and ethos. We believe that alcohol sponsorship has no place in the girls' and women's game. Of course we understand the appeal of financial investment but we need to be responsible. The overwhelming majority of players involved in our competitions are under 18. We have a duty of care towards the girls in our game and we should do everything we can to promote positive and healthy lifestyles."

Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport, said: "Restricting alcohol marketing is crucial to preventing alcohol-related harms and one of the three 'best buy' measures recommended by the World Health Organization.

"We know that children and young people in Scotland see alcohol advertising and promotion in a variety of ways – when attending sporting events or concerts as well as on billboards, buses and at train stations.

"I am determined to cut down on the volume of alcohol marketing that children and young people in Scotland see and will publicly consult on potential alcohol marketing restrictions in 2022.

"I applaud Scottish Women's Football for the stance they have taken and would encourage sports teams and organisations to diversify sponsorship away from alcohol brands."

SHAAP's Director Elinor Jayne added: "The ban on tobacco sponsorship of sports has been successful with clubs and tournaments finding alternative sponsors. We now call on the Scottish Government to not only curb alcohol marketing when it publishes proposals next year, but to give consideration to an outright ban on sports sponsorship by the alcohol industry."

Park's Motor Group announced as title sponsor of the SWPL



Park's Motor Group have been confirmed as the sponsor of the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) for the 2021/22 season as part of an exciting new commercial agreement for the league.

The deal ensures the continuation of a headline sponsor for the top women's league in Scotland.

Scottish Women's Football's (SWF) Chief Executive Officer, Aileen Campbell, said: "This is a positive development for the girls' and women's game. Since my arrival as CEO, I know how important commercial income is to ensure we continue to grow the game and this deal is another step forward.

"This deal is a further sign that the game here in Scotland is deserving of recognition and investment. This will be the fifth continuous season that the SWPL has had a title sponsor. I want to thank all those involved in our game for helping make that possible and for continuing to help us grow and develop the sport we all love."

Park's Motor Group's Marketing Director, Graeme Park, said: "We are delighted to be supporting the women's game at this exciting time. Park's has a rich history within the men's game, with our coaches being used by many teams across the years as well as providing sponsorship and support to many clubs. We're excited to be extending our involvement in Scottish football and helping to further grow the national game."

SWF Chair, Vivienne MacLaren, added: "This is a historic moment for SWF, the SWPL, and the entire game. To have a brand such as Park's Motor Group show their support to girls' and women's football in Scotland is a sign of the work that has been done and the progress we plan to make.

"The COVID pandemic was difficult for everyone and I'm sure many had concerns about the momentum of the game. However, today's deal showcases that the Scottish game is more attractive to commercial sponsors and partners than ever before."

SWF announces new staff members



Scottish Women's Football (SWF) have recently recruited in a number of areas as they evolve to meet the increased demands of the growing game.

These appointments are Ann Jane Malloy (right) as the new Child Wellbeing & Protection Officer and Becky Padden (centre) and Jack Mckeown (left) as Club and Competitions Co-Ordinators. With a Commercial Partnerships Manager to be appointed, SWF will have nine members of staff in early 2022.

Aileen Campbell, SWF Chief Executive Officer, said: "I'm delighted to have Ann Jane, Becky, and Jack joining the SWF team. The women's game continues to grow apace, and we recognise the importance of ensuring we can meet the demands of our members and the game as a whole. These appointments help ensure we can do that.

"The new staff join at an extremely busy time for SWF but already they've shown a desire to get involved and have much to offer and contribute to SWF's vision and ambitions for the women's and girls' game. Given their experiences and enthusiasm, I have no doubt they'll hit the ground running and that our members will get to know them quickly."

In the Child Wellbeing & Protection position, Ann Jane brings a wealth of experience having previously worked as Safeguarding Officer at Celtic FC and as a Solicitor representing children and vulnerable adults. Speaking about her appointment, she said: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to work within the women's game at a national level, especially at such an exciting time for Women's Football."

Becky and Jack will join the Club and Competitions team at SWF, helping to cover the 81 competitions that the organisation currently administers.

Jack, who was Club Development Officer at Cumbernauld Colts, said: "It's an exciting time to join SWF with the growth of the girls' and women's game in Scotland. I have a passion for developing girls' and women's football and I'm looking forward to working with all the clubs.

"Having joined SWF from a member club, I understand the wants and needs of clubs and I'm hopeful I can represent club views to promote positive change within girls' and women's Football."



Wales promises equal pay within next five years



The Football Association of Wales has pledged to introduce equal pay for its men and women international players by the end of 2026.

Recently Jess Fishlock called the lack of equal pay 'unacceptable'.

The FAW responded by saying it is committed to achieving equal pay within its current strategic cycle, which lasts from 2021-2026.

Fishlock said: "Equal pay is an interesting conversation.

"If we go to a major tournament and they [men] go to a major tournament, they [UEFA/FIFA] will give, for example, the women £10million [of prize money] and they'll give the men £250million.

"They're still not really investing in it like they decided to invest in men's football 20, 30 years ago. No I don't think we deserve from the men's pot.

"But if you take that out of it, when you just come to the FAW and Wales and the men's side and the women's side, we do the exact same thing for our country. The

difference in pay for that is just unacceptable."

FAW chief executive Noel Mooney said: "The FAW are taking positive steps forward towards equality, including a substantial and far reaching agreement following discussions with the Women's National Team players.

"As acknowledged by UEFA, we now invest more as a percentage of our turnover into our Women's National Team programme than any other nation in Europe and are committed to achieving equal pay within this strategic cycle.

"The current priority for the team is the upcoming matches against Greece and France with the aim of reaching a major tournament for the first time."

In comparison, England have been paying their men's and women's teams equally in terms of match fees and bonuses since January 2020 - with the fee reported to be around £1,000 per game - while in September 2020, Brazil announced it would do the same, emulating Australia, Norway and New Zealand.

Fishlock wins MVP award



Wales and OL Reign midfielder Jess Fishlock has been named the National Women's Soccer League's (NWSL) most valuable player.

The midfielder, 34, scored five goals and got four assists in 24 appearances during the season.

Fishlock was one of five finalists for the award along with Angela Salem (Portland Thorns FC), Mallory Pugh (Chicago Red Stars), Ashely Hatch (Washington Spirit), and Margaret Purce (NJ/NY Gotham FC).

Pugh earned second place in the voting, followed by Purce, Hatch and Salem.

The list of finalists was decided after a preliminary round of voting by owners, general managers, coaches, players and media.

The finalists were then voted on by fans (10%), owners, general managers, coaches (20%), media (20%), and players (50%).

