

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

ISSUE 7

MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2017



JODIE TAYLOR

- Jodie Taylor becomes BT Action Sport Woman of the Year
- Toni Duggan talks to us about her move abroad
- Lionesses updates from the World Cup qualifiers

Welcome

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Welcome

Welcome to our eighth issue!

I hope you are all looking forward to the festive season and getting to spend time with your families and friends.

We are excited to bring you lots of exciting stories this month including part one of our "Brits Abroad" pieces. Part two is coming soon!

A massive congratulations must be said to Jodie Taylor who was named BT Sport's Action Woman of the Year. Congratulations Jodie and good luck in your new venture at Mebourne City and Seattle Reign.

Congratulations also go to Chelsea boss Emma Hayes who has announced she is expecting twins!

As we move forwards into 2018, we have lots of exciting things to bring you from TWFM including a brand new website. We cannot wait to share it all with you!

But for now there is only one thing to say... To those who celebrate Christmas, we hope you have a fantastic festive period.

Merry Christmas and a very happy new year!
Helen Rowe-Willcocks
Editor

BT Sport

ACTION WOMAN AWARDS 2017

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About My Month

Well with Christmas decorations going up thick and fast, December was always going to be a rather busy month.

As a magazine we have been here, there and everywhere this month - going to England matches, meetings and some really fun events!

On a cold Monday evening, I was seen running (in heels!) across London to make it to the BT Action Sport Woman of the Year awards held at the BT Studios in Stratford. It was an absolutely fantastic night and it was great to see so many women recognised for their achievements across so many different sports.

Congratulations to Judy Murray on winning the lifetime achievement award and the England Women's Cricket team for winning team of the Year. We were so proud to see Jodie Taylor lift the trophy too!

I would like to finish this section by dedicating this issue to my Gran. Unfortunately she passed away at the end of November. My gran was a fantastic role model, she put me up through university and was always proud to hear what I was doing. So this issue is for her.

I hope you all have a great Christmas.
Enjoy the issue!
Helen x



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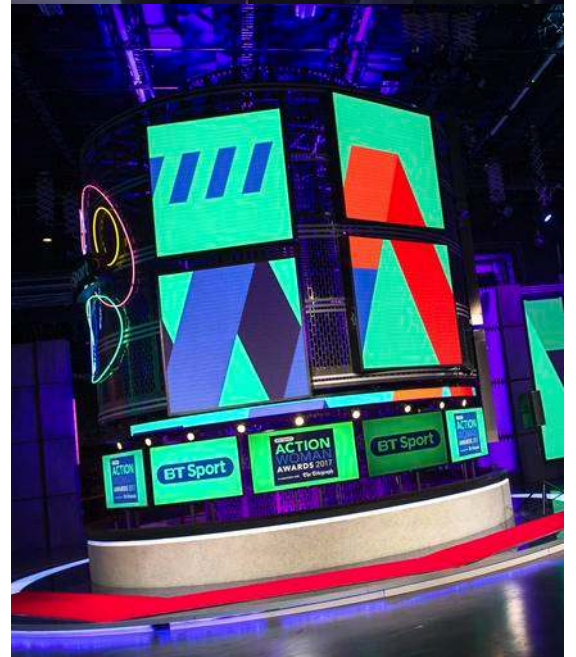
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— The FA —
**WOMEN'S
SUPER★LEAGUE**



**THE FA
ANNOUNCES
DECISION
ON CLUB
LICENSING
APPLICATIONS FOR
TIER 1 AND 2**

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The FA has today announced its decision in respect of the applications made by FA Women's Super League (FA

WSL) clubs for licences to participate in Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the restructured women's football pyramid from 2018/2019 onwards.

The decisions were made by The FA Women's Football Board following a detailed assessment of each application by a panel of experts.

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All clubs have been offered a licence for the tier at which they applied. For some clubs this offer of a licence is conditional on the club ensuring that certain requirements are met before the grant of the licence is confirmed. Decisions are subject to appeal.

