

THE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

ISSUE 6

MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2017



KAREN BARDSLEY

- France vs England analysis

- Interview with Scotland's Shelly Kerr

- City goalkeeper discusses mental health during injury rehabilitation

Welcome

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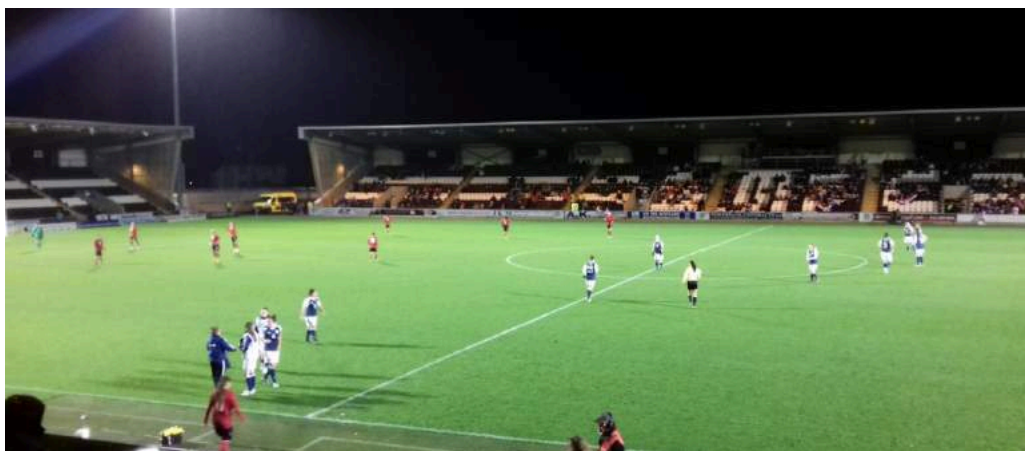
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Welcome

Welcome to the seventh issue of The Women's Football Magazine.

We have been enjoying the vast amount of football which has been gracing our country this month.

We would like to wish Ellen White a speedy recovery. Birmingham City Ladies boss Mark Skinner have confirmed that the striker will be out until the New Year.

There have been vast improvements made in women's football but there is still a long way to go. After getting accredited for the FIFA awards this month, prominent women's football writer Kieran Theivam was told he did not have access to the ceremony. It is really disappointing to hear stories like this are still around and it is about time that women's football and those associated in it are treated with the same respect that those in the men's game are.

We were also really pleased to hear that SSE have offered Andrew from this year's Apprentice a ticket to the Women's FA Cup final next year after his rather interesting comments during the show!

Helen Rowe-Willcocks
Editor





About My Month

Each month I get to writing this part and I wonder if I will have enough to talk about but somehow I manage to find enough!

I was really excited to get to my first Continental Cup game of the season. We got down to St. Pauls Ground to watch Millwall Lionesses vs Arsenal Women. It was a fantastic game and Millwall, who have started their WSL2 season really brightly, gave the former WSL1 champions a real run for their money.

It was also great to be able to watch Ella, sponsored by the magazine, in action. Such a fantastic goal too!

There have been some really great

goals in the competition including a stunner from Fara Williams.

Our twitter page is really starting to take off and there is lots of new content on there every day which is great news for us. Also keep an eye out for live game coverage, twitter polls and sneak peeks for each issue.

We are growing as a community each month and it is so great. Thank you so much to everyone joining us on this journey!

We are always looking for people to join us so please get in touch! n touch!

Enjoy the issue!
Helen x



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Karen Bardsley: Between the sticks

@helenrw11



The Man City Women's goalie discusses mental health, injury and her aims for the season

Karen Bardsley has for a long time been a player who everybody knows, respects and looks-up to but with a career which has been dogged by tough injuries the 33-year-old has struggled to mentally keep herself going.

With each injury came another setback and during the 2017 European Championships in the Netherlands this summer Bardsley was substituted after breaking her leg in the win over France – the third time she has suffered the same injury.

Through her recovery the Manchester City Women's goalie admits that there were times where she really struggled but this time she was wise enough to discuss it.

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 speaking like this” and they could find out who I needed to speak to. I did have the right people to speak to about. There were some coaches, some teammates, some sports psychology people who I could trust and rely on. They were very important to keep me focused on the right things – the things which would be beneficial to me instead of catastrophising things and worrying about things which were not



things which were not in my control."

Bardsley, who has been at Manchester City since 2014, has broken bones in her leg twice before – once in 1999 and once in 2003.

Even though they were hard at the time, she believes she has learnt a lot about herself throughout her time on the sidelines.

She said: "They were massive blows to me and I had to go through those situations to discover what my resilience not just as a player but look at who I wanted to be in the future. I did not want those things to define me. It meant so much to me to be involved in the Euros and I was looking forward to going as far as we could and we aimed to lift the trophy. I felt like I was playing well and I wanted to transfer this into the season with Man City but unfortunately you cannot control things and freaky things happen – they seem to happen to me a lot!"

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

"I tried to make sure that I was honest with my feelings and emotions. I knew I needed to rely on people for support and that is not something I would have admitted when I was younger. My support really helped me through, keep my motivation going – which I found hard at times – so when I spoke to the right people, they made me focus on things which I could control and it was imperative for me to keep my perspectives and perception of reality on track. 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."

Manchester City Women have had a fantastic start to the season.

They are top of the WSL1 table, performing well in the Champions League and have their eye set firmly on winning at least two trophies so far this season.

Bardsley returned to the squad for the first time this season in the 2-1 Continental Cup win over Everton and she was delighted to be back but admitted it was frustrating watching from the stands.

"It was so exciting to be back," she said. "I was trying to keep the excitement in, I did not want it to take over what I needed to do. It was great, I was so happy to be back on the pitch. It felt like a relief and the ups and downs were worth it. It was a really



really big moment for me, I was just so happy to be back out there. It felt great."

"I think there is a definite belief [that this could be an outstanding season for us]. We have had some great performances already this year. One which stands out was the Arsenal performance. That massively stands out. In terms of our potential, it shows that we have a lot of grit and a lot of resilience and that is something which has not necessarily been tested in quite a while so it is quite nice to see that side of us."