She has been in the NWSL since 2013 and her head coach Laura Harvey also won the 2021 NWSL coach of the year award.

Speaking about Fishlock, Harvey said: "I think that's just a compliment of what she's always brought to this team.

"The journey that she's been on to get to this point has been phenomenal.

"I'm glad that she's getting some recognition that she deserves."

Taking to Twitter, Fishlock wrote: "I'm not going to say much. Still smiling.

"Best thing about this year was this award could've gone to any of those nominated.

"Everyone was a worthy winner.

"This league is just going to get better and better.

"Feel very proud to be amongst the players in this league."

Uefa 2021/22 wu17 Euro and wu19 Euro qualifying round two draws

The draws for the 2021/22 UEFA European Women Under-19 Championship and Under-17 Championship Qualifying Round Two have taken place.

Wales will face top seeds England, Belgium and Iceland in WU19EURO 2021/22 League A Group 3. The fixture schedule and venue are to be confirmed.

The group winners will qualify for the finals from June 27 to July 9 2022.

Nicola Anderson's side were promoted to League A after three wins to gain promotion from League B in the first round of qualifiers in October.



For the WU17EURO Second Round, Wales will face Turkey, Latvia and Armenia in League B Group 2. The mini-tournament hosts and schedule are to be confirmed.

Loren Dykes' side are in League B after facing Italy, France and Sweden in Round One League A in October.

The teams in League B will compete for promotion to next season's League A.



Dykes names squad for WU17 Euro qualifying round

The draw for the semi-finals of the FAW Girls' Cup took place at FAW HQ on Monday, December 6.

Caernarfon, Cardiff City, Penrhyn Bay and Treowen Stars are the four remaining teams left in the competition and will battle it out for a place in the final.

The FAW Girls' Cup semi-finals draw in full:

- Cardiff City Women v CPD Merched Tref Caernarfon
- Penrhyn Bay Girls v Treowen Stars Girls

The ties will take place on 13th February 2022.



Northern Ireland keep World Cup hopes alive with impressive performances against top seeds



By Josh Bunting

Northern Ireland continued their 2023 World Cup qualification campaign last month playing the top two seeds in the group England and Austria.

To the neutral Northern Ireland were expected to comfortably lose both fixtures after starting the campaign with back to back wins against Luxembourg and Latvia back in September.

Northern Ireland however did pick up a point at home to Austria drawing 2-2 however, it was only a

matter of seconds from being much better with Austria and Stefanie Enzinger equalising in the 91st minute.

Kenny Shiels side went down 4-0 at Wembley but were solid up until the introduction of Beth Mead and Bethany England with Mead scoring with her first touch to break the deadlock in the 64th minute.

England moved the ball quicker and the Wembley pitch was a telling factor at the end of the day with fitness being a clear issue between the two sides.

However there were plenty of positives out of the game not least including the performance of goalkeeper Jackie Burns who made a number of top class saves throughout the game, as well as Kelsie Burrows making her first competitive start at Wembley Stadium.

Although forced back and to defend for the majority of the game against the Lionesses in the capital, but they did have a big opportunity on the counter attack at the start of the second half when Rachel Furness played a superb pass for Lauren

Wade who crossed low for Caragh Hamilton, but Alex Greenwood got a big touch on it before Hamilton could steady herself and shoot.

Northern Ireland will have found out a lot about themselves that night in London and have since been drawn against England in the Euro 2022 group stage draw.

For a side that is made up mainly of amateur players, Northern Ireland did extremely well that Saturday evening holding England until the 64th minute with a resilient performance.

Shiels side then returned to Belfast and Seaview Stadium where history was made several months earlier against Ukraine in the Euro 2022 playoff to prepare for the game against the Austrian's who rank 21st in world football.

From going 1-0 down to a Barbara Dunst goal just before half-time, Northern Ireland stunned Austria with two goals right at the start of the second half from Lauren Wade and Demi Vance.

Hearts were broken a minute into injury-time, though, when Stefanie

Enzinger's header looped into the net.

Vance's goal was a real moment of magic from a free-kick whipping it over the wall and beyond the dive of Arsenal keeper Manuela Zinsberger in the Austrian goal.

However once again that night in Belfast belonged to Burns who made several top class saves throughout the evening, showing her quality and the improvement she has made since the Euro 2022 playoff win over Ukraine.

After the draw with Austria it was visible how disappointed the players were that they conceded so late in the game, and that is a story in itself of just how far the team has come in such a short space of time.

Lauren Wade said after that game "With that sucker punch at the end it just wasn't to be, but we are so proud of how far we have come,"

"We have shown over the past two years what we are capable of. We had a lot of support out here tonight and that spurs us on.

"Teams come here and they respect what we have done.

"Over the past 10 days we have played the two hardest teams in our group and we have shown that we are able to compete with that."

Northern Ireland showed heart and determination in both games digging in deep and have shown they are able to compete with the best teams in the world.

The game against Austria was made even more difficult with Chloe McCarron, Caragh Hamilton, Nadene Caldwell and Laura Rafferty sidelined due to a covid related issue on the way back from England, however others stood up in their place and drove their side onto a good result.

Northern Ireland in both games were very much focused on the defensive side of their game with Julie Nelson and Kelsie Burrows like a green wall frustrating the opposition.

They kept two clean-sheets in their opening two games against Latvia and Luxembourg but those two games were total different

levels of challenges with Northern Ireland impressing fans all around Europe with their performances.

Following the Austrian clash Shields said “The dream is still alive because if we can go and beat them out there then there will be a high chance that we will get to the play-offs — provided that we can win the other games, don’t forget that,”

We were going to play against professional footballers, one of the top teams from the upper echelons of Europe, and we matched them — and were in front up to 91 minutes. I couldn’t believe the performance of the girls.

“We tried to change some things at half-time and where we felt we could hurt them, we had to believe we could hurt them and we certainly achieved that. It was a master performance.”

The back three was a really brave move from Shields but it worked with the wing-backs getting forward as much as possible and getting crosses into the opposition box.

There were many players at the top of their game in both games and that is the standard that they have set for themselves in the campaign.

Next up is a double header with North Macedonia on November 25 away from home before hosting them at home five days later.

With the boost that Simone Magill is back in the squad and after a Luxembourg win over North Macedonia last time out the Green and White Army will be favourites coming into both matches.

Northern Ireland still have a lot to do but the dream is still very much alive to reach Australia in 2023 and with the spirit and attitude shown history is there to be written once more.





Furness named 2021 NI Sports Personality of the Year

Northern Ireland midfielder Rachel Furness has been named as the 2021 BBC Northern Ireland Sports Personality of the Year.