Tier 1 clubs:

- Arsenal Women
- Birmingham City Ladies
- Brighton & Hove Albion Women
- Bristol City Women
- Chelsea Ladies
- Everton Ladies
- Liverpool Ladies
- Manchester City Women
- Reading Women
- Yeovil Town Ladies

Tier 2 clubs:

- Aston Villa Ladies
- Doncaster Rovers Belles
- Durham Women
- London Bees
- Millwall Lionesses
- Sheffield FC Ladies
- Tottenham Hotspur Ladies

The licence application process now moves to an open application phase where applications from clubs outside of The FA WSL will be accepted for both Tier 1 and Tier 2.

A minimum of two licences are available through the open process in Tier 1 and a minimum of five licences (including - subject to the rules and regulations in respect of promotion - a place for The FA WPL champion club) are available in Tier 2. Clubs who wish to submit an application as part of the open application phase must do so by 9th March 2018. Applications will be assessed by an expert panel and The FA Women's Board.



Decisions will not be communicated until after The FA WPL Championship Play-Off at the end of The FA WPL season.

The FA Women's Football Board also agreed the distribution of a prize fund for the 2017/18 FA WSL season.



The Big Match Internationals Special: England Lionesses By Dan Pentland

@DanPentlandpcuk



England Women 4 - 0 Bosnia and Herzegovina Women

The Women's Football Magazine focusses on one of the biggest matches in the women's game in the UK. This month, it's a double-header as we took in England's 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying matches against Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kazakhstan. We start in Walsall as the Lionesses met a Bosnian side for just the third time in qualifying.

With England having beaten Russia Women 6-0 in their first 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying match in Birkenhead in September, a sellout crowd swelled the Banks's Stadium in Walsall for their second fixture against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Lionesses went into the match

under the guidance of interim boss Mo Marley. The game would see England take on a Bosnian side which they had previously defeated twice in qualifying for the 2017 UEFA Women's European Championship, although both matches were won by a single goal.

As expected, England started their latest fixture against Bosnia and Herzegovina on the front foot and the pace and trickery of Nikita Parris caused panic in the visitors' defence from the off.

The Bosnians stood firm for just 19 minutes before conceding in the West Midlands when Danielle Carter dinked a cross into the box and visiting keeper Almina Hodzic could only divert the



the ball towards the head of England captain Steph Houghton who made no mistake from 10 yards.

Hodzic was busy throughout the half and the keeper came to the Bosnians' rescue with some excellent saves to deny Fran Kirby from scoring on at least three occasions as the two sides went into the break separated by just one goal.

England finally beat Hodzic for a second time soon after the restart when a superb cross from Toni Duggan was headed in by Parris from close range. That goal set the tone for a more cut-throat second half performance from Marley's side and it was 3-0 eight minutes into the half when Houghton grabbed a rare brace by firing a low free-kick into the corner of the net from just outside of the box.

Bosnian striker Milena Nikolic was an isolated figure for most of the match but the player was cruelly denied a goal just before the hour mark when

her effort was ruled out for a foul on England defender Mille Bright. A defensive mix-up between Bright and goalkeeper Siobhan Chamberlain saw Nikolic nip in to steal possession and tap the ball into an empty net however the referee harshly ruled that the Bosnian had pulled Bright back.

England's luck was out six minutes later when Amira Spahic looked to have fouled Carter at the other end and the referee failed to award the Lionesses a penalty.

Duggan and Kirby then went close to adding a fourth goal before Carter finally won her side a penalty. After missing a spot kick against Russia in the previous qualifier, Kirby stepped up to successfully convert from 12 yards to give England a 4-0 victory in front of over 10,000 fans.

Speaking after the match, interim England manager Marley was delighted with her side's performance in what was her first victory in charge of the senior side. "I thought we started the game really well" Marley told The Women's Football Magazine.

"We've worked on playing quickly, changing the play and alternating from side-to-side to find spaces. The girls acquitted themselves brilliantly. They've embraced what we've wanted to do and the way they've played is pretty impressive."

England's fourth goal came from the penalty spot and Marley added that two-goal defender Steph Houghton was never considered to take the spot kick.

"Fran (Kirby) is the penalty taker, 100%" said the England interim boss.