She added: "Also in the pre-season we played really well against Lyon and we had a great result against them. It was a wake-up call to a lot of clubs in Europe. I do not think we have reached

our full potential yet – I do not believe we have had a full game where everyone can say it was the best of the best. We want to keep raising the bar. The club is ambitious, we as individuals are ambitious."

On November 6 the FA launched its Higher and Further Education focussed participation initiative – FA Girls' Football Week.

The event saw over 80,000 participants in 2016 and was launched at Manchester Metropolitan University with the help of England Women's players Karen Bardsley (Manchester City) and Amy Turner (Liverpool), who took part in a number of FA Girls' Football Week sessions with students.

Speaking about the initiative,



Bardsley said: "It has been a lot of fun, the kids are all really excited, they have lots of energy and the students were out training. There have been lots of great questions asked, we have had some really fantastic interaction so far which has been a really nice start.

"I think it is great to create and continue because we obviously need to show that participation keeps growing within women's football. We are creating the future generation and now the opportunities are there for these girls to see football as a career path rather than just a hobby so I think it is important that they can see that if they want to be they can be a footballer. We should be able to incorporate playing and studying at the same time. It is a key age where we lose talent because at the moment it is seen as one or the other. There are not many who chose to do both."

:: The FA Girls' Football Week runs from Monday 6 to Sunday 12 November and gives students the opportunity to stay active in a fun and sociable way through football. Find a session near you at FAGirlsFootballWeek.com and share your experience using #JoinOurSquad to win exclusive prizes.



Has the future of
women's football
changed?



2017 started with such promise for the women's game in the United Kingdom. Radical new changes ensured a move to a winter league which would provide a much healthier schedule and supporters had a quick Spring Series to look forward to before England's summer assault on the European Championships got underway in July.

Since then it has spiralled out of control, one painful fall down the steps after another. Sunderland, a club responsible for the development of England internationals such as Steph Houghton, Lucy Bronze, Jill Scott and Jordan Nobbs, announced they were reverting to a part-time model, affecting the lives and careers of many of their players and staff.

Then, almost unthinkable, 2015 FA Cup and Continental Cup finalists Notts County announced they would cease to exist a mere 48 hours before they were set to open their Spring Series campaign against Arsenal.

Financial pressure had done for both, and FA WSL 2 side Watford almost followed and were only saved at the eleventh hour after forfeiting their FA Cup tie against Doncaster Belles. So, all eyes on England to maintain some sanity in an insane world...

A positive tournament ended in a 3-0 defeat to the Netherlands, but that was just the tip of the iceberg. Allegations against head coach Mark Sampson eventually saw the 35-year-old sacked last month, shortly after the FA had announced yet more radical changes to the women's game.

As if Sampson's early squad announcement hadn't deemed the Spring Series utterly irrelevant, the new batch of changes has now ensured a whole season of women's football means nothing, unless you finish in the top two places of FA WSL 1.

The announcement that FA WSL 1 will become a fully professional league from the 2018/19 campaign onwards and that FA WSL 2 will become a part-time/semi-professional league has predictably been met with a mixture of confusion, anger, frustration and disappointment from clubs, players, staff and fans alike.

It has instantly robbed us of a superb battle for supremacy in FA WSL 2 and ensured whoever finishes top is totally irrelevant, the eventual champions knowing a team who finishes seven or eight places below them could bounce above them based on finances and structure off the field.

Whilst every 6-0 win for Chelsea or Manchester City only strengthens the FA's case, it appears lessons haven't been learned despite a backlash when



Doncaster Belles were demoted in 2014 to make way for Nick Cushing's all-conquering City side.

City have done a lot of good for the women's game, but pushing an honest and historical club out of the way left a bitter taste in the mouths of many that still remains to this day. Hearty underdogs Yeovil, FA WSL 2 champions last year, could have almost packed their bags as soon as they'd arrived in the top tier, with the club now having to crowdfund in the hope of hitting the £350,000 target that will go a long way to gaining a licence for next season's top tier.

Pleas from a new group – FA WSL Fans Utd, set up by Chelsea Ladies founder Tony Farmer – also appear to have fallen on deaf ears. The group

sent an open letter to Katie Brazier [The FA's Head of Women's Leagues and Competitions], outlining 19 key questions for her to answer, and Brazier responded with no hint the FA were ready to backtrack on their extravagant changes for next season.

Yet so many questions still remain. Current FA WSL clubs must submit their bids for a licence by the end of this month, and if any of the 14 available top tier spots aren't taken, FA Women's Premier League clubs may bid to take any vacant spots come March 2018.

Sadly, Watford Ladies have already confirmed they won't be submitting a bid for an FA WSL licence and will return to the FA WPL, whilst Sunderland announced they will wait



until March in order to make a joint bid for Tier 1.

Not ideal, but at least a move that could see their current players return to full-time status for 2018/19.

With eight of the ten current FA WSL 1 clubs confident of maintaining their position in the women's football pyramid, it would leave six spots available, two of which many expect to go to current FA WSL 2 clubs Tottenham and Brighton.

That would leave four remaining spots, with West Ham United already boasting about plans to be in the UEFA Women's Champions League within two years and a top six club worldwide within three, it appears the Hammers will be welcomed with open arms.

But what if somehow the 20 current clubs do manage to fill the 14 spots between them?

It's unlikely, verging on impossible, but would the FA really dare turnaround to West Ham and tell them there's no room at the inn? In her response to Farmer's open letter, Braizer was non-committal when asked if a team would be pushed aside to allow a West Ham to take a spot. And what of Manchester United? Rumours within the women's game suggest the club have set aside money for a possible entrance into the FA WSL next season, could the FA really stop themselves booting out a less fashionable name for one of the biggest clubs in world football?

Whilst West Ham's plans are fantastic and Manchester City-esque on the surface, what of the careers of their current players and staff? All due respect, but the current team aren't



going to meet the bold claims set out by the club, is there any second thought given to the players who will likely have to find new clubs elsewhere from next season onwards?