The 33-year-old played a starring role as the Northern Ireland senior women's team defied the odds and qualified for next summer's Women's European Championship finals.

In November the Liverpool Ladies midfielder made history by becoming Northern Ireland's all-time top goalscorer, netting twice against North Macedonia to take her overall career tally to 38 senior international goals.

Furness was presented with the BBC award by Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp at the Merseyside club's training ground.

Speaking about winning BBC Northern Ireland Sports Personality of the Year, Furness told the Irish FA: "It is a fantastic moment for me to be only the second woman to ever win this award, but it isn't just about me, it is about my team.

"I want to dedicate this award to my team-mates in the Northern Ireland squad. Over the past 12 months we have achieved so much and hopefully this is just the start of something really special."

The judging panel featured Olympic gold medallist Lady Mary Peters, Kenny Archer (Irish News), Neil Brittain (BBC Sport NI), Darren Fullerton (Daily Mirror), Jim Gracey (Belfast Telegraph Sports Editor) and chair Thomas Kane (BBC Sport NI).



Electric Ireland Girls' Challenge Cup last four line-up confirmed

The semi-finals of a new cup competition for girls' teams in Northern Ireland have been confirmed.

South Belfast sides Linfield Ladies and Rosario Ladies, Carnmoney Ladies from Newtownabbey and Portadown-based Ambassadors Girls have reached the last four of the inaugural Electric Ireland Girls' Challenge Cup.

The new U15/U16 competition - it was open to all women's/girls' clubs in membership of the Irish Football Association - builds on Electric Ireland's partnership with the association and its Game Changers NI campaign which aims to increase the opportunities for girls and women across Northern Ireland to be able to play and watch football.

The draw for the last four has pitted Linfield against Rosario, while Ambassadors Girls will meet Carnmoney Ladies.

Disney Playmakers programme gets girls on the ball

More than 1600 young girls across Northern Ireland have been introduced to football through the Playmakers programme from Uefa and Disney.

Using Disney's world famous storytelling and inspired by research showing the positive role of storytelling in helping children take up sport, Playmakers aims to increase the number of girls taking part in physical activity and to kickstart a lifelong love of football.

The Irish FA Foundation has been rolling out the programme to kids aged five to eight – primary one to primary four (Year 1 to Year 4) - across Northern Ireland since April.

Unlike traditional football programmes, each of Playmakers' 10 initial training sessions follow the narrative of billion-dollar global box office smash hits like Disney's Frozen II and Disney and Pixar's Incredibles 2.

Equipped with footballs, bibs and cones, trained coaches encourage participants to play the roles of popular characters, such as Elastigirl and Elsa and Anna, bringing the films' action scenes to life through movement, teamwork and their imagination.

The Irish FA Foundation now has 30 trained Disney coaches and is hoping to add to this number next year.

Women's U17 and U19 draw made

Northern Ireland have discovered who they will face next spring after the 2021-2022 UEFA Euro Women's Under 19 and U17 Championship qualifying round 2 draws were made.

The U19s have been drawn against Azerbaijan, Faroe Islands and Malta in Group 1. These games are set to be played in April 2022 and a host nation for the group is still to be confirmed.

The U17s, meanwhile, have been pitted against Luxembourg, Faroe Islands and hosts Israel - also in Group 1. The three matches are scheduled for March 2022.



UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2022 ENGLAND



Travel Solutions offers Women's Euro travel packages

Travel Solutions, the official Northern Ireland Supporters Travel Partner, is offering packages to Uefa Women's Euro 2022 in England.

Northern Ireland's senior women's team are set to take on Norway on 7 July, Austria on 11 July and England on 15 July in the group stages of the tournament, with all three matches being played at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton.

Belfast-based Travel Solutions has put together travel packages which cover return flights from Belfast City Airport to London Heathrow with Aer Lingus (one 10kg checked-in bag included), airport taxes and security charges, executive coach transfers to/from Southampton, one night's accommodation in the three-star St Giles Hotel at Heathrow and breakfast.

Prices start at £219 per person sharing (adults and children).

A £50 pp deposit is required at the time of booking. Match tickets are not included in the price.

Book online now by clicking here or call Travel Solutions on 028 90455030.



IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN IRELAND

UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2022

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IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
NORTHERN IRELAND

Women's Euro 2022 finals draw made



The finals draw for the Euro 2022 competition, which will be held in England, has been made.

Hosts England will open the tournament against Austria at Old Trafford and also meet Norway and Northern Ireland in Group A after the draw was made at Victoria Warehouse in Greater Manchester.

The draw was made by Camille Abily, Karen Carney, Rúben Dias, Juan Mata, Anja Mittag, Katrine Pedersen, Lotta Schelin and Kelly Smith.

Germany, whose 22-year reign as champions was ended in 2017, will start

their bid to regain the trophy against the team that beat them in that quarter-final, Denmark, in Group B, which also contains Spain and Finland.

The Draw

Group A
England (hosts)
Austria
Norway
Northern Ireland

- England and Austria will open the tournament at Old Trafford on 6 July.

- England knocked Norway out of the last two FIFA Women's World Cups, in the 2019 quarter-finals and 2015 round of 16.
- Norway are two-time champions and beat Northern Ireland twice in qualifying.
- Austria reached the semi-finals on debut in 2017.
- Northern Ireland are in their first women's final tournament, and five days ago lost 4-0 to England in a World Cup qualifier at Wembley; Austria are also in that group.

Group B

Germany

Denmark

Spain

Finland

- Denmark ended Germany's 22-year reign as champions with victory in the 2017 quarter-finals.
- Germany beat Spain 1-0 in the 2019 World Cup group stage.
- In the last finals in England, in 2005, Finland knocked Denmark out in the group stage to reach the semi-finals on debut but then lost to Germany.

Group C

Netherlands
(holders)

Sweden

Russia

Switzerland

- The Netherlands won the last tournament in 2017; Sweden won the first in 1984.
- The Netherlands beat Sweden in the 2017 quarter-finals.

- The holders defeated Russia twice in qualifying.
- The Netherlands beat Switzerland in a 2019 World Cup qualifying play-off
- Sweden beat Russia in the group stages of 1997, 2001, 2009 and 2017.

Group D

France

Italy

Belgium

Iceland

- France beat Iceland in the group stages of 2009 and 2017.
- France beat Italy 3-1 in the group stage of the last finals in England in 2005.
- Italy are two-time runners-up
- Belgium made their finals debut in 2017.
- Iceland are in their fourth straight finals.