“It’s nice for players to score goals, particularly if they are forwards as they measure themselves on that role.

“We pretty much had five forwards on the pitch today, we took that risk and it would be nice for them to all get a goal.”

Discussing her time in temporary charge of England, Marley said “I’ve really enjoyed it, it’s intense with two games in a short period of time.

“At the end of it (interim period) I’ll reflect and say is it right for me and is it right for the players?

“It’s about getting the right person for moving this team forward.”

Marley saved special praise for the huge number of supporters who came out to support her side on a bitterly cold evening in Walsall.

The England boss said “It’s inspirational.

“It’s Friday night and it’s freezing cold but the players absolutely love it.

“They buzz off the energy in the stadium, this is what they play for.”

Victory over Bosnia and Herzegovina saw England continue to keep the heat on group leaders Wales Women with two wins out of two.



England Women 5 - 0 Kazakhstan Women

The Women's Football Magazine focusses on one of the biggest matches in the women's game in the UK. This month, it's a double-header as we took in England's 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying matches against Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kazakhstan. In our second look at the Lionesses, we attended England's third qualifier against Kazakhstan at The Weston Homes Community Stadium in Colchester.

Interim England boss Mo Marley's final match of her three-game temporary spell in charge of the Lionesses came in the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifying match against group minnows Kazakhstan at a bitterly cold Weston Homes

Community Stadium in Colchester.

The Lionesses went into the match heavily fancied to rack up a cricket score against a Kazakhstan side which set up with a formation which could only be described as a nine-player defence. The visitors had lost all of their three previous qualifying matches while they had never faced England before.

Interim England boss Marley opted to use the match to rotate her squad and Melissa Lawley was handed her first start for the Lionesses while Keira Walsh made her debut in Essex.

The inexperienced pair combined for England's first goal when Walsh's



15th-minute cross found Lawley with space in the box and the youngster made no mistake from 10 yards.

The Lionesses had to be content with a one-goal advantage in the first half with visiting keeper Oksana Zheleznyak making a number of good saves including a stunning stop to deny Alex Greenwood's thunderous strike from hitting the back of the net. Kazakhstan's overcautious approach saw Marley's side crowded out when given the slightest glimpse of goal.

The second half saw England step it up a gear although it wasn't until the introduction of both Fran Kirby and Izzy Christiansen just after the hour mark that the Lionesses found their scoring boots.



It took Kirby just two minutes to add her name to the scoresheet when Nikita Parris' dink into the box was harshly adjudged to have been handled by a visiting player. Kirby stepped up to take the spot kick and the player successfully made it two converted penalties out of two in her last two outings for the Lionesses.

Parris then notched a quick-fire double, firstly keeping her composure to blast a close range strike into the roof of the net before beating substitute Kazakhstan goalkeeper Irina Sandalova when one-on-one.

A minute later, Christiansen scored a fifth with a tap-in to make it four goals in 12 second half minutes for England as they went on to record a comprehensive victory and maintain their 100% record in qualifying.

Speaking to The Women's Football Magazine after the match, interim England manager Marley admitted that the result was pleasing although

the first half performance from her side was not clinical enough.

"We've tried to use the ball well in the last couple of games" said Marley.

"We did well in the two games but at half time we were like 'that's not good enough'. The message at half time was to be more positive and clean and clinical in what we are doing, get the wide players to be a bit more direct. We have to take the game to the opposition rather than wait for things to happen."

One of the most pleasing aspects of the match was the performances of youngsters Lawley and Walsh and Marley said that both players were ready for the challenges of senior international football.

"They've trained well" Marley added. "Mel (Lawley) made her debut in France when she came on as a sub and that was right for her to gently integrate her. Keira (Walsh) has trained well and today was the right time to balance the youngsters and senior players. We have World Cup qualifiers and we have to win them. It's important to field the kids but we still need a performance and we still need a game plan. I just thought today was the right time for it."

The match saw no less than six Manchester City Women players start for England and interim boss Marley said that players of any club can be selected providing that they are playing regularly. Marley added "Traditionally in the women's league, the stronger teams have had the greater number of England internationals but for me it's a case of you must be playing week in, week out."