You need only look at Cushing's side to see the impact it can have, only defender Abbie McManus remains from the club parachuted up several tiers into FA WSL 1 back in 2014. Most new supporters of the league, or perhaps even just the club itself, will struggle to recall names such as Danni Lea, Steph Marsh, Lynda Shepherd or Chelsea Nightingale.

Others have made solid careers for themselves back in the FA WPL, whilst Emma Lipman now resides in Italy and Georgia Brougham is a regular for FA WSL 1 side Everton. But such a

@RichJLavery





move can only have a detrimental effect on a player's mindset and their confidence.

Even if Jamie Sherwood's Yeovil do rustle together the money needed, what happens when the fee is hiked again the year after, and the year after that? There's a train of thought that even if the money is handed over that the Glovers may not get a spot anyway, a similar situation to when the FA were reluctant to allow the Belles to take their place in 2016 after earning promotion back from FA WSL 2.

How closely will the FA look at attendances? A big part of any FA plan has been attracting new fans to the game, yet how any new supporter could come in and understand what's going on when the league changes every year is a question for another day.

Whilst the move to a winter schedule has undoubtedly beefed up the schedule and given supporters

the regular games they want, it's also had a negative impact in how many go to watch the games.

With more TV coverage and games being streamed across Facebook and the BBC, it's now all too easy for people to sit at home in front of the warm fire than tackle the delights of Widnes or Borehamwood on a cold, miserable Thursday night.

Some clubs are so aware of dwindling figures that they're not even announcing the numbers anymore. Clubs like Liverpool, two-time FA WSL champions, regularly fall below the threshold for the targets set out by the FA, but how much pressure will they put on a club who given a lot to the women's game. Perhaps more pressure on where they play their games would be a start...

Then there's the FA WPL itself, another knock-on effect of the changes which continue to ripple much further down the pyramid. Should West Ham or any other FA WPL club take a place in the new FA WSL next season, who takes their spot? How many teams must be demoted or promoted to make it work, the FA are playing one big game of snakes and ladders and it appears fans are already fed up.

Loyal supporters make the women's game in England what it is. If 75,000 didn't turn up to Old Trafford for a Premier League match, another 75,000 would flock into Manchester to take their seats. But if the few hundred who go to Millwall, or Watford, or Sheffield or wherever didn't turn up, the players would simply be playing in front of empty stadiums. Some of those players were quick to publicly air their frustrations on social media, but



has anyone taken note? Frustration and disappointment is already rife among fans due to the FA's handling of the Mark Sampson/Eni Aluko saga, and this latest move is already alienating and upsetting supporters who give up plenty of time for a league which appears to be giving little back. The Premier League caved years ago to the demands of money and glamour and there's no going back to a day where fans came first, let's hope some sense is seen in the women's game before it's too late for it aswell...



FAWSL FOCUS

@DanPentlandpcuk



In each edition of The Women's Football Magazine we look at one of the club's playing in the FA Women's Super League.

For this month's issue, reporter Dan Pentland went along to St. Andrews to watch Birmingham City Ladies in action against Doncaster Rovers Belles in the Continental Tyres Cup.

In 2016, Birmingham City Ladies went all the way to the Continental Tyres Cup Final where they pushed FA Women's Super League 1 title winners Manchester City Women to the limit before Lucy Bronze's extra-time winner won the trophy for big spending City in front of over 4,000 fans at The Academy Stadium.

In this season's tournament, the Blues went into their third match of the competition against second tier club Doncaster Rovers Belles on the back

of one win and one defeat against Oxford United Women and Everton Ladies respectively. The fixture against the Belles was staged at the club's true home of St Andrews with their usual Damson Park venue out of use.

The first half took time to warm up with the visitors set up to prevent Birmingham City from playing their passing game. Young striker Charlie Wellings saw an effort blocked by some last-ditch defending following a poor clearance from Belles keeper Jules Draycott while a Paige Williams 40-yard free-kick almost found its way into the net before being pushed to safety by the visiting keeper.

Blues captain Emily Westwood then



saw an effort scrambled off the line when she popped up unmarked from a corner kick before the Belles took a shock lead when Christine Murray latched onto Kirsty Hanson's header across the box to thrash the ball into the net from six yards.

On the stroke of half time, the home side levelled when Wellings found space in the box following a long ball upfield and the player crossed for Freda Ayisi to tap the ball beyond Draycott.

The second half saw Ayisi fire an effort just wide from 18 yards out before Birmingham City took the lead when Andrine Hegerberg played in Wellings who drove the ball across goal into the far corner of the net.



Draycott then made two excellent saves from both Wellings and Ayisi before substitute Rachel Williams extended Marc Skinner's side's lead after connecting with a corner kick, despite the Belles' defenders' best efforts to prevent the ball from crossing the line.

The visitors immediately brought the scores back to 3-2 courtesy of a stunning 20-yard dipping half volley from Hanson but the Belles could not stop Birmingham City from racking up their second victory of the competition.

Speaking to The Women's Football Magazine after the match, Blues boss Skinner admitted that it has been an uncomfortable afternoon for his side.

"It wasn't easy" said Skinner. "I thought Doncaster came with a game plan and despite being down to the bare bones with injuries, they did very well.

"We aren't happy with the performance, we have to start taking our chances. We scored three but I am still saying that.

"Sometimes we have to win ugly and that's what we didn't do against Everton."

Skinner refrained from replacing Hegerberg with Rachel Williams just before the hour and the Norwegian midfielder went on to create the first goal before Williams netted herself when coming on later in the match but the Blues boss was not taking credit for the timing of his substitutions.

"I wanted to give Andrine (Hegerberg) a few minutes longer as she's been off a week with illness so I wanted to make sure she got her amount of minutes.

"We knew Rachel (Williams) could do that and I wanted to give my squad a game just to see where they are at."

Skinner feels that there is much to be positive about at Birmingham City and hopes to bring cup success to the club this season.

"Every game is important to us" stressed the Blues boss.

"Unfortunately, we didn't pick up the three points against Everton so we have to go to Manchester City and win the game.