Match Venues

Match venues

Brighton & Hove
(Brighton & Hove
Community Stadium)

London (Brentford
Community Stadium &
Wembley Stadium – final
only)

Manchester (Manchester
City Academy Stadium)

Milton Keynes (Stadium
MK)

Rotherham (New York
Stadium)

Sheffield (Bramall Lane)

Southampton (St Mary's
Stadium)

Trafford (Old Trafford –
opening game only)

Wigan & Leigh (Leigh
Sports Village)



Euro 2022 Fixtures



*All kick-off times CET,
local time is 1 hour behind*

Group stage

Wednesday 6 July

Group A: England v
Austria (21:00, Old
Trafford)

Thursday 7 July

Group A: Norway vs
Northern Ireland (21:00,
Southampton)

Friday 8 July

Group B: Spain vs Finland
(18:00, Milton Keynes)

Group B: Germany vs
Denmark (21:00,
Brentford)

Saturday 9 July

Group C: Russia vs
Switzerland (18:00, Wigan
& Leigh)

Group C: Netherlands vs
Sweden (21:00, Sheffield)

Sunday 10 July

Group D: Belgium vs
Iceland (18:00,
Manchester)

Group D: France vs Italy
(21:00, Rotherham)

Monday 11 July

Group A: Austria vs
Northern Ireland (18:00,
Southampton)

Group A: England v
Norway (21:00, Brighton
& Hove)

Tuesday 12 July

Group B: Denmark vs
Finland (18:00, Milton
Keynes)

Group B: Germany vs
Spain (21:00, Brentford)

Wednesday 13 July

Group C: Sweden vs
Switzerland (18:00,
Sheffield)

Group C: Netherlands v
Russia (21:00, Wigan &
Leigh)

Thursday 14 July

Group D: Italy vs Iceland
(18:00, Manchester)

Group D: France vs
Belgium (21:00,
Rotherham)

Friday 15 July

Group A: Northern Ireland
v England (21:00,
Southampton)

Group A: Austria vs
Norway (21:00, Brighton
& Hove)

Saturday 16 July

Group B: Finland vs
Germany (21:00, Milton
Keynes)

Group B: Denmark vs
Spain (21:00, Brentford)

Sunday 17 July

Group C: Switzerland vs
Netherlands (18:00,
Sheffield)

Group C: Sweden vs
Russia (18:00, Wigan &
Leigh)

Monday 18 July

Group D: Iceland vs
France (21:00,
Rotherham)

Group D: Italy vs Belgium
(21:00, Manchester)

Knockout phase

Quarter-finals:

Wednesday 20 July

QF1 – Winners Group A v
Runners-up Group B
(21:00, Brighton & Hove)

Thursday 21 July

QF2 – Winners Group B v
Runners-up Group A
(21:00, Brentford)

Friday 22 July

QF3 – Winners Group C v
Runners-up Group D
(21:00, Wigan & Leigh)

Saturday 23 July

QF4 – Winners Group D v
Runners-up Group C
(21:00, Rotherham)

Semi-finals:

Tuesday 26 July

SF1 – Winners QF1 v
Winners QF3 (21:00,
Sheffield)

Wednesday 27 July

SF2 – Winners QF2 v
Winners QF4 (21:00,
Milton Keynes)

Final:

Sunday 31 July

Winners SF1 v Winners
SF2 (18:00, Wembley)



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The LEGO Group, Pandora and Starling to partner UEFA Women's EURO England 2022



PANDORA

Today UEFA and The FA have announced three new national partners of the UEFA Women's EURO 2022, with the line up now including the LEGO Group, Pandora and Starling Bank. The tournament, which is due to be the biggest European women's sporting event in history, will be hosted in England next year.

The competition's partnership with the LEGO Group forms part of the company's ongoing commitment to champion girls who rebuild the world through creative problem solving and their 'Ready for Girls' campaign, celebrating girls who rebuild the story of old-fashioned gender norms.

The partnership with Pandora is aligned to their mission of giving a voice to people's loves and passions, highlighting the vital role team sport can play in equipping young people with

self-confidence and a sense of identity.

Starling Bank has been named the official national banking partner for the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 and as part of its involvement, the four-times winner of Britain's Best Bank, will showcase its commitment to health & wellbeing, empowerment and equality.

Guy-Laurent Epstein, Director of Marketing at UEFA, said "We are delighted to have the LEGO Group, Pandora and Starling Bank join us as the first national partners of UEFA Women's EURO 2022.

"The addition of these three major brands is further proof of the scale of this event and our ambition to make it the biggest women's European sport event ever. It is important for us to have partners on board who share the same values, working

together collectively to deliver what is set to be a record breaking tournament that further grows the women's game."

The tournament takes place from 6 July – 31 July 2022 in 10 stadiums, across nine cities in England, including Brighton & Hove, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Rotherham, Sheffield, Southampton, Trafford and Wigan & Leigh.

The Final Draw will be hosted live on BBC One from 16.30 BST on the 28 October. Fans tuning in can expect a star-studded show, hosted by Alex Scott and Gabby Logan live from Greater Manchester.

Fans will have their next chance to apply for tickets following the draw with the Public Ballot opening that evening at 19.00 BST here: www.uefa.com/womenseuro/ticketing.

Unprecedented demand for UEFA Women's EURO tickets ahead of ballot closing



With just over 24 hours to go until the UEFA Women's EURO England 2022 ticket ballot application window closes, the tournament has revealed that over 200,000 tickets have already been applied for through the first ever ballot application process held for the women's tournament.

The over 200,000 ticket applications, on top of the 162,000 tickets sold during pre-sale, have been applied for by a range of fans helping broaden the appeal of the sport even further. 47% of applicants are female and the average age range between 25 and 45.

The tournament is attracting fans from all over the world, with 15% of applicants international, coming from 114 different countries. Fans from each of the participating nations have been quick to

purchase tickets and whilst host nation England comes out on top as applicants' favourite nation, home nation Northern Ireland is currently listed as second, followed closely by the Netherlands and then Germany.

England games and the showpiece final are in huge demand with the final six times oversubscribed against the available quota. Currently 21 matches out of the 31 being played next summer will be requiring a ballot to determine ticket holders in at least one price category, with eight matches going to ballot across all price categories based on the number of tickets available at this phase, including all England fixtures.

Alex Scott, UEFA Women's EURO 2022 Board Member said: "There are loads of

sporting moments I wish I could've been at, such as Bolt's first gold in Beijing or Emma Raducanu winning the US Open. This could be one of those history-making moments and tournaments, so we need to make sure people don't miss out!

"I hope the knock-on effect of the tournament being so widely celebrated also has an effect on girls watching who want to be the next Lucy Bronze, Nikita Parris or even Pernille Harder - this is their chance to see these big stars in real life in a huge international tournament and know that they can actually be in their shoes one day."