“Each of the big teams have England players.

“Nikita (Parris) is playing week in, week out and it’s fluent. If she is playing with the same players for England and for her club, then it has got to help with her understanding for sure.”

England are next in 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup qualifying action when they face Wales Women at St Mary’s Stadium in Southampton on Friday 6 April 2018.



Jodie Taylor named as BT Sport Action Woman of the Year

England Lioness Jodie Taylor has been named as BT Sport's Action Woman of the Year after her spectacular performance at the UEFA women's Euro 2017 finals, where she won the Golden Boot with five goals.

The Seattle Reign forward beat off competition from a shortlist of eight women, with exceptional sporting performances throughout the year, to win the public vote.

Jodie received her award from Rachel Atherton, the 2016 winner, at the awards ceremony at the BT Sport Studio, hosted by Clare Balding and broadcast live on BT Sport 2, BT Sport's Facebook page and btsport.com.

Speaking at the ceremony, she said: "There was no way did I expect to win this. Without the team's success, I would not be standing here."

"It is such an honour and a privilege to be named among these amazing women here. They are all fantastic women and role models."

The England cricket team walked away with the Team of the Year award following their thrilling World Cup victory over India. Judy Murray received the Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition for her commitment to tennis, and the impact and the inspiration she has given to so many others.





BRITS ABROAD: Toni Duggan

"I am loving life on and off the pitch in Barcelona"



Toni Duggan's move from Manchester City to Barcelona was one of the most high-profile transfers of the summer as she became the first English player to play for the Spanish giants since Gary Lineker's move to the Nou Camp in 1986.

The England international has settled in well with her new club, scoring on her debut and helping Barça to their current position at the top of the Liga Iberdrola on goal difference.

Six months on from signing for the Catalans, Duggan spoke with our **Chief Sports Reporter Jessica Pratt** whilst on international duty about how it has been adapting to life on and off the pitch in Spain.

Firstly, Toni, how is it being back in England?

Do you manage to get home very often? It's really nice being back in England, and it was great that my family could get to the England game [against Bosnia-Herzegovina] as they don't get to see me play as often as they'd like to now. It's good to be back with the team – but I really don't miss the weather!

How has the mood been in the England camp ahead of the two qualifiers - how have you been preparing?

It's been good. Obviously World Cup qualifiers are really important and everyone is just focused on getting the three points in every game. We've been working hard on and off the pitch to make sure we're there in France in



2019.

It was a great result [against Bosnia-Herzegovina] and nice to see a sell-out crowd, how would you compare the attendances and support here to what you've seen in Spain now you've been there a few months?

It's been mixed in Spain. When we play at the training ground crowds are not so big, but when we play at our mini stadium the crowds are good. Crowds are also really good in away games. The atmosphere feels more intense at games in Spain, even if the crowds are smaller than in England.

What has been the hardest thing about moving away?

Leaving family and friends is the hardest thing about it. The language barrier can be difficult but I'm learning, and it obviously takes time. The playing style has also been hard to adapt to – it's a new team, new culture and you're also wanting to impress. It's about being patient which I am not so good at. But I am loving life on and off the pitch in Barcelona.

Has there been any player in particular who has helped to translate things?

A couple of the players speak English which helps and they help me with translating. Lieke Martens is there and I am quite close to her. She doesn't know the language yet either, but she has played in other countries and is helping me in that respect.

The reasons behind your move have been well-documented and you've spoken before about the differences with the Spanish playing style, has it been as technical as you anticipated?

I



It was even more so, it really surprised me. I'd expected it to be technical but training with the girls day-to-day you realise how technical they are.

Do you feel the move is helping you to improve your game? Definitely. I'd say I was a technical player before but now I need to work even more on my technique.

We've recently heard the news that Jodie Taylor will be leaving Arsenal and playing overseas [with Melbourne City and Seattle Reign]. Do you think it will become more of a trend for English players and would you encourage young English players to play abroad?

Everyone's career path is different and as long as a player is developing it doesn't really matter what country they play in. When I moved it was the

@redjess14



the right time for me, but it might not have been a few years earlier.