"We've made it hard for ourselves but I'd love to win the Continental Tyres Cup, the FA Women's Cup and the league but it's difficult to win all three at the minute."

Singing the Blues

Birmingham City Ladies boss Marc Skinner pays tribute the club's board for their ambition and support for the club

Birmingham City Ladies manager Marc Skinner has heaped praise upon the club's board as the Blues plan for a successful future in the FA Women's Super League 1.

The club reached the Continental Tyres Cup Final in 2016 while they were FA Women's Cup runners-up at Wembley in May. Birmingham City also finished a respectable fourth in the FA Women's Super League 1 in 2016.

Speaking to The Women's Football Magazine following the club's 3-2 Continental Cup victory over Doncaster Rovers Belles, Blues boss Skinner said that he feels that he has huge support from the board going forward.

"The board have been exceptional" Skinner admitted. "I've got a meeting with the CEO after this game to talk about players.

"For me, I am really happy with the level of support which the club has given us."

Birmingham City's narrow victory over second tier club Doncaster Rovers Belles in the Continental Tyres Cup was played at St Andrews, the spiritual home of the men's club. The fixture saw the ladies' side play a competitive fixture at the venue for just the fourth time in their history but the Blues boss is keen to grow the link between men's and women's football at Birmingham City Football Club.

Skinner added "We would love to play here (permanently). Who knows, that could be something that we can do in the future.

“We want to play here, this is Birmingham City’s home. This surface (at St Andrews) allows you to play the type of football that we want to play. Solihull Moors is usually a good surface too and they have been great tenants for us. We will be happy to stay at Solihull Moors if we have to but we would love to come here.”

A crowd of 682 watched the Continental Tyres Cup fixture. In truth, that attendance was no bigger than the crowds which are regularly recorded at Solihull Moors’ Damson Park ground however with the FA Women’s Super League 1 set to become more competitive both on and off the pitch in 2018/2019, the growth and visibility of the Birmingham City Ladies brand is more important than ever before.

The 2018/2019 campaign is expected to be very tough for the Blues with an all full-time club league on the horizon for the first time. The competition’s restructure is likely to see more money ploughed into the women’s game from a greater number of club’s meaning that Birmingham City may need to increase their own investment and recruit a higher standard of player over the close season to remain competitive.

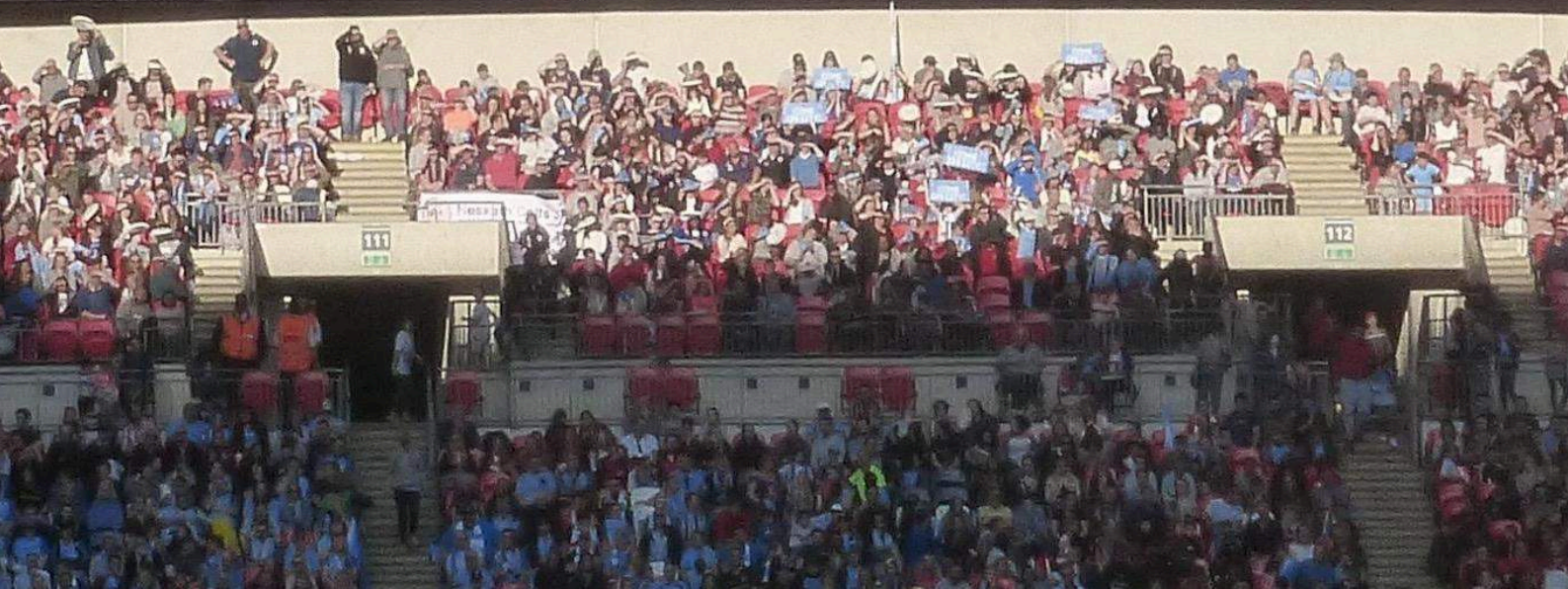
The use of St Andrews to stage fixtures on a more regular basis may help boost both the awareness of the club and attendances which could have a positive impact upon the Blues’ finances.



15 CHARLIE WELLINGS



GOAL





Charlie Wellings: Filling the void

Birmingham City Ladies youngster Charlie Wellings is playing her part in the absence of England striker White. When experienced Birmingham City Ladies striker Ellen White picked up a groin injury that will keep her out of action until 2018, some fans

wondered where the goals would come from in the team. One player looking to fill the void left by White's absence is youngster Charlie Wellings and reporter [Dan Pentland](#) went along to St Andrews to meet the striker after she scored one goal and created another in a 3-2 Continental Tyres Cup victory over second tier outfit Doncaster Rovers Belles.