Around the World



Match schedule confirmed for Fifa WWC 2023

FIFA has announced the much-anticipated, 64-match fixture match schedule for the ninth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, to be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand in 2023.

The opening match and opening ceremony for the first-ever co-hosted women's tournament will take place on 20 July 2023 at New Zealand's Eden Park in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau.

Stadium Australia in Sydney/Gadigal has been selected to host the final a month later on 20 August.

The tournament will be played in nine Host Cities at ten stadiums across Australia and New Zealand.

Group A's opening match at Eden Park will see New Zealand's Football Ferns take to the pitch, before Australia's Matildas enter the tournament in Group B at the Sydney Football Stadium.

The host countries will split the remaining group-stage fixtures, with New Zealand hosting five further matches in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, seven in Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara, six in Dunedin/Ōtepoti and five in Hamilton/Kirikiriroa.

Australia will host six group-stage fixtures at the Sydney Football Stadium, with Perth/Boorloo and Brisbane/Meeanjin both hosting five and a further four each taking place in Melbourne/Naarm and Adelaide/Tarntanya.

The round-of-16 matches will take place from 5-8 August, with Stadium Australia hosting its first match of the tournament.

A further five will take place in Australia and the remaining two matches will be played in New Zealand (Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau and Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara).

The quarter-finals are split between the two

hosts, with matches in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau, Brisbane/Meeanjin, Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara and Stadium Australia in Sydney/Gadigal.

Both Australia and New Zealand will also host one semi-final each at Stadium

Australia and Eden Park respectively, while the match for third place will take place at Brisbane Stadium, Australia.

Speaking about the announcement of the match schedule FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura said: "The ninth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, with 32 teams competing in 64 matches hosted by Australia and New Zealand, will be extremely special."

Australia's Minister for Sport Richard Colbeck said momentum was building as the countdown to the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 continues.

"The tournament will embody the nation's passion for women's football and provide Australians with the opportunity to watch, and be inspired by, the best footballers in the world," said Colbeck.



Nominees for The Best FIFA Football Awards™ 2021 revealed



- Shortlists for players', goalkeepers' and coaches' prizes announce
- Public voting via FIFA.com: votes can be cast until 10 December 2021
- The Best FIFA Football Awards™ 2021 show to take place on 17 January 2022

FIFA has revealed the candidates shortlisted for The Best FIFA Football Awards™ 2021, the winners of which will be revealed at an online ceremony on 17 January 2022.

Two expert panels – one for women's football and one for men's football – selected the candidates for each category.

The nominees are listed below in alphabetical order:

The Best FIFA Women's Player: *

- Stina Blackstenius (Sweden / BK Häcken)
- Aitana Bonmatí (Spain / FC Barcelona)#
- Lucy Bronze (England / Manchester City WFC)
- Magdalena Eriksson (Sweden / Chelsea FC Women)
- Caroline Graham Hansen (Norway / FC Barcelona)
- Pernille Harder (Denmark / Chelsea FC Women)
- Jennifer Hermoso (Spain / FC Barcelona)
-

- Ji Soyun (Korea Republic / Chelsea FC Women)
- Sam Kerr (Australia / Chelsea FC Women)
- Vivianne Miedema (Netherlands / Arsenal WFC)
- Alexia Putellas (Spain / FC Barcelona)
- Christine Sinclair (Canada / Portland Thorns FC)
- Ellen White (England / Manchester City WFC)

The Best FIFA Women's Coach:

- Lluís Cortés (Spain / FC Barcelona)
- Peter Gerhardsson (Sweden / Swedish national team)

- Emma Hayes (England / Chelsea FC Women)
- Beverly Priestman (England / Canadian national team)
- Sarina Wiegman (Netherlands / Dutch national team / English national team)

The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper:

- Ann-Katrin Berger (Germany / Chelsea FC Women)
- Christiane Endler (Chile / Paris Saint-Germain / Olympique Lyonnais)
- Stephanie Lynn Marie Labbé (Canada / FC Rosengård / Paris Saint-Germain)
- Hedvig Lindahl (Sweden / Atlético de Madrid Femenino)
- Alyssa Naeher (USA / Chicago Red Stars)

FIFA Puskas Award:

- Luis Diaz
- Gauthier Hein
- Erik Lamela
- Valentino Lazaro

- Riyad Mahrez
- Sandra Owusu-Ansah
- Vangelis Pavlidis
- Daniela Sanchez
- Patrik Schick
- Mehdi Taremi
- Caroline Weir

The FAN Award:

- Denmark and Finland fans—As the UEFA EURO 2020 crowd waited for news on Christian Eriksen's health, fans from both teams banded together in an emotional tribute. Finnish fans chanted "Christian!" and Danish supporters responded with "Eriksen".
- German football fans—After devastating floods killed over 170 people and left more than 150 missing, fans of clubs came together to raise aid in the form of money, food and other supplies.
- Imogen Papworth-Heidel—The 11-year-old organised a 7.1 million keepy-uppy challenge to raise money for the UK's key workers.

* These shortlists contain more candidates, in accordance with article 5 of the Rules of Allocation.

Note: the shortlist with the nominees for the FIFA Puskás Award (awarded for the best goal) will be announced at a later stage.

Voting open now!

Public voting is open on FIFA.com and will run until 23:59 CET on 10 December 2021.

FIFA will announce the three finalists in each of the seven categories listed above in early January 2022.

The full voting and award process is detailed in the Rules of Allocation.

To keep up with the latest news about The Best, check out FIFA.com and FIFA's accounts on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

You can join the discussion about who should win the awards by using the hashtag #TheBest.



The 23 most voted players for the 2021 FIFA FIFPRO Women's World 11



FIFPRO and FIFA proudly announce the 23 players who received the most votes for the 2021 FIFA FIFPRO Women's World 11, the only global player award organised by the players and for the players.

FIFPRO and FIFA asked professional footballers worldwide to vote for the World 11. We requested them to pick the three players who in their opinion were the most outstanding players during the 2020/2021 season in the following lines: goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders and forwards.

For the first time, FIFPRO is updating the announcement about the most-voted players, reducing the shortlist from 55 to 23. This has been done to resemble a real-life "squad" which, usually for international competitions, is the number of players involved.

The three goalkeepers, six defenders, six midfielders and six forwards with the most votes earned a place in the 23-women World 11 "squad". To complete this elite selection, the two remaining outfield players with the most votes were added.