The Champions League draw has got everybody talking, especially as you will be playing Lucy Bronze's Lyon side and one of you could potentially be returning to England to play against your former club Man City in the semi-finals. What did you make of the draw?

I'm really looking forward to the games. As a player you want to play against the best teams and Lyon are one of the best in Europe, so it's a positive for me not a negative. It's a great test for us as a club and we're going in as underdogs, so we've got nothing to lose.

Do you see yourself returning to England to play in the future?

Maybe, but I'd be open to any new experience or opportunity.

What are your aspirations for club and country in the next few years?

Win trophies!

Toni Duggan's interview is part one of our Brits Abroad feature. Coming next month will be Jess' chat with Lucy Bronze.





Champions League draw sets up Duggan versus Bronze

England teammates Toni Duggan and Lucy Bronze will go head-to-head in the Champions League quarter-finals next March as November's draw saw their respective clubs - Barcelona and Lyon, pitted against one another.

Barcelona, into the last eight for the fourth time in five years, are aiming to build on last year's campaign where they made the semi-finals for the first time. They will undoubtedly face a tough test against the French holders - who have never been eliminated at the quarter-final stage.

First-time quarter-finalists Chelsea will also face French opposition, as they were drawn against Montpellier and former striker Sofia Jakobsson.

Manchester City will similarly welcome a familiar face for their tie, as Kosovare Asllani will return to England with Swedish side Linköping.

City surpassed the quarter-finals on their debut last season, reaching the semi-finals before narrow defeat over two legs to eventual winners Lyon. The Blues may face the current champions at the same stage this season if both sides advance, which could set up a return for Lucy Bronze and Pauline Bremer to their former clubs. If City and Barcelona make it to the semi-finals, Toni Duggan will be the player to make her first return to Manchester since leaving in the summer.

The final tie of the quarter-finals is



Wolfsburg against Slavia Praha. The two-time German champions are certain favourites to beat the Czechs, who fell to Lyon in their only previous quarter-final in 2016. If Wolfsburg were to advance, they are likely opponents for Chelsea – who they have eliminated from the knockout stages in each of the previous two campaigns.

Full UEFA Women's Champions League quarter-final draw

Montpellier (FRA) v Chelsea (ENG)
Wolfsburg (GER) v Slavia Praha (CZE)
Manchester City (ENG) v Linköping (SWE)
Lyon (FRA, holders) v Barcelona (ESP)

Quarter-finals to be played 21/22 & 28/29 March



FAWSL FOCUS: Watford

@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** takes a look into matters at Watford Ladies. Watford Ladies have been a member of FA Women's Super League 2 since the division first formed in 2014.

The Lady Hornets have struggled on the pitch and at the time of writing, the club have managed to collect just 35 points from an available 208 since the competition first began over three years ago. Watford have finished bottom of the FA Women's Super League 2 in two of the four seasons in which they have competed (which includes the 2017 FA Women's Super League 2 Spring Series) while the club again look likely to finish bottom of the pile this term.

Surprisingly, during the 2017 FA Women's Super League 2 Spring Series the Hertfordshire club collected eight points from nine matches, their most impressive points-to-games ratio in the division so far.

The feel good factor around the club ahead of the new 2017/2018 winter campaign has quickly evaporated as the new season has begun. One point collected from Watford's first five matches makes grim reading for fans of the yellows but more worrying is the club's decision to not apply for a new FA Women's Super League licence for 2018/2019.

After considering the pros and cons of submitting an application, Watford surprised management, players and fans by releasing a statement



indicating that they will focus on being a community-based operation next season outside of the top two tiers of the women's game.

That decision has left everyone connected with the club questioning just what the future holds for Watford Ladies Football Club and these are worrying times for the former FA Women's Premier League Northern Division runners-up.

With other FA Women's Super League 2 clubs such as Brighton & Hove Albion Women and Tottenham Hotspur Ladies looking to evolve and grow into top class women's footballing models like their male counterparts, it seems a huge shame that Watford will not be considering the same growth in the coming years.

Watford men's team are an established English Premier League club and one can be forgiven for questioning the club's commitment to growing the ladies aspect of the football club.