The 19-year-old hotshot made her name by scoring a stunning goal against Manchester City Women in a 4-1 defeat in the FA Women's Cup Final at Wembley in May. The player's career has continued to blossom this term with Wellings topping the Birmingham City goalscoring charts along with fellow striker White with three goals in all competitions.

When speaking to The Women's Football Magazine, Wellings said that she is taking things one game at a time. "I don't set goal targets" the player said. "I am trying to score as many goals as possible and that's it really. I want to keep playing, keep improving and that's the main thing. I want to keep my place in the starting XI and that's what I am hoping to do. I'm looking to keep working hard in training and to continue to improve on the areas which I need to improve on and then keep on playing more games."

Wellings has already scored more goals during the first few weeks of the new season than in any of her previous campaigns as a professional footballer and the player said that the club are looking to improve their goalscoring record after Birmingham City ended the 2017 FA Women's Super League Spring Series as the third lowest scorers in the division. "We are trying to get forward more as a team and we know that we have to score more goals" the youngster added.

"We want to get at teams and not sit back so that's helping my game this year."

The striker played her part in a deserved cup victory over Doncaster Rovers Belles but Wellings admitted that despite her good form, the competition for places in the squad is keeping her on her toes. "We have a lot of forwards in



squad this year and all of us have different strengths” Wellings said.

“We all need to know about each other and I am really enjoying it at the minute.”

Teammate White could miss at least three more of Birmingham City’s fixtures but fans should not be too concerned as in Wellings, the club have a raw talent who is beginning to work towards fulfilling her full potential. Against The Belles, Wellings was a constant threat in the final third and with the player showing such a great attitude towards her learning and development, it looks like Birmingham City might just have a future star on their hands.





US Olympian Hope Solo speaks out for equal rights and accuses ex-Fifa president Sepp Blatter of sexual harassment

Hope Solo joined a host of sporting greats to deliver insights into sports leadership in October as she visited Dublin for the second annual One-Zero sports conference. Solo spoke about her experiences as the most capped goalkeeper in US football history with 202 appearances, including in the 2008 and 2012 Olympic – and 2015 World Cup-winning teams. The former US number one is no stranger to controversy having had her national team contract terminated last year for ‘conduct that was counter to the organisation’s principles’, and she was quick to praise the Irish women’s team for their protest against the FAI earlier this year.

In April, 13 members of the senior Irish women’s team, supported by the player’s union (PFAI), publicised their grievances with the FAI in the national media. They discussed everything from the lack of proper kits, gym membership and remuneration for players on international duty to the humiliation of having to go into public toilets in airports to change into team tracksuits, which had to be returned swiftly after games for use by other teams. The dispute was quickly resolved after both sides ‘reached common agreement and a settlement, which allows the two parties to move forward together as one, in the best interests of Irish football.’

Solo praised the Irish protest saying,



"You look at what the Republic of Ireland did, it's incredible...They had to put their foot down against the federations to get only what is considered basic rights; hotel wi-fi, attire, bonuses; but it never would have happened if they didn't put their foot down."

When the point was raised that the Irish public had supported the women in their fight for better treatment but this wasn't reflected in terms of attendances at matches, Solo agreed that brands, sponsors and corporations all need to take a greater stand in promoting the women's game to help narrow the divide between men's and women's sport.

"There's so many people that can help in the process including corporations. I meet CEOs all the time and I ask them 'what are you teaching your young girls if you're only having endorsements for male football players? Are you teaching the value of men versus women in our society and across our

globe?' It's a responsibility of the federations, it's a responsibility of the individual fan base I guess, but we have to get them to come to the games and see the value. Once they see the value I have confidence they'll appreciate the game. But CEOs of corporations? The marketing dollars that go into marketing the women's team? If you don't see them on TV why are people going to gravitate towards the games?"

Solo has had her own battles to overcome off the pitch and has been a prominent figure in the US women's national team's (USWNT) fight against the United States Soccer Federation for equal pay. The USWNT have made great strides forward after negotiating an increase in compensation, improved travel benefits and greater support for players with children but the team are still yet to achieve complete wage equality with the men's national side.

"I'm not saying we're as good as the men, I'm not saying we're as fast as the men, I'm not saying we're as strong as the men, but there is value in women's sport," Solo told Irish sports presenter Joanne Cantwell at the conference in Croke Park.

Whilst they have yet to completely achieve their goal, the USWNT has served as an inspiration for other international women's teams who have started to campaign for equal rights and pay, forcing their respective football federations to sit up and take note.

At the beginning of October, the Norwegian women's soccer team confirmed that an agreement had been reached with the Norwegian FA for equal pay, making them the first

This has seen the women's wages almost double, after players from the men's national team agreed to contribute a portion of their own salaries in order to establish equality.

nation to pay their men's and women's teams equally.

Denmark's women's national team are also campaigning for pay equality and better treatment from the Danish Football Association (DBU). After the women forced a cancellation of a friendly with the Netherlands, the DBU announced that the World Cup qualifying match against Sweden would not be going ahead after negotiations with the players had stalled. Since then, a partial agreement has been made which ensured the players participated in their other World Cup qualifying game against Croatia, which Denmark won 4-0. The team are committed to achieving their goals off the pitch as much as they are

all proving that, in Solo's words, "in order to get power you have to take it."

Solo has since spoken out about another 'rampant' issue plaguing the sport; sexual harassment. She has recently alleged that former FIFA president Sepp Blatter assaulted her as she was about to go on stage to present at FIFA's Ballon d'Or awards ceremony in January 2013. Blatter has denied the allegations but there is no doubt that the bravery of players like Solo and England's Eniola Aluko to speak out about important off-field issues will help to create a safer environment for future generations of women to play football.



Hope Solo's career:

Full name
Hope Amelia Solo

USA appearances
202

Honours
2-time Olympic gold
FIFA World Cup winner
U.S. Soccer Female Athlete
of the Year: 2009
FIFA Women's World Cup
Golden Glove: 2011, 2015
FIFA FIFPro World XI
2015[139] 2016[140]



GI-Over Achievers

After punching above their weight for the past few years, Yeovil Town Ladies are finding life in the FA Women's Super League 1 tough since their promotion to the top flight in 2016 as reporter [Dan Pentland](#) found out when he watched The Glovers in action at FA Women's Super League 1 Spring Series champions Chelsea Ladies.