The 23 players in the World 11 squad are: In alphabetical order:

Goalkeepers: Laura Benkarth (Germany/FC Bayern München) Ann-Katrin Berger (Germany/Chelsea FC Women) Christiane Endler (Chile/Paris Saint-Germain/Olympique Lyonnais)

Defenders: Millie Bright (England/Chelsea FC Women) Lucy Bronze (England/Manchester City WFC) Kadeisha Buchanan (Canada/Olympique Lyonnais) Ellie Carpenter (Australia/Olympique Lyonnais) Magdalena Eriksson (Sweden/Chelsea FC Women) Irene Paredes (Spain/FC Barcelona) Wendie Renard (France/Olympique Lyonnais)

Midfielders: Estefania Banini (Argentina/Levante UD/Atlético de Madrid Femenino) Barbara Bonansea (Italy/Juventus FC Women) Aitana Bonmati (Spain/FC Barcelona) Delphine Cascarino (France/Olympique Lyonnais) Carli Lloyd (USA/NJ/NY Gotham FC) Alexia Putellas (Spain/FC Barcelona)

Forwards: Pernille Harder (Denmark/Chelsea FC Women) Samantha Kerr (Australia/Chelsea FC Women) Marta (Brazil/Orlando Pride) Vivianne Miedema (Netherlands/Arsenal WFC) Alex Morgan (USA/Tottenham Hotspur FC Women/Orlando Pride, San Diego Wave) Gabrielle Onguene (Cameroon/CSKA) Megan Rapinoe (USA/OL Reign)

New chapter in history of African women's football written



A FIFA delegation, led by Secretary General Fatma Samoura and including Chief Women's Football Officer Sarai Bareman, attended the CAF Women's Champions League match for third place, which saw Morocco's ASFAR beat Equatorial Guinea's Malabo Kings FC 3-1, before the eagerly awaited final between South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns Ladies and Ghana's Hasaacas Ladies. The South African side clinched the crown with a 2-0 victory.

The tournament saw a total of 33 teams from Africa's six zonal regions battle it out to secure their place among the final eight teams who went head to head in Egypt in a bid to secure the CAF Women's Champions League trophy.

Speaking about the tournament, FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura said: "I'm thrilled to have seen the best of African women's club football display their outstanding talent and skill during this competition. This tournament is historic and provides a fantastic platform to show young girls around Africa that women's football is growing and they too can be part of it. I'm proud of the performances of all of the teams involved and they should have a tremendous feeling of accomplishment having reached this prestigious competition."

FIFA's Chief Women's Football Officer Sarai Bareman added: "The successful planning and hosting of the CAF Women's Champions League was an important milestone for the female game in Africa. It provided clubs the chance to showcase their talent and what we have seen has been extremely impressive. This important competition will play a vital role in the professionalisation of women's football in Africa as we will start to see clubs and leagues strengthen their structures, driven by a top level competition".

The final of the inaugural CAF Women's Champions League was also attended by CAF President Patrice Motsepe, Egyptian Minister of Youth and Sport Professor Dr. Ashraf Sobhy, CAF Secretary General Veron Mosengo Omba and CAF Vice President's Souleiman Hassan Waberi and Kanizat Ibrahim.

During her working visit in Cairo, the FIFA Secretary General attended fruitful meetings with the CAF Secretary General and the Egyptian Minister of Youth and Sport. Central to discussions was the Egyptian Football Association's upcoming elective congress and the possibility for future collaboration between Egypt, CAF and FIFA to nourish and develop football.

FIFA launches new commercial partnership structure including dedicated programs for women's football and esports



For the first time since 2013, FIFA is introducing a new commercial partnership structure that will provide companies around the world with more tailored opportunities to partner with the sport of football, leverage the FIFA brand and support its competitions.

Three distinct partnership verticals are being launched this week with a range of packages available across Women's football, Men's Football and esports/gaming.

Kay Madati, FIFA's Chief Commercial Officer, said: "As we continually work to make football truly global, accessible and inclusive, we recognised the need for a nimble and customisable commercial structure that enables brands big and small, global and local, to connect with all aspects of the beautiful game.

"The new model will allow our partners to create more tailored programming

and marketing activations that align directly with their strategic business goals, and connect them to the world's most passionate fans, in the world's most engaging sport."

First dedicated commercial program for Women's football launched to accelerate growth and equality of the women's game

Building on FIFA's Women's Football strategy unveiled in 2018, the launch of a dedicated women's football commercial vertical marks another step in FIFA's commitment to make football more equitable and accessible for women and girls. Partners in this new vertical will be able to directly impact and support the growth and development of the women's game.

Sarai Bareman, FIFA's Chief Women's Football Officer commented, "This marks a ground-breaking moment to maximize the growth of the women's

game and its marketing appeal, as we create equal commercial models across Women's and Men's Football for the first time. We're excited about the opportunities for brands who want to support women's sport, help accelerate women's equality, and wish to align themselves with the unparalleled momentum around women's football."

An exciting new era in football gaming and esports with FIFAE Vertical

As FIFA continues to broaden its esports and gaming footprint, a dedicated partnerships structure will provide exciting opportunities to participate in the fastest growing media vertical on the planet. FIFAE - the recently launched umbrella brand for all of FIFA's future esports and gaming initiatives - grants access to the interactive and immersive entertainment world of new generations, cultures, tournaments, and merchandising licensing opportunities.

FIFA's New Commercial Structure At-A-Glance

A flexible partnership model will exist across the new distinct verticals for Women's Football, Men's Football, and esports/gaming.

- World Cup Partners/Women's Football Partners/FIFAE Partners will receive extensive global commercial rights across all national team tournaments within their respective vertical, or a premium position across all esports competitions for the FIFAE vertical
- Sponsors will receive global activation rights surrounding the

FIFA Women's World Cup, the FIFA World Cup and/or across all FIFAE competitions

- Tournament Supporters will be able to select territorial activation rights for either the FIFA Women's World Cup, the FIFA World Cup or the FIFAE competitions. A more flexible Tournament Supporters program is now available for women's and men's development tournaments such as the FIFA U-20 and U-17 World Cups
- FIFA Partners continue to hold the highest level of association with global partner status and category exclusivity across their respective FIFA properties and competitions
- FIFA's new commercial approach will enable brands to benefit from new opportunities to associate with FIFA's brand to build and accelerate new business opportunities as well as create community and purpose-driven programs.

For more information on FIFA's new commercial structure, please email media@fifa.org. For commercial related enquiries, email sales@fifa.org.

Influential Women in Sports: The Sports Stars to Look Out For in 2022



Women's sports are more popular than ever. The number of people watching women's sports has risen in the past year, with 51.1 million people estimated to watch female-led sports in 2021.