Watford Ladies are just three years short of their half-centenary year since their formation as a supporters' ladies club in 1970. The upcoming makeover for the women's game could give the competition a real boost and it is a huge shame that The Lady Hornets will not be part of that evolution. The club could be unrecognisable from its current form at the start of next season with both management and players expected to move on and it is the uncertainty of Watford's future shape and success which will trouble the club's suffering supporters most.



Off Pitch Perfect

by Mark Bradley

As I write this article I'm on an Air Baltic flight from Paris to Tallinn. I'm headed to Estonia, as part of a UEFA project, to help their Premium Liiga attract and retain more fans.

Estonia has some challenges. Cross country skiing, basketball, ice hockey and cycling are all popular sports here, but only 0.07% of the population attends football matches (the lowest 'per capita' in Europe, compared with Scotland, which is, I'm reliably informed, the country where the highest 'per capita' number attends).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I'll be going down the family route with my friends at the Estonian FA. Families are a unique audience segment in football. Unlike other fan groups, for whom to a greater or lesser extent, good, attractive, winning football is a key expectation or hope, that's not the case for young families. With an enthusiastic team of volunteers, limited resource and some imagination, we can CONTROL everything they need.

Families are looking for more than just 90 minutes. They hope to have something to keep the kids occupied pre-match (and during it too, if like me, they have to endure Sunderland AFC more than once in a while). Some kind of physical activity, entertainment or other form of engagement will always be a good idea and, as luck would have it, smaller clubs, especially women's teams across the country, also provide the freedom for kids to run around, change ends at half time, meet and talk to players and hear everything that is going on.

A little souvenir purchase, a chance to make a racket with a kazoo or clapper and a decent mix of food, offering both healthy and 'once in a while' unhealthy, will always make an impression too.

So you get all of this in place, promote it widely and deliver well on a match day and what do you have? Hopefully you're starting to develop a reputation as a family club. However, STOP THERE.

In our rush to engage the next generation – the fans of the future – we mustn't forget the reason we're doing it. If we provide too much distraction for kids, we risk them coming along and failing to connect with the team and / or the club. At higher levels of the men's game at clubs with two tier stands for example, having the family stand in the upper tier means kids can't access players and get autographs (unless organised separately as a pre-match experience as they arrive).

We need to be conscious of the factors that will engage kids and build that connection. We're not just entertainment. We offer something different: a chance to really be part of the club, something that's growing, something that's giving girls a chance to practise sport, learn about team work, get to know some fantastic role models and develop confidence and self-esteem. So how are we going to go about creating match days that deliver that?

Few of us have a Donnie Belles 50+ year history. In fact, many of us have only just started. For us, there are no statues of ex-colliery men who would emerge from a mine shaft clutching a strangulated canary to take the Number 27 to the ground with two dozen paying fans. We don't have the glorious win in 1947 to keep Granddad going with anecdotes or the near-miss in 1964 that meant Uncle Charlie missed out on a bet worth 2 shillings and sixpence (and still hasn't stopped telling you about it).

We need to pro-actively find ways to connect our new young audience to our clubs. How can we get them wearing our club badge in their everyday lives? How we can develop a team of recruiting sergeants who will bring their friends along? How could social media increase knowledge of our club and what it stands for? Could kids help us to develop a set of values in the first place?

By seeing engagement as a 'distraction' for kids, we risk missing out on the next generation of lifelong fans. By seeing it as a series of steps that connect the youngster to the 'movement' behind the club, we're more likely to see our future attendances rise, because the kids will be here for the football and that's what matters more than anything else.

Northern Natter

With Daniel Pentland

Darlington based football writer and reporter Dan Pentland discusses a women's footballing matter dominating conversation up north. In this month's issue Dan looks at whether Newcastle United Women would be able to succeed in the new 2018/2019 FA Women's Super League 1 should they apply for and obtain a licence.

Newcastle United Women were first formed in 1989 and are current members of the FA Women's Premier League Northern Division One. The Lady Magpies were once FA Women's Cup quarter-finalists although they have never played in the FA Women's Super League since the competition's formation in 2011.