It was the fixture which was to surely send shivers down the spines of the Yeovil Town players, a trip to Kingsmeadow to face a rampant Chelsea side who had scored 13 goals in three league outings without reply.

Emma Hayes' Blues side look to be the 'top dogs' in English women's football this season while opponents Yeovil

Town are struggling to find their feet in the top flight with the club operating on one of the division's smallest playing budgets. The fixture promised goals and it didn't disappoint.

Chelsea were thoroughly dominant throughout the match and a double from Crystal Dunn combined with goals from Eni Aluko and Karen Carney saw The Blues race into a four-goal lead inside the opening 25 minutes.

The 90 minutes was nothing short of a struggle for Jamie Sherwood's Glovers side and further goals from Carney and Aluko in the second half gave the home side their third 6-0 win of the new season.



Yeovil Town arrived in Kingston-upon-Thames without scoring a single goal in the FA Women's Super League 1 in their three previous league matches and they managed just four shots on goal all afternoon compared to the 40 recorded by Chelsea.

Home goalkeeper Carly Telford was a spectator in The Blues goal as the visitors rarely ventured into the final third throughout the match. The fixture highlighted just how far the Somerset club have come in recent years but also displayed the huge gulf in class between themselves and one of the top clubs in English football.

Yeovil Town's success on the pitch is very much down to the hard work of many off the pitch and despite being forced to re-apply for their place in FA Women's Super League 1 next season and having to consider full-time football for the first time in their history, the club remain committed to furthering their success.

Whilst a recent fundraising drive to raise the £350,000 needed to go full-time fell flat, the club have announced ambitious plans to continue with their application for a full-time FA Women's Super League 1 licence in 2018/2019.

Yeovil Town will look to develop and grow its own financial resources based on long term self sustainability and it is hoped that the club will be granted FA Women's Super League 1 status for next season based on players training 19.25 hours per week, a total which will increase by 2020.

On the pitch, the club are enduring an extremely difficult 2017/2018 campaign but the fairytale Yeovil Town journey is not ready to end just yet and huge credit must go to those people looking to protect The Glovers' top flight status whilst being committed to growing the club into a top flight outfit.

Yeovil results so far:

24/09/2017 Home
L 0-4 Manchester City Women

30/09/2017 Away
L 0-1 Bristol City Women

08/10/2017 Home
L 0-1 Sunderland AFC Ladies

11/10/2017 Away
L 2-4 Brighton & Hove Albion

29/10/2017 Away
L 0-6 Chelsea Ladies FC

01/11/2017 Home
L 1-2 Tottenham Hotspur Ladies FC

11/11/2017 Home
L 0-2 Everton Ladies FC



Off Pitch Perfect

by Mark Bradley

'Sustainability' is not the most exciting of terms, but it's fundamental to the success of the women's game in this country. The FA's plans for a new full-time professional top tier have promoted much discussion on the strength of clubs' economic models, while smaller clubs, relying on good will and the commitment of volunteers, already know the value of every pound.

One of the things that has intrigued me in the men's game over the years has been the apparent belief that you can only grow a club in two ways: (1) by offering fantastic football and winning things and (2), when that doesn't work, discounting. Given that winning isn't something that any club outside the elite in either the men's or women's game can control or even largely influence and given that discounting, by definition, reduces income streams, wouldn't it be good if there was a third way.

I'm convinced that there is. I believe the women's game is perfectly placed to take advantage and I believe the key is in developing a family experience.

The experience the women's game offers (I hate to call it the 'product') certainly transcends 90 minutes of football. It's accessible, it's friendly, it's safe, the players are approachable, the experience before and after the game is enjoyable and, importantly, it's not as expensive as the men's game. Most of all, it's the type of experience that appeals to families and children.

Why families and children? Simply because when you take the time to find out what your different audience segments require (I dislike 'audience' too), all but one, to a greater or lesser extent, require entertainment, positivity

Men's clubs like Middlesbrough (600 to 4000 family season ticket holders in 4 seasons) and Cardiff City (450 to 7200 in 4 seasons) realised, after taking the time to investigate the needs of young families that 'the quality of the football' didn't feature in their top ten of greatest needs.

What they really wanted was something to entertain and divert their kids: players giving autographs, somewhere warm to shelter, something to do if they get bored, good food with nice kids' items, pocket money gifts to purchase, a chance to meet the mascot, opportunities to participate by posting pics on social media, 'money can't buy' moments, easy access, decent parking, some activities to work off steam pre-match, a chance to take penalties, a chance to go on the pitch at half time and, more than anything else, friendly engaging staff or volunteers.

Now of course these kids are going to grow up, form an attachment and get as miserable as the rest of us when their team doesn't play well (and, believe me, as a fan of a club who haven't won a home game in nearly 12 months, I know how they feel). But when they are at their youngest (maybe before the age of seven) they will marvel at the friendly experience you offer and be less concerned about whether you're deploying a 3-4-3 or a 4-4-2.

By all means, commit to consulting and engaging with ALL of your different supporter groups, but if you're looking for a quick win on the sustainability front, think about the USP of the women's game, think about the audience for whom this has most appeal, and do the right thing.

Next time, I'll set out what I believe are the four cornerstones of sustainability and explain how, regardless of the size of your club, you can build an effective strategy for growth.



Grassroots Girls: Hoddesdon Ladies FC

@DanPentlandpcuk



In each issue of The Women's Football Magazine we will be taking a look at one of England's grassroots girls football clubs hoping to develop the next generation of talent. In this month's issue reporter Dan Pentland looks at Hoddesdon Town Owls Girls and Ladies FC with club player, coach and committee member Charlotte Grogan

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Who are the Hoddesdon Town Owls Girls and Ladies?

We are a club that was formed in 1998 to provide a girls only football club for the local area. We have since had girls of all ages join from all over Hertfordshire and Essex. We are a FA Charter

Standard Club. We have an ethos at the club to make football available to all girls regardless of their capabilities whilst ensuring that they enjoy playing the game and developing their skills to the best of their own ability.