The interest in women's sports could encourage equal treatment of female athletes, from their media coverage to the appreciation of their talent.

This article will look at the five most influential women in sports. To do this, we've created an index based on the online presence of five sports stars, taking into account their average number of monthly searches and number of followers on social media. Here are the sports stars look out for in 2022.

Serena Williams

Instagram followers:
13,700,000

Average monthly searches:
135,000

First on our list of influential women in sports is Serena Williams. An American tennis star, Serena is extremely recognisable in her tennis outfits and women's trainers. Williams is renowned in many ways, and considering she holds more Grand Slam titles (23) than any female tennis player, we can see why. Competing against her older sister Venus, Serena won her 23rd Grand Slam title during the 2017 Australian Open. Even more astonishing – Williams won the championship whilst being in the early stages of pregnancy!

2021 has been an exciting year for Serena. As well as attending Met Galas and designing her own clothing label, Williams' life has made its way into Hollywood. King Richard, a biopic film released in 2021, is inspired by Serena's childhood

years as a budding tennis star. Unfortunately, Serena had to withdraw from the 2021 US Open due to an injured hamstring, but we're sure she'll be back on the court soon enough.

After being in the spotlight for over 20 years, Serena Williams continues to be one of the most influential women in sports. She is definitely a star to continue watching in 2022.

Emma Raducanu

Instagram followers:
2,100,000

Average monthly searches:
823,000

In contrast to the stalwart Serena Williams, Emma Raducanu has experienced a meteoric rise to fame in 2021. A British tennis player, Raducanu became a household name after winning the US Open in 2021. The tennis star exceeded all expectations and

became the first qualifier to reach a Grand Slam finale. Emma won nine consecutive matches and is now ranked as England's No.1 tennis player. As well as this, Raducanu is the first British woman to win the tournament in 44 years – all while being 18 years of age!

Raducanu has quickly become a popular public figure in sport and beyond. She attended the 2021 Met Gala, an extremely prestigious event that boasts an impressive celebrity line up, wearing Chanel and sporting Tiffany & Co. diamond earrings. As of October 2021, Emma became the British ambassador for Dior's womenswear collection and skincare range. With such esteemed sporting awards and elite social presence, Raducanu's next step is sure to be a success!

Alex Morgan

Instagram followers:
9,400,000

Average monthly searches:
49,500

Next on our list of influential women in sports is US women's football player Alex Morgan. The football star, who plays for Orlando Pride, is a two-time World Cup champion and has scored 115 goals during her career. As well as this, Morgan has a gold medal from the London Olympics in 2012. With successes in both American soccer and English football, it's no wonder Morgan has such a big following on social media!

The past few years have been a success for Morgan. As well as returning to America to play for Orlando Pride, she won a bronze medal at the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2021. She is consistently attaining fantastic achievements to go alongside her previous accomplishments. Despite being in the later stages of her career, Alex Morgan continues to inspire the next generation of female footballers.

Simone Biles

Instagram followers:
6,900,000

Average monthly searches:
135,000

Simone Biles, a 24-year-old American artistic gymnast, rose to fame at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. During the tournament, Biles became the first US female gymnast to win four gold medals in one tournament. Simone continues to deliver high-quality performances in 2021. At the US Classic, Biles became the first woman to successfully land the Yurchenko double pike. Similarly impressive, at the US Nationals, she won three gold and one bronze medal!

After her many breathtaking achievements, she decided to withdraw from the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games to focus on her mental health. This sparked a worldwide conversation around young women and their mental wellbeing. As a result, Biles has become an advocate

for mental health and a shining example for young girls both within and outside of sports.

Sania Mirza

Instagram followers:
8,100,000

Average monthly searches:
5,400

Last on our list is Sania Mirza, an Indian tennis player who became the first Indian woman to win a singles title in the 2005 WTA Tour. Mirza's success has continued throughout her career. She became the first Indian woman to win a doubles title as the 2015 Wimbledon Grand Slam and went on to become the first Indian woman to be No.1 in doubles or singles tennis.

In 2021, Sania made it to the 2nd round at Wimbledon and the 1st round at the US Open! Considering these astonishing accomplishments, it's no wonder Mirza continues to be an inspiration to young women across the world, especially for budding Indian tennis players.

Female athletes are at the forefront of public discussion. From established and renowned sportswomen to upcoming and budding athletes, women in sports are more influential than ever before. By combining their follower and searches score, we believe these are the five sports stars to watch in 2022. Will you be tuning in for their next sporting event?

This article is written on behalf of Dune London.



News from around the world

Yallop reaches 100 Australia caps

Tameka Yallop made her 100th appearance for Australia against the United States of America in Sydney.

The Matildas were defeated in front of a record crowd – 36,109 people turned out to watch the match and smashed the attendance record for a standalone Matildas match in Australia that was set way back in 2000.

Yallop captained the Australians but couldn't lead the team to victory after goals from Ashley Latch, Rose Lavelle and a penalty from Lindsey Horan secured a 3-0 win for the USA.

Swedish FA agree to equal pay

The Swedish FA have agreed to equal pay for both men and women footballers.

No more information has been released yet but it is another great step in the women's game.

USSF to no longer pay USWNT club salaries

The United States Soccer Federation issued a statement today announcing the end of the NWSL Federation Player program, where the federation agreed to pay the NWSL salaries of US Women's National Team players.

The U.S. Soccer Federation and the U.S. Women's National Team have reached a deal to end the current allocation system and to extend the no-strike/no-lockout agreement under our current collective bargaining agreement through at least March 31, 2022. While we hope and believe that CBA negotiations will be completed much sooner than March 31, 2022, we wanted to ensure we had sufficient time to reach an agreement. Under today's agreement, U.S. Soccer will no longer pay the salaries of any USWNT players to play professionally in the NWSL, which had been the case since the beginning of the league. Today's agreement demonstrates that U.S. Soccer and the USWNT can and will continue to work together for the good of the game.

Part of the announcement was an agreement to extend the current collective bargaining agreement (CBA) through the end of March next year as the player's union and the federation continue negotiations. This applies ONLY to payments for the players while they played with the NWSL. From now on, the league will pay those players while the federation will pay the players for their national team play, as to be determined by the current contract negotiations. The player's union itself issued a statement:

The decision to stop paying club salaries is a big deal for all parties involved. The original decision to pay WNT players' club salaries was motivated by a desire to prop-up the NWSL when it was first formed in 2012. However, it no longer fits the needs of the league, the players, or the federation.



News from around the world

Fifa evacuates 100 refugees

At least 20 women footballers are among 100 refugees evacuated by Fifa from Afghanistan.