There have been mutterings in the North East that Newcastle United could make an application for a FA Women's Super League licence for the new 'full-time' division next year and I take a look at four key points to determine whether the club could be worthy of a place in the top flight of women's football.

Is women's football popular enough in both Newcastle and the North East?

Newcastle United is a global brand supported by fans and businesses worldwide however the club's women's team is not well followed or publicised. The women's side are often watched by low three-figure crowds despite the men's team regularly attracting over 52,000 at St James' Park.

Neighbours Sunderland AFC Ladies reverted to a part-time operation to cut costs in time for the FA Women's Super League 1 Spring Series although what The Black Cats and local rivals Durham Women have achieved on the pitch in the North East in recent months has been nothing short of marvellous.

Girls' football at grassroots level in the North East is more popular than ever but building strong links with girls' clubs and promoting the club via Newcastle United men's side could be key to the club's growth.

Do Newcastle United have the finances to survive in the new FA Women's Super League 1?

With the Newcastle United brand being a multi-million business, there is every chance that the women's club could survive in the top flight of women's football. The question would be how committed the board are to see The Lady Magpies flourish in the FA Women's Super League 1?

It is difficult to determine the actual initial cost of running a full-time Newcastle United women's side however one would expect that the club would need to be willing to invest around £500,000 a season to be competitive. With the club currently up for sale, any financial commitment to the women's team is very much up in the air.

Does the club have a squad capable of playing in the top flight of women's football?

In a word, no. Newcastle United are a squad made up of part-time players who have failed to impress in FA Women's Premier League Northern Division One this season. On the field, the club do not currently have the quality of player required to compete in FA Women's Super League 1.

At the time of writing, the club are in eighth in the FA Women's Premier League Northern Division One table and make no doubt about it, the playing squad would need a complete overhaul to allow the club to grow into a decent top flight full-time outfit.

Do Newcastle United have the facilities to host FA Women's Super League 1 football?

Top flight football would probably mean a new home for The Lady Magpies. Their current Cochrane Park venue does a job at the club's current level but an FA Women's Super League 1 licence would surely demand more supporter-friendly facilities.

Staging women's football at St James' Park on a regular basis would be unlikely but there are other potential venues in the area including Kingston Park rugby ground and Gateshead's International Stadium, both of which would be up to a decent standard.

In my opinion, Newcastle United would need a complete overhaul on and off the field if they want to compete in full-time women's competition. Their squad is well below the standard required for the new FA Women's Super League 1 while the club's future financial commitment is uncertain.

It is more than possible for the club to make the step up to the top flight however making the club more visible in the public eye and attracting new fans to watch the club on a regular basis could be The Lady Magpies' initial hurdle to clear.



SSE WOMEN'S FA CUP

THIRD ROUND

DRAW

Charlton Athletic, winners in 2005, have been pitched away to Ipswich Town in the third round of the SSE Women's FA Cup after the draw was made on Monday afternoon.

The high-flying Addicks put five goals past London rivals QPR in round two and they will take on Ipswich on Sunday 7 January 2018.

Middlesbrough, 8-1 winners over Farsley Celtic on Sunday, will host Liverpool Marshall Feds while Portsmouth will travel to Blackburn.

The draw took place at Park Hall Academy School in Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, and was conducted by 16-year-old pupils Felicity Barnes and Millie Hall.

They were ably assisted by Birmingham City stars Ellen White and Hayley Ladd, who took part in a Q&A session and then joined some of the girls for a football session in the sports hall.

Each winning club will receive £1,000 from The FA prize fund and a place in round four – the stage at which FA WSL clubs enter the competition.

Third round draw:

Cardiff City v Burnley
Fylde Ladies v Plymouth Argyle
Keynsham Town v Brislington
Huddersfield Town v Lewes
Leicester City v Bradford City
Newcastle United v The New Saints
Blackburn Rovers v Portsmouth
Derby County v Brighouse Town or
Wolverhampton Wanderers
Ipswich Town v Charlton Athletic
Crystal Palace v Coventry United
Middlesbrough v Liverpool Marshalls Feds
Chichester City v Luton Town





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