What is your role at the club and how long have you been involved with the Hoddesdon Town Owls Girls and Ladies?

My role at the club is a player, coach and committee member. I began playing at Hoddesdon Town when I was aged 13 or 14 for a few years. I returned at the age of 21 and have stayed here since. On my return to football, I decided I didn't want to just play so I took up coaching at first in local schools then I felt confident enough to take a team week in, week out. When the opportunity came around at Hoddesdon Town with the U10s girls, I took the responsibility on and I now coach with teammate and friend Summer which is perfect for us. I am part of the committee at the club which means a lot to me and I want the best for the girls' futures which I can help with by being a part of it.

Have any of the girls had any achievements in the last 12 months either in league or cup competitions?

Since we took over the team, we have had players leave us for Arsenal Ladies which is a great achievement. The girls finished the season on a huge high by winning their final few games while this season, we have been placed in a league with very talented teams such as Watford. We are always pleased with the girls' attitude and ability.

Has the club produced any promising players in recent years who could go on to play either semi-professionally or professionally in the future?

The club has seen many players over the years move on to semi-professional or professional teams such as Arsenal, Watford, Tottenham Hotspur and Stevenage. Being one of the only girls clubs in the area for a number of years means that most girls in the local area start their footballing days at Hoddesdon Town Owls.



www.hoddesdon-owls-fc.co.uk **Are you seeing more girls wanting to play for Hoddesdon Town Owls or for other clubs in the local area?**

Girls football is always growing and improving. The popularity of the sport is becoming much more obvious with new girls turning up to train every week. Our U10s side has doubled in numbers over the last year with the possibility of having to create another team which is fantastic. Incentives like #girlsfootballweek are fantastic because we can get out to local schools and put sessions on to children who have never played before or don't know anywhere to play. We can show them what we are about and how they can get involved which always attracts more girls to the club.

What is the best thing about working with the club and what are your hopes for the club in the future?

The best thing about the club for me is seeing the girls play football. Sometimes I just sit back and watch certain skills, a pass or a player being encouraged by another, and it just makes you so proud to be a part of that. The fact that they love playing and want to attend sessions whenever possible just makes you realise why coaching is so rewarding!

A special thank you to Charlotte and the Hoddesdon Town Owls Girls and Ladies for their insights into their club in this month's issue of The Women's Football Magazine.

For more info on the club go to:
www.hoddesdon-owls-fc.co.uk



Lionesses Update: England lose friendly in Marley's first game in charge

England conceded late on in Valenciennes as interim manager Mo Marley's first game in charge of the senior team ended a tumultuous few weeks for the Lionesses with narrow defeat at the Stade du Hainaut. The 2019 World Cup hosts France capitalised on an error from goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain to claim the victory with Marseille attacker Viviane Asseyi's late header.

In England's first match since Mark Sampson was sacked, many were keen to see how former Under-19s Coach Marley would fare - especially after Sampson had led England to their first victory over France since 1974 the last time the two teams met, in the Euro 2017 quarter finals back in July.

Marley picked a similar squad to the one that thrashed Russia 6-0 in the World Cup qualifying win that became Sampson's final game in charge. Strikers Fran Kirby and Ellen White were notable absentees through injury, whilst Laura Bassett was left out after recently relocating to Australia to join Canberra United.

The controversy off the pitch had somewhat overshadowed Marley's big audition, as goalkeeping coach Lee Kendall was sent home hours before kick-off after becoming the subject of an internal FA investigation. Kendall, who faces allegations of racism and speaking to Eniola Aluko in a fake Caribbean accent, was replaced on the bench by the men's Under-21s equivalent Tim Dittmer.



Marley, who has recently submitted her application to become the permanent coach, opted not to bring in Aluko for this game but was quoted as saying she would be "100% willing" to call on the Chelsea striker in the future. Marley said, "It's not just about one player, there's a lot of good young talent out there and we want to find players playing regularly and doing well for their clubs who can help us get to the World Cup finals here in France in 2019 and, more importantly, go from



number three in the world to number one. I want to give everybody an opportunity to be part of that.”

France also headed into the game under new management as Corinne Diacre, the first woman to coach a men's professional football team in France, took over from Olivier Echouafni at the start of September. Echouafni was relieved of his duties after Les Bleues were knocked out of this summer's Euros by England.

The French started comfortably on home soil and typically controlled possession early on, but the Lionesses' defence coped with the early pressure limiting the hosts to few chances. England's best opening of the first half came on the break, as Karen Carney found Jodie Taylor with a fine cross, which the Arsenal forward could only float over the goal.

The game's best chance came through France when Chamberlain somehow managed to par Valerie Gauvin's header round the post with a sublime fingertip save. Lucy Bronze saw her own header go close at the other end in the second half, but Chamberlain was soon forced into action once again as she saved from Eugenie Le Sommer's long-range effort.

The most noticeable of Marley's changes then came, with Manchester City forward Melissa Lawley on for her international debut.

England's two other substitutes combined late on as Nikita Parris felt she should have had a penalty when her ankles were clipped as she tried to control Isobel Christiansen's cut-back.

However, the appeal was turned down by the referee and just as the game looked headed for a stalemate, Chamberlain gifted substitute Asseyi an open goal after failing to catch a simple cross. It was harsh on the Liverpool keeper who had performed well all night and had already denied the French twice with two superb saves.

The defeat seemed unfair as both sides were poor on the night and neither did enough to deserve the victory. Ultimately Marley's first game will go down as a loss and she will need to better demonstrate her credentials in her final two games as interim coach, which are both World Cup qualifiers on home soil.

England face Bosnia & Herzegovina at Banks's Stadium in Walsall on Friday 24 November (7.05pm KO) and Kazakhstan at Colchester United's Weston Homes Community Stadium on Tuesday 28 November (7.05pm KO).

Tickets for the games are on sale priced at just £1 each for children and concessions. Group booking and Charter Standard discounts also apply.