The group of mainly women and girls, including some who play for the national team, left Kabul on Thursday on a flight bound for Doha, according to the Independent.

Dunn announces pregnancy

US star Crystal Dunn has announced she is expecting a baby in May 2022.

Taking to Twitter she wrote: “The biggest blessing of them all: we are so excited and happy to be adding a new member to our family in 2022.”

Congratulations!

Formiga announces her retirement

Brazil legend Formiga has announced her retirement from international football.

She has played in seven World Cups and seven Olympic tournaments and holds the world records for both.

When she was born, women playing football in Brazil was illegal.

One of the greatest players, congratulations on a stunning career.

Hamraoui to return to training

Kheira Hamraoui is set to return to training with the Paris Saint-Germain women’s team a month after she was dragged from a car and beaten on the legs with an iron bar.

Her team-mate Aminata Diallo, who witnessed the attack and was detained for 35 hours by police before being released without charge, is also due to return to full training this week.

Hamraoui, 31, has not played a match since October 31 and has been recovering after the attack by masked men on November 4 that left her legs cut and bruised. The police investigation is still ongoing.

Diallo, 26, who was driving them home from a team meal, was arrested on suspicion of organising the assault. They play in the same midfield position and are direct rivals for a starting place.

A reconciliation meeting between the two players was held by PSG last week in which they agreed they would play together again, paving the way for this week's return to team training.

Fifa Ballon d'Or 2021 finalists:

The nominees



The nominees for the Women's Ballon d'Or 2021 have been announced.

The winners are set to be announced in December.

Last year, the award was cancelled for the first time in its history, owing to the pandemic but the Ballon d'Or is returning for 2021 and taking the previous 12 months of football into account.

France Football have decided upon the 30-woman shortlist for the prize; after which, a selection of international journalists, national team coaches and captains will

be asked to pick their top five players from the 30.

Women's Ballon d'Or 2021 award nominees

Kadidiatou Diani (PSG)

Fran Kirby (Chelsea)

Jennifer Hermoso (Barcelona)

Christiane Endler (Lyon)

Christine Sinclair (Thorns FC)

Ashley Lawrence (PSG)

Irene Paredes (PSG, Barcelona)

Jessie Fleming (Chelsea)

Lieke Martens (Barcelona)

Sandra Panos (Barcelona)

Viviane Miedema (Arsenal)

Ellen White (Manchester City)

Pernille Harder (Chelsea)

Samantha Mewis (North Carolina Courage)

Wendie Renard (Lyon)

Marie-Antoinette Kattou (PSG)

Stina Blackstenius (Häcken)

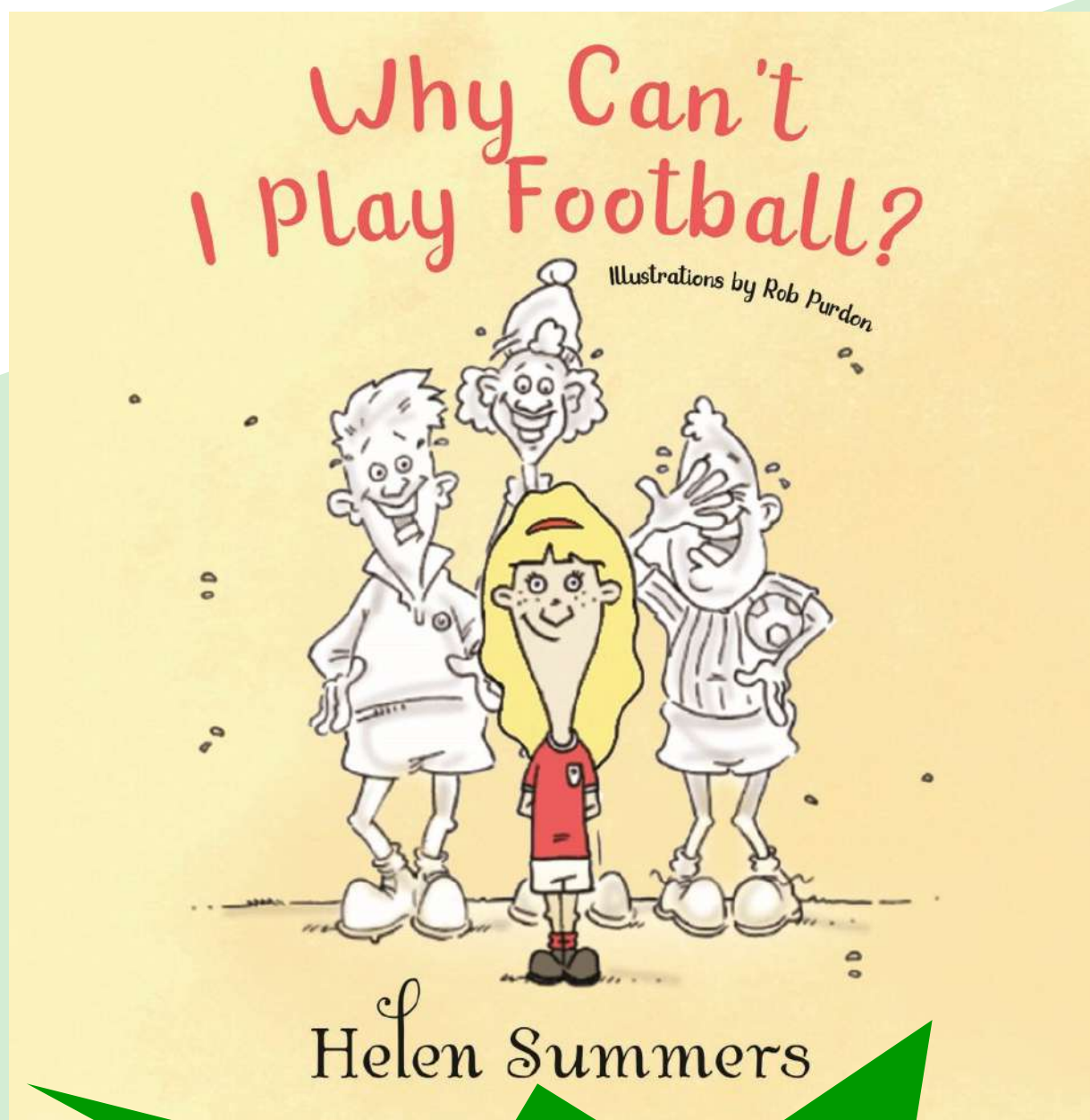
Magdalena Eriksson (Chelsea)

Sam Kerr (Chelsea)

Alexia Putellas (Barcelona)



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