Scotland Women v Albania Women

W 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifier

The Women's Football Magazine focusses on one of the biggest matches in the women's game in the UK. This month, we went along to the Paisley 2021 Stadium to watch Scotland take on Albania in a 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying match.

@DanPentlandpcuk



This was Scotland's homecoming. After the blood, sweat and tears of the nation's 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship campaign which ended at the group stage, Scotland had the opportunity to impress followers of the women's game once again when they took on Albania in a 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying match at the Paisley 2021 Stadium.

Under new boss Shelley Kerr, Scotland had won their first qualifier 2-1 against Belarus in Minsk just days earlier and hopes were high that the nation would make easy work of latest opponents Albania, a side which had conceded no less than 41 goals in five matches during their previous qualification campaign.

Scotland started the match positively on a chilly evening in Paisley and Claire Emslie and Caroline Weir both saw efforts kept out of the net by visiting keeper Marigona Zani before Emma Mitchell really should have opened the scoring but headed wide when left unmarked on the edge of the six yard area.

Zani then did well to tip a Lana Clelland strike over the bar but the Albanian keeper was left embarrassed moments later when she flapped at the resulting corner kick and somehow diverted the ball into her own net.

Just after the half hour mark, it was 2-0 to Scotland when Chloe Arthur's venomous shot cannoned off the bar and the rebound was put in by Fiona Brown.

SCOTLAND V ALBANIA

24 OCTOBER 2017
PAISLEY 2021 STADIUM
KO 7.30PM | FREE ENTRY



Jane Ross should have made it three for Kerr's side before the break but headed wide when failing to fully connect with a cross into the box.

The second half saw Scotland come alive and in the 54th minute they scored the third goal of the match when Mitchell's strike proved to be too hot to handle for Zani and Ross was on hand to tap the ball into an empty net.

A minute later, Scotland were 4-0 up when Player of the Match Emslie scored the goal of the game when she cut in from the right and unleashed a spectacular 20-yard shot into the far corner of the net.

Substitute Lisa Evans was guilty of an unforgivable miss nine minutes from time when she failed to hit the target

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after being played in by Brown but the player soon made up for her error when she headed in an Emslie cross to make it 5-0.

Evans wasted another chance in added time when she took a shot on herself and fired over rather than tee up Brown but it didn't matter as Scotland made a real statement of intent with a 5-0 victory.

Speaking after the match, winger Emslie admitted that she was delighted to score such an impressive goal for her country.

"It was one of those ones where if you hit it perfect it's great but if you hit it wrong it's in Row Z" the youngster said.

"I'm delighted it hit the back of the net tonight."

The result saw Scotland top the qualification group and boost their goal difference and Emslie admitted that it had been a great start to her nation's quest to qualify for France in 2019.

"That's really good, we've kicked-off the campaign with six points and that's the most important thing" added Emslie.

"If goal difference helps then that's excellent." Scotland's next fixture comes against Switzerland next April and Emslie believes that the Swiss will be very tough opponents.

"We need to just take one game at a time" the winger said.

"We know Switzerland are a good team so we know that they could be our toughest opponent."

Scotland have won two of their three matches under new boss Kerr with the 3-0 defeat to Hungary in an international challenge match being their only defeat to date.

Upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup Qualification fixtures:

vs SWITZERLAND 5 Apr 2018

vs POLAND 10 Apr 2018

vs BELARUS 7 Jun 2018

vs POLAND 12 Jun 2018

vs SWITZERLAND 30 Aug 2018

vs ALBANIA 04 Sep 2018



Shelly Kerr

Scotland bid to take the high road to France

Scotland boss Shelley Kerr was naturally delighted that her side picked up six points from their two qualifying matches against Belarus and Albania in October as The Women's Football Magazine reporter Dan Pentland found out when he met the former Arsenal Ladies manager at the Paisley 2021 Stadium following the 5-0 thumping of Albania.

Two 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying matches down and six points in the bag. There was to be no banana skin for Scotland against Belarus in Minsk or when they took on Albania on home soil.

Under new boss Shelley Kerr, Scotland have started pretty much where they left off before their 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship adventure in the summer. Make no doubt about it, this is Scotland Women's golden era.

They battled to a 2-1 victory over Belarus in Minsk and followed up that result with a 5-0 battering of Albania in front of almost 2,000 supporters in Paisley. That victory at the 2021 Stadium saw Scotland thrill the home crowd and after the match manager Kerr was full of praise for her side.

"We are delighted to have got another three points (against Albania)" said Kerr. "It's only a starting point and we



are not getting carried away. We made five changes tonight and that's how confident we are in the squad. There's a real trust in all of the players because they are competent footballers."

The Scotland boss added "I don't think we actually played that well in the first half and we spoke at half time about being a bit more patient and having better control the speed of the game because it was a bit frantic.

"We used the wide areas well in the second half and scored some good goals so overall we are delighted with the three points."

Scotland went into the match against Albania as huge favourites to win but despite the expectancy weighing upon the players' shoulders, Kerr admitted that her side prepared for the game the same as any other.

"Any team is capable of scoring against you if you are not switched on" Kerr said.

"Every international team has two or three goalscorers. We really focussed on ourselves in terms of our game plan and I thought that in both matches we have created so many chances in the game. Against Belarus, perhaps the finishing wasn't there but tonight was different."

The performance against Albania saw Scotland really entertain the supporters and Kerr added that playing an attractive brand of football forms an important part of her plans for success in her role: "We want to allow the players to go and express themselves and play with a bit of freedom" Kerr confessed.

"The foundations are there, we have been very structured defensively so now we want to take the team to the next level by playing attractive football and hopefully everybody saw signs of that tonight."

Kerr reserved special praise for the fans who came out on a cold wet evening in the West of Scotland to back her side in their numbers.

The Scotland boss said: "The crowd were fantastic tonight especially considering the weather. In the Euro's the players really engaged with the support and it is fantastic for us. They made a lot of noise and that was great."

Scotland now face a break of almost six months until their next qualifying fixture when they are scheduled to face a Switzerland side who are expected to rival them closely for qualification from the group.

That match is scheduled to take place on 5 April 2018 although the date is subject to change.

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